
Haiti independence day

A promising Haiti under President Martelly

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CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES OF HAITI

On Jan. 1, 2014, we celebrate the 210th anniversary of our independence. On this occasion, I wish to convey, on behalf of my government and the people of Haiti, our deepest respect and warm greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, members of the Imperial family, the government and the people of Japan.



The 210 years of history of the Republic of Haiti constitute a glorious moment and an opportunity to reiterate our tribute to the founding fathers, Toussaint Louverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Alexandre Petion, and to show reverence to our heroes Francois Capois aka Capois La Mort, Boukman, Catherine Flon and Mackandal, for their courage and triumph over oppression.

Since the fall of the Duvalier regime in 1986, Haiti has strug-

gled to overcome its legacy of instability and underdevelopment. The fragile stability of the first Black Republic has been shaken by many obstacles such as political crisis, natural and man-made disasters, and recently, the abuse and slaughter of Haitians in the Dominican Republic as an expression of "anti-Haitianism" that existed in the DR for decades, if not centuries, unacknowledged and institutionalized.

On Sept. 23, 2013, the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic, aimed to withdraw citizenship from descendants of Haitians born in the DR after 1929 on the basis that their parents were considered "in transit" after 85 years, whereas the law ironically considers "in transit" a stay of 90 days. This decision affects approximately 210,000 Dominicans of Haitian descent and more than 400,000 children of Haitian migrants, who will be stateless through deprivation of their nationality.

During his nearly three years in office, Haitian President Michel Martelly has taken impor-

tant initiatives that have led the country to a considerable improvement in territorial, economic and social stability as well as institutional rebuilding. He has accomplished many projects and the results are starting to be felt throughout the country. Accordingly, there has been significant progress on health, education, job creation, tourism, and infrastructure and other sectors.

To this date, the accomplishments of President Martelly are numerous. Following the devastating earthquake in January 2010, there were 1.5 million people living in camps; today, less than 200,000 people remain in those camps. Currently, 1.2 million children attend school under a tuition-waiver program; 329 schools were rebuilt; the international airport in Port-au-Prince has been renovated; the reconstruction of 14 secondary schools and other educational establishments that were damaged by the earthquake is complete; the construction of "Villa of Hope," which comprises 3,600 houses, led to the creation of nearly 3,000 jobs; the filling of

vacancies on the country's highest court took place.

The Martelly-Lamothe administration is pushing for foreign direct investment. Haiti is the only country right now that offers an "investment code," which provides investors with 15 years of tax-free status. These achievements represent some of the highlights of the Martelly-Lamothe government.

The leaders of many donor countries, including U.S. President Barack Obama, believe that Haiti is heading toward sustainable development. Thus, President Martelly has accomplished, in the face of vicious opposition, more than his predecessors in the last 25 years. Looking at Haiti today, you will see a country on an optimistic path.

In closing, I wish to express my deep appreciation to The Japan Times for giving me this opportunity to address its distinguished readers on this glorious day, and I would like to convey, on behalf of my government and the people of Haiti, our best wishes to the people of Japan for a happy, prosperous and peaceful 2014.