

Kenya national day

Enhancing strategic partnerships

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA

The Republic of Kenya marks its 51st Independence anniversary today, Dec. 12. As we celebrate this momentous occasion, the Embassy of the Republic of Kenya in Tokyo wishes to convey warm greetings and best wishes to the government and the friendly people of Japan.

At the same time, the embassy takes this opportunity to congratulate all Kenyans in Japan on this auspicious occasion and to commend them for their hard work and patriotism as they contribute greatly as a bridge between our two friendly countries.

As Kenyans celebrate the long and tortuous journey in commemoration of our country's independence, they will take a moment to reflect the strong bonds of friendship and mutually beneficial collaboration that has existed between Japan and Kenya since 1963. The relationship with Japan has indeed continued to grow in leaps and bounds, transcending the confines of official development assistance (ODA) to more strategic partnerships based on mutual respect, common trust and shared values.

Kenyans in Japan are indeed proud to have Japan as a leading development partner in all areas of cooperation, including economic infrastructure development and private sector growth. Japan has also been a major contributor to Kenya's agricultural development, human resource development, health sector development and environmental conservation.

As a result, Kenya today hosts over 700 Japanese people, one of the largest Japanese communities in Africa. Kenya is also the regional headquarters for most of Japan's major agencies (JICA, JETRO and JBIC) as well as its largest trading houses with approximately 40 Japanese companies operating in Kenya.



The embassy looks back with gratitude as we reflect on the last 18 months of bilateral cooperation. For example, we have witnessed accelerated engagements between the business communities in both countries. Moreover, the two countries relations have been characterized by an exchange of high level visits by high ranking government officials as well as by top business executives. One notable visit include the inaugural visit to Kenya by Toshimitsu Motegi, the then minister for economy trade and industry in August 2013. The fact that Motegi's delegation had more than 60 senior government officials and top business executives was indeed a statement of Japan's commitment to the TICAD V declaration. On the Kenyan side, the embassy has had the honor to welcome at least four ministerial visits coupled with three investment seminars in the last year alone. The highlight of this intense official engagement was the recent official visit to Japan by Kenya's cabinet secretary for transport and infrastructure during the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of Japan's ODA. The visit was a clear demonstration of the commitment of our two countries to walk together as partners in progress.

The bilateral initiatives in various sectors can only bear the desired fruits if translated into tangible developments. The embassy believes this is achievable through heightened bilateral engagements in



(Clockwise from top) A panel discussion at a symposium commemorating the 60th anniversary of Japanese ODA, on Nov. 17 in Tokyo; An aerial view of the Olkaria IV Geothermal Power Plant; Spectacular sunset and world-class Luxury at Sarova Salt Lick Game Lodges, in Tsavo East National Park

support of Kenya's development blueprint, Vision 2030. Some of the commendable undertakings in this regard include the ongoing projects in the areas of hydro and geothermal energy development. Indeed, Kenya prides itself in having the largest geothermal power plant in the world. Another success story relates to economic infrastructure development, including the oil pipeline project, the expansion and modernization of Mombasa port and its surroundings; agricultural development, including rice development; human resource development and health sector reform.

Kenya welcomes Japan's continued commitment to Africa as espoused by the TICAD process. In this context, TICAD has provided a forum to reinvigorate our collective efforts toward achieving more inclusive and sustainable growth on the African continent. Consequently, Kenya's current development cooperation with Japan is anchored on the TICAD V framework with a focus on regional infrastructure development; energy resource development (particularly geothermal); expansion of the manufacturing

sector; vocational training with exit; research, science and technology & innovation; mining and mineral exploration, and joint ventures in small and medium-sized enterprises.

Despite the outstanding achievements, the balance of trade between our two countries is still heavily tilted in favour of Japan, in a stark ratio of 1:15. To address the challenge, the two hope to work on a mechanism that would promote and protect investments to encourage more value-added economic activities, including trade diversification, direct investments and joint ventures in various fields within the Vision 2030 framework.

On the other hand, Kenya hopes to play a steady role as a regional business hub in East and Central Africa for the benefit of all regional countries. To this end, some key reforms have been initiated in several areas, including modernizing the railway system, expanding our seaports, improving airports and generation of more geothermal electricity. All the above economic related activities place Kenya on an accelerated developmental pedestal which is further complemented by the



structures established by both the East Africa Community and COMESA economic regional blocs. These bodies are important to Kenya and her friends given the combined market population of over 400 million. The recent discovery of oil and gas is bound to exponentially improve Kenya's economic prospects. In this regard, the embassy appeals to Japanese companies to seize these opportunities now and engage their Kenyan counterparts for mutually profitable investment in Kenya.

An equally important sector of bilateral collaboration with Japan is tourism. Kenya aims to be one of the top long-haul tourist destinations in the world, offering high-end diverse and distinctive visitor experiences. Consequently, the Japanese market has been identified as one of the potential sources of tourism growth. We appeal to our Japanese friends to help by contributing toward this goal. It is worth mentioning that a dedicated team of a specialized tourist police force has been formed to address any cases of insecurity in the tourist areas across Kenya. Tourists

should be able to enjoy their holidays in Kenya, which is ordinarily a safe and peaceful country.

To further augment tourism Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda have introduced the East Africa tourist visa to ease travel across the three countries using a 90-day multiple entry visa. The embassy wishes to encourage Japanese tourism stakeholders to take advantage of this development, and hopes to see increased flights between Japan and Kenya to boost Japanese travelers to Kenya and the region at large.

Finally, the embassy wishes to thank all partners who have supported us to host the National Day reception this year. Our sincere appreciation to our friends who sent us messages of goodwill, most notably, The Japan Times for the opportunity to publish this supplement. We wish readers of The Japan Times a happy festive season, good health and prosperity in the New Year. For more information about Kenya and the existing business opportunities, readers are kindly urged to visit the mission's website at www.kenyarep-jp.com.

Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Kenya
on the 51st Anniversary of
Their Independence

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