

DR Congo national day

Japanese investment can spur nation's development

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Every year on June 30 the Congolese people commemorate their National Day, celebrating their nation's independence.



On this occasion, the Congolese people renew their honor to the Fathers of Independence among them H.E. the First President Joseph Kasavubu, H.E. the First Prime Minister Patrice Emery Lumumba (Martyr of Independence) and others.

In this moment of the celebration of our 53rd anniversary of independence, and on behalf of the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and on my own behalf, I take this opportunity to express my congratulations to all Congolese people living in Japan and wish them happiness, health and success during their stay in this beautifully friendly country of Japan.

On this Sacred Day, I have the honor and pleasure to extend hereby the warm greetings with deep respects from the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo H.E. Joseph Kabila Kabange, the government as well as all Congolese people to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as to all distinguished members of the Imperial family, members of government and to all the people of Japan.

The 53rd anniversary of the independence of the Democratic Republic of the Congo coincides with the conclusion of TICAD V, which has pledged a huge financial package in order to support the trade exchanges between Japan and Africa as to stimulate growth in Japan and development in Africa. In the Yokohama Declaration 2013 we can read: Hand in Hand with a more Dynamic Africa. Yes, we can reaffirm TICAD has served as an open and inclusive international forum since its inception in 1993. It has raised and maintained global awareness of Africa's development challenges and opportunities, and contributed to Africa's development.

In that respect, the Democratic Republic of the Congo believes that TICAD is an opportunity for Africa to benefit from technology transfer for its development.

After 53 years of independence, the Democratic Republic of the Congo strongly believes in the need to diversify its portfolio of partners.

Right now a new generation of leaders is rising with determination to help the country play its leading role not only in Africa but also in the world as an emerging country to come.

Today, under the new leadership of H.E. Joseph Kabila Kabange, our country is in a new era of reconstruction with priorities for infrastructure in the fields of energy, transports, sea-ports, railways, airports and in the fields of health, education, water, etc.

This program of reconstruction coincides with the conclusions of TICAD V and by the voice of H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who has promised a big package to the African continent.

We are very happy to see Japan has maintained its faith in the future of Africa. Yes, with

Japan we can believe in Africa's development. Japan has come to assist our continent when all the international community has forgotten Mother Africa. Japan is one of the best partners of Africa.

In his opening speech, HE Prime Minister Abe promised much help for our continent in the field of infrastructure and many others fields of development such as health, education, etc., through the public and private sector including official development assistance (ODA).

It is known that infrastructure is one of the big gaps in the development of African countries in general and the Congo in particular. The DRC, six times larger than Japan, needs many infrastructures (roads, transport systems, railways, etc.). If there are no infrastructures, the country can not be developed and become a rich country.

The DRC government is doing its best to build a new country as many people from abroad are witnessing a big change all over the country. These foreigners are surprised by the new, dynamic nation-building, which has never been seen in the country. But, the structural gap in infra-

structure constitutes to be a big handicap for economic growth and poverty reduction.

This is the reason we invite the Japanese private sector as we did last year to join many others partners of Congo because Japan needs all kind of minerals for its industries. The DRC has many opportunities in this field (copper, cobalt, diamonds, gold, uranium, cassiterite, niobium, manganese, tin, oil, etc.).

A long time ago, the government initiated economic reforms aimed at stabilizing the macro-economic situation and promoting economic growth to attract investments. The country also has a code of investments and a mining code interesting for those who wish to invest in the DRC.

In the energy field, the government is finalizing the large hydroelectric dam of Inga on the Congo River. This project is to become a regional project (NEPAD) that can supply electricity to many African countries. The Japanese private sector can also join other African partners in this big project such as South Africa, the U.S., European Union, etc. It is known that sustainable development cannot occur in the ab-

sence of electric power.

Others fields that may interest the Japanese private sectors are: tourism, agriculture, textile, transports (airways, railways, ports) and forests/timber. For this last point the DRC has about 46 percent of equatorial forests with many available species of timber. This rich environment is the reason the DRC plays an important role against the effects of global warming.

In conclusion, the Democratic Republic of the Congo congratulates very much H.E. Prime Minister Abe for his decision to continue to sustain the TICAD process for African development.

As I said last year, the relations between Japan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are excellent. The cooperation is heading up more and more. The recent inauguration

of the new JICA Center in Kinshasa is one of example of excellent relations between Japan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

So, I encourage the group of Japanese companies that visited our country last October to continue to go to invest in our country. This will show a good and real example that you are following the prime minister's steps, as he said during TICAD V.

Congratulations

to the People of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
on the 53rd Anniversary of Their Independence

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