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MEDIA STATEMENT

**CONFERMENT OF THE GRAND CORDON OF THE ORDER OF THE RISING
SUN ON DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH E. GONSALVES, PRIME MINISTER
OF ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES, BY THE GOVERNMENT OF
JAPAN**

On Monday April 29, 2024, the Government of Japan announced its conferment of the high national decoration of the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun on Dr. The Honourable Ralph E. Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

This announcement in Japan was swiftly followed by a Letter of Congratulations from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Her Excellency KAMIKAWA Yoko, in the following terms:

“Please accept my sincerest congratulations on the conferment of the Order of the Rising Sun, in recognition of your outstanding contribution, and my best wishes for your continuous good health and happiness.”

By letter dated April 29, 2024, to our Prime Minister, the Ambassador of Japan to Trinidad and Tobago and St. Vincent and the Grenadines His Excellency MATSUBARA Yukata, wrote as follows, among other things:

“I trust that you have been keeping well since our last exchange about your acceptance of the historic offer of a Japanese national decoration. We were extremely delighted to receive a positive response on your willingness to receive this highest of honours. In this regard, I am pleased to forward a congratulatory message from Her Excellency KAMIKAWA Yoko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, expressing felicitations and well wishes in recognition of your forthcoming conferment. The conferment of a national decoration upon a sitting head of government is a very rare occurrence, and it is this rarity that befits a leader of your stature.

“I wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for your gracious acceptance of the national decoration. Having the privilege of meeting you on a number of occasions, I can honestly say that I hold you in the highest regard, both as a leader and statesman. You have managed, Honourable Prime Minister, to transcend cultural and geographical boundaries to foster an ever-growing partnership between Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Japan, with your trademark congeniality. Thus, I greatly admire you and all you have achieved as a beacon of leadership in the Caribbean.”

It is expected that the actual conferment ceremony of the national decoration will take place in St. Vincent and the Grenadines during this calendar year, at a mutually-convenient time.

The Order of the Rising Sun was established in 1875 by the Japanese Emperor. In its design, there is the central feature of the rays of sunlight from the rising sun; this symbolizes energy as powerful as the rising sun. The high award to our Prime Minister is that of the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun.

The Prime Minister thanks the Government of Japan for its kind consideration and accepted the national decoration with humility in the quest for the further strengthening of the already excellent relations between Japan and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Dated the 30th day of April, 2024.

Shevrell Mc Millan
Press Officer