

# Uganda independence day

## Investing in 'The Pearl of Africa'

Wasswa Biriggwa  
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF UGANDA

Today, Ugandans and our friends around the world celebrate the 47th anniversary since the country gained independence Oct. 9, 1962. I take this opportunity to extend our profound appreciation to the people of Japan for the historically friendly relations and close partnership between our two countries, which has grown even stronger during the year.



On this joyous occasion, I am honored to convey the warm greetings and good will of His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, president of the Republic of Uganda, to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, and to the people and government of Japan.

### Bilateral cooperation

Uganda views relations with Japan as a key pillar of its foreign policy. As we celebrate this occasion, I am glad to note that a lot has taken place during the past year in the area of economic cooperation as well as development cooperation in sectors including infrastructure, investment promotion and technical cooperation.

I would like to express our appreciation to the people and government of Japan for the strong commitment to our bilateral cooperation over the past year. During the year, Japan has extended cooperation on several vital projects in Uganda, including the Rural Electrification Project, road infrastructure, River Nile bridge and Ayago Dam feasibility evaluation, and the northern Uganda rehabilitation project. Uganda greatly appreciates Japan's development partnership in other vital areas, including health, education and sustainable irrigation, among others.

I wish to extend warm appreciation to JICA President Sadako Ogata and her entire team for their unflinching

commitment and partnership toward Uganda, and indeed Africa as a whole.

Thanks to JICA's support through the highly successful NERICA (New Rice for Africa) project, Uganda is a regional center for rice production and is set to double output of 14 million tons over the next decade. JICA cooperation is further instrumental in establishing the East and Central African rice production research facility near Kampala. Japan also contributes to capacity building by offering over 100 tertiary and post-graduate scholarships to Ugandans in key disciplines.

By early 2009, JICA had deployed 18 experts in Uganda working on vital development projects in public financial management, education and vocational training, health, capacity development and agriculture, among others. In addition, Uganda is hosting up to 127 Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), the largest number of JOCV volunteers serving in a single country globally.

I wish to especially salute the many JICA/JOCV volunteers and experts who have worked and are working in Uganda for the commitment and zeal they exhibit every day. Living and working with Ugandans all across the country, they impart greatly needed skills that transform the communities they work in. Equally significantly, they generate interest in Japan about Uganda and Africa as a whole. They truly represent the very best attributes of the Japanese people.

### U.N. Security Council

In January 2009, Uganda took its seat on the U.N. Security Council as the African Union (AU) representative for the period 2009-2010, joining Japan, which is Asia's representative on the UNSC during the same period.

Due to the strong bilateral relations between Uganda and Japan, as well as the inextricably close cooperation between Japan and Africa, our two countries continue to cooperate closely in the Security Council on issues promoting peace and security, as well as tackling global challenges, in-



Natural wonders: The national parks of Uganda UGANDA EMBASSY

cluding climate change and economic/financial issues.

Uganda remains committed to its close partnership with Japan in meeting these and other common challenges within the framework of the Security Council, and other multilateral organizations.

### Oil exploration, development

I wish to particularly highlight the discovery a few years ago of large commercially viable oil deposits in Uganda, which has opened up a highly lucrative investment opportunity. As announced by Heritage Oil Corp. and Tullow Oil Co., deposits discovered and fields under development in Uganda hold several "billions of barrels of oil in place."

The company added that the oil discovery in Uganda was unquestionably the largest onshore discovery made in sub-Saharan Africa in at least 20 years, possibly ever. Indeed Tullow announced that it is diverting investment resources away from the U.K. North Sea to accelerate development of oil fields in Uganda as exploration has yielded sufficient reserves to warrant an export-led development, with commercial production scheduled to commence within two years. I invite the Japanese private sector to invest in Uganda's oil and related in-

dustries at this early stage at favorable terms.

### Investment destination

Uganda enjoys a unique location at the heart of sub-Saharan Africa within the East African region, giving it a commanding base for regional trade and investment.

The rapid transformation and modernization of Uganda's economy over the past two decades has resulted in a strong showing of investor confidence in Uganda's investment environment. This objective confidence is based on the predictable macroeconomic stability in Uganda, with the liberalized economy maintaining single-digit inflation during the past decade and stable annual economic growth averaging 6 percent per annum.

