

Malawi National Day

A shared dream to continue future business development

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AMBASSADOR OF MALAWI



Today, July 6, Malawi, the "Warm Heart of Africa," is celebrating 53 years of Independence after 70 years of British colonial rule.

With the trust and confidence that the President, His Excel-

lency Arthur Peter Mutharika, has conferred on me, and on behalf of Malawians, I have the greatest pleasure to convey "warm heart greetings" to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the government and people of Japan. My sincere appreciation goes to Japan Tobacco Inc. and Toyota Tsusho Corp. for funding this publication in The Japan Times.

During the state of the nation address on May 5, which was ably delivered by the president of the Republic of Malawi on the occasion of the state opening of the sixth meeting in the 46th session of Parliament and 2017-18 budget meeting in Lilongwe, the president titled his address "Harvesting economic gains for sustainable growth and development," with good reason.

Malawi has been anchored to an agro-based economy from the time of the colonial era, meaning that the country relies heavily on rain-fed agriculture. However, commercial irrigation farming has recently been introduced within the last 10 years or so with the aim of complementing or supplementing production efforts for economic development and growth. This will curb down the negative growth in agriculture the country has gone through due to natural disasters. For instance, recently Malawi has been affected by prolonged dry spells followed by floods the following year, contributing to negative growth in agriculture production.



Malawi President H. E. Arthur Peter Mutharika

Growth in manufacturing, electricity and gas, as well as water supply activities, were equally affected in the last two years, thus registering a decline, thereby hampering the performance of the private sector.

Nevertheless, the government of Malawi has put up stringent measures to carry on with reforms to spur investment and economic growth. Our former President, the late Bingu wa Mutharika repeatedly said, "Malawi is not a poor country, but its people are poor." Malawi is blessed with abundant natural resources either hidden below ground or above ground, but have remained un-exploited. These include scenery and abundant flora and fauna that includes the much sought-after big-five game group for viewing and various minerals, including rare earth minerals, waiting to be extracted.

In agriculture, the country grows a variety of both domestic and cash crops such as maize, tobacco, tea, sugarcane, cotton, cashews, peanuts, rice, beans, coffee and more. These account for almost 80 percent of the country's economic growth.

In 2016, the country attained a real gross domestic product growth rate of 2.7 percent and in 2017 the economy is showing signs of recovery from drought and floods, with an estimated real GDP growth rate between 5 and 6 percent. All this achieve-

ment is attributed to local patriotism and collective self-sacrifice, integrity, hard work, discipline and the peace and security of the Malawi environment.

International investors have also contributed toward this quick recovery plan. For example, Japan Tobacco purchased 14 percent of the total tobacco Malawi produced in 2016.

I would like to emphasize that Malawi has set the right policies and taken the right steps in the right national direction to build on what the country has already begun. These efforts include, but are not limited to, the creation of one-stop center for investors to process and register their business, reducing the time from 30 to only 5 working days and the establishment of a National Planning Commission to facilitate development initiatives in the country, as well as formulate both medium and long-term development strategies. The commission is also mandated with coordinating the implementation of such initiatives. A further effort has



Tobacco farm under JTI contract farming

EMBASSY OF MALAWI

begun with parliament recently passing a bill for the government to establish the Green Belt Initiative Authority. Its mandate is to direct and strengthen strategic oversight and coordination of commercial farming under irrigable land in Malawi.

All the above efforts are aimed at supporting investors, including Japanese companies, to come to Malawi and grow their business and help develop the country. With trade, investment and tourism, there is absolutely no way Malawi will remain poor as some people perceive it to be.



Lake Malawi National Park EMBASSY OF MALAWI

Congratulations
 to the People
 of
 the Republic of Malawi
 on the 53rd Anniversary
 of
 Their Independence

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