

DR Congo independence day

DRC celebrates 51st anniversary of independence

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In this moment of celebration of our 51st anniversary of independence, we can't forget our Japanese brothers and sisters who have suffered the tragedy of the March 11 Great East Japan Earthquake, which caused many victims among the population. On this occasion, we send our wishes for all the population and pray to God to give them courage and blessing.



Hence, on this sacred Independence Day, it is with pleasure that we would like to transmit hereby the warm greetings from President Joseph Kabila Kabange to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as the whole Imperial Family. We would like to acknowledge and praise their unceasing efforts toward the promotion of peace and friendship between the people of the world. Our greetings are also given to the Japanese government and the all Japanese people.

The celebration of this 51st anniversary is for us an appro-

priate time to assess the progress of our country's situation. As we take a retrospective look at our journey during the last 51 years, we can express today the joy of celebrating this jubilee united and living in our territory with the same geographical borders as on June 30, 1960.

It is also the right occasion to remember that our country has known its first civil war starting on July 11, 1960, only 11 days after the proclamation of independence! The war caused by those who wanted to perpetuate their domination on the country's natural resources such as minerals.

The intention to divide our country emerged again 10 years ago because of lust of some countries.

Fortunately, the Balkanization of our country didn't take place because of the determination of the Congolese people with help of some goodwilled people.

During the last few years, the government has been committed to reinforcing the peace and to rebuilding the country under the direction of President Kabila. Indeed, the latest crisis, which lasted from 1997 to 2003, made the DRC bloodless with the basic infrastructures completely destroyed.

The reconstruction of a territory six times larger than Japan and as large as Western Europe is



Joseph Kabila Kabange,
president of the Democratic
Republic of the Congo

not a easy task, especially when the country is sorely short of financial means. Its meager fiscal revenues have been directly allocated to the payments of a heavy external debt for which we have been in negotiations for long time with Bretton Woods Institutions. Fortunately, last year these Institutions have accepted to cancel the DRC's debt and to allow our country to allocate the financial means for its economic and social development.

To our partners, including Japan, we express again and repeat our confidence that only direct foreign investment can create many jobs in our country and can help it to stand up and play its role on the worldwide stage, politically and economically.

The main assets of the DRC are:



**Central Africa: The Democratic
Republic of the Congo is the
third-largest country in Africa.**

- A vast market in the heart of the African continent with many possibilities to develop numerous large-scale activities: farming, livestock breeding, forestry, mining, industry, tourism, etc.

- The mining reserves of the DRC: the Congolese ground contains an extremely various range of ores such as bauxite, coal, diamonds, gold, iron, oil, copper, cobalt, nickel chromium, methane gas in Lake Kivu, etc. All these natural resources are needed by main industries of the world and if they are judiciously exploited can certainly contribute to improve the conditions of life of the Congolese people.

- The forest of the DRC (basin of Congo), more than 60 percent of all territory, is an asset

that the whole world needs, namely in the fight against the effects of global warming. It contains around 1,000 species of wood.

On this subject, the DRC has been chosen as one of the pilot countries of the United Nations program REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation). The purpose of this program is to get the country ready for the REDD initiative by 2012 as soon as that regime is accepted and recognized internationally as an instrument for the reduction of factors that cause climatic change in the post-Kyoto Protocol framework.

Also, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with a 3,680,000 km water basin, is one of the biggest soft water reservoirs in the world.

The Congo River has the second most consistent and powerful flow (40,000 cu. meters per second) in the world, after the Amazon River.

According to the relevant studies, the hydroelectric dam at the Inga site alone on the Congo River, once its four phases are completed, can be able to provide electricity to the entire African continent. The contribution of Japanese enterprises, with their knowhow and their advanced technology for realizing this important project, can be of great support not only for

the DRC's development but also for the African continent. In this field exists a code of investments with many advantages for investors.

On the tourism field, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has also many wonders, with national parks and natural reserves with animal species such as okapis, bonobos, gorillas, white rhinoceroses, etc.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has a specific climate diversity: the country straddles the equator, there are four types of climates with singular rainfall marked by rains throughout the year.

In conclusion, we take the

opportunity to express our hope of seeing Japanese corporations joining our efforts in the reconstruction of the DRC along with the other partners who are already there. We can't forget that the relations between Japan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo began since 1955 with the opening of a consulate in the former Leopoldville, today Kinshasa.

After the painful period of 1960 and the recent anguishes of the war of aggression of the 1990s, the Congolese people aspire to a peaceful life; to build a country where it is good to live smartly with immediate neighbors and friends afar.

Today, President Kabila has begun the big works of reconstruction of the country as this can be seen everywhere in the capital Kinshasa and everywhere in the country.

At the end of this year of the 51st anniversary of our independence, the DRC will organize the presidential and legislative elections.

To our citizens who live in this beautiful country Japan, we ask them to learn from the Japanese experience, which can benefit our country, the DRC.

As our national hymn says, "Debout Congolais (Stand up Congolese)" ... for the reconstruction of a beautiful country.

Congratulations

to the People of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
on the 51st Anniversary of Their Independence

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