

Central America Independence Day Special

Bicentennial marks progress toward better future for all

On Sept.15, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica celebrate 200 years since they decided, in 1821, to take the first step toward their independence, an act that represented a historic transition, initiating processes of democratic transformation that have allowed them as modern states to be actors in their own history and builders of their own destiny as part of the world's concert of nations. On this occasion, the embassies of Central America allow themselves to convey warmest greetings from our countries for the good health and prosperity of Their Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, the Japanese government and the people of Japan.

Aware of their common history, and of the conditions and characteristics they share, they have maintained the aspiration of regional integration, establishing for more than 30 years the Central American Integration System – SICA – with the purpose of building a region of peace, freedom, democracy, well-being and development.

Throughout the years, the Central American countries have created deep bonds of brotherhood that have allowed



Ometepe in Lake Nicaragua is the world's only island formed by two volcanoes in a freshwater lake. NICARAGUAN TOURISM BOARD



Costa Rican ox carts are known for their extravagant decorations, including their wheels. INSTITUTO COSTARRICENSE DE TURISMO

us, through collaboration, cooperation and regional integration, to advance our common interests and thus achieve joint development for our peoples. Our countries share a history and a series of potentialities they can take advantage of to become a true region of opportunities.

The five Central American countries share a special spirit of commemoration for the bicentennial of our independence, and despite the great global challenges and difficulties ahead, we assume with optimism and trust that the Central American region will continue to advance in creating a better future for the benefit of our peoples.

As we commemorate this outstanding moment of our independence history, the ties of solidarity, cooperation and commercial entrepreneurship between Central America and Japan are likewise bright in our memory. While the diplomatic rela-

tionships between Japan and Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica started in 1935, it is also important to remember that by the early 1950s our nations were among the first Latin American countries to establish business exchanges with Japanese companies. In the 1960s, the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) started joyful and valuable work that benefitted the Central American people. This program has been continuous and highly satisfactory for our countries as well as the Japanese volunteers, who have supported us in areas ranging from education, health and sports to technology, agriculture and disaster risk management, among others.

Along with the JOCV program, the cooperation projects Japan has co-executed with each of the Central American countries, as well as regional projects carried out with the SICA agencies, have con-

tributed greatly to the well-being of our societies. Aside from development and economics, the fields of music, language, culture and cuisine have also been important elements of this historical exchange. Nowadays, the Japanese community living in Central America and the Central American residents of Japan are living proof of the ties of friendship among our nations.

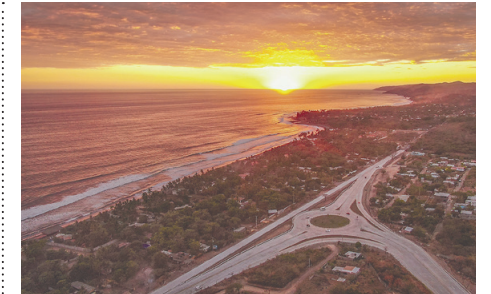
The great vulnerability of Central American countries and Japan to climate change and natural disasters, and new challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, give us the opportunity to work on a common and constructive agenda toward the achievement of internationally agreed goals, including the Paris Agreement and the U.N. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, among others. Therefore, we look forward to continuing working together in the strengthening of



The Grand Plaza and Temple I at Guatemala's Tikal National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. INGUAT

our political and cooperative ties.

Finally, the embassies of Central America wish to convey, through The Japan Times, our sincere greetings to all Central American nationals residing in Japan on the occasion of celebrating the bicentenary of the independence of our countries.



Sunset at Surf City, El Salvador
GOVERNMENT OF EL SALVADOR



The Great Hieroglyphic Staircase and Stela M are the main draws in Copan, Honduras.
INSTITUTO HONDURENO DEL TURISMO

Congratulations
to the People of
Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala,
Honduras and Nicaragua
on the Anniversary
of Their Independence

Takeshige Ogawa
Honorary Consul of
the Republic of Guatemala in Yokohama
and
Group Representative

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Guatemala Ambassador H.E. Cristobal Herrera wrote this article on behalf of the chiefs of mission of the republics of Central America: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.



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**Congratulations to the peoples of
Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala,
Honduras and Nicaragua on the
Anniversary of Their Independence**

Yoshihisa Morita

Yoshihisa Morita

Supreme Advisor,
Kyoto University of Foreign Studies
Honorary Consul-General of Nicaragua

School Motto

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(World Peace through Languages)