

South Africa National Day Special

Diverse relations across wide range of areas

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AMBASSADOR OF SOUTH AFRICA



I wish to convey warm and sincere regards from President Cyril Ramaphosa and the people of the Republic of South Africa, as we celebrate our National Day. Freedom Day

commemorates the birth of the Rainbow Nation and the innocent people who died fighting for the freedom that South Africans enjoy today.

This year marks the 100th birthday of the late Nelson Mandela, the first democratically elected president of South Africa, as well as anti-apartheid activist Albertina Sisulu. South Africa and the world are celebrating the life of our great icon and leader as we dedicate the year to his legacy. Also affectionately known by his family clan's name, Madiba visited Japan three times. The first time was on invitation of the government of Japan in October 1990 when he was deputy president of the African National Congress only eight months after

his release from prison. He met then-Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu, and other ruling and opposition party officials. Upon his visit to Osaka, Madiba was received by around 30,000 people at a welcome rally. Mandela's second visit was in April 1991 when he was invited as a guest speaker at an International Press Institute convention in Kyoto.

His third visit was in July 1995 as president of South Africa. Madiba spoke with great admiration for Japan's achievements during that visit. "You lifted your country from the devastation of war to become the economic dynamo of Asia and the foremost economic success story of our era," he said at a luncheon hosted by Japanese economic organizations on July 4, 1995. As we celebrate Mandela's centennial birthday this year, we reflect on these important visits, as well as the support that the people of Japan rendered through their anti-apartheid movements.

During this time, it is important to also reflect on our relations with our strategic partner, Japan, our third-largest trading partner. Since the democratization of South Africa in 1994, bilateral relations with Japan have diversified and excelled in many areas, especially in the areas of trade and investment, science and technology

cooperation, as well as skills development support. With Japan being the third-largest global economy, we are humbled by the fact that South Africa remains Japan's largest trade and investment partner on the African continent, with more than 141 Japanese companies doing business in South Africa. As a result, approximately 150,000 South Africans have been employed and the partnership has contributed to skills development and technology transfer.

According to the South African Revenue Service, last year's total bilateral trade was \$7 billion, with South African exports to Japan totaling \$4.2 billion and Japanese exports to South Africa reaching \$2.8 billion.

South Africa is grateful for the commitments made during the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI) in Nairobi, Kenya, in August 2016. It is a clear signal that Japan has taken a long-term interest in Africa, and this is reflected in the growth in investments by Japanese companies on the continent. In this regard, it is my sincere honor as the ambassador of the Republic of South Africa to Japan to thank the government of Japan for the confidence placed in my country to host the first Japan-Africa Public-Private Economic Forum that will take place in Johannesburg on May 3 and 4.

South Africa prides itself on its world-class infrastructure, institutions, banking systems and health care facilities. The level of development is on par with many leading economies of the world, and our diverse people make it an ideal destination for investment, trade and tourism. Ramaphosa, in his state of the nation address on Feb. 16, stated that South Africa is entering a new dawn that is inspired by our collective memory of Mandela and the changes that are unfolding.

As we look forward to strengthening our strong relations with Japan, in addition to increasing investment, we extend our support to the government of Japan for the

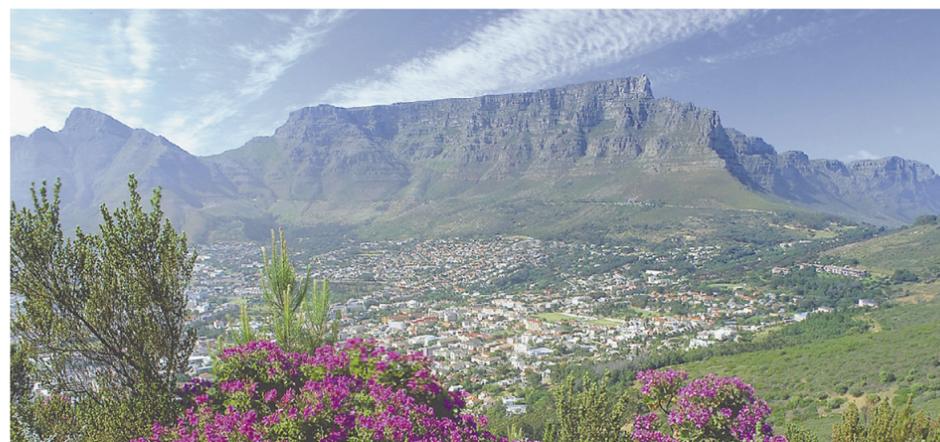
hosting of the TICAD VII summit, Group of 20 summit and Rugby World Cup in 2019, as well as the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020.

We invite the Japanese people to visit South Africa to experience our beautiful tourism sites and meet our warmhearted people who boast a diverse, rich heritage and culture.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.



A statue of Nelson Mandela, the first democratically elected president of South Africa, at the Union Buildings in Pretoria. SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM



Cape Town's Table Mountain is one of the city's most popular tourist attractions.

SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM

Congratulations
on the 24th Anniversary
of the Freedom Day
of the Republic of South Africa



from the president and staff of
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