

Ghana independence day

Striving to build a better Ghana

William G.M. Brandful
AMBASSADOR OF GHANA

Ghana celebrates 55 years of independence on March 6. This auspicious occasion should be devoted to the examination of national achievements, especially in a year of presidential and parliamentary elections. The celebration should also provide an opportunity for Ghana to convey fraternal wishes to the international community for the dedicated support that the country has enjoyed as it strives to build a "better Ghana."



Let me therefore, in my capacity as ambassador, convey heart-

felt greetings and deepest respect on behalf of the government and people of Ghana to their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the entire Imperial family as well as to the government and friendly people of Japan for the exceptional hospitality extended to Ghana in Japan over the past year. While expressing the profound appreciation to our illustrious host country, we wish to join hands with all friends of Japan to pray for the continued good personal health of the Japanese leadership generally, and for the full restoration of health to His Imperial Majesty in particular.

We also need to pause and reflect soberly with the people of Japan as the country memorializes the first anniversary of the triple disaster that struck a year



President of the Republic of Ghana John Evans Atta Mills

ago March 11. The resilience and fortitude exhibited by Japan in the face of that disaster was admirable and have since provided succor to a country that has spared no effort to recon-

struct. So, even as we share, one year on, in the national grief of remembrance of those who lost their lives and properties, we are also comforted in the knowledge that over the past year, no effort has been spared to reconstruct the country and provide the country with the insurance that may be humanly possible to prevent the recurrence of another tragedy on that scale.

Ghana, during the year, remained committed at the domestic level, to promote sound economic management, good governance, socioeconomic development in implementation of the agenda to build a "better Ghana." Generally, the macroeconomic projections contained in the "Manifesto for a Better Ghana," prepared in 2008 by the ruling National Democratic Con-

gress (NDC) administration, were achieved in the past year, as the country recorded the most sustained single-digit rates of inflation in decades, with the rate of inflation of 8.55 percent for 2011 being the lowest in the 42 years since 1970. Projects, amounting to more than \$7 billion in value of foreign direct investments, were recorded. For the first time ever, Ghana produced over one million tons of cocoa in 2011. That output was over 50 percent of the amount produced in 2008, of 680,000 tons. And, at the end of 2011, Ghana had earned a total of \$444,124,724 from the sale made by the Ghana Group through the raising of crude oil production four times, making a total of 3,930,189 barrels.

At the sub-regional level, Ghana continued to contribute positively to the realization of the objectives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), especially in the areas of maintenance of peace, security, stability and development, anchored on a culture of human rights of her citizens, respect for the free movement of goods and capital and for free and fair elections, and the pursuit of democratic accountability and good governance among others.

The initiative taken by Ghana to honor the memory of and role played by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president, in the promotion of Pan-Africanism and African emancipation, through the institution in Ghana of the celebration of Founders' Day, commemorated Sept. 21 starting from 2010, found a unique continental expression in the decision taken at the beginning of 2012 by the 54-member African Union Commission to unveil a statue of Ghana's first president, erected on the grounds of the new headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, during the 18th Ordinary Session of the Assembly. Cast in bronze, the 3.5-meter statue depicts Dr. Nkrumah wearing a short-sleeve shirt in an African design with a pair of trousers and shoes to match. The significance of such a huge honor bestowed on Ghana is not lost on the country! Indeed Ghana



Discovery: Located 60 km offshore between Deepwater Tano and West Cape Three Points blocks in Ghana, the Jubilee Field has produced oil since December 2010. EMBASSY OF GHANA

na will, through her present and future citizens, be forever grateful for that gesture of recognition.

Ghana-Japan bilateral relations were also intensified during the past year, as Ghana continued to occupy the enviable record of being the only African country to have arranged, since the 1990s, for her past and current presidents to visit Japan on 10 different occasions. The visit to Ghana by Crown Prince Naruhito in March 2010 lifted bilateral relations between Ghana and Japan to a higher pedestal.

Ghana's high visibility and image continued to soar in Japan as a result of the nationwide sale of Ghana brand chocolates produced in Japan with Ghanaian cocoa beans. Additionally, new programs for multisectoral capacity-building and training were instituted for mutual gain, while cultural exchanges and other forms of collaboration were explored. The basis has therefore been created for the erection, during 2012, of new areas of celebration. These include the 60th anniversary of the col-

laboration between Ghana and the Japanese-based Cocoa and Chocolate Association of Japan in June 2012, and the monthlong tour in Japan from August 2012, of the Ghana Dance Company.

Ghana wishes to invite Japan to further partner with Ghana in the years ahead, to strengthen the already existing areas of cooperation. There is no doubt that new investment opportunities have emerged in Ghana, especially in the wake of the discovery of oil and the



Capital: Accra is the main city of Ghana, home to 4 million people and serving as the nation's economic and administrative hub, and a center of culture and tourism. EMBASSY OF GHANA

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Ghana independence day



Independence marker: The Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park is dedicated to the first president of Ghana for his campaign to liberate the nation from colonial rule. EMBASSY OF GHANA

The Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum, symbol of Ghana's genesis

Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was an influential 20th century advocate of Pan-Africanism, the first president of Ghana (1957-1966) and leader of its predecessor state, the Gold Coast, from 1952 to 1966.

The Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum, also known as the Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park, is the last resting place of the first president of Ghana. His body and that of his wife, Madam Fathia Nkrumah, are buried under a catafalque raised in the center of the park.

The park is located directly opposite the old Parliament House in Accra, the capital city of Ghana.

The museum houses the personal effects and publications of Ghana's first president and pictures showing his life history.

A bronze statue of Dr. Nkrumah is sited at the exact location where he proclaimed

Ghana's independence. As you approach the main way leading to the Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum, you will see springs on either side of the walkway. Each spring has seven bare-chested, squatting statuettes of flute players, who seem to welcome the arrival of world leaders and other important personalities. The design of the Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum, which represents swords turned upside down, symbolizes peace. It can also be viewed as an uprooted tree to signify the unfinished work of Dr. Nkrumah to totally unite Africa.

This is a place you wouldn't want to miss during your stay in Ghana, since the transition of the Gold Coast to Ghana happened at this same location. The Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum is what some scholars call the "genesis" of the actual history of Ghana.

Growth on a common vision

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

commencement of its production. The gas sector also presents opportunities waiting to be tapped. The accompanying developments of tourism-related investments need to attract the Japanese private sector.

While extending fraternal greetings both on behalf of the embassy as well as in my own name to all compatriots in Japan on our anniversary, my special appeal is to let us use the occasion to reflect on the way forward as we strive collectively to build a better and prosperous Ghana anchored on a united and common vision.

I would also like to take this opportunity to renew our heartfelt gratitude and solidarity to the government and friendly people of Japan for contributing in various ways toward the achieve-

ment of another successful year by Ghana.

Finally, our sincerest appreciation is addressed to all our sponsors for supporting this media initiative to facilitate the transmission of this message in celebration of Ghana@55. We are equally grateful for the role played by the management of The Japan Times to support this endeavor to reach the English readership of their newspaper.

The Ghana Embassy will position itself, even as Japan and her partners undertake the preparations toward the holding of TICAD V (Tokyo International Conference on African Development) in 2013, to play its part in the further consolidation of relations between Ghana and Japan.

Long live Ghana-Japan relations.

Congratulations

to the People of the Republic of Ghana
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