

Zambia independence day

Road to development leads to investments

Mbikusita Lewanika
AMBASSADOR OF ZAMBIA

Today, Oct. 24, Zambia celebrates its National Day, marking 47 years of independence from British colonial rule. Immediately upon achieving independence, Zambia established diplomatic ties with Japan, leading to a long-lasting relationship in political, economic and social spheres.



I would like on this occasion, on behalf of H.E. President Michael Chilufya Sata, the government and people of the Republic of Zambia, to convey my deepest respect to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, and to H.E. Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda. I would like to express my gratitude to the government and people of Japan for their friendship and assistance to the government and people of Zambia.

On behalf of the president and the people of Zambia, I would also like to take this opportunity to extend to the government and people of Japan our deepest condolences to all those affected by the March 11 Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami, and to express our sincere wishes for the earliest possible recovery of victims and disaster-stricken areas. The resilience of the Japanese people in reconstructing the country in the wake of the unprecedented disaster is commendable.

The peace-loving people of Zambia desire that under the government led by the Democratic Party of Japan, existing bilateral relations between the two countries will grow from strength to strength as Zambia continues to enjoy uninterrupted tranquility, peace and political stability since gaining independence in 1964.

Zambia held its presidential, parliamentary and local government elections on Sept. 20, which saw the main opposition Patriotic Front (PF) leader Sata emerge victorious. He was sworn in by Zambia's chief justice on Sept 22 as Zambia's fifth president, in a smooth transfer of power from the then President Rupiah Bwezani Banda,

This is the second time that a ruling party has conceded defeat, making Zambia a shining example of peace, democracy and good governance in the sub-Saharan region.

Zambia has become a great foreign direct investment destination and it has many positive attributes to attract poten-

tial investors. These include a democratic Westminster-style government and a liberal economic framework combined with an investment-friendly and export-oriented business incentive package. Market-oriented economic policies focusing on sustainable economic growth and private sector development have created an enabling climate in which to do business, attracting significant foreign direct investment (FDI). The European Union constitutes the largest single foreign investor followed by South Africa. Japan is invited to be a major participant in this process.

The economic reforms of 1991 have included a free currency exchange regime, privatization of many state-owned enterprises, financial market developments including the stock exchange and the pursuit of structural reforms backed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, such as the removal of consumer subsidies and price controls.

The expansion of non-traditional exports is also vital in order to achieve the goal of sustainable growth. Zambia's market access and global competitiveness are boosted through its active participation in regional and international trade forums.

The Zambian economy has been recording positive trends in the key macroeconomic indicators. The gross domestic product (GDP) in real terms has averaged more than 6 percent per annum over the past six years. Inflation has declined and for the first time in three decades, a single digit rate of 7.6 percent was registered in July 2011. The interest rates also declined from 43 percent in 2002 to 19 percent by June 2008, thereby making credit relatively affordable to productive sectors of the economy. This is expected to drop drastically in the near future.

Improvements have equally been registered in the external sector where gross international reserves increased to an unprecedented level of \$1.9 billion at the end of 2010. The government is aware of the impact of the rise in oil prices and the rise in some food prices and their negative impact and measures are in place to cushion the domestic economy. Economic diversification from mining is a continuous struggle to free Zambia from depending on one commodity. Copper production and copper prices have been on the upswing due to increased FDI. Zambia is now the biggest producer of copper in Africa.

In the agricultural sector, the government has implemented policies that have enabled our



Nature: Zambia is home to a part of the Victoria Falls, which will be the setting of the general assembly of the United Nations' World Tourism Organization in 2013. EMBASSY OF ZAMBIA

country to score significant achievements. Zambia is today food-secure with a surplus of corn last year with an unprecedented harvest of 3,020,380 tons, of which was a surplus of 1,661,626 tons, some of which have been exported to neighboring countries. And in terms of agricultural infrastructure, the government has, in the past few years, constructed and rehabilitated feeder roads, bridges, market sheds, grain silos and other structures under the rural investment fund. To this end, government procured road construction and maintenance equipment to be used in all 73

districts of the country.

