

Ethiopia national day

Dramatic progress in economic development

Markos Tekle Rike
AMBASSADOR OF ETHIOPIA

It is my profound privilege on the 21st anniversary of our National Day to express my heartfelt, warm, respectful greetings and best wishes to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihi-to and Empress Michiko, members of Imperial family, and the friendly government and people of Japan.

Since the establishment of our first diplomatic relations in 1933, Ethiopia and Japan have maintained cordial relations that have been both bilateral at the government level and people-to-people. Currently, our relations have scaled up with more commercial and economic ties. Besides, Japan is one of the most reliable development partners of Ethiopia in supporting our development endeavor in line with our policy priorities.

The last one year marked a

number of high-level visits to Japan, which indicates the level of diplomatic cooperation and friendship between our two nations. H.E Hailemariam Desalegn, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, and H.E Ahmed Shide, state minister for finance and economic development, by kind invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a business delegation led by H.E. Yaekob Yala visited Japan in aiming to boost bilateral cooperation and business ties. The visit to Japan by H.E Dr. Tewodros Adhanom, minister for health, by kind invitation from the Tokushukai Group, was aimed in understanding the philosophy of group Chairman Torao Tokuda and getting more experience from the success of Tokushukai in building high-tech health facilities and management all over Japan and abroad, as well as to negotiate for possible expansion of such a philosophy and projects to Ethiopia. All visits were fruitful and successful in strengthening the cordial relation between our two nations and achieving their

objectives.

The Ethiopian Association of Japan, former Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) members, the Mocha Dance group, the Nilo-Ethiopian Association and numerous friends of Ethiopia have been instrumental in promoting people-to-people relations between the two countries and building Ethiopia's image in Japan. The Ethiopian Night, which has become an annual event in which cultural exchanges between the two countries take center stage, was held at the beginning of November last year. The celebration marked the 40th anniversary of the Ethiopian Association of Japan, which signifies the long-standing friendship between Ethiopia and Japan. The Nilo-Ethiopian Association's annual event was also successfully held earlier this year at Kyoto University, on April 20 and 21, in which an Ethiopian coffee exhibition and seminar on Nilo-Ethiopian area studies were the core components.

May 28 marks the demise of the dictatorial military regime and the dawn for democratic governance and overall development. It was after this event that Ethiopians adopted the democratic constitution that recognizes and protects the true identity, history and culture of all nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia based on equality and justice, and genuinely promotes the beauty of the nation based on the notion of unity in diversity. This year, the National Day celebration is in the period when Ethiopia is successfully implementing its five-year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP). The first-year performance evaluation of GTP is

appreciated in terms of its progress in the areas of agricultural productivity, industrial expansion and in expanding infrastructure and power generation and transmission.

Dramatic progress in economic development and the business environment is attracting a large number of foreign investors from around the globe. Ethiopia, which had been little-known with its appalling image in the past, is vibrantly changing and transforming. Since 1992, Ethiopia has made considerable progress in economic and social development. This is due to its political and social stability, macroeconomic stability and rapidly growing economy; excellent climate and fertile soils; pro-investment government; abundant and trainable labor force; strategic location at the crossroads between Africa, the Middle East and Asia; the lowest crime rates in Africa; simple and transparent investment approval procedures; competitive incentive packages; access to a wide market; its richest histories and traditions on the African continent; and UNESCO World Heritage sites. Ethiopia is now becoming an ideal place for trade, investment and tourism. Today, Ethiopia is open for business and opportunities. I invite all interested to do business to invest and to visit Ethiopia.

As a result of the implementation of rural development, industrial development and other sectoral policies and strategies, agricultural and industrial production, and export trade are growing steadily from year to year, both in terms of variety and volume. Between 2005 and



Bilateral cooperation: Hailemariam Desalegn (left), Ethiopia's deputy prime minister and foreign minister, meets with Foreign Minister Koichiro Genba on Dec. 1 during a signing ceremony held in Tokyo. EMBASSY OF ETHIOPIA

2011, the country's real gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 11 percent per annum, with the service sector accounting for the highest growth (15 percent), agriculture for more than 8 percent and industrial development 10 percent. This growth is greatly contributed by a 15 percent expansion of agricultural land and a 40 percent yield increase, significantly improved infrastructure, increased foreign investment from less than \$820 million in 2007/08 to more than \$2 billion in the first half of the 2010/11 fiscal year. In terms of export expansion, the volume of Ethiopian exports doubled in the last five years. It is expected to be doubled in the coming five years. Trade ties with Japan in terms of the volume of trade is expanding every year. Ethiopian coffee, cut flowers, sesame, leather and agricultural products are getting more demand in Japan's market.

Both the government and The International Monetary Fund expect Ethiopia's economy to continue as one of the world's fastest growing over the coming years. Participants of the World Economic Forum (WEF) on Af-

rica, which was successfully held in Ethiopia early this month, applauded Ethiopia for its achievement in registering a high rate of economic growth and accelerating social development.

Climate change has become the greatest challenge in which African countries are more prone to its adverse consequences. Ethiopia plays a key role in adopting common positions for Africa in international climate change negotiations. Ethiopia's Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy is the indicator of Ethiopia's commitment to contribute toward sustainable development and a stable global environment. Ethiopia is the first African country to announce a zero-emission strategy for the year 2025. Harnessing more reliable and clean energy is one of the CRGE targets. The launching of the construction of Renaissance Dam on the Nile, which would generate 6,000 megawatts, sought to play a key role in transforming the Ethiopian industrialization process in generating clean energy.

Currently, we are witnessing the impact of Japanese support in our priority areas to alleviate

Continuing to promote friendship

Sadao Umeda
PRESIDENT, THE ETHIOPIAN ASSOCIATION OF JAPAN

On behalf of The Ethiopian Association of Japan, I am pleased to extend our sincere compliments and congratulations to the friendly people and government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on the auspicious occasion of the 21st anniversary of their National Day.

Ethiopia has registered remarkable achievements in its last five-year Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) and, since 2010, has launched another five-year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), of which I am confident in its success based on the country's achievements in the past.

It has been eight years since I became president of the association. During my visit to Ethiopia at the start of my presidency, I had the privilege of having an audience with Ethiopian President Girma Wolde-Giorgis.

Since, I have met with high-ranking officials, including Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, who visited Japan to attend the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in 2008, and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hailemariam Desalegn during his visit in 2011.

It is gratifying for me to have participated in various memorable events, such as the Ethiopia Millenium in Tokyo in 2007, and to have made some contributions to our bilateral exchange and development.

Last year marked the 40th anniversary of the establishment of our association. Honoring our achievements over these years, Ambassador Markos Tekle Rike presented us with a letter of appreciation from President Girma, for which I feel a deep sense of gratitude.

In closing, I sincerely wish Ethiopia and its people every success, progress and prosperity. This association will continue its endeavors to promote mutual friendship and good will in the economic and cultural fields.



Diplomatic center: The African Union's new headquarters stands in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa. EMBASSY OF ETHIOPIA

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to the People of
the Federal Democratic
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on the 21st Anniversary of
Their National Day***

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