

**REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AND CARICOM
AFFAIRS
AT THE FLAG-RAISING CEREMONY TO COMMEMORATE THE OFFICIAL VISIT
TO THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO BY
HIS EXCELLENCY TOSHIMITSU MOTEGI, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
JAPAN**

7 AUGUST, 2026

- Your Excellency Toshimitsu Motegi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan;
- Your Excellency Dr. Akima Umezawa, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago;
- Mr. Randall Karim, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs and Head of the Foreign Service;
- Esteemed Members of the Visiting Delegation;
- Members of the National Steel Symphony Orchestra;
- Members of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force;
- Members of Staff of the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs;
- Members of Staff of the Embassy of Japan;
- Other Specially Invited Guests;
- Members of the Media;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning.

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome His Excellency Mr Toshimitsu Motegi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, and his delegation to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Today's flag-raising ceremony is a fitting and symbolic start to this Official Visit, which reflects the respect, friendship, and enduring partnership between the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Oriental Republic of Japan.

Indeed, the Honourable Kamla Persad- Bissessar, Prime Minister, welcomed the late Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan to Port of Spain, in 2014.

That historic occasion presented the Heads with an opportunity to exchange opinions on the bilateral relationship, Japan-CARICOM relations and cooperation in an international arena.

Similarly, I also warmly recall my visit to Japan, the first by a Foreign Minister from Trinidad and Tobago, almost one year ago on August 13, 2025.

For me, it was a significant diplomatic engagement, and I trust that for you, this will also be an important opportunity to reaffirm our shared commitment to deepen cooperation, advance our mutual interests, and strengthen the bonds of friendship between our nations.

The Trinidad and Tobago Japan bilateral relationship had its genesis in June 1964, when we established diplomatic ties and it was reinforced through the opening of the Japanese Embassy in Port of Spain in 1975.

Since then, Japan has consistently been a valued partner to Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean region. We deeply appreciate Japan's contributions across the region in areas such as development cooperation, disaster risk reduction, climate resilience, culture, education, and people-to-people exchanges.

As Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, I also wish to gratefully recognise Japan's contribution to the upliftment of Trinidad and Tobago's scholars, who have participated over the years in the JET Programme, which promotes cultural exchange and supports English language education in Japanese schools at the elementary to high school levels.

On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I look forward Minister Motegi to this Official Visit being productive, meaningful, and memorable.

Thank you.