

Angola national day

Angola — Working hard for a better, brighter future

Andre Panzo
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE REPUBLIC
OF ANGOLA TO JAPAN

Today, Nov. 11, we celebrate the 34th anniversary of the Republic of Angola as a sovereign country. It is indeed an occasion of joy and pride for all Angolans, and friends of Angola as it marks the end of centuries of colonial rule.



On this auspicious and unparalleled occasion it is a great pleasure and honor to extend, on behalf of His Excellency José Eduardo dos Santos, president of the Republic of Angola, the people and government of Angola, our best wishes for peace, good health and prosperity to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, members of the Imperial family, the government and the friendly people of Japan.

In the same token, I use the opportunity to congratulate the Emperor and Empress on their golden wedding anniversary, wishing them good health and every success in all their undertakings.

Stability, development
The Angolan people achieved peace just over seven years ago, since then decisive steps have been taken to consolidate peace, strengthen democracy and national unity.

The results of the legislative elections held in September

last year, overwhelmingly won by MPLA, have clearly shown and confirmed the Angolan people's confidence in the government's efforts to rebuild the country, and consolidate the cohesion among Angolans. On the other hand, we believe that the increase in FDI inflow and the growing interest of the world economy toward Angola are also the result of the ever-greater credibility gained by the government through its arduous work.

As many other developing nations, Angola is confronted with many challenges in its future development. Internally it is committed to meet the development aspirations of its citizens in various areas such as the consolidation of social peace and stability, national reconciliation, poverty reduction and infrastructure development, among others.

In this context, seven years after bringing to an end the long-lasting war that ravaged and destroyed the country's main infrastructure, the Angolan government and its hardworking people are fully committed to work toward the achievement of many goals resulting from the task of rebuilding the country's social network, namely:

* The consolidation of peace, strengthening democracy and national reconciliation;

* Strengthening the country's institutional capacity aimed at achieving significant improvements in governance;

* Working toward the achievement of high rates of economic growth and the improvement of the quality of life of citizens;

* Creating jobs to meet the high demand of the people, particularly of the fast-growing youth population;

* Urban development and environment protection;

* Promotion and protection of human rights; and

* Working toward a better integration of the country in international world affairs and economic structures, among others.

It is the conviction of the Angolan authorities that after having gone successfully through many hardships in its quest for development, by implementing and achieving these goals, the country will certainly be among the winners in the process of globalization in which everyone is bound in this interconnected world. Therefore, all the means and resources to achieve such a desirable reality are being mobilized.

Development prospects
The prevailing climate of peace and stability is the result of the intelligent and realistic economic policy adopted by the Angolan government, a policy that made possible the



President of the Republic of Angola José Eduardo dos Santos

consolidation of macroeconomic stability, and paved the foundations for the rapid and robust economic achievements that place the Angolan economy among the economies with the highest growth rates in the world. Judging by the most recent macroeconomic achievements, Angola can therefore be regarded as one of the few major emerging markets in Africa.

It should be stressed that the current economic growth rate is not merely a result of the growth of the oil industry, though Angola remains, of course, dependent on that commodity, which is regarded as the engine of its economy. The high rates of economic growth are also the visible result of the public investments the government has been making since the achievement of peace and the re-establishment of political stability in the country. At the end of this seven-year period of peace, we are proud to note that the investments have proven to be worthy and fruitful.

Soon after the attainment of peace and stability, the government embarked on an ambitious and accelerated Program for Economic Recovery. The program, whose aim was to rehabilitate and modernize

the country's productive infrastructure and social facilities, led to greater movement of goods and people throughout the country, as well as decisively stimulated national and foreign private investment, which led to fundamental structural changes in Angola's economy. It should be stressed though, in this respect, that since 2006, the gross domestic product of the nonoil sector has grown more rapidly than that of the oil sector, which is a positive indication of the diversification of Angola's economy.

The correctness of the economic policy adopted by the Angolan authorities is clearly proved by many facts, namely:

* The successful macroeconomic stabilization, which kept stable the inflation rate and the monetary situation;

* The national currency has remained stable, playing its role as a means of exchange and reserve of value in a more effective way;

* Between 1989 and 2008, a 19-year period, the Angolan economy achieved an average growth rate of 9 percent a year;

* From 2004 to 2008, the average annual growth rate was about 17.4 percent, which means an accumulated growth of 102.2 percent in real terms. That is to say that the GDP more than doubled in five years;

* In 2006, the growth rate of the nonoil sector was 25.9 percent, compared with 13.1 percent achieved in the oil sector, while in 2007, the growth rate was 25.7 percent in the nonoil sector against 20.4 percent in the oil sector;

* In 2008, the growth rates were 15 percent in the nonoil sector against 12.3 percent in the oil sector;

* The inflation rate has been falling from year to year, reg-

istering rates close to 10 percent in the past three years: 12 percent in 2006, 11.79 percent in 2007 and 13.2 percent in 2008;

* Comparatively, it is worthy to recall the annual accumulated 3,000 percent hyperinflation registered in 1996, a situation that was reversed many years ago; and

* Through the government's economic policy achievements the inflation rate is expected to fall to single digits in the next few years.

