

Uganda independence day/world

Embracing growth, social economic transformation for Uganda's prosperity

Wasswa Biriggwa
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF
UGANDA

On the occasion of the 49th independence anniversary of the Republic of Uganda, it gives me great pleasure to extend heartfelt greetings and warmest regards to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial Family, and the government and people of Japan.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend on behalf of the government and people of Uganda our sincere and deepest condolences to the Japanese government and people, particularly all those who were affected by the devastating effects of the March 11 Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami. Our

thoughts and prayers are with the Japanese people and it is my conviction that the strength, resolve and perseverance of the Japanese people will prevail and the country will eventually overcome the effects of this disaster and rebuild itself.

Uganda celebrates this national day as a more stable, peaceful, united and democratic country that is moving forward in its quest for transformation into a modern and prosperous country.

Thanks to the measures taken under the wise leadership of President Yoweri Museveni, Uganda has exhibited promising macroeconomic signs and consistent overall growth of its economy over the last 20 years. For instance, during the period when the country implemented the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), the average rate of growth in gross domestic product (GDP) was 7.2 percent at the initial stages of implementation

and drastically rose up to 8 percent over the period 2005-2009. This GDP growth performance contributed significantly to a reduction in poverty levels. The country is thus committed to addressing the great challenges of economic and social development, like poverty eradication, job creation and developing local economies.

As part of the strategy for economic growth, the government has adopted the National Development Plan (NDP), a successor of the PEAP. The NDP stipulates the country's medium-term strategic direction, development priorities and implementation strategies. It addresses structural bottlenecks in the economy in order to accelerate socioeconomic transformation for prosperity. The main thrusts of these interventions aim at creating employment, raising average per capita income levels, improving the labor force distribution in line with sectoral GDP shares, raising the country human development and gender equality indicators so as to improve the country's competitiveness to the level of a middle-income country. In this regard, government has embarked on sustained orientation of government expenditures and implementation capacity toward the removal of the most binding constraints to his socioeconomic transformation.



Uganda-Japan cooperation: A computer image shows the new bridge that will be built across the Nile at Jinja, Uganda. EMBASSY OF UGANDA

As a whole, the government's development approach intertwines economic growth and poverty eradication, to be pursued in a quasi-market environment where the private sector will remain the engine of growth and development, with the government undertaking the facilitating role of providing conducive policy, institutional and regulatory framework, encouraging foreign investments and sound macroeconomic management.

Regarding bilateral relations, it is worth noting that the partnership between Japan and Uganda keeps getting stronger over the years. I am therefore greatly pleased to congratulate the Rt. Hon. Yoshihiko Noda upon his election as prime minister and

wish him great success in this august office.

I also wish to express the appreciation of the government of Uganda to Japan for its unwavering support and continued commitment in providing development assistance, in particular in the areas of hydropower development and infrastructure reconstruction like the \$150 million bridge project on the River Nile at Jinja. This development assistance will go a long way in improving the country's overall development indexes within the framework of the U.N. Millennium Development Goals and foster economic growth within the region.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite Japanese in-

vestors to take advantage of the abundant investment opportunities available in Uganda, particularly in the key sectors of mining, tourism, agriculture and energy.

The country's nascent petroleum and gas sector is also worth exploring after recent discoveries of significant quantities of commercially viable reserves of oil and gas in the Albertine Graben, which is considered far cheaper to extract than offshore drilling.

On this occasion, therefore, I am further pleased to extend warm and sincere greetings to the friends of Uganda in Japan as well as hearty congratulations to the community of Ugandans living and working in Japan. I wish you a happy Oct. 9 Uganda National Day celebration.



Nature: Sipi Falls is a series of three waterfalls on the edge of Mount Elgon National Park in Uganda. EMBASSY OF UGANDA



Wildlife: Uganda is home to roughly half of the world's mountain gorillas. EMBASSY OF UGANDA



Warm welcome: A woman sells pumpkins at an open-air market in Uganda. EMBASSY OF UGANDA

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on Their 49th Independence Day



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