

Gabon national day

'Green Gabon' aims for development and food self-sufficiency

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OF GABON



Ona Ondo, the government and all Gabonese people, best wishes of peace, prosperity and good health to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko and to the whole Imperial family.

Aug. 17 marked the 55th anniversary of the independence of the Gabonese Republic. On this joyful occasion, I would like to express on behalf of the President of the Gabonese Republic, H.E. Ali Bongo Ondimba, the Prime Minister, H.E. Daniel

As well, my wishes are extended to the Japanese government led by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, to the members of various Japanese institutions and to the very friendly people of Japan.

This opportunity further allows us to express our sincere greetings to the Gabonese community, as well as many friends of Gabon living in Japan

and around the world.

"Green Gabon" strategy

The purpose of Green Gabon strategy is to become a world leader in sustainable development. It will lean on the valuation of the "Green Oil" which constitutes our tremendous ecosystem with our 22 million hectares of forest, our farmlands and our 800 km coast.

Belonging to the basin of Congo, Gabon dedicated 11 percent of its territory to national parks to participate in the global effort of environmental protection and fight against global warming. This effort will be maintained while taking into account the imperatives of development and industrialization of our country.

The green economy is indeed one of the vectors of the world economy of the 21st century and our country is arranging assets to become a big player there. For that purpose, we have to:

- Protect our forests and assure their contribution to the world fight against climate change is paid its just value;
- Completely transform the timber industry to process wood locally through dynamic



Ali Bongo Ondimba, president of the Gabonese Republic

small businesses and industry;

- Build modern agriculture, fishing and fish farming operations to guarantee our food security;
- Exploit completely our strong potentialities in the ecosystem, which confer us our immense forest spaces.

Investment opportunities

Ecotourism: Gabon has become one of the first ecotourism destinations by taking advantage of the fabulous potential of 13 national parks,

which are treasures of biodiversity and key in the fight against climate change.

Industry: Massive incentives are available for the creation of industries for local wood processing, intended for local consumption and export.

Agriculture: Gabon aims to reach in less than five years the objective of food security through incentives aimed at the creation of small farms and fish farming.

GRAINE Project

Regarding agricultural policy, Gabon has launched a unique initiative in the GRAINE Program (Gabonaise des Realisations Agricoles et des Initiatives des Nationaux Engages, or the Gabonese public society for agricultural productions and initiatives of involved nationals.

This program proposes providing Gabonese with mentoring support in the creation of agro-industrial cooperatives, which are at the center of the agricultural sector.

Deployed in all provinces of Gabon, the program encourages the creation of a large number of jobs, harmonious socioeconomic development



The representative of a local cooperative on a cassava plantation in the village of Adzamikak in Woleu-Ntem Province EMBASSY OF GABON

of rural zones, diversification of the national economy by modernizing agro-industry, the enhancement of food safety and the reduction of payment balance for food importation.

The GRAINE Program forms part of the three agricultural targets of the "Green Gabon" vision, set out by President Ondimba and aims at increasing agriculture's contribution to the GDP to 20 percent by 2020. It also intends to ensure food self-sufficiency and end dependence as an importer of foreign food products.

Entrepreneurial model

The GRAINE Program is offering Gabonese a chance to achieve financial independence through activities that will be source of regular income and that will also open a way to prosperity.

Transfer of skills

A basic tenet of the program is the transmission of know-how. GRAINE participants will receive up-to-date job education for agricultural management followed by a four-month training period in Malaysia, before obtaining a qualification that certifies completion of the training. Once qualified, the members will be field supervisors in agricultural cooperatives.

Technical partner

The project is supported by the Society of Agricultural Transformation and Rural Development (SOTRADER), which was created from a public-private partnership between the Gabonese Republic and the OLAM International Company. This latter is a major player in the supply and processing of agricultural and food products and is a worldwide multinational that can offer expertise and technical knowledge.

Purchase guaranteed

To ensure a commercial outlet for their activities, SOTRADER will buy cooperatives' production at international market prices and market their products domestically and internationally.

Social infrastructure

Development of the program includes the contribution to improving social infrastructures, especially schools and health centers, grouped in specific zones close to the cooperative villages. Also, 3,000 km of roads in total, will improve the conditions of transport and access to local entities. Development of local infrastructure, as well as electrical and water systems are also expected.

Rural development

GRAINE acts directly on rural development to increase per capita income, enlarge the social safety net and raise the employment rate of women. Furthermore, the potential of local communities will be emphasized by involvement of the people in the agricultural cooperatives, whose economic activity plays a key role in the development of the regions concerned.

Economic diversification

The development of agriculture will have a positive impact in stimulating the country's economy, job creation and low-cost commercialization of essential, locally produced foodstuffs.

This is an overview of the steps Gabon is taking toward agricultural entrepreneurship, with a challenging commitment to professional training. It is also important to note that GRAINE, as asserted by President Ondimba, calls for the active involvement of the youth to build and strengthen a real lever for development.

Congratulations

to the People of the Gabonese Republic
on the Occasion of the 55th Anniversary of
Their Independence

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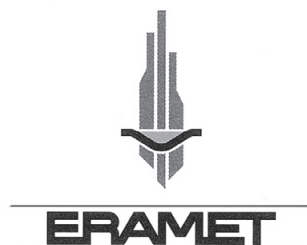
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