

Guinea national day

Building a stable, self-sustaining democracy

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA

On this happy occasion of the 51st anniversary of the independence of my country, the Republic of Guinea, it is a great pleasure for me to extend my sincere thanks to the management and personnel of The Japan Times for allowing me to address its many faithful readers.



It is also a great pleasure for me to extend through your esteemed newspaper to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, and the Japanese government and people, the friendly greetings of the Guinean people and government, as well as the expression of their deep appreciation for the assistance extended to Guinea by Japan.

With regard to this assistance, we would like to cite among others the strengthening of financial assistance in the priority sectors of education (construction of schools), health, fisheries and potable water.

You may remember that on Dec. 23, 2008, following the death of Gen. Lansana Conte, president of the republic, the Guinean armed forces took power by creating a National Council for Democracy and Development (NCDD) directed by H.E. Capt. Mousa Dadis Camara, president of the republic, head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces.

In order to assure a peaceful transition, a prime minister, head of government, was named quickly, in the person of Kabine Komara. A govern-

ment consisting of officers and civil technocrats was formed Jan. 13 this year.

It must be emphasized that the action of the armed forces was motivated by the grave crisis that undermined Guinean society and state institutions. As corrective measures, the NCDD and government determined the following priority objectives:

* Restoration of the authority of the state

* Organization of democratic, free, equitable, transparent and credible elections from now until the end of 2009

* Struggle against corruption, insecurity and impunity

* Raising moral standards in the management of the economy and public finances

* Struggle against the trafficking, and consumption of drugs and narcotics

* Struggle against banditry,

and other crimes and offenses

This salutary action brought together political actors, trade unions, civil societies and religious faiths, and led to the regional coordination of the country.

It is necessary to recognize that beyond the prejudice inherent in the taking of power by the army, the action of December 2008 took place without either bloodshed or arrests.

In fact, the intervention of the army created much hope among the population, who during many years looked desperately for an improvement of their living standards through better governance. The objectives that the NCDD endeavored to achieve correspond to this expectation.

On the economic plane

As part of a campaign for raising the moral standards of economic life and public fi-

nances, an aggressive policy of mobilizing customs and fiscal revenues was implemented to cover the absence of external revenues. These actions were undertaken by setting up an audit and surveillance committee of strategic sectors of the economy to put an end to the waste and corruption the country experienced.

On the social plane

Without the improvement of the living conditions of the population, it is difficult to envisage a return to a stable democracy and constitutional order. That is the reason why the NCDD started a vast project called "Water and Electricity Program for All" by investing the funds collected through the audits, and the voluntary contributions of business operators and companies.

Organization of elections

According to the new timetable proposed by an ad hoc joint committee and accepted by the president of the NCDD, the two rounds of the presidential election will be Jan. 31, 2010, and Feb. 14, 2010, and a legislative election will be held March 26.

There are grounds to congratulate and salute the spirit, and the exemplary quality of the aid that Japan extends and continues to extend to Guinea. The political will of the Japanese government to support the Republic of Guinea as much as possible took concrete form with a nonrefundable grant of ¥188.5 million



Concrete aid: Kabada Primary School in Kankan Prefecture, Guinea, is part of Japan's ODA project for the construction of elementary schools.

through the UNDP, which manages support funds for the electoral process in Guinea, to support and assist the holding of fair, transparent and peaceful elections, after extensive consultations with the nation. This assistance from the government of Japan will be used

to purchase the necessary materials (ballot boxes, fitting isolators and voting desks).

It is also hoped that there will be an increase in Japanese public aid to development in favor of my country and also promotion of private direct investment, a condition

sine qua non of a successful and reciprocally advantageous partnership.

In conclusion, I address my congratulations to all my compatriots living in Japan, Australia, the Philippines and the Fiji islands, and I wish them a happy anniversary.



Economic growth: A paddy field in Forcariah, western Guinea EMBASSY OF GUINEA

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