

# Ghana independence day

## Forging ahead with democratic and transformational agenda

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AMBASSADOR OF GHANA

Ghana achieved her Independence on March 6, 1957. Today, therefore, marks the 58th anniversary of the country's independence.



Ghanaian flag

Both Ghana and Japan have shared values of spreading democracy, pursuing global peace and harmony, while extending goodwill and friendship to all peace-loving peoples of our interconnected world.

The anniversary also has a special significance because it coincides with the 55th year of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Ghana and Japan.

On such a momentous occasion, I have the distinct pleasure, on behalf of the government and People of Ghana, and the entire Ghanaian community in Japan, to first and foremost, convey our very warm greetings and profound gratitude to their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the entire Imperial family and the government and people of Japan for the unwavering friendship and true hospitality that has continually been extended to all visiting Ghanaian delegations and those residing in Japan.

Let me also use this opportunity to reiterate Ghana's unalloyed friendship and solidarity with all people of Japan, to whom we extend our deepest sympathies on the fourth anniversary of the devastating earthquake and tsunami, which falls on March 11. We stand shoulder to shoulder with you, as you mourn your loss and bring succor to the bereaved families.

During the past year, Ghana saw some successes in its efforts at effectively mobilizing its human and material resources for the sustainable development of the country. Undoubtedly, there were challenges accentuated by falling agricultural and oil prices, which were huge external shocks to our economy. However, the government is taking the necessary measures and providing leadership to overcome the challenges of a developing economy. The government strategy has been a combination of rational, practical and transformational economic policies underpinned by prudent management and timely social interventions to soften the impact of austere measures on vulnerable people. With a stable political environment, determined, resourceful and resilient people as well as an adaptable, easily trainable and dynamic work force, Ghana is on a firm trajectory to achieve its developmental goals. Indeed, it has already met its millennium goal of halving poverty by 2020.



Ghana is the second-largest bulk producer of cocoa in the world. EMBASSY OF GHANA

The past decade witnessed major developments on the political and economic landscape of the country as part of the country's transformational agenda. The widely acknowledged democratic credentials of Ghana, anchored on adherence to the rule of law, multiparty democracy, press freedom and respect for human rights, were further deepened and strengthened.

The challenge facing the country is to translate these democratic achievements into concrete and palpable benefits at the economic level and lift the majority of the people to an appreciable standard of living commensurate with a country of middle-income status. The country's GDP growth in nominal terms more than doubled in the last decade, reaching a peak of 14 percent in 2012. During the decade, the real GDP growth rate averaged 7 percent, much higher than the sub-Saharan African average of 4.9 percent and the average global rate of 3.2 percent.

Following a rebasing of the

economy in 2010, Ghana achieved lower middle-income status. The country's medium to long-term prospects are bright, particularly because Ghana is now a major West African sub-region oil producer and is set to produce about 230,000 barrels per day by 2021 as a result of new discoveries. The country has a diversified economy with dynamic agricultural and service sectors. In recent years, the service sector has overtaken the agricultural and the manufacturing sectors in terms of contribution to GDP.

During the past year, the country continued to play its well-recognized role of being a responsible member of the international community that is committed to global peace and stability and making necessary contributions to the international organizations to which she belongs. In the particular context of the West African sub-region, the President of Ghana, H. E. John Dramani Mahama, in his capacity as chairman of ECOWAS, mobilized the support of the international com-

munity for the area, amongst others, in the Ebola fight, which is being won. He designated the country as the centre and hub for international efforts in coordinating relevant and timely assistance to the affected countries. In this respect, the government of Japan's role through the sterling work of Japanese Special Defense Forces needs to be commended. Ebola has, to a large extent, been contained and West Africa is safe for travel so business people and tourists need not be scared by the disease. Moreover, given air connections, West Africa is no longer a faraway place for Japanese investors. Over 19 Japanese companies are now working in Ghana. We invite Japanese companies to take part in an investment seminar at JICA Hall in Ichigaya, Tokyo, at 10 a.m. on April 2.

Ghana and Japan began negotiations for the conclusion of a Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement last April. This is expected to provide the needed impetus for increasing the number of Japanese companies doing business in Ghana and vice versa.

Ghana was honoured to be the venue for the recent meeting of Japanese ambassadors in West Africa. Indeed, Japan has been a veritable and dependable partner in Ghana's developmental efforts over the years and, there is enough evidence to indicate that increased collaboration between the two countries will be more robust. Indeed, Ghana is the third-largest recipient of Japanese ODA in Africa.

Ghana's Embassy in Japan has therefore introduced expedited visa services for Japanese, especially the business community, since January.

On this auspicious occasion, therefore, Ghana wishes to urge Japanese companies to seize the opportunity of positive developments in the country and the bright future prospects, to increase their investments in Ghana and forge strategic partnerships with Ghanaian companies for mutual benefit and to reflect our excellent bilateral relations.

Finally, I wish to express profound gratitude to the various friends of Ghana and all the companies whose sponsorship



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

has facilitated the publication of this message. I also wish to thank The Japan Times for their cooperation and professional-

ism. Long live Ghana-Japan relations and the Japan-Africa friendship and partnership.

Congratulations  
to the People of  
the Republic of Ghana on  
the 58th Anniversary of  
Their Independence

*from the president and staff of*  
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