

## Côte d'Ivoire independence day

## Consolidation of peace, security for economic development

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AMBASSADOR OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE

The celebration of the 54th Anniversary of Côte d'Ivoire's National Day gives me the pleasant opportunity to address once again the friends and development partners of Côte d'Ivoire, through the columns of The Japan Times.

First of all, I would like, on behalf of the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, H.E. Mr. Alassane Ouattara, the government and the people of Côte d'Ivoire and on my own behalf, to extend my respectful greetings to Their Imperial Majesties, Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as the Imperial family, and offer them my fervent wishes of health and continuous happiness.

I would also like to convey my sincere greetings to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the government and the friendly people of Japan.

I also salute my fellow countrymen living in Japan and the other countries of the Embassy's diplomatic district: Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore.

Finally, I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to express deep appreciation of the president, the government and the people of Côte d'Ivoire to Prime Minister Abe for his historic visit in Côte d'Ivoire on Jan. 10 and 11, 2014, at the head of a large delegation of officials as well as executives of Japanese major companies and industrial groups.

This visit offered the occasion for the President of Côte d'Ivoire, H.E. Mr. Alassane Ouattara, to invite - in the spirit that characterizes the integration between the Member States of ECOWAS - the other heads of state and government to an enriching meeting with Prime Minister Abe on major integration infrastructure projects in the sub-region as part of the implementation of the Yokohama Action Plan.

This address will focus on the consolidation of peace and security in Côte d'Ivoire, the improvement of the Ivorian economy and the relation between Japan and Côte d'Ivoire.

#### Peace and security

The consolidation of peace through national reconciliation remains one of the government's priorities. Throughout this year 2014, various measures have been taken by the government such as the release of some people close to the former president arrested after post-election crisis, and the reintegration of some of them into their former positions.

The overall security situation is stable now. The security has improved significantly with an index of insecurity currently at 1.2 against 1.4 in September 2013 and 3.8 in January 2012.



Children give flowers to the wife of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at their arrival at Abidjan's airport on Jan. 10. EMBASSY OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE

The government is working to consolidate the downward trend of this indicator through the strengthening of the operational capabilities of the security forces, in particular the phased deployment within the country of the Center for Coordination and Operational Decisions, a special unit comprising police, gendarmes and military, designed to ensure the security of people and assets.

#### Ivorian economy

On the economic front, the government expects a growth greater than 10 percent for the year 2014, after the impressive growth rates in 2012 (9.8 percent) and 2013 (8.7 percent). For a strong, sustainable and inclusive economic growth, the government decided to focus on three key areas: infrastructure, private sector and social welfare.

With regard to infrastructure, many works have been completed or are at a certain stage of completion. The main ones are the 230 km-long Highway Abidjan-Yamoussoukro, the Bridge Henri Konan Bédié in Abidjan, the Interchange on the Boulevard Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in Abidjan and the Highway between Abidjan and Grand-Bassam.

In the airport area, the modernization and the extension of the Airport Cargo Terminal of Abidjan was officially launched on March 1, 2014. In addition, the government continues to adapt the airport's runways to accommodate wide-bodied aircrafts such as Boeing 787s or Airbus A380s, which had its inaugural flight last January on the occasion of the economic forum entitled "Invest in Côte d'Ivoire - 2014." This modernization also seeks the compliance of the airport to the ICAO standards for certification in 2014. Moreover, the rehabilitation of the airports of Korhogo, Man and Odienné will start soon, for flights within the country by Air Côte

d'Ivoire, the national airline company.

In the railway sector, the government attaches priority importance to the following strategic projects: 1) the launch, at the beginning of the year 2015, of the work of the urban passenger train in Abidjan, 2) the launch, before the end of the year, of works for the rehabilitation of the railway Abidjan-Ouagadougou-Kaya with an extension to Tambao and Niamey (Niger), completing the original ambition of the "Régie Abidjan Niger," 3) the construction, in the form of B.O.T, of the railway between Man and San Pedro in an integrated approach taking into account the construction and exploitation of the ore terminal of the port of San Pedro, as well as the exploitation of Mount Klahoy's iron ore.

The completion of these major projects will enable Côte d'Ivoire to take comprehensive policy for exploration and mining, especially in western part of the country, with the development of related services such as transportation and logistics.

It is also worth noting that, in addition to reserves of iron, this part of the country has significant resources of nickel, palladium and scandium. Moreover, the whole of the national territory has huge natural resources including gold, diamond, manganese, bauxite, nickel and others.

