

Venezuela national day

Strengthening friendly relations

Seiko Ishikawa
AMBASSADOR OF VENEZUELA

On the happy occasion of the 203rd Anniversary of the Independence of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, I am honored to convey the renewed commitment of our government to the continued friendship between Venezuela and Japan and to extend my best wishes of happiness, health and prosperity to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Japanese government and its people. I also would like to express, on behalf of our government and myself, felicitations to the Venezuelan community residing in Japan. On this auspicious day, I am grateful to The Japan Times for this opportunity to address its distinguished readers.

In 2014 Venezuelans celebrate the bicentennial of the Battle of La Victoria, where thousands of youngsters and students armed with great courage, under the command of Dr. Jose Felix Ribas, fought for independence. To mark this historic event and in praise of Venezuelan youth, the Bolivarian government launched the welfare program "Young People of the Homeland Mission," for the development and social inclusion of Venezuelan youth in areas such as science, sport, production and culture.

President Nicolas Maduro, after his election in April 2013, has vowed not only to continue the Bolivarian Revolution but also to expand its reach and to improve its efficiency. Last December, Maduro passed a law, with majority support from the National Assembly, for the Second Social and Economic Development National Plan, thus cementing the legacy of late



Angel Falls in Canaima National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is the world's tallest waterfall at 979 meters.
EMBASSY OF VENEZUELA

President Hugo Chavez.

Furthermore, Maduro announced in June a series of reforms to the national system of social programs and pledged to end extreme poverty by 2018, the end of his current term in office.

Venezuela's state-run national system of welfare programs, coined by Chavez as "missions," has been hailed as one of the key factors behind the significant reduction in household poverty since the Bolivarian government took office in 1999. The percentage of households in extreme pov-

erty has decreased steadily in the last decade from 12.7 percent in 2003 to 5.5 percent today. In the same period, overall poverty has decreased from 30.5 percent to 19.6 percent.

These programs have been praised by numerous U.N. organizations for achieving several Millennium Development Goals ahead of schedule.

By these measures, it should not come as a surprise that, among 18 countries of the Latin American region polled by Latinobarometro in 2013, Venezuela is where support for

democracy has grown the most since 1995, standing first in the region, with 93 percent polled answering "agree" or "very much agree" with the statement, "Democracy might have problems but it is the best government system." Also, Venezuela was ranked second when people were asked if they believed income distribution is "just or very just." These are proof of the general satisfaction of Venezuelans toward democracy as a concrete result provided by the Bolivarian government since 1999.

We were overjoyed in 2013 when Venezuela and Japan celebrated the 75th anniversary of bilateral relations with the Japan Tour of the Youth Orchestra of Caracas last October. A group of 200 Venezuelan youngsters executed their best performances for Her Imperial Majesty Empress Michiko, who graced us with her attendance during the Gala Concert at the Tokyo Metropolitan Theater.

These members of the Youth Orchestra of Caracas, along with 500,000 Venezuelan children and youth, form the core of El Sistema, the best-known cultural and social program in the world, which has replicated in more than 40 countries, including Japan.

After two years of relentless work and effort by Friends of El Sistema Japan in the city of Soma, Fukushima, Prefecture, transforming lives through the Soma Children's Orchestra Project, we are delighted to announce that the Venezuela-inspired program has now expanded to Otsuchi, Iwate Prefecture, to further serve the children of the disaster areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami.

We stay committed to continuing to strengthen and deepen the friendly relations with Japan, while expanding our economic bonds.

Growing ties in energy sector, expanding bonds in other areas

Takeo Hiranuma
CHAIRMAN OF THE JAPAN-VENEZUELAN PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE

Venezuela today marks the 203rd Anniversary of the Proclamation of its Independence and I would like to express my deepest congratulations to the government and people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on this remarkable date as an independent and sovereign country.

The bilateral ties between Japan and Venezuela have been promoted and strengthened, especially in the energy field, and have expanded to other important sectors such as technology, infrastructure, education, the environment and sports since we established diplomatic relations 76 years ago.

On this significant day of celebrating Venezuelan Independence, I wish to convey on behalf of my country and myself, our joy in sharing common grounds on many bilateral and multilateral issues based on the friendship and mutual respect among the two governments and their people. The development of our nations has been driven by similar values and a belief in individual liberties, fundamental civil rights such as freedom of speech and expression and a right to self-determination.

