

Malawi independence day

Development path remains a success story for 'The Warm Heart of Africa'

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July 6 marks an auspicious day as people of Malawi celebrate the 46th Anniversary of Independence.

On this special occasion, I would like to express, on behalf of the government and people of the Republic of Malawi, our best wishes to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko and the government and the people of Japan.



This year's independence anniversary is celebrated on a high note because it is the year that H.E. the President of the Republic of Malawi Ngwazi Prof. Bingu Wa Mutharika was elected African Union chairman.

As we take stock of our achievements and embark on the challenges that lie ahead,

we salute the government of Japan for the role they have played in contributing to our development endeavors, including through financial and technical assistance, and for various development endeavors rendered through the TICAD process. Examples of assistance from Japan to Malawi include infrastructure development projects such as the rehabilitation of the Blantyre City Road, bridges and health facilities, and technical assistance for the One Village One Product (OVOP) movement.

Malawi is thankful to the government of Japan and is proud to have hosted the largest number of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) in the world since the program began in 1971. These young volunteers and other technical experts continue to provide valuable services and skills in a number of technical fields.

After six years of positive economic performance under the wise and visionary leadership of President Mutharika,



H.E. President of Malawi
Ngwazi Bingu Wa Mutharika

Malawi's development path remains a success story. Malawi has made remarkable progress in various sectors of the economy, including in transport and infrastructure development, agriculture and health.

Prudent macroeconomic policies have been the driving force behind Malawi's success story and contributed to the

continuation of high economic growth rates of above 7 percent in the past five years, a single digit inflation rate since 2007, a stable exchange rate since 2004 and reduced domestic debt, from 25 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2004 to 13.5 percent of GDP in 2008/09.

Malawi's success story in the agriculture and food security sector since 2005 has been recognized globally. The government launched the Farm Input Subsidy Program, which resulted in impressive agricultural output in corn and other products. Since then, Malawi increased corn production to an average of 3 million tons per year. In this regard, Malawi has been transformed from being a food deficit country to a star performer in food production.

Malawi's economy relies on agriculture and the performance of the sector is largely dependent on the pattern of rain. To cushion against possible crop failure due to erratic rainfall, the government has

embarked on a project called the Green Belt Irrigation Initiative, which would use Lake Malawi and other bodies of water in the country for irrigation to enhance production of a variety of crops, livestock and fish. So far 6,000 hectares of land were developed, bringing the total area under smallholder irrigation to about 40,000 hectares benefiting over 283,000 smallholder farmers.

Malawi continues on its nationwide infrastructure rehabilitation program including in energy, education and health. In our transport infrastructure program, the government has made significant strides in improving our roads, rail and air transportation.

Malawi continues to create a climate conducive to private investment. There are many investment opportunities for international investors. Such opportunities are available to investors including in agro-processing, manufacturing of textile products, fertilizers, pesticides, cut flowers and

tourism.

There are indications that Malawi has many untapped natural resources, which may include coal deposits, gold, diamonds, emeralds and oil. A uranium mine is now operational and exports of uranium concentrates began in August 2009.

Malawi is commonly referred to as "The Warm Heart of Africa" and remains one of the most attractive tourist destinations on the continent. Besides enjoying the legendary hospitality of Malawians, tourists can enjoy the experience of the most beautiful ornamental fish species in our 584-km-long lake, magnificent mountains and gorgeous game and national parks.

We wish to thank the government and the people of Japan for their continued support and contribution to Malawi's development. We also wish to thank Toyota Tsusho for supporting our anniversary message in The Japan Times.

Congratulations to the People of the Republic of Malawi on the 46th Anniversary of Their Independence



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