As pointed out earlier, Zambia has been a predominantly mining nation. In the recent past, the sector has attracted massive investments due to high prices of metals on the world market and friendly investor policies that the government introduced. More than 50,000 jobs have been created. This additional revenue of more than \$400 million is facilitating implementation of national programs in areas such as health, education and infrastructure development. In addition, the government in 2009 advertised for prospectors to start bidding for exploration for

oil and gas in the North Western, Luapula, Eastern and Western provinces.

The attractive economic and investment policies put in place in the last decade have made Zambia an investment destination of choice on the African continent.

Zambia realizes that not all these goals can be achieved without the support of our partners in development like Japan through the TICAD (Tokyo International Conference on African Development) IV process. The Japanese government is committed to doubling its official development assistance (ODA) to Africa, for which Zambia is most grateful. Zambia has benefited greatly from Japan in the fields of education, health, infrastructure development, manpower and human resource development and cultural exchanges, which we wish to be continued and strengthened. In addition, Zambia is delighted that during the African Outreach at the Group of Eight Muskoka Summit in Canada, then Prime Minister Naoto Kan announced that Japan would provide additional assistance up to ¥50 billion, approximately \$500 million, for maternal and child health, which was the main agenda of the last African Union Summit in July, this year. Zambia also takes serious note of Japan's assistance in infrastructure and agricultural

Making cooperative efforts to help the Zambian people

Katsumi Yamaguchi
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-ZAMBIA FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION;
PRESIDENT, ECC GROUP OF SCHOOLS

Congratulations on the 47th anniversary celebration of the independence of the Republic of Zambia. Since the founding of our Japan-Zambia Friendship Association in 1975, it has been a great honor to join the people of the Republic of Zambia in celebrating its Independence Day each year. On behalf of the members of our association, all of the ECC students and staff, and the people of Japan, we are sincerely pleased on this occasion to extend our warmest congratulations to President Michael Chilufya Sata, and our love and friendship to all the people of this peace-loving country, the Republic of Zambia.



The establishment of our association is based on the founding philosophy of ECC Foreign Language Institute, the parent body of the association: "It is our goal, through the teaching of foreign languages, to contribute to the development of our students' capabilities, international awareness and leadership qualities. In this way, we hope to promote more interaction and understanding among the peoples of the world, thus helping to contribute to world peace."

Our association has carried out various activities to promote mutual understanding and to form bonds of friendship between the people

of Zambia and the people of Japan. These efforts are made possible through joint work with the ECC Save-the-Earth Campaign, an annual endeavor of the ECC Group of Schools, and the Japan-Zambia Friendship Association. This yearly campaign collects donations from ECC students and staff, as well as the general public.

Last year, we organized our campaign under the slogan, "Let's Send a Tractor to Nakonde, Zambia." ECC students and staff all over Japan joined the campaign, and together we were able to procure a farm tractor, plough, cart, hand tiller, gasoline engines and a water pump. In January 2011, these donations were shipped from Kobe and they arrived in Lusaka in March. These are to be received by Chairman Edwin Sikalangwe of the Nakonde Cooperative Union. We have asked H.E. Akio Egawa, the ambassador to the Republic of Zambia, to kindly assist in Lusaka by attending the donation ceremony on behalf of our association. We are looking forward to the day when our project will be realized and our efforts bear fruit.

It is indeed the greatest pleasure for our association to attempt to serve the needs of the people of Zambia, even in our small way. With heartfelt wishes for an ever-brighter future, the association and the ECC Group of Schools will continue to make efforts in the hopes of strengthening and increasing the ties of friendship between our two nations, and throughout the world, with the ultimate objective of eliminating the three great human tragedies of war, poverty and disease.

development worth \$2 billion over two years by making use of yen loans, and that in order to boost trade and investment, Japan has been dispatching Trade and Investment Missions to Africa, one of which visited Zambia

in particular.

It is Zambia's wish that the close ties that the country enjoys with Japan grow from strength to strength for the mutual benefit of the two countries and peoples.

Finally, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the sponsors, Toyota Tsusho Co. and the Japan-Zambia Friendship Association, for making it possible for me to publish this message in The Japan Times. Thank you.

Congratulations to the People of the Republic of Zambia on Their 47th Independence Day



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