

Bolivia Independence Day Special

Women working to build democracy during difficult time of pandemic

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On Aug. 6, 1825, Bolivia became an independent state. Today we celebrate 195 years of independence. On this auspicious occasion, I have the honor to extend, on behalf of the

government of Bolivia, my warmest, most respectful greetings and sincere wishes of good health and happiness to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, as well as the imperial family. I would also like to pay my respects to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the Japanese government.

At the same time, I would like to present my warmest congratulations to the Bolivian community residing in Japan and wish them good health and prosperity. I would also like to thank The Japan Times and friends of Bolivia for their support.

Bolivia has been ruled almost always by males. However, since November 2019 a woman, Jeanine Anez Chavez, became the constitutional president of the current transitory government. The president is a



President Jeanine Anez Chavez

lawyer and seasoned politician who, before assuming the constitutional presidency of the country, was a senator in the Bolivian Legislative Assembly. Additionally, for the first time in the history of our country, another woman, Karen Longaric Rodriguez, has become the minister of foreign affairs. Rodriguez is a career diplomat and a university professor of international law.

Another prominent woman in the government is Eidy Roca Justiniano, an experienced surgeon and public health specialist who is the current minister of health. This is the reason for the title of this article, "Women working to build democracy during difficult time of pandemic." These women, together with other men and women in the current government, were charged with challenging responsibilities at a time of particular hardship. In fact, the unprecedented pandemic of the coronavirus the world is enduring these days is affecting the life of millions of people around the world, and Bolivia has not been spared. The coronavirus pandemic hit our country, which was unprepared to handle a situation of such magnitude. The health sector was not developed properly and the current democratic government of the president had to make up in haste for the deficiencies found.

The Ministry of Health of Bolivia has been making every effort to prevent



Foreign Minister Karen Longaric Rodriguez

and control the spread of infections by strengthening the infrastructure of hospitals throughout the country. Following more than four decades of Japanese cooperation with Bolivia, in March, diplomatic notes were exchanged between

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the foreign minister and then-Ambassador of Japan to Bolivia Kyoko Koga (incidentally also a woman) for the donation of ¥500 million — a very welcome and timely support that helps equip seven public hospitals in Bolivia. In continuation to this agreement, the newly appointed ambassador, Osamu Hokida, and the

foreign minister signed the diplomatic notes for a donation of ¥300 million for medical equipment to be installed at Bolivian public hospitals in July. Recently, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs for Foreign Trade and Integration Claribel Aparicio Ferreira launched an agency for the promotion of exports and tourism and to attract investments in Bolivia. This agency functions under the aegis of the ministry of foreign affairs, and has the objective to diversify and increase foreign trade with Bolivia. This measure, coupled with the plan for the reactivation of the economy undertaken by Anez, aims to recover from the adverse effects of the coronavirus on the Bolivian economy.

Although a period of hardship is still ahead, the pandemic will eventually submit and, in a not-so-distant future, Bolivia will recover its economy in freedom and democracy.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.



Health Minister Eidy Roca Justiniano



Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs for Foreign Trade and Integration Claribel Aparicio Ferreira



Former Ambassador of Japan to Bolivia Kyoko Koga

CONGRATULATIONS
to the People of
the Plurinational State of Bolivia
on the Anniversary of
Their Independence

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