

Local Journalist learnt best practices in disaster preparedness and mitigation in Japan



At the back: L-R: APIC Secretary General Megumi Araki, Glenda Allen from Jamaica and Barry Alleyne from Barbados. At the front: L-R: Ayaka Otaka from Japan, Christine Simealai Moetala-Faiupu from American Samoa, Rachna Nath from Fiji, Programme Coordinator Mr Floyd Takeuchi, APIC President Ambassador Peter Sato, Anisha Samuel from Grenada, Akiko Sagano - Secretary General at FPCJ, Talililagi Kelesoma from Samoa and Deputy Director of the Media Relations Division at FPCJ - Mayuko Fukasawa

Anisha Samuel – a senior reporter with The Grenadian Voice newspaper, represented Grenada at the 2017 Association for the Promotion of International Corporation/Foreign Press Centre Japan (APIC/FPCJ) Journalists' Programme.

The Pacific-Caribbean Journalists' Programme, which ran from October 16-26, was designed to focus on the environment and disaster preparedness from the perspective of Japan's best practices, as well as its lessons learned.

According to the Programme Coordinator, Mr Floyd Takeuchi, "Japan may be the world's best laboratory for studying this subject as it has frequent earthquakes, typhoons, occasional tsunamis, and active volcanoes." Mr Takeuchi is an American journalist with 40 years of news media experience, including as a financial markets correspondent for Bloomberg News based in Tokyo.

The Participants, who hailed from Barbados, Jamaica, Fiji, American Samoa and Samoa, were required to write one 350-word

story a day, which was then shared with others in the programme. "The result is a disciplined way for journalists to develop an understanding of what they're studying by doing what journalists do best -- put new information in the context of story-telling," said Mr Takeuchi.

During the programme, participants visited three major cities Tokyo, Kyoto and Sendai. They also got an introduction to traditional and contemporary Japanese culture, which included visiting temples and shrines that are designated as National Treasures and World Heritage sites. The journalists also learnt about the kimono, which is the traditional wear of Japan and the history of animation. Their visits also included an apartment waste area to learn how citizens sort and dispose trash for recycling, waste treatment centre, recycling plant, an affected town -- Higashimatsushima -- following the 2011 tsunami and earthquake and the Shichigo Elementary School in Sendai to learn about their efforts in disaster preparedness and mitigation through educa-

tion.

During the closing ceremony on Wednesday October 25, APIC President, Ambassador Peter Sato expressed hope that participants enjoyed the short stay in Japan and bid them to return sometime to visit other parts of Japan to communicate what Japan is doing.

"It was a pleasure to experience Japan and be a part of this intense programme which required us to be on the ball daily. Though Japan is a much larger and technologically advanced country than Grenada, both countries share similar challenges and so its best practices can be a model to us on our journey in disaster preparedness and mitigation. Grenada sees recycling as a must in the future; therefore, it can learn a thing or two from Japan for successful implementation," said Ms Samuel.

The first class of the programme, traveled to Japan in 2015. The process of selecting the fourth class, which will travel to Japan in 2018, is expected to commence soon. Participants must be

independently nominated for consideration, and if they pass that step, must then apply for one of six positions (three from the Caribbean, three from the Pacific Islands).

APIC was established in 1975 and promotes international cooperation and deepens mutual understanding between Japan and nations in the Caribbean and Pacific Islands.

FPCJ is a non-profit independent private organisation, formally inaugurated in October 1976, to provide foreign journalists with necessary assistance and cooperation for collecting accurate

and up-to-date information on Japan. It arranges individual interviews, press tours, press briefings and publish foreign language materials on Japan.

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