
Haiti national day

Lasting traditional friendship, ties

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CHARGE D'AFFAIRES OF HAITI

On Jan. 1, 2015, the Republic of Haiti will commemorate the 211th Anniversary of Independence and the 59th year of the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between Haiti and Japan. On this very special day, I wish to convey, on behalf of my government and the people of Haiti, our deepest respect and warm greetings to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, members of the Imperial family, the government and the people of Japan.

211 years ago today, a heroic army of former slaves, black men brutally imported from Africa, declared they would eliminate slavery and form a republic. Hence, on Jan. 1, 1804, the French colony of Saint-Domingue (now Haiti) proclaimed its independence



after 13 years of struggle.

As we celebrate the 211th year of freedom, we pay homage to the founding fathers of the Haitian Nation: Toussaint L' Ouverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Alexandre Pétion. We also show veneration to our heroes: François Capois aka Capois La Mort, Boukman, Catherine Flon and Mackandal for their bravery and victory over tyranny.

On this occasion, I am honored and delighted to say that the strengthening of friendship and cooperation between Haiti and Japan is one of the urgent goals of my government. The President of the Republic of Haiti H.E. Michel Joseph Martelly has formulated policies and put in place resources in order to attract Japanese investors to Haiti.

The traditional relationship between the two countries began long before the Second World War, with the creation of the Consulate of the Republic of Haiti in Kobe in 1931 and with the installation of the

honorary consul of Japan in Port-au-Prince in 1935. Unfortunately, due to the war, the two countries postponed their bilateral relationship for a few years and resumed it in 1956. As a result, in 1960, the Embassy of Haiti was established in Japan and Japan's embassy in Haiti opened in 1975.

It is worth noting that over the years, despite unfortunate interruptions and sizable geographical distance, the relationship between Haiti and Japan has grown substantially. In fact, the two countries have enjoyed long-standing relations since the re-establishment of their diplomatic relations in 1956. The fruit of the relationship had been manifest, not only through economic cooperation, but also through cooperation in the Japan-CARICOM framework and in the worldwide context.

Moreover, the 59 years of friendship have been marked by technical cooperation in many areas, including disaster

risk reduction; education and capacity development; the consolidation of democracy and good governance; the strengthening of the rule of law; the improvement of key industries such as healthcare and agriculture; training assistance programs; and knowledge sharing on the environment and climate change. The positive impact that has been achieved in the country to date is a testament of the friendly and stable relationship that is the direct result of the initiatives of the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

In closing, I wish to express my deepest appreciation to The Japan Times for giving me this opportunity to address its distinguished readers on this glorious day. On behalf of my government and the people of Haiti, I also wish to express our thanks to the government and people of Japan for their continuing support.

Best wishes for a happy, prosperous and peaceful 2015.

Vive Haiti, Vive Japon!