

# Malawi independence day

## Malawi on the path to development and prosperity

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AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF MALAWI TO JAPAN

On July 6 each year, Malawi celebrates the anniversary of its independence. On this 45th anniversary celebration, I would like to express, on behalf of the president, H.E. Ngwazi Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika, the government and the people of Malawi, our warm greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the government and the people of Japan, and thank them for their continuing friendship. I also wish to extend our best wishes to the very small Malawi community in Japan.



Malawi congratulates Japan for organizing the first TICAD IV Ministerial Follow-up meeting in Botswana on March 21 and 22 this year, and the fifth Africa-Asia Business Forum in Uganda from June 15 to 17, as follow-up to the successful

TICAD IV conference, which was held in May 2008 in Yokohama.

Malawi held parliamentary and presidential elections on May 19, in which the ruling party, namely, the Democratic Progressive Party, won 137 seats in the 193-member parliament and the president was re-elected to a second term. The elections were peaceful, free and fair, and the result a true reflection of the will of the people of Malawi.

The president was sworn in on May 22, 2009, and on June 23, he addressed the newly constituted parliament, describing Malawi as an economic miracle that was moving from poverty to prosperity through economic policies whose main thrust is to bring about prosperity through economic growth within a stable political and macro-economic environment. As a result, Malawi has successfully achieved low inflation, low interest rates and stable exchange rates. Malawi's economic performance continues to be remarkable and in 2008, growth in real gross



President Bingu Wa Mutharika

domestic product was 9.7 percent, compared to 8.6 percent in 2007. The economy experienced a stable exchange rate and a single-digit inflation rate of 8.7 percent.

Malawi is not immune to the ongoing financial and economic crisis. The country, in the medium and long term, may experience some adverse impacts of the economic turmoil, but the government will implement broad-based and holistic strategies to respond to the crisis, and minimize the adverse effects on the economy.

Malawi realized impressive agricultural output in 2008/2009 as a result of implementing the Input Subsidy Program. Maize production was 3.77 million metric tons, representing a 36 percent increase from the previous year's production estimates, and showed a surplus of 1.32 million metric tons after taking into account our national maize requirement.

Surplus output was also registered in other food crops such as cassava, sweet potatoes, groundnuts and pulses, including soybeans. The government will continue to implement the program for food production in the 2009/2010 season. To reduce the country's overdependence on rain-fed agriculture, the government will implement the Green Belt Irrigation scheme, which will bring up to 1 million hectares of land along Lake Malawi and surrounding rivers under irrigation systems to enhance production of a variety of crops, including rice and maize.

With support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Ma-

lawi government continued to implement the One Village, One Product program in 2008/2009 to promote value addition of local products and enhance infrastructure development to stimulate rural enterprises. Currently, there are 32 active registered groups producing more than 25 products.

Malawi embarked on a nationwide infrastructure rehabilitation program for roads, rural electrification, health services infrastructure, and girls' hostels and teachers' houses in secondary schools.

Malawi is becoming a competitive investment destination in Africa. With regard to mining, there are new unfolding opportunities for international investors. Recently, a uranium mine was commissioned in the Karonga district. A feasibility study is under way for a multielement deposit of nobium, tantalum, zircon and uranium in the Mzimba district. Another feasibility study is being carried out in the Balaka and Mangochi districts for the production of lime and cement.

There has been significant growth in investment in the manufacturing sector for cotton, timber, cloth, sugar, tobacco and plastic ware.

Malawi's external trade performance has been encouraging lately as more of its commodities were exported than in the past. The government will therefore continue to implement policies aimed at diversifying exports through the promotion of nontraditional commodities, including paprika, honey, macadamia nuts, handicrafts and cassava.

Malawi is a peaceful country, and continues to be the "Warm Heart of Africa," boasting of beautiful tourist destinations, which include Mount Mulanje, the third-highest peak in Africa at over 3,000 meters above sea level; Lake Malawi, the third-largest freshwater lake in Africa; many national parks and game reserves; and historical and cultural sites.

In conclusion, Malawi thanks the government and people of Japan for their support in our development efforts, and looks forward to

further cooperation and possibilities of expanding areas of cooperation in the years

ahead. Long live the friendship between Malawi and Japan.

### Congratulations to the People of the Republic of Malawi on the 45th Anniversary of Their Independence



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