

Madagascar National Day Special

Economic diplomacy fosters ongoing development

MIREILLE MIALY RAKOTOMALALA
AMBASSADOR OF MADAGASCAR



On June 26, National Day and Independence Day of Madagascar, as the ambassador of Madagascar in Japan, on behalf of the president of the Republic of Madagascar, his government and the Malagasy people, I am honored to express my warmest greetings to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, to the government and Japanese people.

I would also like to offer my heartfelt thanks to The Japan Times for the opportunity to share this commemoration with their readers, as well as our partners and friends for their messages of support on this occasion.

As usual, this event is an opportunity to share news about Madagascar with the

readers and talk about the relationships between Madagascar and Japan.

The big island of Madagascar is renowned for its significant economic potential, due to its natural, energy, touristic and human resources. Therefore, to achieve and develop this potential in an economically feasible and efficient way, the Malagasy government has implemented a development strategy through the National Development Plan (2015–2019) where six development areas were selected: agribusiness, light industry, infrastructure, mining, information and communication technology, and tourism.

It is in line with this strategy that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs pushes for economic diplomacy that serves the cause of development so these resources are harnessed in a sustainable manner for the well-being of the people.

In terms of multilateral relations, Madagascar is very active on different levels within the international organizations to which the country belongs. For instance, the big island will be chairing the interna-

tional organization la Francophonie until November and had the honor to organize its 2016 summit, which was a success.

Currently holding the presidency of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, Madagascar has emphasized its commitment to prioritizing regional integration and trade, with the economic development of Africa in mind.

As for its bilateral relations with Japan, the diplomatic, friendship and cooperative ties were established 58 years ago. Those relations have strengthened ever since, and the official visit of President of the Republic of Madagascar Hery Rajaonarimampianina last December has brought a new dynamic to this development.

Summit meetings were held and one of them was marked by an exchange of notes ceremony on food security involving ¥470 million, and ¥200 million for a safe drinking water supply. Moreover, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has expressed the support of Japan in regards to the implementation of the National Development Plan

through technical and financial assistance toward the achievement of high-quality public infrastructure projects, as well as capacity building.

The Malagasy president has, in turn, listed the different projects that have continuously deepened the cooperation between our countries, including in the area of agriculture, the Ambatovy nickel project where Sumitomo Corp. has become the first shareholder, as well as the extension of the Port of Toamasina, which is the most important project ever undertaken by Japan in Madagascar.

These important projects have had a positive impact on attracting Japanese investment, with some investors being leaders in their field.

As for the private sector, an economic association between Madagascar and Japan was created in Madagascar by Malagasy and Japanese economic operators last year with the aim of bolstering exchanges between Malagasy and Japanese private sectors, knowing that the development of the private sector was



President Hery Rajaonarimampianina and his wife Voahangy visit Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo in December. EMBASSY OF MADAGASCAR

one of the key elements of the successful economic development of Japan.

Madagascar has also played an active role in the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, both as a contributor and as a beneficiary. TICAD plays an important role in the relations between Japan and Africa.

In conclusion, there is promising potential in the bilateral relations between our countries, and our economies appear to be complementary. Madagascar has great

natural resources, and Japan has advanced technology along with an important investment capacity. This should further strengthen this win-win partnership.

Finally, we share some common traditions and insularity that should contribute to a better understanding in regards to the friendship between our countries.

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



Top: The president speaks at a Toamasina port project inauguration ceremony on April 23, as Japanese Ambassador Ichiro Ogasawara (second from right) looks on. Above: The Avenue of the Baobabs is a group of ancient baobabs lining a road between Morondava and Belo Tsiribihina in Madagascar. EMBASSY OF MADAGASCAR / GETTY IMAGES

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Tokyo Head Office : 2-3-13, Konan, Minato-ku, Tokyo 81-3-4306-5000

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