As chairman of the Japan-Venezuela Parliamentary Friendship League, I vow to deepen and continue to strengthen the close and friendly relations between Venezuela and Japan, through the promotion of bilateral cooperation and mutual trust for the benefit of our countries.



Working for mutual benefit

Toshihiro Nikai
CHAIRMAN OF THE JAPAN-VENEZUELA FRIENDSHIP COUNCIL

As Chairman of the Japan-Venezuela Friendship Council, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the government and people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on the occasion of the 203rd anniversary of their country's independence.

Venezuela is a country with abundant natural resources and the energy sector, as the mainstay of its economy, offers multiple opportunities to promote mutually beneficial cooperation with Japan. Both countries maintain excellent friendly ties and in recent years have established complementary relationships, especially in the promotion of economic relations in the energy field, through ministerial visits and high-level delegation exchanges in both countries.

The Memorandum on Energy Cooperation between the

Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan and the People's Ministry for Energy and Petroleum of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, to which I had the opportunity to subscribe in March 2009, was the first agreement on energy development between Japan and a South American country. It opened a channel of communication to diversify bilateral relations with Venezuela in areas such as gas, oil, petrochemicals, finance, electricity, infrastructure, the environment and renewable energy.

Both countries are deepening their bilateral cooperation, and on the occasion of my last visit to Venezuela in 2011, as a member of the Diet, I was part of a multidisciplinary delegation that achieved positive results by sharing initiatives with Venezuelan government officials in construction, industry, housing, tourism and sports.

I am confident that Japan and Venezuela will continue to work together in exploring new development projects based on friendship and to the two economies' mutual benefit.



Culture week sees 'new wave' music in Japan



Top, Aldemaro Romero plays the piano. Above, The Aldemaro Romero Trio with singer Carmela Ramirez (left)
EMBASSY OF VENEZUELA

The Venezuelan Cultural Week in Japan has become something of a happy tradition. Since 2002, the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has presented a diverse array of artists in Japan. This year we are proud to present the Aldemaro Romero Trio featuring the talented singer Carmela Ramirez.

Aldemaro Romero, who passed away in 2007, had for many years wished to come to Japan to play his music, but was never able to make this very dear dream come true. Romero is one of Venezuela's most internationally acclaimed composers. In Venezuela and the world, he has been a great source of inspiration to many individual musi-

cians as well as groups such as Grammy Award winner "Los Amigos Invisibles."

Creator of the Onda Nueva ("New Wave") half a century ago, Maestro Romero's rhythm has deep roots in Venezuela's national folk music and dance, the "Joropo." A Venezuelan Joropo ensemble is traditionally made up of three musicians playing the harp, cuatro and maracas. A singer is usually added to make the group livelier with lyrics about love, humorous episodes and picturesque situations.

Romero, being an accomplished pianist "modernized" the group, substituting the three folk instruments with drums, a double bass and, of

course, a piano. The result is a tropical jazz trio with a singer to add words to the melodies.

The Aldemaro Romero Trio is composed of Pedrito López (piano), Gustavo Caruci (bass and guitar) and Miguel de Vincenzo (drums). These talented musicians played alongside Romero for many years. They promise to give Japanese audiences a flavorful taste of our new wave music accompanied by the warm voice of Ramirez.

Our cultural week will kick off on Nov. 3 in Tokyo, then move on to Toyohashi, Aichi Prefecture; Osaka; and Komagane, Nagano Prefecture; before wrapping up in Tokyo with a gala concert on Nov. 13, at the Blue Note Tokyo.

Congratulations
to the People of the Bolivarian
Republic of Venezuela
on the Occasion of the 203rd
Anniversary of Their Independence



Minatomirai Grand Central Tower
4-6-2, Minatomirai, Nishi-ku
Yokohama 220-8765, Japan
<http://www.chiyoda-corp.com/en>

Congratulations
to the People of the Bolivarian
Republic of Venezuela
on the Occasion of
the 203rd Anniversary
of Their Independence



Akasaka Biz Tower,
5-3-1 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-6332 Japan

Congratulations
to the People of the Bolivarian
Republic of Venezuela
on the Occasion of
the 203rd Anniversary
of Their Independence



Engineering for the Quality of Human Life
JGC CORPORATION

Congratulations
to the People of the Bolivarian
Republic of Venezuela
on the Occasion of
the 203rd Anniversary
of Their Independence



