

Jamaica Independence Day Special

Bilateral cooperation remains resilient and strong

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CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF JAMAICA



On the occasion of the 58th Anniversary of Jamaica's Independence, I have the honor to extend warm greetings to Their Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako

and offer best wishes to the Jamaican community and the many friends of Jamaica in Japan.

As Jamaicans, at home and abroad, commemorate another anniversary of nationhood, we do so this year mindful of the unprecedented and devastating socio-economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic on all countries, whether large or small, developed and developing, including Jamaica and Japan. Indeed, the theme for our celebration, Resilient and Strong, reflects the desire of the government and people of Jamaica to seize the opportunities of the present crisis to commit to "building back better," with international solidarity and cooperation based on partnership at the center of our efforts.

Since the detection of the first coronavirus case in March, Jamaica has taken swift and decisive action to contain the spread of the virus. Jamaica's efforts at containing the virus have been largely successful. We have implemented a raft of economic and social initiatives to provide a cushion to vulnerable citizens and the business sector. We are now taking strategic but cautious steps to return to full operations across business sectors.

Despite our success in containing the spread of the virus, it is evident that dealing with the impact of the coronavirus will require longer-term concerted efforts at the global level. During this time of unprecedented crisis, we continue to count on the



Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness

support of Japan, which has been a reliable partner and genuine friend of Jamaica and the wider Caribbean region. I therefore use this opportunity to convey the appreciation of the government of Jamaica to the government of Japan, which even amid its own challenges with the pandemic, has provided support in the form of medical supplies and equipment to bolster Jamaica's coronavirus response.

Over the past year, Jamaica and Japan continued to enjoy close ties of friendship, cooperation, trade and investment, with the partnership entering into a new phase of dynamic growth.

The official working visit of Prime Minister of Jamaica Andrew Holness to Japan in December is still fresh in our minds. That successful visit reaffirmed our shared values and mutual desire to continue pursuing close collaboration, including in the areas of education and training; energy; climate change and disaster risk reduction; trade and investment; and security.

A highlight of the visit was the signing of a double taxation convention with Japan, to encourage greater trade and investment. We also welcomed Japan's support on that occasion to enhance our maritime secu-

rity and disaster response capacity, which was expressed by what our prime minister said to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during their bilateral talks, "My presence here in Tokyo and our discussions earlier demonstrate that not only are we benefitting from a dynamic partnership, but that we have so much more to gain as we expand and deepen our cooperation."

Jamaica remains among the top destinations for nature- and adventure-based tourism with world-class beaches and gastronomy. Last year, Jamaica's Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett was pleased to lead a delegation to the Tourism Expo in Osaka to promote the country's multifaceted tourism brand in Japan. With the gradual and careful opening of the tourism sector this past June, Jamaica is demonstrating that it is a leading safe and secure destination for all.

At the start of this year, Jamaica secured the endorsement of the Japan Coffee Roasters Association during their visit to the island nation, in our country's ongoing bid to obtain a geographical indication tag for the protection of Jamaica's luxurious Blue Mountain Coffee brand. Japan has also remained consistent in its support for Jamaica's West Indian Sea Island Cotton.

The people of Jamaica and Japan have a growing mutual fascination with each other's cultures. This has opened the door to better understanding between us, as well as increased travel and tourism and community-to-community engagement. We very much look forward to Japan's successful hosting of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games where Jamaica's athletes look to showcase their talents, and both our countries can share the delights of our dynamic and vibrant cultures.

As Jamaica looks beyond the coronavirus pandemic, it does so with a clear strategy toward continued and deepened engagement with Japan. It is within this context that the government of Jamaica appointed Shorna-Kay Richards as Jamaica's next

ambassador to Japan, who is expected to assume duties in Tokyo in mid-September.

In closing, I reiterate Jamaica's gratitude to the government and people of Japan for the unwavering support extended over five decades of excellent relations. I also convey special thanks to The Japan Times and its readership.

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



Prime Minister Andrew Holness and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the press conference for the Jamaica-Japan bilateral summit on Dec. 12. THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA

Congratulations to the Government and People of Jamaica on the Anniversary of Their Independence

Association of Japanese Importers
of Jamaican Coffee

Ataka Trading Co., Ltd.
Kanematsu Corporation
MC Agri Alliance Ltd.
UCC Ueshima Coffee Co., Ltd.
Wataru & Co., Ltd.
Yutaka Trading Co., Ltd.
<http://www.bluemountain.gr.jp>

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Marubeni

<https://www.marubeni.com>