
Botswana national day

Ever-diversifying economy and society

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AMBASSADOR OF BOTSWANA

The 49 years since the Republic of Botswana was born have been a happy time of peace and progress. On behalf of H.E.



President Ian Khama, the people and government of Botswana, we bring heartfelt greetings and wishes of good health, peace and prosperity to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko as well as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the government and people of Japan.

For nearly 50 years, Botswana has been synonymous with peace, stability, social progress and prudent economic management. Botswana has a multiparty constitutional democracy since independence and free, fair elections have been held every five years.

Botswana has a reputation as

the best performing economy in Africa over a 30-year period. This growth took Botswana from being one of the poorest countries in the world in 1966 to middle-income status by the 1990s. Botswana is the world's second-largest producer of diamonds by value. Since 2001, credit rating agencies (Moody's and Standard & Poor's) have rated Botswana the highest in Africa.

However, we are mindful of dependence on diamonds. Botswana is working hard to diversify other areas, including financial and business services, tourism, manufacturing and agriculture. The mining sector is also important in the diversification process. Areas include promoting downstream activities in the diamond industry, relocating the De Beers Diamond Trading Company International (DTCI) from London to Gaborone and establishing diamond marketing channels outside DTCI.

Tourism and wildlife are inextricably linked in Botswana and the country has reserved

17 percent of its territory as game reserves and 20 percent as wildlife management areas. It is for this reason that Botswana's Okavango Delta — UNESCO's 1,000th World Heritage site — is home to some of the world's most beautiful and diverse wildlife.

Botswana's post-independence economic performance has been the basis for widespread social development and progress. Government revenues derived from mining have been used to fund extensive social programs. Compared to 1966, many achievements have been made in universal primary and secondary education, health care, access to clean water, roads and other infrastructure. These have contributed to a steady reduction in poverty, resulting in the country's middle-income status today.

Japan and Botswana have enjoyed strong ties since diplomatic relations began in 1966. With the opening of resident missions in Tokyo and Gaborone in 1997 and 2008 respec-

tively, bilateral relations have strengthened in political dialogue, economic relations, capacity building and sociocultural exchanges. These culminated with the commencement and continuation of various projects. Examples include the adoption of the Japanese Digital Broadcasting standard by Botswana, the continuation and expansion of JOGMEC remote sensing center and the finalization of a commercial agreement on results of joint research on Kalahari watermelon genes between the Nara Institute of Science and Technology, Japan Tobacco International and Botswana's Department of Agricultural Research. Botswana also continues training people in various fields and many Botswana are training in Japan.

On the occasion of the 49th Anniversary of Independence of the Republic of Botswana, it is my honour to invite all to come to Botswana as investors, tourists and development partners.

Pula!