

Uganda independence day

'The Pearl of Africa' offers much for investors, tourists

Wasswa Biriggwa
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF
UGANDA

On Oct. 9, 1962, the Republic of Uganda gained its independence and today Ugandans and our friends all over the world celebrate the 48th anniversary of Uganda Independence Day. I am honored to take this opportunity to extend our profound gratitude to the people of Japan for their warm friendship and cooperation over the years.



On this occasion, it is an honor to convey the warm greetings and good will of H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of the Republic of Uganda to Their Imperial Majesties the Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, H.E. Prime Minister Naoto Kan, as well as the people and government of Japan for the strong partnership between our two countries and people.

I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to The Japan Times for availing me the opportunity to address its esteemed readers.

Bilateral cooperation

Uganda views strong bilateral relations with Japan as a key pillar of its foreign policy. We therefore appreciate the commitment shown by the government of Japan to warm bilateral relations through its unwavering cooperation in both bilateral and multilateral spheres.

As we celebrate our National Day, a lot has taken place in the area of economic and political cooperation with Japan.

In June 2009, the Hon. Sam Kutesa, minister of foreign affairs of Uganda, visited Japan

at the invitation of the Japanese government, during which he met several high-level Japanese dignitaries and visited some of Japan's many renowned sites, including traditional temples in Osaka, Miyajima Island in Hiroshima and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Museum. Following his visit, the Hon. Kutesa expressed great appreciation for the warm welcome and selfless hospitality he received from the Japanese people throughout his stay and was struck by the natural beauty and memorable cultural experiences abundant in Japan.

The minister's official visit further cemented the close cooperation between our two countries and reaffirmed our mutual commitment to policy cooperation in various areas.

On this occasion, I am pleased to further express the profound appreciation of the people of Uganda to Japan for its continued support through development projects in several areas, particularly in infrastructure development.

Over the past year, Japan has continued to support Uganda through development cooperation in several sectors. I would like to extend particular appreciation for Japan's support for the construction of the River Nile Bridge in Jinja, Uganda, a vital transportation hub that connects several countries in the East African region to the sea. This project will greatly boost trade and cross-border movement to the benefit of the entire region and clearly demonstrates to Ugandans and our neighbors in East Africa the strength of Japan's commitment to supporting regional economic development in East Africa.

Investment and trade

I would like to take this opportunity

to invite the Japanese business community to explore the many investment opportunities available in Uganda particularly in the key sectors of mining and energy, agriculture, tourism, information and communication technology (ICT) and other sectors. Of particular note are the lucrative opportunities available in the oil and gas sector, which is emerging as one of the region's most important.

Located at the heart of East and Central Africa, Uganda shares borders with some of Africa's most economically strategic and resource-rich countries. A stable macroeconomic and political system, consistent economic growth averaging 6 percent per annum and single-digit inflation for well over a decade have created a unique opportunity for foreign investors.

The Ugandan Constitution (1995) and the Investment Code Act (2000) also stipulate sufficient laws to protect investors' rights and property, and the country is also a signatory to international conventions and institutions including the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA); Overseas Private Investment Corp. (OPIC) of the U.S.; the U.N. Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards (CREFAA), among others.

Uganda's liberal economic regime ensures the free inflow and outflow of capital, unrestricted foreign ownership of investments and exchange rates freely determined by the market. Investors in Uganda enjoy free trade and market access preferences to several markets including the Common Market for Eastern and Southern African states (COMESA), a region with a market of over 380 million people in 20 countries, guaranteeing the business com-

munity more than 80 percent tariff reductions in this regional market.

Several Japanese companies have already shown interest in this key area and we invite the Japanese business community to contact this embassy as well as the Uganda Investment Authority with any queries on investing in Uganda.

'The Pearl of Africa'

Lying astride the equator in East Africa, Uganda is known as "The Pearl of Africa" for its magnificent natural beauty, warm and hospitable people as well as a rich mosaic of cultures.

The country's reputation as a splendid tourist destination continues to grow in Japan, resulting in a dramatic annual increase in the number of Japanese tourists visiting Uganda. The Japanese people's great love for nature and fascinating cultures has generated interest in visiting Uganda, whose attractions are enjoyed by tourists from all over the world.

Tourists from around the world travel to Uganda to see the rare sight of the majestic mountain gorillas in their mountain forest habitat, over 1,200 bird species in one country, the rich animal variety in the national park and tropical rain forests with the highest number of primates in Africa. Other attractions include the savanna scenery and snow-capped mountains as well as Lake Victoria and the source of the River Nile, where visitors can enjoy white-water rafting on the rapids of the Nile, a unique experience with an unblemished safety record.

In light of the peace and security prevailing in all areas of the country as well as the development of tourism infrastructure, Uganda offers a safe and memorable experience for the

foreign visitor. We look forward to welcoming Japanese tourists in even larger numbers and thank the many Japanese tour agencies that are offering Uganda as a package destination for Japanese tourists.

I have enjoyed meeting the many Japanese people who have visited Uganda. The embassy remains at your disposal for further information on tourist attractions in Uganda as well as related information prior to your visit to Uganda.

Partners in the world

Uganda and Japan enjoy close cooperation on the international stage particularly as both countries are U.N. Security Council members for the period 2009-2010. Uganda took its seat on the Security Council in January 2009 as a representative of

the African Union and has cooperated closely with Japan and other international partners in promoting global peace and stability. Our two countries also share a common purpose and partnership in tackling other global challenges including climate change.

In light of its responsibility to support peace efforts, Uganda continues to provide the majority of peacekeepers currently stationed in Somalia under the AU peacekeeping efforts in this vital region. We extend appreciation for the selfless commitment Japan has demonstrated to promoting peace and stability in the region and reaffirm our commitment to continued cooperation with Japan on the international stage.

On this occasion, I am further pleased to extend warm



Uganda-Japan cooperation: The new bridge across the River Nile will be built in Jinja, Uganda. EMBASSY OF UGANDA

congratulations to all Ugandans living and working in Japan and urge the Ugandan community to always represent our beloved country with dignity, integrity and an un-

wavering sense of responsibility.

Let me end by wishing all of you, dear readers, a happy Oct. 9 Uganda National Day celebration.

Congratulations
on the Independence Day of the Republic of Uganda

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Congratulations
to the People of the Republic of Uganda
on Their 48th Independence Day



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