The Angolan authorities are fully aware of their primary and exclusive responsibility in conducting the country's destiny in every sphere. Notwithstanding, Angola is not a country closed to the outside world. Since its independence Angola has established, and enjoys good and fruitful relations with all countries in the world, as well as with the Bretton Woods institutions, namely, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, based on the universal guiding principles of mutual respect and understanding, real cooperation and a win-win approach.

Despite the prevailing international financial crisis, the Angolan authorities, under the firm leadership of President Dos Santos, are striving to build a just, equitable and developed society, in which hunger and extreme poverty are targeted to be eliminated; a society based on equal opportunities for all citizens, with special emphasis on human development and fair distribution of national income, so as to ensure political and social stability. A society that guarantees to every family proper housing, clean water, electric power, education and health-care services, and other public benefits that contribute to social well-being.

Even though the fact that the goal is a very ambitious one, the Angolan government is convinced, and strongly believes that through an economic and social policy that establishes the right priorities, and with the full involve-

ment of all the people, it will keep fighting for the society that its people believe in. Therefore, investing in human capital, and in the rehabilitation of economic and social infrastructures is a key element of the strategy leading the country to be one of the big winners.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



Offshore: Floating oil production, storage and offloading platforms EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA



Liquid gold: The oil industry is regarded as the engine of Angola's economy.

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to the People of the Republic of Angola
on the Occasion of
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On the road to Cabo Ledo: Thousands of kilometers of highways have been built in Angola in recent years, increasing the flow of people and goods, and strengthening national cohesion. EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA

Better, brighter future

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

namely:

* Thousands of kilometers of roads have been built in recent years, which has increased the flow of people and goods throughout the country, and strengthened national cohesion;

* The modernization and expansion of the country's ports, airports, rail networks and other major infrastructure;

* The expansion and development of electric power production and distribution grid through numerous projects ranging from large-scale ones like dams to smaller mini-hydroelectric schemes;

* The expansion and development of telecommunications based on the most modern technology;

* The development of large-scale agricultural projects, like irrigation schemes toward an integrated rural development;

* The creation of special economic zones and industrial centers intended to develop agro-industrial production and urban development. This is strongly believed to be the most effective way to ensure that public and private investments play an important role in the establishment of an economy of scale by increasing production and operational efficiency with the aim to reduce the prices of the commodities; and

* The expansion of the school network by constructing many elementary and secondary schools, the completion of one new University City, and many health-care centers and hospitals as a way to extend the social facilities network all over the country.

Strategic partnership

With the Angolan government mobilizing all its efforts and means to rebuild the entire social and economic infrastructure massively destroyed during the war, I cannot think or expect a different role by the government of Japan as well as the Japanese private sector. As Japan is one of the major and visible key players in world affairs, we expect it to play a visible and very important role in financing projects, and providing technical assistance in the complex endeavor of rebuilding the country's infrastructure, peace consolidation and poverty reduction.

Angola and Japan have enjoyed a very warm and cordial friendship since Angola's independence. The two governments share many ideas and common values regarding peace, security, human

rights, democracy, the rule of the law, climate change and other values.

We are pleased to note that despite the ongoing financial crisis, the Japanese government is committed to pursuing the full implementation of the recommendations of TICAD IV enshrined in the Yokohama Action Plan, addressing developmental issues for Africa. We believe that by doing so the Japanese government will not only be playing a key role in the development of Africa, but more than that will be playing an important role in strengthening the most wanted cooperation between the developed world and the developing countries.

I feel the occasion timely to congratulate the Japanese authorities on the successful Aug. 30 election, wishing them every success in their future endeavors. We are looking forward to witnessing the fulfillment of the expressed intentions to strengthen social policies and further contribute to the solution of some global challenges.

To the many companies who had the opportunity to express their greetings to the Angolan people, namely, Sojitz Corp., Sumitomo Corp., Ajoco, Toyota Tsusho Corp., Marubeni Corp., Komatsu, Raito Kogyo Co., Ecoh Corp., Toa Corp., among others, I would like to take the occasion to express our deep appreciation and gratitude for their cooperation, friendship and understanding.

I would like to use this happy and timely occasion to renew our invitation to the Japanese business community to take advantage of the prevailing business opportunities and peaceful environment to invest in the Angolan market. Knowing the high expertise of the Japanese companies in various fields, I am confident that the Angolan economy offers them many unique business opportunities.

To all my countrymen who have chosen this great country to pursue their business activities or studies I would also like to express my warm greetings, wishing them good health and success in all their undertakings.

Last but not least, I would like to thank The Japan Times for giving me the opportunity to inform its distinguished readers about some of the most recent events and provide an overview of some of Angola's achievements.

Thank you very much and let's meet in Angola so that we can talk about business.



Breathtaking: The Tundavala Crevice near Lubango, Huila province