



Ministerial Joint Statement for 8th Japan-CARICOM

(Tokyo, 14 Dec 2024)

1. The Eighth Japan-Caribbean Community (CARICOM) - Ministerial Conference was held in Tokyo, Japan, on 14th December 2024, with the participation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and other Heads of Delegations of the Member States of the Caribbean Community. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, IWAYA Takeshi and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business, Trade and Energy of Dominica, The Honourable Dr. Vince Henderson, served as Co-chairs.
2. On the occasion of the commemoration of the Japan-CARICOM Friendship Year 2024, which marks the 30th Anniversary of relations between CARICOM and Japan, the Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their shared commitment to work under global partnership to promote values and principles such as freedom, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and seek for peace and economic prosperity.
3. The Foreign Ministers welcomed the steady expansion and deepening of Japan-CARICOM cooperation, particularly under the “three pillars of Japan’s CARICOM Policy” announced during the First Japan-CARICOM Summit in 2014.
4. The Foreign Ministers acknowledged the shared challenges facing Japan and CARICOM Member States, including threats to a free and open international order based on the United Nations Charter and the rule of law in the international community, and the intensification of global challenges, which require a collaborative approach. In order to create solutions to the given challenges, the Foreign Ministers expressed their determination to further deepen and expand cooperation under the three pillars, based on the initiatives of both Japan and CARICOM.

< First Pillar: Cooperation towards Sustainable Development including Overcoming the Vulnerabilities Particular to Small Island Developing States >

5. The Foreign Ministers affirmed that CARICOM Member States, as small island and low lying coastal developing states, are a special case for sustainable development with unique and particular vulnerabilities, and that overcoming these challenges is increasingly important due to the effects of climate change and environmental degradation and thus effective global responses are needed. Japan reaffirms its commitment to actively supporting effective responses that address the specific needs of Small Island Developing States. In this regard, the Foreign Ministers of CARICOM Member States took note of Japan's reiteration of its position that it is permissible to preserve the existing baselines and maritime zones established in line with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), notwithstanding the regression of coastlines caused by climate change related sea-level rise. The Foreign Ministers also took note of the AOSIS Leaders' Declaration on Sea Level Rise and Statehood (September 2024).
6. The Foreign Ministers expressed their appreciation for Japan's continued solidarity and its elaborate assistance which is not necessarily based only on per capita income, but is tailored to each country's circumstances. They further emphasized the importance of a comprehensive approach to financing for development that considers various factors, not limited to per capita income such as structural and environmental vulnerabilities.
7. The Foreign Ministers, in keeping with Japan's Diplomatic Initiative toward Latin America and the Caribbean, welcomed Japan's expression of its continued support for the full utilization of its expertise and experiences in sectors, some of which are new, including maritime and oceanic affairs, disaster risk reduction, climate change, food security, public safety and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) based on the concept of human security.
8. The Foreign Ministers reaffirmed the importance of assistance under the Japan-CARICOM Friendship and Cooperation Fund, which is Japan's public and private initiative since 2000, and decided to continue their cooperation in this regard, mindful of its flexible operation and possible synergy with other assistance programs.

< Second Pillar: Deepening and Expanding Bonds Founded on Exchanges and Friendship >

9. The Foreign Ministers welcomed the deepening of cultural exchanges and promotion of mutual understanding of cultures between the public and private sectors at various levels during the Japan-CARICOM Friendship Year 2024, and confirmed they will maintain the momentum and further strengthen mutual understanding and friendly relations for the next decade.
10. The Foreign Ministers appreciated the results of people-to-people exchanges through programs such as the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (JET) and the Japan-CARICOM Young Diplomats Invitation Program. They reaffirmed their commitment, given the importance of these programs, to continue people-to-people exchanges at all levels.
11. The Foreign Ministers welcomed the hosting of Expo 2025 in Osaka, Kansai, Japan under the theme, “Designing Future Societies for our Lives”, and noted mutual cooperation for the Region’s participation in the Expo.

< Third Pillar: Cooperation in Addressing Challenges of the International Community >

12. The Foreign Ministers of CARICOM Member States welcomed Japan’s expressed commitment to the promotion of cooperation through intra-regional groups, complementing bilateral and multilateral diplomacy based on its “Diplomatic Initiative toward Latin America and the Caribbean”.
13. The Foreign Ministers recognized the growing importance of cooperation between Japan and CARICOM as global partners, particularly as the international order faces new challenges and reaches a historic turning point. They confirmed that any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion are unacceptable anywhere in the world, and also expressed strong opposition to economic coercion. They affirmed that such challenges to the international order are a shared concern between Japan and CARICOM.
14. The Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to realizing a world without nuclear weapons. They converged on the importance of maintaining and strengthening the international regime of nuclear disarmament and non-

proliferation, without prejudice to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the its cornerstone. The Foreign Ministers stressed that the 40-year long decline in global nuclear arsenals must be sustained and not reversed.

