

# Zimbabwe independence day

## Trade, investment and tourism steadily increasing

Lloyd P. Sithole  
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES OF ZIMBABWE

On the 35th anniversary of Zimbabwe's independence day, I take this opportunity so kindly afforded by The Japan Times to extend warm greetings to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko of Japan, as well as to the government and people of Japan and to thank them for their friendship, consideration and generosity of spirit toward the people of Zimbabwe.



I would also like to extend my warm greetings to the community of Zimbabweans residing in Japan.

Just last month, the President of Zimbabwe, H.E. Robert G. Mugabe, who is also the current Chairperson of the African Union (AU) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), and other heads of state and delegates from more than 100 U.N. member states, converged on the city of Sendai to attend the Third U.N. World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, hosted by Japan.

Mugabe, in a speech delivered at the conference, lauded Japan's experience in disaster risk reduction and disaster management and recovery, which provides important and helpful lessons for all countries. He also expressed gratitude to Japan for its long-standing commitment and contribution to the global effort toward building national disaster resilience.

The Zimbabwean economy currently faces multiple challenges, and to guide national development for the five-year 2013 to 2018 period, the government adopted an economic blueprint, known as the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustain-

able Socioeconomic Transformation (ZimASSET), a cluster-based plan reflecting the need to fully to exploit synergies between the various facets of the economy. These clusters are: Food security and nutrition; social services and poverty eradication; infrastructure and utilities; and value addition and beneficence.

In 2014 Zimbabwe completed the first Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), an international household survey program that was developed by UNICEF after the 1990 World Summit for Children to assist countries in monitoring human development in general and the situations of children and women in particular.

The survey collected information critical to the monitoring and reporting on selected indicators for all the eight U.N. Millennium Development Goals and has assisted in monitoring government national priorities, focusing on the provision of basic social services, as pronounced in ZimASSET.

A gradual thawing of relations between Zimbabwe and the European Union, one of the country's main trading partners, has been witnessed over the past two years and this has culminated with the resumption this year of development assistance for projects decided jointly with the government. Many EU member countries have of late been sending high-powered business delegations to Zimbabwe to seek ways of consummating this new era of renewed hope in our relations.

Japan was among the first to establish diplomatic relations with Zimbabwe after independence in 1980 and this mutually beneficial relationship has blossomed over the years and today includes generous development assistance, especially in the area of maternal health, HIV/AIDS, education, human resources

development and grant aid for grass-roots projects.

Trade between Zimbabwe and Japan, though, continues to be rather muted, a reflection of supply constraints from Zimbabwe, but that notwithstanding, Japanese brands continue to command tremendous respect in Zimbabwe.

There is a definite increase in Japanese private sector interest in Zimbabwe, itself an acknowledgement of the enormous potential the country holds, especially in the mining/mineral and agricultural sectors.

Other positives that most Japanese who know about Zimbabwe cite include a good banking system, educated labor force, peaceful industrial relations, extremely comfortable climate, absence of tropical disease and plenty of outdoor sports, including soccer, golf, cricket, hunting, horseback riding and marksmanship.

In agriculture, most parts of Zimbabwe have, after incessant floods, suffered a devastating drought with rainfall declining about 80 percent in the crucial months of January and February. Although the rains have now resumed, it is too late to save the crop growing season and relieve food stress, especially in rural communities, presenting a major challenge for the government as 2015 progresses into 2016.



Tourism continues to grow and, besides sightseeing at places such as Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe has an art and events calendar that offers diverse attractions every month, ranging from sports competitions, fairs and expos to art and music festivals. Best known is the Harare International Festival of the Arts, a six-day annual festival held at

the end of April and early May that aims to showcase the very best of local, regional and international culture, including theater, dance, music, visual arts and circus performances.

As the Chair of the AU and SADC, Zimbabwe continues its role to pursue a further strengthening of cooperation between Japan and Africa, which has intensified with Ja-



(Clockwise from left) Harare International Airport in the capital is the largest airport in the country; the Victoria Falls Hotel was built in the early 1900s; Victoria Falls is one of the largest waterfalls in the world. EMBASSY OF ZIMBABWE

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to the People of  
the Republic of Zimbabwe  
on the 35th Anniversary  
of Their Independence

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the Republic of Zimbabwe  
on Their Independence Day

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We use a mineral called Petalite from Zimbabwe to make *Donabe*, a fire-proof casserole pot.

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**Peace**

平和への願い

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