

# Kenya independence day

## New constitution promises Kenya a bright future

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On Dec. 12, 1963, Kenya attained her independence and broke away from the yoke of colonialism.

Kenya's 46th anniversary when she joined the league of nations that enjoyed self-rule. As we reflect on our history, I wish to thank The Japan Times for providing me with this opportunity on behalf of the government and people of the Republic of Kenya to convey heartfelt greetings to Their Majesties the Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, for their role in promoting unity of the Japanese people.

I also wish to congratulate them for their 50th wedding anniversary celebrated in April and above all the 20th anniversary of the enthronement of His Majesty the Emperor. I trust Their Majesties will continue to enjoy good health and further wish for the prosperity of the Imperial Household.

Let me also convey warm greetings to Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and the government and people of this great and friendly nation for the successful election held in August that saw the Democrat-

ic Party of Japan win enough seats to form a government. It is my hope the agenda for change, the platform on which the DPJ secured its victory, will contribute toward addressing the myriad challenges facing not only Japan but the global community.

I believe Japan will continue playing an active leadership role in reversing the adverse effects of climate change, threats to international security, attainment of Millennium Development Goals and strengthening the relationship between Japan and the African continent embodied in the TICAD IV framework. I therefore take this opportunity to applaud Hatoyama's announcement during the United Nations General Assembly in September regarding his government's commitment to double overseas development assistance by the year 2012 within the TICAD IV framework, a position echoed by Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada when he addressed the African diplomatic corps in October.

As a major beneficiary of ODA from Japan, Kenya will play her respective role in advancing the letter and spirit contained in the Yokohama Declaration of 2008.

From a historical context, Kenya has maintained her strategic partnership with Japan for more than four decades.

In the recent past, our en-

gagements have been marked by high-level exchange visits such as those by Samuel Poghisio, minister for information and communications, who visited Japan in February to attend a workshop organized by the government to discuss peace and Security in the neighboring Sudan, followed by Cecily Mbarire, the assistant minister for tourism, in September to attend JATA 2009 and finally Dr. Sally Kosgei, minister for higher education, science and technology, who represented Kenya during the Science and Technology in Society Forum in Kyoto in October.

These visits alongside others have promoted further collaborative efforts geared toward international security and promotion of trade and investment, science and technology, and above all explored new areas of partnerships.

Let me also thank the government of Japan for sending a team composed of members of the House of Councilors to visit three African countries, including Kenya, in October to assess the efficacy of ODA. I am happy to note that the team reported sound ODA management in the countries they visited.

I also wish to thank the Japanese public for their support of the African continent and assure them that Kenya values ODA from Japan, which is playing a pivotal role in complementing the government's efforts toward poverty reduction.

Our bilateral engagements have also realized mutual gains for both countries. The joint trade mission that visited Kenya late last year consisting of government officials and Japanese investors provided a platform for exploring further prospects in Kenya. I therefore invite more to take advantage of the attractive business climate in Kenya, supported by her geo-strategic location, an educated and industrious labor force, a relatively developed infrastructure, the well-established banking system, a ready market within the region and a stable political climate.

As we celebrate this auspicious occasion, it is fitting to reflect on the experiences of Kenya as a nation over the last two years. In December 2007, Kenya held its 10th general election (presidential, parliamentary and local government). The results were disputed, resulting in disturbances that led to the loss of more than 1,200 lives, injuries, the displacement of more than 300,000 people and enormous destruction of property.

Thankfully though, Kenyans quickly resolved the conflict with the help of the international community and settled for a grand coalition government that is now fully operational owing to its inclusive nature. This achievement is owed to self-sacrifice by our political leaders who agreed to pursue a peaceful path that has now remained the key pillar in the cur-

rent political dispensation. This has also provided a constitutional moment that has triggered debate on the harmonized draft constitution released by the government in November for Kenyans to study for a month to enable them make an informed decision during the national referendum in 2010.

As a member of the global community, Kenya is also confronted by the adverse effects associated with climate change that have manifested themselves in loss of forest cover, drying of water sources, occasional floods during the erratic rainy seasons, drought, food scarcity that is characterized by high food prices, irreversible trends on ecosystems, threats to biodiversity caused by human activities and human-wildlife conflict.

As a result of these challenges, Kenya remains keenly interested in environmental and climate change issues. As host to the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Program, Kenya wishes to continue to play its traditional leadership roles in global environmental matters as well as climate change. Kenya is also keen to see UNEP's role in environmental management and climate change enhanced, deepened and expanded.

Kenya is concerned about the systematic weakening of UNEP through fragmentation of its mandate and the creation

of new secretariats tied to environment and climate change, distortion of UNEP's mandate through the multiplication of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), poor and unpredictable funding for UNEP as well as a lack of equitable support for and funding of the United Nations Office in Nairobi by member states and the U.N. Secretariat, which undermine its role as the backbone to UNEP administration. In this regard, Kenya would like to see the Copenhagen conference result in an outcome that strengthens UNEP's role in the environment, climate change and International Environmental Governance (IEG), and streamlining and consolidation of MEAs to enhance IEG.

The government has also developed a policy planning document referred to as Vision 2030, which aspires to see Kenya become a middle income country by the year 2030 with 10 percent economic growth. To nurture a robust economy, key sectors such as tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, trade, information technology and financial services will need to provide the impetus for growth.

The overriding principle of Vision 2030 is to produce a national psyche with Kenyans identifying themselves with and believing in it. The Vision takes into account the diversity in Kenya expressed by different cultures, religions, ethnic

groups, races and geographic areas. It is expected that under Vision 2030, Kenya's economy will turn around and provide more opportunities not only for Kenyans but the international community under a globalized world. I therefore invite entrepreneurs from Japan to position themselves to further boost trade relations between our two countries.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to thank all those who have sent to us messages of good will and once again thank The Japan Times and wish its readers a happy festive season, good health and prosperity in the new year. Meanwhile, I invite you all to learn more about Kenya through our mission Web site at [www.kenyarep-jp.com](http://www.kenyarep-jp.com)



### Congratulations to the People of the Republic of Kenya on the 46th Anniversary of Their Independence Day



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