

New heads of mission

Please see page 42 for other recent arrivals.

Shyamala B. Cowsik
High Commissioner for India



Ms. Cowsik is a professional diplomat. Before joining the Indian foreign service, where she was the first woman to top the country-wide list of successful candidates on the exams, she completed a Master's degree in physics.

She was first posted to Geneva, after which she became first secretary at the embassy in Washington. She moved on to Bangkok before a posting in Belgrade and then returned to India to head up a division at the foreign ministry. Her first head-of-mission posting was to the Philippines. From there, she went to Washington, as deputy chief. She then served as high commissioner for Cyprus and, afterward, moved on to the Netherlands.

Ms. Cowsik has a 22-year old son, Sidhartha. Her interests are classical music, reading and trekking.

Sadaaki Numata
Ambassador of Japan



Mr. Numata was born in Hyogo Prefecture in 1943.

After joining the foreign ministry, he went to University College at Oxford, where he obtained his masters degree in arts. He then spent two years in the

embassy in London. He returned to Tokyo for six years before being posted to Jakarta. Two years later, he was assigned to Washington. Back in Tokyo, he served as a director in the economic affairs bureau, the Japan-U.S. security division and, the North American affairs bureau.

He held postings in Geneva and Australia before returning to Tokyo. He later became deputy head of mission in London. He was ambassador to Pakistan, where he served until 2002 before returning to Tokyo as ambassador in charge of Okinawan affairs.

He is married to Kyoko Numata and they have two children. His interests include singing folk songs, fly fishing and skiing.

Romy Vásquez de González
Ambassador of Panama



Mrs. Vasquez has a masters in business from an institute for technology in Mexico. Her career began at the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington and she started working as a diplomat with the foreign ministry in 1984 when she became an economic adviser for the Embassy of Panama in Mexico. From 1987-88, she worked in the same job, this time at the embassy in Ecuador before she returned to Mexico for two more years. For the past 10 years, she has worked as director-general of a international leather and accessory trading company in Mexico.

Since political relations between Canada and Panama are good, Mrs. Vasquez says she'll concentrate on trade relations, specifically in the areas of marine or ports technology, during her time here.

Mrs. Vasquez is married to Mario Gonzalez and they have a son and a daughter. She speaks Spanish, French, English, Italian and Portuguese.

Jamil Haidar Sakr
Ambassador of Syria



Mr. Sakr was born in 1948 in Hama, Syria. He graduated from the University of Damascus, with a bachelor degree in French literature. But he wouldn't join the foreign service until 1980 when he became a staff member at the foreign ministry. He was first posted to France and Libya, each for one year, and then spent five years in the Czech Republic before being sent to Germany for a year. He then spent five years at his country's embassy in Washington. At Syria's foreign ministry, he worked as director of the department of Asia and director of the department of the Americas.

Mr. Sakr speaks English and French and his mother tongue is Arabic. He is married to Hend Hassan and has two children.

Musaed Rashed Al Haroon
Ambassador of Kuwait



Dr. Al Haroon comes from an academic background. Born in 1951, he joined the Youth Care Department at Kuwait University as a supervisor in 1972. By 1980, he was dean of student affairs. Five years later, he joined the foreign service, becoming a cultural counselor at the Kuwaiti embassy in Washington. He returned to Kuwait University four years later to teach educational administration. That same year, he became under-secretary,

first for the ministry of high education and later for the ministry of education. From 1998-2001, he was permanent representative at UNESCO and became minister of education and higher education from 2001-03. He rejoined the foreign ministry in 2004.

Dr. Al Haroon has a masters degree in educational management from San Francisco University and a masters in educational psychology from Indiana University, as well as a PhD in education from the same institution. He also studied at Harvard University in Cambridge.

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