

# South Africa National Day

## Bilateral alliances continue to fuel economic, social growth

**ROYCE B. KUZWAYO**  
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF SOUTH AFRICA



On April 27, 1994, South Africa held its first multiracial democratic elections, marking the end of colonialism, segregation and apartheid, the establishment of a new democratic government led by

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela and a new state subject to a new constitution. Twenty-three years later as South Africans reflect on the strides made in achieving the vision of a better life for all, we invite the world to join us in celebrating our democracy. We are proud to say that South Africa and Japan enjoy diplomatic relations spanning more than 100 years. Since the democratization of South Africa in 1994, bilateral relations with Japan have diversified and excelled in many areas, especially in trade and investment, science and technology cooperation and skills development support. In 2010, South Africa's bilateral relationship with Japan was upgraded to a strategic cooperation partnership. South Africa is Japan's

largest trade and investment partner on the African continent and an investment destination in key sectors such as beneficiation, agro-processing, aquaculture and fuel cell technology.

South African President Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe recently met on the sidelines of the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI) in Nairobi, Kenya, on Aug. 27 and 28. Following Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa's working visit to Japan in August 2015 and the TICAD VI summit, Japan's private sector has been keen on greater involvement in both the South African and African economies. This interest has been demonstrated tangibly by various Japanese companies since a Keidanren visit to South Africa in February 2016, after which new Japanese investment into South Africa's economy increased substantially. The visit contributed substantially to key objectives of the South African government, such as job creation, industrial development, human resource development and innovation as part of implementing South Africa's National Development Plan.

Japan currently has a presence in South Africa of approximately 140 companies, sus-

taining over 150,000 local jobs to the benefit of many South Africans in terms of both income and skills transfer. At least 16 new Japanese business representative offices of multinational companies were established in South Africa over the past two years. In addition, several major new Japanese investments were made into economic sectors such as the automotive sector, including \$6 billion for 4x4s at Toyota's Durban plant and 550 million South African rand (ZAR) (approximately \$41.36 million) for Quantum minibuses; the energy sector via Independent Power Producer companies; the water supply sector such as Hitachi's desalination plant in Durban worth \$6 billion; the mining and mineral beneficiation sector through joint ventures within the platinum group of metals value chain; and electronic industries. Itochu, Mitsubishi Hitachi Power Systems, Mitsui & Co. and Sumitomo have also made substantial increases in business activities in South Africa during this period. Fuji's Electric Fuel Cell (platinum) was launched at the South African Chamber of Mines in March 2015.

New, local offices of the following Japanese companies were established during the same period: Sumitomo Africa; JVC Kenwood; JX Nippon Oil & Energy; Panasonic; NHK;

Konica Minolta; Maekawa Manufacturing; Hankyu Hanshin Express; Asahi Shimbun; Sonpo Japan; Isuzu Motors; Advics; Tokyo Marine Nichido Fire Insurance; Nomura International (business advisory services); and Hayakawa SA. With Japan being South Africa's third-largest trade partner total bilateral trade in 2015 stood at ZAR90.75 billion (approximately \$6.84 billion).

Partnerships between South Africa and Japan include the sourcing of scarce skills (electrical engineering, automotive industry and maritime, marine and aquaculture resources and biology) and securing technology transfers (clean coal, energy efficiency and water management). In this regard, cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) includes the African Business Education (ABE) Initiative that sees 83 South Africans currently completing their master's degrees and internships in highly technical fields in Japan, as well as a Technical Cooperation Project for Artisans being developed in close collaboration with the South African Department of Higher Education and Training. Following discussions on Universal Health Coverage (UHC) between the South African and Japanese health ministers, JICA is currently conducting training on health



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financing in the South African Department of Health.

During the Mining Indaba Conference in Cape Town in February, South Africa and Japan acknowledged having complementary interests in mining through the signing of a memorandum of understanding on matters related to cooperation in the development of mining and mineral resources by South Africa's Minister of Mineral Resources Meso-benzi Joseph Zwane, and Parliamentary Vice-Minister Takumi Ihara, representing Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry Hiroshige Seko. The memorandum will assist both South Africa and Japan in collaborating in a number of areas across the mining value chain.

South Africa welcomes the increase of more than 27 percent over the past year of Japanese tourists visiting the country. As

reiterated by the South African Minister of Tourism Tokozile Xasa, during her visit to Japan in September in her former position as deputy minister, our well-established tourism industry offers world-class facilities, true adventures and diverse experiences amid natural beauty, wildlife, good weather and friendly people.

We highly value the bonds of friendship with Japan and we are deeply appreciative of the supportive role of Japan in contributing to the socioeconomic transformation of a democratic South Africa.

As we look forward to further enhance our relations with Japan while preparing for the 13th Partnership Forum to take place at the ministerial level between South Africa and Japan, as well as the South Africa-Japan University Forum this year, we call on our friends to join us in celebrating 25 years of freedom.



The Sandton area in Johannesburg SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM

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on the 23rd Anniversary  
of the Freedom Day  
of the Republic of South Africa

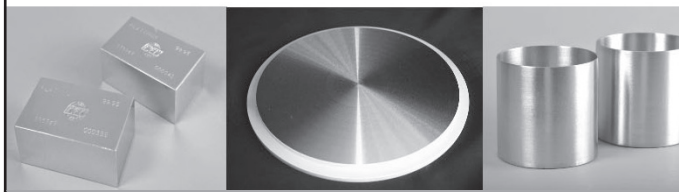


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to the people of the Republic of South Africa  
on the 23rd Anniversary of  
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