Nigeria Independence Day Special

Electoral, financial reforms boost nation-building efforts

ABUBAKAR MORIKI HUSAINI AMBASSADOR OF NIGERIA



I wish to congratulate the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu (GCFR), the government and the people of Nigeria on the occasion of Nigeria's

63rd independence anniversary as a sovereign country. May I also extend my hearty congratulations on the celebration of the 63rd anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Nigeria and Japan.

This year's celebration is special, because it marks the successful transition of one civilian administration to another, as well as the consolidation of our nation's continuous march to stable democratic order in the past 24 years. Therefore, it affords us the opportunity to evaluate the milestones we have attained in this period of nation-building, especially over the past year, as well as our relations with Japan.

There is no denying that we are living in very challenging times. The global economy had yet to fully recover from the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic when it was struck by further disruptions occasioned by the Russia-Ukraine war. The concomitant effect has been spiraling inflation, especially in food prices, as well as supply chain disruptions. However, progress was made in the domestic political, economic and social environment, as well as in bilateral relations between Nigeria and Japan.

There has been tremendous improvement in the consolidation of our nation's democracy in the past year. This is manifested in our unflinching belief in the conduct of free, fair and credible elections and the sanctity of constitutional term limits. These we have steadfastly adhered to in newspaper.

Nigeria over the past 24 years.

Nigeria has made significant advances in the electoral process by deepening the use of technology to make the process more transparent. This led to the election of the president, some governors and members of the national and state assemblies from various political parties during this year's general elections. The inauguration of the government at various levels was successfully accomplished.

Nigeria is not immune from the vagaries of the present global economic turmoil. However, the new presidential administration, in its determination to bail the nation out of its economic doldrums, has embarked on a number of strategic reforms that are aimed at retooling the economy and putting it on a steady path of progress and prosperity in line with the administration's Renewed Hope Agenda for a better Nigeria.

Consequently, the president took the bold and decisive step to remove the stifling petroleum subsidy and harmonize the foreign exchange rates regime.

The repudiation of these two policies, as well as the ongoing tax and fiscal reforms aimed at simplifying our complicated tax system, eliminating multiple taxes, streamlining regulations that negate the ease of doing business and closing annual tax gaps, are all directed at restructuring the economy for greater productivity and accelerating development, while providing greater prosperity for all. These reforms have the capacity to create an environment suitable for attracting foreign direct investment.

Nigeria and Japan have had a long and cordial bilateral relationship, beginning with the opening of the Japan External Trade Organization office in Lagos in 1955, as well as the establishment of formal bilateral relations on Oct. 1, 1960. This relationship has continued to blossom with the establishment of the Nigeria-Japan Special Partnership Forum, which was subsequently upgraded to the level of binational cooperation at its sixth session held on Aug. 22 and 23, 2013, in Abuja.

In the past year as Nigeria's ambassador to Japan, I witnessed increased cooperation between our countries. I have had more engagements with Japanese officials, agencies and companies in our drive to attract investment to Nigeria for the mutual benefit of both countries.

In addition, the Nigeria-Japan Business Forum was held from Jan. 23 to 27 this year, under the theme "Harnessing of Cross-Border Technological Advancement as a Catalyst for Achieving Sustainable Development of Nigeria." Having more than 100 companies and many top government officials and agencies from both countries attend is eloquent testimony to this cooperation. We will continue building on the firm foundations established by both countries in advancing our bilateral relations.

Let me seize this opportunity to reassure Nigerians in Japan of the embassy's commitment to their welfare and well-being. I urge them to be law-abiding and respect the customs and cultural norms of their host. I also appreciate the Japanese government for the conducive environment it has provided for us so that diplomacy may thrive.

My gratitude also goes to various Japanese companies and individuals doing business in Nigeria who are partners of the cordial relations between Nigeria and Japan. I look forward to many more relations and investments.

Once again, congratulations on the occasion of Nigeria's National Day on Oct. 1.

Long Live the Federal Republic of Nigeria! Long Live Japan! Thank you and God bless.



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (GCFR) EMBASSY OF NIGERIA

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