

Bolivia independence day

Land of opportunity and social inclusion

Erick Michel Saavedra
AMBASSADOR OF THE
PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA

It is with great honor that on behalf of H.E. President Juan Evo Morales Ayma, The Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. David Choquehuanca and the people of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Embassy of the Plurinational State of Bolivia wishes to express its best intentions to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akhito and Empress Michiko, H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the ministers, government officials and the people of Japan.

On Aug. 6, 1825, Bolivia was born as a republic after its Proclamation of Independence from Spanish rule. This period as a republic proved to have an inherited and unequal colonial social structure that would face necessary and endless transforma-

tions and reforms until finally becoming The Plurinational State of Bolivia in 2009.

Bolivia's principles are based on respect, equality, social inclusion, sovereignty, dignity, complementarity and equality in the distribution and redistribution of social products. These are subject to the concept of *vivir bien*, or living well, thus presenting a perfect scenario for social stability and setting a good example for present and future generations of equality and inclusion.

Cultural melting pot

The plurinationality of Bolivia comes from the inclusion of all 36 indigenous nations and all the immigrant descendants that live in our national territory and the acceptance of all 36 indigenous languages plus Spanish as official languages of the country.

These indigenous languages have roots on 13 different linguistic families proving the diversity of our country, most of the indigenous nations have



Coat of arms of the Plurinational State of Bolivia

been able to preserve their values, traditions and knowledge and represent 62 percent of the national population. The acceptance of diversity of people and backgrounds includes immigrants thus making Bolivia one of the most inclusive countries in the world; people are free to practice their traditions and customs, as well as their religions and beliefs.

Bolivia has become a melting pot of traditions; people from different backgrounds practice Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, indigenous and mixed

background traditions, with all citizens being Bolivians, no matter their backgrounds.

Bolivia could also easily be a synonym for biodiversity; it includes 46 ecoregions, 14 ecological zones, 190 ecosystems and 19 bioclimates that are home to thousands of species of flora and fauna, many of which are endemic. Our country has a total of 22 natural protected areas representing 17 percent of the national territory, six of these areas are considered among the largest in the World.

Contrary to popular belief, Bolivia is not a mountain country, it is essentially Amazonia, with 65 percent of our territory from north to south influenced by the Amazon Basin, including its vast biodiversity.

The country is divided into three main regions: Altiplano (highlands), valles (valleys) and llanos (lowlands). The Uyuni Salt Lake (Salar de Uyuni), located in the highlands, is among the world's most exquisite tourism destinations due to its natural

beauty and contrasts; it also holds an estimated 54 million tons of lithium reserves.

Vivir bien is one of the fundamental principles of our country and equality and justice, based on reciprocity, solidarity and principally complementarity, support this ideology. This concept reflects the manner of perceiving, feeling, understanding and projecting the world. Living well is intrinsically bound to nature, Mother Earth and the balance and harmony between humanity and nature; this principle strives toward the idea of the common well being, including all forms of life and nature.

Bolivia is one of the few countries to have enacted a law in favor of the planet, the "Law of Mother Earth," which establishes nature as a collective asset and clarifies that the rights of Mother Earth shall prevail over all human activity and any acquired rights. The contravention of this law and the rights of Mother Earth give way to administrative and jurisdictional responsibilities which generate criminal sanctions against the people or entities that do not abide by these principles.



La Paz, at an elevation of roughly 3,650 m above sea level and the country's seat of government, is the highest administrative city in the world. EMBASSY OF THE PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA

Bolivia is a country dedicated to the protection of nature based on the indigenous principles that highlight the importance of nature and the direct symbiosis of human and nature.

Bolivian Minister of Foreign Affairs David Choquehuanca Cespedes once said: "We belong to the culture of life, neither money or gold are of importance, nor is mankind; those things come last. The most important should be given to the rivers, the air, the mountains, stars, flora and fauna. ... Mankind should come last, what is most important is life."

A new Bolivia

Due to the continuity of social and economic policies and principles, Bolivia is gradually becoming a country with an important and stable economic growth, looking toward the development of new industries and market competitiveness.

The Bolivian economy is on a dynamic track toward industrialization. On July 15 Fitch Ratings increased the country's rating from BB- to BB. Over \$1 billion in bonds have been placed. This was a remarkable event since the last access to capital dated back to 1920 when Bo-

livia was still called a republic.

The future of the Bolivian economy is very promising. GDP reached 5 percent growth in 2015, despite the effects of low commodity prices. In the past years of continuity, Bolivia has created strong international economic reserves, providing great support for the country's present and future. The economic forecast for the next five years ranges from 5.8 percent to 6.1 percent growth, based on key aspects such as the world's largest reserves of lithium which have not yet been industrialized.

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San Cristobal Mining Project

The growth in global population and economic development in emerging countries is raising demand for nonferrous metals such as the zinc, lead and silver used in various industrial products. Sumitomo Corporation began participating in the San Cristobal Mining Project through the management of Minera San Cristobal S.A. (MSC) in 2006 in Bolivia, one of the most resource-rich countries in the world. MSC is now the world's seventh-largest producer of zinc. As one of the world's top zinc, lead and silver mines, MSC contributes to the stable supply of mineral resources.

To develop and operate a mine in harmony with local communities, creating a relationship with surrounding towns based on mutual trust is essential, as is paying constant atten-

tion to the environment and the occupational health and safety aspects of the mining operation. On the environmental front, not only does MSC constantly monitor the environmental impact of its operation, such as air cleanliness and well water level, but it also focuses on the sustainable use of natural resources.

