

Guinea national day

Overcoming hardships amid economic, democratic progress

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AMBASSADOR OF GUINEA

The celebration of the 56th Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Guinea, offers a welcome opportunity to express to their Majesties the Emperor Akihito, Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, the government and people of Japan the gratitude of the Guinean government and President of the Republic of Guinea, H.E. Alpha Conde, for the invaluable contributions to Guinea as part of the process of economic and social development.



On this happy occasion, I'd like to pay tribute to all our known and anonymous predecessors that fought to the ultimate sacrifice for our country's independence. I would also like to address the Guinean community of Japan and ask for continued cohesion and national unity in contributing to the economic and social development of our country.

Fifty-six years is quite an advanced age in the evolution of the life of a man and as a country more than 50 years old, the vicissitudes of history have given us maturity and wisdom.

For us, the independence of Guinea is also that of the whole of Africa and all the oppressed countries, the independence of our country served to unlock the aspiration for the complete decolonization of Africa.

It is the celebration enabling us beyond our ideology, poli-

tics, race and class to take stock and strengthen the gains of independence.

For the valiant people of Guinea, this anniversary should be a new beginning for Guineans in a joint effort of reflection and action, to open a new page in the history of the country for the benefit of all her children.

Under the high and wise leadership of President Conde, Guinea has embarked on a vast program of consolidation of national unity and implemented projects and development programs to lay the foundations for economic policy and harmonious social development.

For nearly two-and-a-half years, through rigorous and virtuous economic management, Guinea has regained the confidence of the international financial community and donors.

Evidenced by the results of the recent economic forum in Abu Dhabi, during which senior executives from major international institutions, including leaders of some of the largest international firms showed keen interest in Guinea.

This meeting saw more than \$6 billion of direct investment in Guinea, confirming our country has become a credible partner.

President Conde said then, "I felt great pride in presiding over a country that is able to offer international investors guarantees of credibility, both in terms of its word and the competence of its political and economic leaders."

Today, we have not only cut the budget deficit, curbed in-



President Alpha Conde of the Republic of Guinea

flation, seen external debt relief, stabilized the currency, but also tripled customs revenue and doubled taxation.

These results, regularly praised by major international agencies, helped Guinea sign a formal agreement with the IMF in September 2012, on the completion of the HIPC initiative, which led to the cancellation of more than two-thirds of our external debt (over \$3.2 billion).

After parliamentary elections on Sept. 28, the EU unblocked access to the 10th European Development Fund (EDF).

This agreement with the EDF also marks resumption of full cooperation with the EU, which had been suspended in 2008.

An agreement for the exploitation of iron ore from Mount Simandou was also reached.

The benefits of these efforts have resulted in a wage in-

crease of 50 percent, the adoption for the first time of a minimum wage, medical coverage for workers and the improvement of living conditions for the poorest.

Today, the improving business environment has been confirmed by the World Bank's Doing Business 2013 report, which placed Guinea among the twenty world economies that made the most progress.

"We must now, with full responsibility, put our energy into the implementation of a comprehensive development program throughout the territory," said President Conde.

The Guinea-Morocco Economic Forum was another major event and the Forum of Casablanca went beyond expectations in terms of participation and South-South partnerships established through workshops. The forum saw an unprecedented mobilization of more than 350 Moroccan companies and the signing of a dozen agreements, conventions and projects.

Guinea actively continues to attract foreign direct investment. As such, global referral partners should increase their investment in Guinea. Forums, conferences, sporting and cultural events gradually promote Guinea a platform for business in West Africa.

The government will intensify reforms undertaken in the mining sector that helped Guinea be cited as an example of transparency and governance.

Improving and stabilizing services remains a goal in the medium term. The replacement strategy of thermal generation by hydropower production will continue to be

implemented, including significant progress in the construction of a hydroelectric dam at Kaleta.

Access to clean water also remains one of the priorities set by the government and the drilling on Mount Kakoulima is to be expanded in terms of the fourth water project that will double the capacity of production in Conakry.

In the area of infrastructure, completion of numerous roads, renovation of Conakry-Gbéssia International Airport and the extension of the Quai du Port of Conakry will be achieved during this year.

Today, another challenge is imposed on our people: the struggle for the eradication of Ebola, which has appeared on an unprecedented scale in Guinea and neighboring countries.

Several thousand people have been suffering from Ebola and more than 500 of our compatriots have died.

This epidemic was declared by the World Health Organization as the deadliest ever and continues to spread particularly in the West African region. Three states on the Mano River

are particularly affected, namely, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea.

I'd like to express the deep gratitude of the people and the Guinean government for the invaluable contributions of the international community to fight for the eradication of Ebola.

Japan has stood alongside Guinea for over 50 years and we are thankful for the support. But Guinea will always need ongoing support, contributions and continued help. The long road toward socioeconomic development that began 56 years ago has been bumpy and difficult at times, but with determination and self-sacrifice, we will see its end.

To The Japan Times, we extend our gratitude for the opportunity to express and convey our message friendship and brotherhood with the government and people of Japan.

Finally, as the first independent African Francophone nation celebrates 56 years of existence, I'd like to thank all people for their continued cooperation and unwavering support.



Members of the Guinean community in Japan hold a gathering in solidarity with their compatriots fighting against Ebola on Sept. 14 in Shin-Kiba, Tokyo. EMBASSY OF GUINEA

Congratulations to the People of the Republic of Guinea on Their Independence Day

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Congratulations on the 56th Anniversary of Independence Day of the Republic of Guinea

We hope that our friendship is forever!!

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