

Cote d'Ivoire Independence Day Special

Strong potential and investment opportunities await

JEROME KLOH WEYA
AMBASSADOR OF COTE D'IVOIRE



On the occasion of the celebration of the Independence Day of Cote d'Ivoire on Aug. 7, I would like, on behalf of the president of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, His Excellency Alassane

Ouattara, the people and the government, as well as on my own behalf, to express my respectful greetings to Their Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, to the imperial family and to formulate my fervent wishes for their continued health and happiness.

I would also like to extend my warmest greetings to His Excellency Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, the government and friendly people of Japan.

This commemoration is being held for the second consecutive year in a particular context of a health crisis that has impacted the global economy in general and the Ivorian economy in particular.

Indeed, despite the health crisis, Cote d'Ivoire has successfully maintained the dynamism that it has regained over the past decade, which makes the country a regional powerhouse. It now offers all the facets of a professional and efficient business center, as well as a pleasant and popular place to live.

Economic growth remains strong and projections for the future are among the most positive indicators in Africa and the rest of the world. The business climate has changed dramatically and the government is focused on its continuous improvement to rank the country as one of the most dynamic emerging economies in the world.

To achieve these results, the Ivorian government has built its strategy around the

National Development Plans (NDP 2012-2015 and 2016-2020), of which one of the major axes is the implementation of a policy to attract domestic and foreign private investment.

Economic forecasts for the coming years are optimistic and growth impulses are increasingly coming from public and private investments in infrastructure, energy, mining and agro-processing, as well as industrial expansion.

The government is making every effort to achieve a structural transformation of the main development levers, with a view to consolidating a competitive market economy and strengthening the private sector, the real engine of economic growth.

With its port infrastructure, airports, roads and railways, Cote d'Ivoire has been chosen by many world-class investors as an ideal regional hub from which to cover other West African markets.

It is of course no coincidence that these companies have chosen Cote d'Ivoire. Its newfound stability, rather liberal governance and progress in the World Bank's Doing Business Report ranking, which grades the business climate in which companies operate, are major assets.

In addition, the attractiveness of the

investment code, the responsiveness and reliability of commercial jurisdictions, the country's advantageous geographical position and its significant contribution (40%) to the gross domestic product of the West African Economic Monetary Union economy are determining factors in this choice.

This is a good opportunity to congratulate the 15 Japanese companies established in Cote d'Ivoire, including Mitsubishi Corp., Ajinomoto Co., Toyota Tsusho Corp., Modec Inc., Itochu Corp. and Marubeni Corp.

The third edition of the Japan-Africa Business Forum, which took place from June 29 to July 6, offered the perfect occasion for Japanese businesspeople to experience Africa as the best destination for foreign investment.

Cote d'Ivoire is proud to be among the African countries with the most attractive business environments due to the measures taken by the government, notably. These include the introduction of a new investment code granting numerous advantages and the setting up of a one-stop shop for the creation of companies within 24 hours.

Additionally, there has been the establishment of special procedures for the settlement of commercial disputes, and NDP 2021-2025, which aims to make private

investment the main vector for economic growth.

As far as Japan is concerned, the idea of creating a Committee for the Improvement of the Business Environment for the Promotion of Japanese Foreign Direct Investment in Cote d'Ivoire, as advocated by former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during his visit to Abidjan in 2014 to encourage the establishment of Japanese companies was manifested by the signing in January

2020 and the entry into force on March 26, 2021, of the Agreement on the Promotion and Protection of Reciprocal Investments between the Government of Cote d'Ivoire and the Government of Japan. I therefore invite Japanese businesspeople to invest in Cote d'Ivoire.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Mitsubishi, NS Semicon Co. and Toyota Tsusho for their support in sponsoring my message in The Japan Times.



President Alassane Ouattara (left) and former Japanese Embassy Charge d'Affaires Tatsunori Ishiba (right) inaugurate the Japan-Cote d'Ivoire Friendship Flyover in Abidjan on Dec. 16, 2019.

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to the People of
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on the Anniversary of
Their Independence

Mitsubishi Corporation

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NS Semicon Co., Ltd.
<http://www.nsemicon.com/>
info@nsemicon.com



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