

# Rwanda national day

## Bright future after country's remarkable turnaround

Eric Rubayita  
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I., EMBASSY  
OF RWANDA

Rwanda gained its independence from Belgian colonial rule on July 1, 1962. Post-independence leaders did little to emphasize what united their people and opted to sustain colonial legacy by preaching and practicing divisive politics. The consequences of these divisive politics affected all Rwandans and brought their country to the horrendous genocide of 1994. The Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) under the leadership of H.E. President Paul Kagame stopped the genocide against Tutsis on July 4, 1994, liberated the country from the genocidal forces and embarked on the long and difficult journey of reconciliation, rebuilding and development.

As we celebrate the 53rd Anniversary of Rwanda's Independence while at the same time celebrating the 21st Anniversary of the Liberation of our country from the genocidal forces, it gives me great honor and privilege to convey to their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, the Cabinet and all people of Japan the warmest greetings from the government and people of Rwanda.

I also wish to take this opportunity to commend H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, for his constant commitment to the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) cause as exemplified by his last official visit to Africa in 2014. This is a demonstration of his personal and his administration's commitment to Africa's development, which is welcomed.

Rwandans are using this celebration of the 53rd anniversary of the independence and the 21st anniversary of the liberation of Rwanda from genocidal forces to reflect on Rwanda's story of reconciliation and nation building and look to the future.

Rwandans have a new story

to tell — about a country of hope offering one of the most peaceful economic and investment environments in Africa.

Over the past decade, Rwanda's progress has been phenomenal. One of the most compelling stories of Rwanda's progress has been in agricultural transformation. Agriculture is the cornerstone of Rwandan society and its economy. It makes up over one-third of the GDP and over 70 percent of Rwandans depend on it for their livelihood.

In the last five years, the main focus has been on increasing household agriculture productivity. The Crop Intensification Program was designed and is largely driven by the use of modern farm inputs such as improved seeds and fertilizers.

Modernization of agriculture through the introduction of a land consolidation policy was also pursued to ensure that farmers grow specific crops in a synchronized manner to improve aggregate productivity while ensuring environmental sustainability. The policy is now reaping benefits. In the past four years, the consolidated use of land area producing maize, wheat and beans has increased tenfold, whereas the use of improved seeds dramatically rose from 3 percent to 55 percent and the use of fertilizer increased from 4 kg/ha to 24 kg/ha.

To consolidate these gains, Rwanda embarked on land irrigation and hill irrigation projects to allow farmers to optimize rice cultivation by reaping at least two harvests per year and increased the area available for agriculture given the country's hilly terrain. Consequently, Rwanda has now become a food secure country and just between 2006 and 2011, 1 million people were lifted out of poverty. There are many opportunities for Japanese companies wishing to invest in agro-processing projects and agro-export products such as fruit and vegetable processing, avocado packaging, essential oil production, bean processing, cattle farming and meat and meat product export.

The Rwandan government is fully committed to reducing

poverty and improving standards of living by fostering a private-sector-led process of economic transformation to reduce the country's dependence on agriculture. To do this, there are deliberate efforts being made to increase the level of private and public investment to build the core and sector-specific infrastructure required. The private sector contribution to GDP needs to increase to 20 percent with the share of private-sector investment increasing over time.

Rwanda's economy has been on track, growing at an average of 8 percent annually. A full-fledged, one-stop center where investors can register their businesses in one easy step and receive their licenses in just six hours was created; alternatively, one can register for free online. An independent judiciary, minimal corruption and a stable democratic system, among others, have set a strong foundation for economic prosperity. The Economic Freedom of

the World 2013 Report and the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report both ranked Rwanda as the second most economically free and the most-competitive country in Sub-Saharan Africa. More impressive is its improvement in the World Bank's 2014 Doing Business Report, where it has been considered as the most-reformed country and is ranked as the second-easiest place to do business in Africa after Mauritius.

Vision 2020, aiming to transform Rwanda into a middle-income economy by 2020, places a clear emphasis on the need for "major infrastructure investment" in the fields of energy, water, telecommunication and transportation. On the transportation side, a second airport and extended railway network form the backbone of these plans. In the energy sector, the country's hydroelectric potential, along with other renewable sources of energy such as methane, solar and geother-

mal are being explored, with a number of plants already completed or under construction.

The Rwandan government recognizes that boosting and sustaining growth requires a strong private sector. Private-sector development is already an integral part of the nation's economic growth agenda and the government is committed to increasing support for the private sector. Prospects of growth, development and diversification through participation of the private sector exist in the several clusters, including agriculture, ICT, tourism, manufacturing and financial and banking services.

In addition, Rwanda has shown remarkable progress in creating an environment that is conducive for investment. The economy is in transition as the government seeks to stimulate growth and create jobs. Moreover, business is becoming more integrated into the international system and foreign investment is increasing. Japa-



The center of Kigali, the capital and largest city in Rwanda EMBASSY OF RWANDA

nese companies are most encouraged to invest in the opportunities mentioned above.

Rwanda's success of the last 21 years was also partly due to the support of our friends and partners from around the world, and from both private and public institutions; support we always cherish and appreciate.

Our embassy is currently focusing on mobilizing the Japanese private sector to be part


of this partnership. The embassy will continue to organize the Rwanda-focused Business and Investment Seminars across Japan, where Rwanda's impressive business environment and untapped investment opportunities in infrastructure (energy, roads, railways and airports), agro-industries, mining, ICT and tourism will be showcased.

We would also like to express our profound gratitude to the government and people of Japan for the support they have

extended to us in our quest for economic development and we highly value your continued partnership.

Finally, we take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to various institutions, companies and individuals in Japan for their support and business engagements in Rwanda, particularly the management of Toyota Tsusho, Mitsui and Co. and African Home Touch for sponsoring the publication of this article.


Congratulations  
to the People of  
the Republic of Rwanda  
on the 53rd Anniversary  
of the Independence  
and 21st Anniversary  
of the Liberation Day



from the president and staff of  
**AFRICAN HOME TOUCH  
RESTAURANT & BAR**


Yoko Central Roppongi Building 3F  
3-15-22, Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0032  
Tel: 03-6447-0116 URL: africanhometouch.com

**Congratulations**  
to the People of  
the Republic of Rwanda  
on the 53rd Anniversary  
of Their Independence  
and 21st Anniversary  
of Their Liberation Day



**MITSUI & CO.**

**Congratulations**  
to the People of  
the Republic of Rwanda  
on the 53rd Anniversary  
of Their Independence  
and 21st Anniversary  
of Their Liberation Day



Metals/ Global Production Parts & Logistics/ Automotive/ Machinery, Energy & Project/  
Chemicals & Electronics/Food & Agribusiness/ Consumer Products & Services

Head Office : 4-9-8, Meieki, Nakamura-ku, Nagoya 81-52-584-5013  
Tokyo Head Office : 2-3-13, Konan, Minato-ku, Tokyo 81-3-4306-5000

[www.toyota-tsusho.com](http://www.toyota-tsusho.com)

**Akagera Motors S.A.R.L**  
(Official Authorized Toyota Distributor in Rwanda)  
P.O. BOX 3774, Kigali, Rwanda  
TEL: 250-57-5220 FAX: 250-57-3018  
Web site: <http://www.toyotarwanda.com/>