<http://www.marubeni.com>

Congratulations
to the People of the Bolivarian
Republic of Venezuela
on the Occasion of
the 203rd Anniversary
of Their Independence



Congratulations
to the People of the Bolivarian
Republic of Venezuela
on the Occasion of the 203rd
Anniversary of Their Independence



<http://www.mitsuichem.com>

Congratulations
to the People of the Bolivarian
Republic of Venezuela
on the Occasion of
the 203rd Anniversary
of Their Independence



MITSUI & CO., LTD.

sojitz
New way, New value
Congratulations
to the People of the Bolivarian
Republic of Venezuela
on the Occasion of
the 203rd Anniversary
of Their Independence



<http://www.sojitz.com/en>

Venezuela national day



Venezuela is home to many tabletop mountains. EMBASSY OF VENEZUELA

Growing cultural exchanges

Masateru Ito
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-VENEZUELA
ASSOCIATION

On behalf of the Japan-Venezuela Association, I extend my sincere congratulations to the government and people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on the occasion of the 203rd anniversary of their independence.



Japan and Venezuela maintain a traditionally friendly relationship and it is reassuring that the cultural exchanges between both countries have been increasing. In recent years, we have witnessed an increased role played by Estudiantina Komaba, a group of students based on Tokyo University's Komaba Campus that plays Venezuelan music. In March this year, five students of Estudiantina Komaba visited Venezuela and participated in El Callao Carnival as well as in the Florza Feast. It was a hot topic in Caracas that Japanese students were playing traditional Venezuelan instruments such as cuatro and bandola and singing and interpreting Venezuelan folk songs. Their activities were widely reported on local TV and radio.

A cuatro music class opened

at the Café y Libros in Meguro, Tokyo in April 2009 and there has recently been an increase in the number of students. The Japan-Venezuela Association for its part occasionally holds Venezuelan cooking classes, which have also proven very popular.

In October last year, the El Sistema Youth Symphony Orchestra of Caracas, composed of 180 musicians between the ages of 14 and 24, visited Japan to further the ongoing friendly ties between our two countries. The orchestra gave concerts in Hiroshima, Tokyo and Chiba, while conducting workshops and symposiums to introduce "El Sistema," the world-class Venezuelan music education system.

It is indeed a pleasure to see Japan and Venezuela deepening bilateral cooperation not only in the economic field, but also in the areas of cultural, artistic and intellectual exchanges and that there is better understanding between both countries and that through efforts on both sides, the two nations are closer to each other.

Finally, I would like to reiterate our warmest felicitations on this historic day and to assure all our Venezuelan friends that the Japan-Venezuela Association will continue to contribute to the strengthening of our bilateral relationship.

An indispensable partner for long-term energy security

Yorihiko Kojima
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-VENEZUELA ECONOMIC COMMITTEE, KEIDANREN

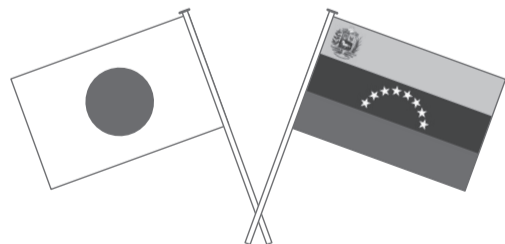


On behalf of Keidanren's Japan-Venezuela Economic Committee, I would like to convey my heartfelt congratulations to the people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on the 203rd anniversary of their independence.

Venezuela and Japan have been enhancing economic relationships, particularly in the energy sector, as Venezuela has a wealth of natural resources such as crude oil, natural gas and iron ore. Japanese businesses participate in loans to PDVSA (Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A.) and oil extraction projects in Venezuela's Orinoco belt, and crude oil imports to Japan are increasing in recent years. Venezuela is an indispensable partner for Japan from the viewpoint of energy security.

Venezuela's oil reserves are the largest in the world and the 30 million people of Venezuela is a huge potential market. Japanese companies wishing to do business with Venezuela hope the business environment will continue to improve.

Finally, I sincerely wish the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and its people peace and prosperity on the anniversary of their independence. The Japan-Venezuela Economic Committee will continue to do its best to enhance economic ties between the two nations and contribute toward a mutually beneficial future.



Congratulations
to the People of the Bolivarian
Republic of Venezuela
on the Occasion of the 203rd
Anniversary of Their Independence

