

Lesotho independence day

Unique opportunities await in Lesotho

Mokhele Likate
AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM
OF LESOTHO

On this day, the 43rd anniversary of the independence of the Kingdom of Lesotho, on behalf of His Majesty King Letsie III and the people of the Kingdom of Lesotho, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, and the people of Japan for the generous hospitality, friendship, support and cooperation extended to the Kingdom of Lesotho.



Our country, although small, is unique: It is the only independent state in the world that is entirely 1,500 meters above sea level. This is why it is known as "The Mountain Kingdom" or "The Kingdom in the Sky." These mountains are the source of Lesotho's abundant natural resources and incomparable beauty. They also

help the 1.9 million people living there to enjoy a very favorable and healthy climate.

Lesotho's government is a constitutional monarchy, one of the three remaining monarchies on the African continent. The prime minister (Pakalitha Mosisili) is head of the government and has executive authority. The king is the head of state and serves an important ceremonial function. The monarchy no longer undertakes any executive role and does not actively participate in political initiatives. This provides a politically stable democracy, and attractive destination for tourism and business. Lesotho is one of the few countries with a constituency-based electoral system that has adopted a legislated quota (30 percent) for increasing women's participation in politics.

In recent years, investors worldwide have recognized Lesotho as a target of economic opportunity, which is why our country has business relationships based on mutual interests, and not only aid and

charity.

One of Lesotho's major natural resources is water, which we often refer to as "The White Gold of Lesotho." 1986 marked the start of the multibillion-dollar Lesotho Highlands Water Project, which contributes greatly to Lesotho's growing economy. This 21-year project is designed to capture, store and transfer water from the Senqu (Orange) River to South Africa's Gauteng province. It generates about \$41 million annually.

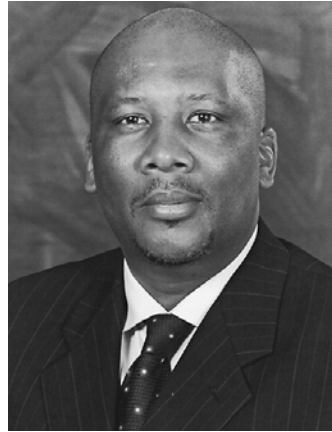
Diamonds of the highest quality, large and small, are being found in Lesotho. Letseng is one of the most productive mines in the country and the best known. A 603-carat diamond, the "Lesotho Promise," was found there in 2006. It later sold for about \$12.4 million. In 2008, miners also found the 500-carat "Letseng Legacy." Both diamonds are among the world's 20 largest rough diamonds ever to be found. Opportunities exist for the establishment of diamond cutting and polishing as downstream activities of the min-

ing industry.

The Mountain Kingdom is also making great inroads in the apparel and textile industry. We have become the largest exporter of garments to the U.S. from sub-Saharan Africa. This, a branding initiative to make "Made in Lesotho" a global trademark, fair and ethical labor standards, and stable government all help to make Lesotho a country on the rise, an African investment destination of choice.

The mountains make Lesotho an exciting tourist destination where visitors can enjoy a real and authentic African experience in a place that upholds a unique balance of the old and the new.

There is so much to do. Travelers can go pony trekking on a sure-footed Basotho Pony in the early morning breeze; take in the stunning mountain landscapes and scenery; or even laze around and soak up the sun. There is also fine dining from haute cuisine to traditional African fare. And no matter what you do, there is always the oppor-



King Letsie III of Lesotho

tunity to make new friends.

Lesotho offers a good choice of accommodations, ranging from sophisticated hotels and casinos to lodges and bed-and-



Lesotho Prime Minister
Pakalitha Mosisili

breakfasts. With the new village-stay accommodation programs, guests can get a taste of everyday life in The Kingdom in the Sky.

Lesotho is a landlocked enclave located within the Republic of South Africa. This makes it a potential destination for the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa. Any soccer enthusiast will tell you that an important key to winning the World Cup lies in the selection of a camp where a team will be based before and during the tournament. The final selection of such a base will ultimately be made in consideration of all relevant factors such as climate, environment and transportation access.

With this in mind, we would like to extend an invitation to the Japanese national soccer team to consider establishing its camp here. Lesotho's capital Maseru is located at an alti-

tude of 1,800 meters above sea level, an ideal location for high-altitude adjustment when considering that South African cities are located at relatively high altitudes, World Cup stadiums may be at altitudes of around 1,000 meters and that the finals will be held in Johannesburg, a city located at an altitude of 1,300 meters.

Once again, on this 43rd anniversary of the independence of the Kingdom of Lesotho, on behalf of King Letsie III and the people of Lesotho, I would like to sincerely express our gratitude to all of our friends here in Japan for your wonderful cooperation and support.

"Khotso, Pula, Nala (Peace, Rain and Prosperity)"

Congratulations
to the People of the Kingdom of Lesotho
on the Occasion of the 43rd Anniversary of
Their Independence Day



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