

Zimbabwe Independence Day

Great strides being made in mining, agriculture and tourism

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AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

Today, April 18, Zimbabwe celebrates 37 years of hard-won freedom and sovereignty. On behalf of President of the Republic of Zimbabwe H.E. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, the government, people of Zimbabwe and Zimbabweans living in Japan, I convey very warm greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the government and people of Japan, and thank them for their hospitality to all Zimbabweans who have visited or taken residence in Japan. I also thank The Japan Times and the sponsors, who have been so generous in making the publication of this article possible.



As we celebrate our independence, we remember the supreme sacrifice made by many so that Zimbabwe could gain its sovereign status. We appreciate the support



Zimbabwe is home to high-quality pastures for raising cattle. EMBASSY OF ZIMBABWE

for Zimbabwe as we continue to build the various sectors of our country. Our celebrations come after the worst El Nino-induced drought ever to have visited us. Harvests, pastures and water availability were a serious challenge to many people and animals in rural and farming communities. During these lean times, the government of Japan supplied Zimbabwe with food assistance through U.N. agencies. This is not the only area where the Japanese government has been of tremendous assistance to Zimbabwe. Currently there is work going on in the rehabilitation of the Nyakomba Irrigation Scheme thanks to aid from Japan. This project will enable the communities in the Nyakomba area to improve their food security and the local economy thus eliminating hunger and poverty, a U.N. Sustainable Development Goal.

Zimbabwe has benefited from Japanese aid in many areas, including personnel development, and Japan International Cooperation Agency-led infrastructure development. The Chirundu Bridge linking Zimbabwe and Zambia, and the One-Stop-Boarder-Post are testimony to this.

Following the severe drought in 2016, Zimbabwe this year received unprecedented rains owing to a tropical cyclone. The two extremes created disaster situations. While the rains were welcomed for pasture recovery, water table recharge, dams and cropping, they caused widespread flooding and loss of life, washing away bridges, dam walls, roads, destroying schools and homes, and thus creating a serious humanitarian crisis. The challenge proved enormous against the resources the government could deploy to recover the situation. The government of Japan responded to a request by providing

emergency relief goods. Zimbabwe is thus extremely grateful to the government of Japan for the aid, said assistance and continued support.

The Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET), a framework whose objective is achieving growth, sustainable development and social equity over the medium term, remains the guide for development. ZIMASSET encompasses a rapid results framework, revitalization of agriculture and mining, and value addition and beneficiation, financial inclusion, infrastructure development and tourism promotion. Debt clearance and improvement in the ease of doing business are areas where great strides continue being made.

There has been a marked improvement as some industries suffocated by sanctions have since resumed production. The government's policy of promoting the local production of many goods has seen companies increase capacity utilization and re-employ laid-off workers. There are new industry entrants, too. The vehicle assembly plant was the most recent to resume operations after almost five years. This revival of industries greatly reduces the heavy import bill. Downstream industries like tire and battery manufacturing are poised for increased activity, thus increasing employment and general economic activity.

Since Zimbabwe's economy is agro-based, the government responded to the drought by launching the Specialized Maize Production and Import Substitution Programme, dubbed "Command Agriculture." This program targeted the production of grain on a massive scale in order to obviate the need for importing grain and to resuscitate the

agriculture sector. Zimbabwe is therefore expected to produce approximately twice its national requirement of grain, thus returning the country to its erstwhile food basket status. A lot of activity in the agro-processing sector, linked industries and increased employment is expected.

Mining is also recovering, particularly gold as the production of the metal has registered a steady increase of about 20 percent over the year. The diamond sector has been reorganized under a single state corporation to minimize leakages and ensure proper accountability in the marketing of the product.

Great strides have been registered in the tourism sector with the commissioning in November 2016 of the new Victoria Falls International Airport in Zimbabwe's prime tourist destination. The airport can handle the wide-bodied, long-haul Boeing 747 and



The new Victoria Falls International Airport EMBASSY OF ZIMBABWE

Airbus A330 aircraft. It has 28 aircraft parking bays. This development should see an upsurge in tourist arrivals at Victoria Falls and adjacent national parks. Zimbabwe offers great opportunities in tourism hence the Victoria Falls, Hwange and Kariba area have been designated as tourism special economic zones, welcoming investment in the sector.

Zimbabwe remains a very peaceful country in the equally peaceful Southern African Development Community region. It offers

many investment opportunities in agriculture, mining, infrastructure development, manufacturing, tourism and other sectors. Zimbabwe's highly literate and hardworking workforce, one-stop-shop investment center for investors and pleasant climate are some of the features that make the country an attractive investment destination. Zimbabwe thus welcomes and offers Japanese investors abundant opportunities. Congratulations! Makorokoto! Amhlophe! Omedeto!

Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Zimbabwe
on the 37th Anniversary
of Their Independence



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