

# Congo National Day

## 'Walk to development' the path to becoming an emerging country

Boniface Lezona  
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I., EMBASSY  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The year 2016 is a notable year, not only for the people of the Republic of Congo, but also for the people of Japan. For Congo, it is a historic year for the people of the Republic of Congo who celebrate today, Aug. 15, the 56th anniversary of their Independence Day.

For Japan, this year will be marked by a major meeting, the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI), in Nairobi, Kenya, on Aug. 27 and 28 where the present 23-year-old Japan-Africa Partnership will be highlighted for the first time on the African continent.

Before exploring in depth these two events, let me express, on behalf of President Denis Sassou-Nguesso, the government and the people of the Republic of Congo, my best wishes of health, prosperity and longevity to their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as the other distinguished members of the Imperial family.

Once again, I deeply share my sorrow with the people of Japan, who have often suffered natural disasters such as the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami in 2011 and the



Left: Sapeurs, the impeccably dressed gentlemen of Congo, pose with Charge d'Affaires Boniface Lezona of the Congo Embassy in Japan and the Japanese photographer Kunio Chano in Okinawa Prefecture; Right: Brazzaville is the capital of the Republic of Congo and the country's largest city. EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO

recent April earthquake in Kumamoto Prefecture. I also offer my condolences for the Japanese victims of the terrorist attack in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

We stand firmly with the government and people of Japan in the efforts of facing all challenges that affect them and the world.

I also extend our warmest thanks to the Japanese public and private investors, businessmen and other partners who strongly work hand in hand with the Embassy of Congo in Japan for the goal of not only promoting and reinforcing the bilateral relationship between Japan and the Congo, but also to support our common views in the multilateral arena.

The walk to development

Since the adoption of the new constitution by referendum on Oct. 25 and the experience of the re-election on March 20 2016 of the president of the Republic of Congo, a "new horizon" has opened.

In fact, to accomplish the objective of "the Congo as an emerging country in 2025," the government and people of Congo are now involved in the new process of implementing the "walk to development," a new program for society for the period 2016-2021.

The new program has succeeded the "path of the future," the former program that has paved the way to the modernization of the Congo.

The walk to development

stands on six priorities that include placing women and men as the cornerstones of the development of Congo by adopting and implementing good values such as the spirit of responsibility, probity, perseverance and patriotism; and consolidating the strategic role of the government as the player actor in the process of economic, social and cultural development of the country through the continued construction of infrastructure such as roads, ports, airports, hospitals, power facilities and water purification centers.

TICAD VI

Additionally, the priorities call for consolidating and perpetuating economic growth by promoting the economic reforms and diversification, with the government expecting to realize more than 5 percent annual economic growth; and preparing youth for employment through training.

The final two aims of the walk to development focus on connecting strongly to the digital economy as it is important now to facilitate and encourage young people to be connected to the digital economy; and continuing the process of institutional reforms, including modernization of public administration and reform of the justice.

will focus its actions on the main priorities of African countries. These priorities include promoting economic diversification and industrialization; strengthening health systems to ensure resilience and preparedness to prevent, detect and respond to epidemics, pandemics and other public health crises; and promoting social stability for shared prosperity.

No doubt, the TICAD VI summit will be a great opportunity for African countries and delegations to deeply discuss and exchange views with the Japanese delegation on how Japan can bring its financial and technical support to Africa.

For the Congolese government, it will be an ideal occasion to hear Japan's decision-makers and leaders on granting financing for relevant projects for Congo.

The main projects concern the construction of a 2,700-meter-long bridge across the Congo River from Brazzaville, in the Republic of Congo, to Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of Congo; a road from Brazzaville to Yaounde in Cameroon; and a road from Oueillo in northern Congo to Bangui in the Central African Republic and N'Djamena in the Republic of Chad.

The Republic of the Congo is a safe and secure land for investment; a place full of opportunities and where dreams can become true.



Young boys fishing in the Congo River in southern Brazzaville. EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO

**Congratulations  
to the People of  
the Republic of Congo  
on the 56th Anniversary  
of Their Independence**

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