One of the most important aims of this project is to support the self-sustainable development of local communities and Bolivian society as a whole. MSC contributes significantly to the country's exports and also created about 1,500 direct and 4,500 indirect jobs (99 percent are Bolivian). MSC also opened The San Cristobal Technical Institute, established in 2009, which is open not only to company employees, but also to local residents, offering edu-



The San Cristobal mine in Nor Lipez Province

cation and training in technical mine skills, as well as courses in the areas of tourism, secretarial skills and business management.

In terms of health, MSC has opened 24-hour medical centers equipped with emergency care facilities for employees, their families and local residents as well.

Sumitomo Corporation will continue to promote mining business and the sustainable development of local communities through the San Cristobal Mining Project in Bolivia.

Text provided by Lead & Zinc Business Department, Sumitomo Corporation

Enhancing Bolivia-Japan relationship, increasing bilateral exchanges

Mitsunori Shirakawa
PRESIDENT OF THE ASOCIACION NIPPON-BOLIVIA

Bolivia is a landlocked country in South America, one of the countries most distant from Japan, but the country has a strong personality and is full of charm. While the indigenous people occupy a high percentage in the demographic composition, Bolivia is a country of diversity not only in its racial composition, but also in its cultural, topographic and climatic aspects.

Regarding its economy, Bolivia is blessed with rich mineral and hydrocarbon resources and its deposits of lithium

are the biggest in the world.

The relationship with Japan enjoys a long history, as Japanese organized migration to South America began at the end of 19th century. Bolivia is one of the first countries where Japanese emigrated and the first country to reopen its doors to receive the Japanese immigrants based on governmental agreements after World War II.

The Asociacion Nippon-Bolivia is formed by people who know of these charms and the special relationship between Japan of Bolivia, and hope that Bolivia will be known and understood more widely and profoundly in Japan. We also hope that the mutual understanding and friendship between our two countries will be promoted even

more by increasing exchanges of people, information and more.

We regularly publish our bulletin "Cantuta" thanks to the voluntary contributions of academics, businesspeople, teachers, development assistance field workers, tourists and others, and upload it to our home page. We organize conferences or seminars inviting specialists on various subjects. Some of the subjects we've recently covered were "Tourism to the salt lake of Uyuni," "Lithium in Bolivia," and "Quinoa," the nutritious cereal with origins in Andes highlands. These events are usually accompanied by exhibitions of folklore groups, drinks and food.

Our events and our association welcome anyone who is interested in Bolivia.



Congratulations

to the People of
the Plurinational State of Bolivia
on the 190th Anniversary of
Their Independence



Hino has participated in the Dakar Rally for 24 years. We look forward to participating in next year's Rally which will go through this excellent nation.

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Their 190th Independence Day

Bolivia independence day



Salar de Uyuni is the largest salt flat in the world. EMBASSY OF THE PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA

Strong, lasting relationship

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Bolivia has the second-largest natural gas reserves in South America. More than 70 percent of the country's total exports are based on traditional and nontraditional exports.

Traditional exports include minerals such as silver, zinc, copper, precious metals and gas exports to neighboring countries. Nontraditional exports include soybeans, quinoa, chia, sugarcane, rice, coffee, wine and singani (Bolivian brandy). These exports make significant contributions and have great potential.

Starting from 2017, Bolivia will produce 28 million barrels of petroleum, three times the current production, becoming a self-sufficient country in petroleum energy.

The investment scenario is now at its best moment, as a new law that grants the protection of all private, national or foreign investments has been passed. Any citizen or foreign national has the right to buy land and develop a new business under the guarantee of protection of their investment and rights. About 28,000 new companies have been created within Bolivia during the last nine years, with most of these companies focused on trade, imports, construction and real estate development. It is forecasted that within La Paz and Santa Cruz over \$2.5 billion is being invested in construction. The land of opportunity and the potential of success is now Bolivia.

Longstanding relationship

Bolivia and Japan have had an excellent relationship for more than half of Bolivia's independent life, starting with Japanese immigration 116 years ago and the establishment of diplomatic relations 101 years ago. Bolivia's good integration of Japanese immigrants into its culture and society has proven to be of mutual benefit, creating a lot of trust on the Japanese culture of commitment and devotion to any task that is undertaken.

The aforementioned principles have created a direct association between the words Japanese and high quality; Bolivians in general trust Japanese

quality standards and are always willing to purchase Japanese-made products due to their quality and durability. The majority of the Bolivian population has at one time or another had a Japanese-made product whether it was a vehicle, machine, electronic appliance or even a watch.

In a declaration commemorating 101 years of Bolivia-Japan diplomatic relations, the Bolivian Chamber of Senators said, "We acknowledge the contribution of the Japanese people on the economic, social and educational development of Bolivia, highlighting more than 100 years of friendship; this contribution is not only translated within a deep approach between both countries; but also within a deep brotherhood conformed between us."

Bolivian embassy *kaizen*

Much like the millennial knowledge of our precolonial nations, Japanese culture and knowledge has been developed through centuries of uninterrupted improvement. Our embassy has found many valuable lessons within Japanese culture among which we have decided to adopt the practice of *kaizen*, or continuous improvement.

The new team under my command is striving to strengthen the work undertaken by our embassy and we are in constant search of further improving our relations and presence in Japan. This includes opening spaces of information for potential Japanese and Bolivian investors to help them find their market niches thus expanding the bilateral relations between our countries.

We shall also strengthen our team by increasing the number of diplomatic staff specialized on different prioritized sectors to not only create new opportunities, but also to consolidate and strengthen existing endeavors and initiatives.

There is an estimated 5,000 Bolivians residing in Japan, therefore the embassy shall implement a series of consulates across Japan in order to grant easy access to both Bolivian and Japanese citizens that may require our services.

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