

Cubans praise Japan's cooperation

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Cuba is grateful for the countless expressions of solidarity from the Japanese government, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

By Roberto Morejón

Japan's cooperation with Cuba is very useful and the Cuban people are grateful for it, especially when 84 buses were sent for urban transportation, at a time of difficulties with that service.

The Japanese government's donation of vehicles is associated with the development of transportation in Havana, where they were destined.

With two million inhabitants, the capital has a shortage of buses, the main means of transportation.

The local Transportation Directorate now has only 49 percent of the fleet needed to meet passenger demands, while in provincial capitals the situation is also reported to be complex.

Cuba's finances have been limited due to the tightening of the U.S. blockade, supported by the Democratic administration, and the heavy expenses to mitigate the impact of the pandemic.

As a consequence, dozens of buses remain paralyzed due to lack of spare parts, tires and other insurances, although the Transportation Directorate of Havana insists on seeking financing.

If financing is obtained, it would acquire inputs to recover immobilized buses and purchase 90 new ones, an amount that arrived annually from China until 2018.

In this context, the Japanese vehicles arrived, assigned to capital routes with the foreseeable benefit to more than 320 thousand people.

This is not the only donation made by Japan, since a series of projects with the Caribbean nation began in 2015 thanks to large-scale Non-Reimbursable Financial Assistance.

The government of the Asian country signed with Cuba programs in health, agriculture, waste management, energy and transportation.

Havana residents enthusiastically recall the shipment in 2019 of one hundred waste collection trucks and the transfer of medical supplies and equipment, in the latter case destined for the whole country.

Japan's expressions of cordiality and cooperation have been welcomed by the authorities and the population.

These are not isolated expressions, since Cuba and Japan have maintained diplomatic relations for 92 years, a period in which the historic visit of then Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2016 stood out.

Cubans remember the mark left by the Japanese immigrant community, especially in the southern Isle of Youth, and praise the people of the Asian nation for their discipline, efficiency, technological progress and development.

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