

DR Congo independence day

Toward a radiant future on key anniversary

Marcel Mulumba Tshidimba
AMBASSADOR OF THE DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

It has been 50 years since our country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, accessed international sovereignty.



Hence, on this sacred Independence Day, it is with true pleasure that we would like to transmit hereby the warm greetings

from President Joseph Kabila Kabange to their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as the whole Imperial family. We would like to acknowledge and praise their unceasing efforts toward the promotion of peace and friendship between the people of the world. Our greetings are also given to the Japanese government and our friends the Japanese people.

The celebration of this 50th anniversary is an appropriate time to assess the progress of our country's situation. When we take a retrospective look at our journey during the last 50 years, we can express today the joy of celebrating this jubilee united and living in our territory with the same geographical borders as on June 30, 1960.

It is the right occasion to remember that the independent Congo went through its first civil war starting on July 11, 1960, 11 days after the proclamation of independence! The war was caused by those who, throughout the world, wanted to perpetuate their predatory actions again over our natural resources, namely minerals.

The intention to divide this African giant emerged again 10 years ago because of the lust of some countries. But thanks to the determination of the Congolese people and their will to live united, and with the support of some goodwilled people, the Balkanization didn't take place. How long will this relief last?



President Joseph Kabila Kabange of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

During the last few years, the government has been committed to reinforcing the peace and to rebuilding the country. Indeed, the latest crisis, which lasted from 1997 to 2003, made DRC bloodless with the basic infrastructures completely destroyed.

The reconstruction of a territory as large as Western Europe is not an easy task, especially when the country is sorely short of financial means. Its meager fiscal revenues are being directly allocated to payments of an external debt for which the terms are largely undefined and for which we are on a race with the institutions of the Bretton Woods system to either reduce or simply cancel it.

To our foreign partners, including Japan, we express and repeat our confidence that only direct foreign investment, which creates jobs, will be able to help the "Giant of Africa" to stand up and play its own role on the worldwide stage, politically and economically. The DRC possesses the natural resources that the main industries of the world

need for operating properly, which, if exploited judiciously, can certainly contribute to the improvement of the conditions of life of our populations.

The forest of the Congo basin, which sits in more than 60 percent of our territory, is an asset that the whole world needs, namely in the fight against the effects of global warming. On this subject, the DRC has been chosen as one of the pilot countries of the U.N. program REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation). The purpose of this program is to get the country ready for the REDD initiative by 2012 as soon as that regime is accepted and recognized internationally as an instrument for the reduction of factors that cause climatic change in the post-Kyoto framework.

The forests of the DRC, covering more than 1 million sq. km, about half of which are tropical forests, remains, however, exploitable by the forestry and other mining industries.

According to the relevant studies, the hydroelectric dam



Golden anniversary: The official logo of the DRC's 50th independence day shows the country's French initials.

at Inga alone, once its four phases are completed, will be able to provide electric energy to the entire continent of Africa. The contributions of Japanese enterprises, with their knowhow and their advanced technology for realizing this project, can be of great support.

The heavy rainfall can also help those countries that lack water. We will not come back to the diverse minerals that fill up the Congolese soil because it is a well-known story.

To conclude, we take the opportunity of our jubilee to express our hope of seeing Japa-

nese corporations joining our efforts in the reconstruction of the DRC along with the other partners who are already there. The Congo is vast. There is enough space for everyone.

After the painful past of the 1960s and the anguishes of the war of aggression of the '90s, the Congolese people aspire to a peaceful life; to building a country where it's good to live, and where they live smartly with the immediate neighbors and friends from afar.

To our fellow citizens who live in this beautiful country Japan, we give our sincere



Power spot: Located on the Congo River in Inga, 225 km southwest of the capital Kinshasa, the Inga Dams provide hydroelectricity to the DRC. The smallest, Inga I, was built in 1972, followed by Inga II in 1982. Both are under reconstruction from the damage sustained during the Congo Civil War. Plans for two larger dams, Inga III and Grand Inga, to supply electricity to African countries are in development.

EMBASSY OF THE DR CONGO

congratulations and encourage them to learn lessons from the Japanese experience to benefit our dear and beautiful country. Blessed gift of our ancestors, for which we have the mission to ensure its greatness, as we sing in our national anthem.

Enjoy the feast!

Congratulations to the People of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the 50th Anniversary of Their Independence

Shigeru Ishige
Member of Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly

The celebration of the 50th anniversary of the independence of the Democratic Republic of the Congo gives me a great opportunity to extend congratulations and best wishes for a prosperous future for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



I know how creative, skillful and friendly are the Congolese people and, in line with the Congo politics of the promotion of Congolese nationals living in foreign countries, I take advantage of the cultural similarities with Japanese people to call for ideas and actions aiming for the full integration of Congolese men and women in Japanese communities.

Let's open our minds and create new opportunities for the Congolese, both individuals and corporate bodies, in a multi-cultural, Japanese-Congolese society.

3-6-23 Shibakubocho, Nishi-Tokyo-shi, Tokyo 188-0014

Tel: 042-460-0855 Fax: 042-460-0856

E-mail: shigeru@ishige.info

http://www.ishige.info

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Akasaka Biz Tower, 5-3-1, Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-6332, Japan