



MINISTRY OF TOURISM

PRESS RELEASE

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JAPANESE LUXURY LINER PAYS INAUGURAL VISIT TO TRINIDAD



Port of Spain, Trinidad – February 22, 2016 – On Thursday February 18, 2016 the Honourable Shamfa Cudjoe, the Minister of Tourism, joined His Excellency Mitsuhiro Okada, the Japanese Ambassador, to welcome the luxury cruise liner MS Asuka II into the port of Port of Spain. On its inaugural visit to Trinidad nearing the end of its 100 day itinerary the Japanese registered cruise vessel boasts a complement of five hundred (500)

Japanese and seven hundred (700) ship's crew; a clear indication of the high calibre passenger profile.

Minister Cudjoe indicated that she was quite “pleased to welcome this maiden chartered call by the Japanese cruise liner MS Asuka II to Port of Spain. The cruise industry is the fastest growing segment of the worldwide leisure travel market; experiencing an average passenger growth rate of 7.4% per annum since 1980. In 2015 it is estimated that some 23 million persons sailed the oceans representing a 4% increase over 2014. In this regard, therefore, the Ministry of Tourism has been actively laying the groundwork to develop additional cruise shipping revenue streams.

It is my hope that this inaugural visit by the MS Asuka II, like the other projected calls, will generate a significant amount of business for our tourism stakeholders; and that we would create a positive lasting impression that will draw larger numbers of visitors to our islands in the near future.”



Minister Shamfa Cudjoe also exchanged gifts with the vessel's captain, Master Masami Masuyama, as well as conducted the traditional ceremonial Crest Exchange. Disembarking passengers engaged in a range of pre-arranged tours including tours of Port of Spain, Angostura Distillery and Butterfly Collection, Fort George and a visit to a pan yard to witness steelpan manufacture as well as a trip to Trincity mall for shopping.

The time honoured maritime tradition of crest exchange was witnessed by other senior tourism executives including:-

- Mrs. Cecilia Greaves-Smith, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism
- Mr. Charles Carvalho, Chief Executive Officer of Carvalho's Shipping Agencies
- Mr. Leon Grant, Chief Executive Officer of the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
- Ms. Charmaine Lewis, Chief Executive Officer of the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
- Mr. Warren Solomon, General Manager Marketing, Tourism Development Company Limited

As of December 2015, the MS Asuka II is the largest cruise ship registered in Japan and was recognised as the 2014's “**Cruise Ship of the Year**” by the Japanese Magazine Cruise for the 23rd consecutive year.

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