

Madagascar National Day Special

'Promising potential' in economy, bilateral relations

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On June 26, the National and Independence Day of the Republic of Madagascar, and as ambassador of Madagascar in Japan, on behalf of President of Madagascar Andry Nirina Rajoelina, his government and the Malagasy people, I am honored to express my warmest greetings to Their Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, the government and Japanese people in the new Reiwa Era.

I would also like to offer my heartfelt thanks to The Japan Times for the opportunity to share this commemoration with its readers, as well as our partners and friends, for its messages of support on this occasion.

As usual, this event is an opportunity to share news about Madagascar and talk about the relationship between Madagascar and Japan.

The island of Madagascar is renowned for its significant economic potential, due to its nature, energy, tourism and human resources.

In this way, the new president of Madagascar, who was elected democratically in January, has implemented a new strategy to develop and achieve the country's potential in an economically feasible and efficient manner. Through the Initiative for the Emergence of Madagascar, and the state's General Policy (PGE), 13 priority axes were selected: peace and security; energy and water for all; a zero-tolerance policy against corruption; education and decent employment for all; health; large-scale industrialization; food; self-sufficiency; sustainable management and the conservation of natural resources; promotion of the habitat and modernization of Madagascar; autonomy and empow-

erment of our decentralized territorial communities; sports; and culture.

The PGE shows the directives and trajectories for the achievement of the initiative's objectives in order to build a strong, prosperous and solidary nation for the pride and the well-being of the Malagasy. This program reflects the priorities and the results expected by the population.

It is in line with this strategy that Foreign Minister Naina Andriantsitohaina pushes for economic diplomacy and the diaspora for its development so these resources are harnessed in a sustainable manner for the well-being of the population.

Regarding the Malagasy diaspora in Japan, the government aims to enhance their contribution to the development of Madagascar through different means. One of the main options is to create conditions conducive to the readjustment of the diaspora who return to Madagascar to serve the country, and offer them opportunities to create their own enterprises. In this regard, the president launched the Firahiana and NextA projects — funding projects that allow young Malagasy to develop their own businesses and acquire a spirit of entrepreneurship.

As for its bilateral relations with Japan, diplomacy, friendship and cooperation were established more than 50 years ago.

These relations have strengthened with the establishment of major projects such as Ambatovy, the largest project for nickel and cobalt in Africa where Sumitomo Corp. became the first shareholder; the expansion of the Port of Toamasina, the most important project ever undertaken in Madagascar; and TaToM, a major infrastructure project aimed at developing economic development between regions.

These important projects have had a positive impact on attracting Japanese investment, with some investors being leaders in their field.

As for the private sector, the Association Economique Madagascar-Japan, an economic association between Madagascar and Japan, was created in July 2017 by Malagasy and Japanese economic operators aiming to boost exchanges between the Malagasy and Japanese private sectors, knowing that the development of the private sector was one of the key elements of Japan's successful economic development. The theme of the private sector will also be one of the major pillars, which will be discussed during the Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VII) in Yokohama in August. Madagascar has also played an active role in TICAD, both as a contributor and as a beneficiary.

In conclusion, there is promising potential in the bilateral relations between our countries, as our economies appear to be complementary. Madagascar has great natural resources, and Japan advanced technology along with an important investment capacity. These should further strengthen this win-win partnership.

Finally, we share some common traditions and insularity that should contribute to a better understanding of the friendship between our two countries.



Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Economy, Trade and Industry Yoshihiro Seki and President Andry Nirina Rajoelina shake hands at lavoloha Palace, the president's residence in a suburb of Antananarivo in February.

EMBASSY OF
MADAGASCAR

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.

Felicitations
to the People of the Republic of Madagascar
on the 59th Anniversary of
Their Independence



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