Finally energy resources, including gas and oil, complete the list of Côte d'Ivoire's economic potential.

The economic forum entitled "Invest in Côte d'Ivoire - 2014", held from Jan. 29 to Feb. 1, 2014, in Abidjan, aimed to show the potential and investment opportunities in Côte d'Ivoire. The large numbers of partici-

pants, estimated at more than 3,700, including 1,080 foreign investors from all over the world, confirmed the success of this event.

Regarding the private sector, the government's action aims to consolidate the role of the private sector as the main engine for economic growth and the largest provider of jobs, particularly for young graduates.

In this perspective, investments, including those from the private sector with the private public partnership, will be one of the major levers of growth and promoters of development. In this regard, the attractiveness of the new investment code is accompanied by significant structural and sectorial reforms carried out particularly in the context of "Doing Business" and the "Millennium Challenge Corporation," contributing to improve significantly the competitiveness and attractiveness of the economy of the country and providing an adequate environment for business development.

Furthermore, Côte d'Ivoire's economy being mainly based on agriculture, the government has set up a national agricultural investment program for the 2012 to 2016 period. The integrated approach of this program, which takes into account both cash crops and food production, is an asset for agro-business in order to increase local processing of agricultural products. It aims to improve production, competitiveness and the modernization of the agricultural sector.

At the social level, the wealth generated by the country's economic performance should enable the government to implement a social policy.

At the level of the improv-



A meeting between ECOWAS heads of state and governments was held with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Côte d'Ivoire on Jan. 11. They discussed major integration infrastructure projects in the sub-region as part of the implementation of the Yokohama Action Plan. EMBASSY OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE

ing the purchasing power of the households, there has been the increase in the minimum wage and the increase in the civil servants' salaries.

These measures are in addition to those relating to the establishment of minimum price guarantee for producers of cocoa, coffee, cashew nuts and cotton.

Finally, with regard to the U.N.'s Millennium Development Goals, the government is making efforts to improve the health system of the country. To this end, the government continues the construction, rehabilitation and renovation of university hospital centers, general hospitals and other healthcare units.

In relation to housing, the government launched a vast economic and social of housing program. The initial level set at 60,000 units for 2013-2015 was increased to 150,000 units to accommodate high demand.

In terms of tourism, located in West Africa, Côte d'Ivoire is bathed in a warm tropical climate tempered by sea breeze passing across the 550 kilometers of fine sand beaches in the south. The country has the road and hotel infrastructure capable of meeting the expectations of tourists looking to experience nature with the Banco Forest on the periphery of Abidjan. Côte d'Ivoire also has the largest basilica in the world, the Basilica "Notre Dame de la Paix" in Yamoussoukro.

#### Relation with Japan

Japan and Côte d'Ivoire have enjoyed excellent relations since the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries after the accession of Côte d'Ivoire to independence in 1960.

Since then, Japan has consistently supported Côte



The "Notre Dame de la Paix" basilica in Yamoussoukro, is the largest basilica in the world. EMBASSY OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE

d'Ivoire in its development effort. I take this opportunity to reiterate to the government and the Japanese people the recognition and the gratitude of the government and the Ivorian people of Côte d'Ivoire for this mark of friendship and loyalty.

The notable participation of President Alassane Ouattara at the fifth Tokyo International Conference on Africa Development (TICAD V) in June 2013 in Yokohama and Prime Minister Abe's visit in Côte d'Ivoire are eloquent testimonies.

Despite these excellent relations between Côte d'Ivoire and Japan, the volume of

commercial exchange between the two countries remains low, with regard to their respective enormous potential. Therefore, I invite Japanese businessmen to choose Côte d'Ivoire's destination where there is a very attractive investment code for industry and agro-processing industry, and to invest massively to take advantage, through public-private partnerships, of many opportunities offered by the country. Japanese companies like Ajinomoto Co., Ltd., Itochu Corporation and Mitsubishi Corporation are already there and some others are willing to do the

same. The offices of JETRO and JICA in Côte d'Ivoire, in addition to the Embassy of Côte d'Ivoire in the Japan, are available for more information on the potential of the country.

I would like to conclude my message by expressing my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the companies which have so generously sponsored the Embassy this year. Arranged alphabetically, these are: Ajinomoto Co., Imperial Hotel, Mitsui and Co., Mitsubishi Corp. and Tokyo Kankan Co. I sincerely thank them for their kind and valuable support and interest in Côte d'Ivoire.

### Congratulations

to the People of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire  
on the 54th Anniversary of Their Independence



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