

## Kenya National Day

## Bilateral ties strengthened by state visit

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AMBASSADOR OF KENYA

Monday, Dec. 12, marked the 53rd Independence Anniversary of the Republic of Kenya. Accordingly, during this auspicious occasion, I wish to convey on behalf of the Government and the people of Kenya warm greetings and best wishes to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the Government and the friendly people of Japan.

As we celebrate this independence anniversary, I wish to reflect on the warm and cordial relationship between Kenya and Japan that has continued to grow from strength to strength. This relationship has been nurtured over the last 53 years. I particularly welcome the fact that our relationship has continued to grow beyond the confines of official development assistance (ODA) programs to a more strategic partnership based on mutual common trust, respect, ownership and shared values for the mutual benefit of our people.

I further take this opportunity to pay special tribute to Kenyan nationals in Japan for their patriotism and commitment to Kenya's cause and more particularly for their steadfast resolve in enhancing bilateral relations between Japan and Kenya. I commend them for their zealous engagement in preparations for, and participation in, the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI) that Kenya had the honor to host on Aug. 27 and 28.

**Bilateral cooperation**

Our strengthened strategic partnership and cooperation is evidenced by heightened engagement between both countries in support of the realization of Kenya's Vision 2030. This is the economic blueprint that envisages transforming Kenya into a newly industrialized middle-income nation where our citizens will enjoy the highest quality of life by the year 2030. Kenya has prioritized its engagement with Japan, with special emphasis and focus on regional infrastructure, manufacturing sector expansion, capacity development, support for joint ventures for small and medi-



H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (left) shakes hands with H.E. President of the Republic of Kenya Uhuru Kenyatta at the Nairobi State House during his state visit on Aug. 28. EMBASSY OF KENYA

um-scale enterprises and environmental conservation.

Upon an invitation by H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta, Abe paid a state visit to Kenya from Aug. 26 to 29, coinciding with TICAD VI. During the state visit, the two leaders witnessed the signing of two agreements and one memorandum of understanding (MOU). These included agreements on the promotion and protection of investments and on grant assistance for economic and social development programs in the amount of ¥1 billion. The memorandum of understanding was on the construction of a special economic zone (SEZ) in Dongo Kundu, Mombasa.

Indeed, the signing of the memorandum of understanding worth \$269.9 million in August for the development of Dongo Kundu SEZ was a clear demonstration of our heightened partnership. This industrial and commercial hub, with its allied infrastructure development, is expected, in addition to Kenya, to also turn around the economies of our sister countries of Uganda, Rwanda and all of the northern corridor member states. Development of phase one of the SEZ commences next year and it is expected to be completed by 2019. In the communique issued, the two leaders underscored their commitment to democracy, secure and peaceful international order and free and fair practices in the conduct of international trade. They further stressed the importance of promoting quality infrastructure investment so as to promote strong, sustainable and balanced growth.

**TICAD VI**

Kenya was honored and privileged to host TICAD VI, the first to be held in Africa. In ad-

dition to Prime Minister Abe, 35 Heads of State and Government from Africa and other dignitaries attended the event.

Nairobi's hosting of TICAD VI affirmed Kenya's steadfast commitment to the TICAD process of forging strong partnerships between Africa and Japan.

The resounding success of hosting TICAD VI by Kenya further demonstrated a mutual resolve by TICAD partners and stakeholders in the acceleration of African development in partnership with Japan that is equally guided by "Agenda 2063."

TICAD showcased Kenya's capacity not only in hosting such international meetings of high magnitude, but also its business, investment and ODA absorption capacity. The signing of 73 MOUs by 20 Japanese and African companies opens new opportunities for Japanese companies to invest in Africa.

It is worthwhile mentioning that out of the MOUs signed, 20 involved Kenya. Indeed, TICAD VI was a defining moment for the TICAD process. The formalization of the pri-



H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta (front row, center) poses with H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (front row, third from left) and African Heads of State and Government during the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI) at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre on Aug. 27. EMBASSY OF KENYA

ivate sector participation will enable public-private partnerships to effectively engage in Africa's industrialization. TICAD VI culminated in the adoption of the Nairobi Declaration.

**Prime conference locale**

Nairobi has continued to be the preferred conference and exhibition destination in the region. Some meetings held there include the 26th Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in February 2014; the Global South-South Expo in November 2013; the ACP-EU Joint Ministerial Conference in June 2014, the sixth Seminar on the Arms Trade Treaty for Countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, among others.

Additionally, Nairobi has successfully hosted high profile conferences. Key among these are the UNEA II conference in May 2015, the AU Ministerial Retreat in May, the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in July 2015, the World Trade Organization 10th Ministerial Conference in Decem-



Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida (left) and Kenya's Finance Minister Henry Rotich sign the Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investment on Aug. 28. EMBASSY OF KENYA

ber 2015, the 14th U.N. Conference on Trade and Development in July and, of course, TICAD VI.

**Investment destination**

Kenya has a liberalized fiscal and monetary economic regime backed by a sound banking and financial framework and home to major global banks and financial institutions. Indeed, a 2015 World Bank Report ranked Kenya among the best economic performers in Sub-Saharan Africa due to the regulatory, fiscal, administrative and legal re-

forms it has undertaken. These reforms have eased doing business with Kenya as the country looks forward to achieving the Vision 2030.

Kenya has a committed, fairly educated, English-speaking, experienced, professional and semi-professional workforce backed by a culture of hard work. With its positive economic outlook of gross domestic product growth of 6 percent in 2017, we are encouraging Japanese investors to take advantage of the attractive investment climate in Kenya.



The newly commissioned Mombasa Port Second Container Terminal will give Mombasa Port the capacity to handle 1.2 million containers. The port's Phase II Expansion begins in 2017. EMBASSY OF KENYA

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Their Independence

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