15. The Foreign Ministers recognized the urgent need to make the United Nations Security Council a more representative, legitimate, effective, and efficient body and confirmed the necessity of Security Council reform, including the expansion of both permanent and non-permanent membership categories. They underlined the importance of giving due consideration to representation of small and medium size Member States, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Looking ahead to the 80th anniversary of the founding of the UN, the Foreign Ministers confirmed that it is important to initiate text-based negotiations in order to achieve concrete results and shared recognition of the commitment to multilateralism.
16. The Foreign Ministers commended Japan's efforts on the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD). They confirmed that they will continue to work closely in the international arena on these initiatives and on specific themes such as the Bridgetown Initiative, the UN SDG Stimulus, and the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) and baselines. At the 4th International Conference on SIDS held in Antigua and Barbuda in May 2024, Japan stressed the importance of addressing climate change, disaster risk reduction and oceans, and emphasized that it will continue to provide necessary cooperation in consideration of the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS. Japan also stressed that it will continue to work together with SIDS in the next decade as a partner of SIDS.
17. The Foreign Ministers affirmed their commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its economic, social and environmental aspects, and to the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and associated 169 targets. They recognized the need to reinvigorate the global partnership for sustainable development and affirmed their commitment to work closely together to implement the “Pact for the Future” Action 12 adopted at the Summit of the Future. They recalled the importance of Goal 17 of the SDGs.

18. The Foreign Ministers confirmed the importance of sustainable use of marine living resources, whose most serious source of threats is IUU fishing practice and harmful subsidies related to overcapacity and overfishing, among others. The Foreign Ministers welcomed the adoption of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction and called for its early entry into force. The Foreign Ministers also committed to working together to advocate for securing international support for the sustainable use of living marine resources in line with SDG 14.6, and highlighted the importance of the prompt entry into force of the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement of the WTO. They emphasised the universal and unified character of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and reiterated that all the maritime claims must be based on the relevant provisions of the UNCLOS 1982, which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. The Foreign Ministers affirmed the importance of maintaining freedom of navigation and overflight consistent with UNCLOS and emphasized that disputes should be resolved peacefully in accordance with international law, without the threat or use of force.
19. The Foreign Ministers shared their grave concern over the advancement of nuclear and missile activities by North Korea as well as increasing military cooperation between North Korea and Russia. They underlined the need for dialogue and reaffirmed their commitment to the complete denuclearization of North Korea in accordance with relevant UNSC resolutions. The Foreign Ministers also confirmed the need for an immediate resolution of the abductions issue.
20. Regarding the situation in Venezuela, the Foreign Ministers stressed that the rules, such as respect for human rights and rule of law, be respected by all parties in Venezuela, and that dialogue between the ruling and opposition parties are promoted toward the restoration of democracy in Venezuela. The Foreign Ministers reiterated the call for the peaceful resolution of the Guyana-Venezuela Border Controversy in accordance with international law and expressed their support for the process underway before the ICJ in that regard. The Foreign Ministers also expressed support for the process of resolution of Guatemala's Territorial, Insular and Maritime Claim against Belize (Guatemala/Belize) at the ICJ and called on all Parties to abide by the ICJ decision when delivered.

21. The Foreign Ministers recognized the significant and profound impact of the situation in Haiti on the Haitian people and on peace and security in Latin America and the Caribbean. They emphasized the importance of restoring stability to facilitate the full restoration of democracy in the country. They further affirmed the complementary roles of the CARICOM Eminent Persons Group through its valuable support to Haiti and Japan's assistance including in the security and humanitarian aid sector, as crucial to achieving these goals.

22. The Foreign Ministers recommitted to the continued pursuit of efforts to achieve the above objectives and to further strengthen their relationship as global partners on issues of common concern to the international community. The Foreign Ministers confirmed the importance of regular high-level political dialogue between Japan and CARICOM, to enhance bilateral cooperation and strategic coordination toward the achievement of shared goals.

23. CARICOM Foreign Ministers expressed their appreciation for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements provided by the Government of Japan for the Eighth CARICOM-Japan Ministerial Meeting.

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