Uganda offers highly competitive investment incentives and complete freedom to hold 100 percent foreign ownership of investments while free inflow/outflow of capital is also guaranteed. Investing in Uganda offers market access to preferential trade zones, including the Common Market for Eastern and Southern African states (COMESA), a region with a market of over 300 million people in 20 countries; and the East African Community (EAC), with a population

of over 150 million people. In addition, investing in Uganda grants duty- and quota-free access into the U.S. (AGOA) and EU (EBA) markets, and Asia, including Japan.

Investment security is guaranteed under the constitution and the Investment Code 1991, and Uganda is a signatory to major international investment-related institutions, including the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), Overseas Private Investment Corp. (OPIC) and the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Award (CREFAA), inter alia.

The Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) functions as a one-stop center for investors looking to set up business in Uganda. It facilitates and expedites all investment issues, including licensing, project support services, industrial land acquisition, special passes for investors, and also assists investors in seeking joint-venture partners and funding.

Currently, Japanese investment in Uganda includes Phoenix Logistics (U) Ltd. in the textile sector. Indeed, jeans made from Ugandan organic cotton are sold in Japan by Lee Store under the "Born in Uganda Organic Cotton" brand. I am pleased to note that the brand has proven popular with the Japanese people due to the

high quality of its jeans made from natural, organic cotton and we look forward to increased growth of the brand in Japan over the coming year.

Several other Japanese companies are in advanced stages of investing in oil and related industries, mining and energy, agro-processing, tourism, including hotel construction, ICT and other sectors. Japanese investors wishing to invest in Uganda have access to a \$5.2 million credit line established through the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

Uganda greatly appreciates the support of the Japanese government in implementing TICAD IV measures by setting up easily available credit and strengthening trade insurance. Following the fruitful visit of a joint private-public investment delegation to Uganda in September 2008, Japanese private-sector interest in the many investment opportunities there continues to rise. I am pleased to invite Japanese business people to contact the embassy or the UIA for detailed and specific information to inform their investment considerations.

Ugandan exports to Japan include frozen fish, sesame, cobalt/alloys, coffee, cocoa, vanilla and other spices, cotton, fruits and raw materials. I wish

to invite Japanese importers to take advantage of the cost benefits of importing Ugandan commodities in light of the safe and well-established transportation links between Uganda and international markets, including Japan.

### 'The Pearl of Africa'

Japanese tourists visiting Uganda continue to increase by over 110 percent annually. Uganda's reputation as a safe and unique tourist destination is increasingly known in Japan. Japanese tourists travel to Uganda eager to see the majestic mountain gorillas in their natural Bwindi mountain forest habitat as well as Uganda's 1,200 bird species that make it the richest country for birds in Africa. Other attractions include game viewing of diverse animals, including lions, elephants, leopards, giraffes, cheetahs and buffaloes in five national parks. For a spectacular mountaineering experience, the snow-covered Rwenzori Mountains ("Mountains of the Moon") tower to 5,119 meters and have been designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. The Bujagali Falls, at the source of the River Nile in Jinja, is world fa-

mous for thrilling white-water rafting and kayaking, as well as bird-watching in its scenic forested islands.

In June 2009, Uganda hosted the fifth Africa-Asia Business Forum (AABF V), organized with the support of Japan under the TICAD framework. The occasion brought together tour agencies from six Asian and 29 African countries to promote tourism.

I wish to invite and welcome the Japanese people to visit Uganda, and enjoy the unique warmth and hospitality that moved Sir Winston Churchill to call Uganda "The Pearl of Africa."

In 2010, Africa looks forward to receiving Japanese traveling to the FIFA World Cup and we urge you to take the opportunity to see as much of the continent as possible.

On this occasion, it is a pleasure to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the entire Ugandan community in Japan, and offer my prayers for your continued good health and success in the coming year.

I wish you a happy 47th Uganda Independence Day celebration.


**Congratulations**  
on the Independence Day of the Republic of Uganda

  
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to the People of the Republic of Uganda  
on Their 47th Independence Day



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