

# Lesotho National Day Special

## Relations grow from strength to strength

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AMBASSADOR OF LESOTHO



This year marks joyous milestones for the Kingdom of Lesotho. His Majesty King Letsie III recently celebrated the diamond jubilee of his birth and the silver jubilee of his reign. These events

were celebrated largely by the whole nation and visitors from neighboring countries.

Furthermore, the second phase of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, a binational intervention, has begun. Upon completion, the cost of the project will amount to \$1.7 billion. It is anticipated that 6,000 temporary jobs will be created, along with 5,500 direct and indirect jobs during the operation of the water transfer.

Our major priorities are focused on agri-

culture, namely migration from what is largely subsistence farming to commercial farming, transport infrastructure, information and communications technology, digital transformation, tourism and renewable energy, a field in which the government of Japan is assisting through the construction of a hydroelectric plant. Let me at this juncture appreciate the shift that we are noticing in the increase of Japanese people visiting our country. We further encourage visits as it will be a lifetime experience for them.

In line with these priorities, there will be a Water and Hydrogen Conference and Expo from Oct. 12 to 13 showcasing opportunities to utilize the treasure that water represents to Lesotho and her neighbors.

This year also marks the signing of the agreement to host the project management office of the Orange-Senqu River Commission, an agreement between Lesotho, Botswana, Namibia and South Africa to harvest and utilize the transborder river basin for sustainable water projects that

will help achieve Nos. 1, 2, 6, 7 and 14 of the U.N. sustainable development goals. Lesotho contributes 40% of the volume of the Orange-Senqu river basin. Approximately 15 million people rely on the basin for water, farming and electricity.

Lesotho has also relaxed some laws to better attract investors. A tax holiday, a free enterprise and free market economic system, a young and literate labor force, and duty-free access to consumers from the South African Customs Union and those eligible under the African Growth and Opportunity Act are some investor advantages.

In closing, I wish that the cordial relationship between the Kingdom of Lesotho and Japan grows from strength to strength, and further extend my gratitude for open interaction between our countries.

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