

# Kenya independence day

## Kenya, Japan remain partners in progress

Benson H.O. Ogotu  
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA

On this momentous occasion in the history of the Republic of Kenya, I wish to convey, on behalf of the government and people of Kenya, our warm and gracious greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko as well as to the government and friendly people of Japan. I also



wish to thank The Japan Times for once again affording us this space to share with its distinguished readers our joy as we reflect on the warm and mutually beneficial cooperation that characterizes the ties between Kenya and Japan.

Since our independence 47 years ago, the people of Japan have stood side by side with their Kenyan brethren through development challenges and aspirations. Japan continues to be our leading development partner.

The last one year has wit-

nessed added impetus in our relations. In February, the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of the Republic of Kenya Raila Odinga led a delegation of senior government and business executives for a four-day official visit to Japan. This was followed in March by the visit to Kenya by His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Naruhito. Within a span of nine months six ministers have made official visits to Japan. These high-level exchanges have served to further illustrate the strong bonds of friendship existing between our two countries.

Japan's development cooperation with Kenya, which dates back to 1964, traverses all areas of human endeavor. Currently, our bilateral cooperation focuses on five key areas, namely economic infrastructural development, agricultural development, human resource development, environmental conservation and health.

The recent past has witnessed a significant growth in the volume of trade between the two countries, registering close to ¥50 billion in 2009. However, the balance of trade is still heavily tilted in favor of Japan. We would want to see a more exponential growth pat-



**Modernity: Nairobi is the capital and largest city of Kenya.**

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tern. In this regard, prospects exist for bridging the gap by way of increasing imports into Japan through diversification of trade items, entering into joint ventures and direct investments. I wish to assure you that Kenya is open and safe for investment.

Prospective businessmen and investors are also welcome to take advantage of opportunities in the wider East African Community with a market of over 126 million in the five partner states. Readers will be glad to know that the integration process in the community is gathering pace.

Kenya has always been synonymous with wildlife. We are

the home of the famous "Big Five" (lion, leopard, elephant, rhino and buffalo) and it is true that this is the best place in the entire continent to see these magnificent species and numerous more in their natural habitats. But Kenya has even more to offer. We have an incredible range of wild habitats, each one with its own unique range of species.

It is important to mention the Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD) and specifically TICAD IV, which aims to support African growth and development by doubling Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Africa by 2012. Ken-

ya's accrued benefits under the TICAD process clearly demonstrate its value as an excellent example of genuine cooperation based on mutual trust and understanding of all involved parties.

During the year, we witnessed a major milestone event: the promulgation of a new constitution of the Republic of Kenya, ushering in "The rebirth of a nation or the inception of a Second Republic." The new constitution is the product of a Kenyan-driven process and provides us with a framework for shared economic prosperity, social inclusion and political stability. It creates the framework for an enabling environment for transforming our nation. Institutions of governance have been created with the necessary checks and balances to ensure that there is no abuse of power and human rights. The constitution is of paramount importance to the socioeconomic and political development of Kenya, in particular, the delivery of Vision 2030.

Let me also take this opportunity to salute Kenyans in Japan for their patriotism and the positive contribution they are giving in the enhancement of our bilateral cooperation. Special mention goes to our athletes, who have over the years continued to shine in major meets in Japan, replicating the dominance we have

maintained on the global stage. They are making us proud as a country of winners.

Finally, I wish to thank all those who have sent to us messages of good will. We take this

opportunity to wish dear readers a happy festive season and prosperity in the New Year. Meanwhile, I invite you all to visit our mission website [www.kenyarep-jp.com](http://www.kenyarep-jp.com)

**Congratulations**  
to the People of the Republic of Kenya  
on the 47th Anniversary of  
Their Independence Day



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**Nature: Beaches along the Indian Ocean are a tourist draw in Mombasa, Kenya's second-largest city.** KENYA TOURIST BOARD