
Lesotho National Day Special

Thankful for key socioeconomic support

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2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the formal diplomatic relationship between the Kingdom of Lesotho and Japan. This epic moment was born upon the realization of a shared

commitment to develop the two countries and their people, and has benefited the duo in many avenues, such as political cooperation, people-to-people relations, bilateral cooperation and consultations on issues of mutual interest. This journey has also been marked by the invaluable support provided by the government of Japan in areas of socioeconomic development and candidature support on international positions on the part of Lesotho.

It was also marked by VIP visits to both countries, the highlight being Their Majesties King Letsie III and Queen Masenate Mohato Seeiso's visits first in 2016 and in 2019 during the enthronement of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito.

The Embassy of Lesotho in Japan during this time has managed to open an honorary consulate in Gunma Prefecture with Yasuhiro Takeuchi as honorary consul, establish friendships with the city of Hamamatsu, Shizuoka Prefecture, resulting in the establishment of the Japan-Lesotho Association, a group dedicated to promoting trade especially in the textile industry (a major employer of Basotho women), and win cooperation in education, research and cultural exchange. The textile industry is unfortunately being threatened by waves of COVID-19 and many factories are signaling they will close in the near future due to a lack of markets. The embassy has appointed Yoshiko Miyazaki to be their

goodwill ambassador, whose main duty is to market Lesotho in Japan as a tourism destination.

May I conclude by congratulating the government of Japan for successfully hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games under very tough and unusual conditions. In the Olympics, Lesotho participated with husband and wife marathoners Khoarahlane Seutloali and Neheng Khatala, and in the Paralympics with discus thrower Litsitso Khotlele. Although none won a medal, Khatala managed to finish in 20th place, which we consider both a great achievement and motivation for future runners.

Lastly, I wish to see this Golden Jubilee develop into a diamond one. *Khotso, pula, nala* (peace, rain, prosperity).

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