

Angola National Day

Celebrating 40 years of freedom and prosperity

João Miguel Vahekeni
AMBASSADOR OF ANGOLA

Forty years ago today, the founder and first President of the Republic of Angola (then People's Republic of Angola), His Excellency António Agostinho Neto, declared before Africa and the world the independence of Angola. Nov. 11 has ever since become the day Angolans celebrate the achievement of their right of self-determination and freedom.

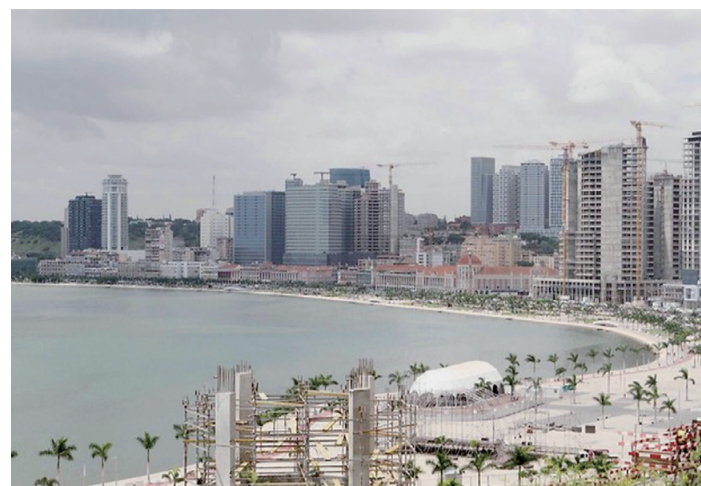
On this auspicious day, I avail myself of this opportunity to, on behalf of President Jose Eduardo dos Santos, the government and the people of the Republic of Angola, convey my heartfelt greetings to their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, the government and to the people of Japan. I also would like to congratulate my fellow Angolan compatriots who call Japan home.

Angola has made great strides over the years and has been increasingly playing an important role as a responsible member of the international community. Angola was elected to the U.N. Security Council

in October 2014 for a two-year mandate starting in January this year. Angola is a founding member of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), a key member of the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) and of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and currently holds the chairmanship of international organizations such as the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and the Association of Power Utilities of Africa (APUA).

The peaceful and stable political environment that Angola enjoys today has created an environment conducive to bolstering economic growth. In fact, Angola featured among the world's fastest growing economies with an average 11 percent GDP growth in the period between 2001 and 2010. However, the oil sector still remains the driving force of the Angolan economy, accounting for about 45 percent of the GDP, 70 percent of government revenue and 90 percent of Angola's total exports.

Consequently, the recent plunge in international oil prices has brought about a slight economic deceleration. Therefore, to reduce the country's reliance on the oil sector,



Above: Facing the Atlantic Ocean, Luanda is both Angola's chief seaport and the country's administrative and financial center. Right: Located in the north of Angola, Kalandula Falls on the Lucala River are among the largest waterfalls by volume in Africa. EMBASSY OF ANGOLA



as well as to lessen the impact of oil price fluctuations on its economy, the Angolan government has launched the National Development Plan 2013-2017 (NDP).

The NDP is a key instrument for economic growth primarily based on a policy of "Promotion and Diversification of the National Economic Structure." This policy aims to implement priority clusters (food, agro-industry, energy, water, housing, transport and logistics), double the annual aver-

age of private investment projects approved by the private investment agency and create more jobs.

Furthermore, the Angolan government has been drawing up several measures to attract more foreign investment to Angola such as setting up special economic zones (e.g. the 8,300-hectare Luanda-Bengo Special Economic Zone) and enacting a new Private Investment Law earlier this year, which will streamline the bureaucracy surrounding the

procedures for the acceptance of eligible investments, among other initiatives.

Although bilateral Angola-Japan relations are robust, a great deal of potential remains to be explored on the economic front. It is against this backdrop that the Embassy of Angola in Japan in collaboration with the Angolan Ministry of Economy organized a business forum in Luanda from March 9 to 11. The event attracted more than 300 participants, including over 100

businessmen and 37 companies from Japan.

The results of the business forum are already being felt as we witness an increase of business visa applicants from Japan, including those from some companies that did not have Angola on their radar before the event. It is my sincere wish to join forces with my Japanese friends and to continue to work hard for the solidification of a strategic partnership between our two countries.

Forging people-to-people bonds

Kenichi Tanaka
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE JAPAN-ANGOLA ASSOCIATION

The Japan-Angola Association, a non-profit organization, was founded in 2006 to promote cultural exchanges between the two countries' peoples at the request of the Embassy of the Republic of Angola in Japan, which wanted Japanese to become interested in Angola. The association has operated ever since in close coordination with the Angolan embassy.

The association organizes exchanges between Angolans and Japanese at the embassy, teaches Portuguese, Angola's official language, to Japanese and conducts public relations and other work by participating in various international exchange events. It also organizes events to experience Japanese culture inviting Angolan people who live in Japan, and provides Japanese lessons to the staff members of the Angolan embassy.

The association marked 10 years in 2015 and today has about 80 members. The members encompass various age groups and have varied backgrounds as they include high school students, employees of private-sector firms, company executives and entertainers. They all share an earnest desire to learn about Angola and other African countries.

The future challenge for the group is to collect the latest information about Angola, which is now known for its impressive economic growth and high prices, as well as cultural achievements in the country. It also plans to mediate exchanges between Japanese and Angolan universities and invite Angolans to study in Japan. However, it has been difficult to raise the necessary funds.

Still, we proudly go about our work every day in the belief that Angolans, who have accumulated rich experiences in Japan, and Japanese, who have learned much about Angola, and their children will foster mutual trust and become close partners.

Committed support for Angola's growth

Koya Nishikawa
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-ANGOLA
PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP
COMMITTEE

I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations on the 40th anniversary of the independence of Angola.

Since the establishment of the Japan-Angola Parliamentary Friendship Committee, of which I have had the honor to represent, last June, the re-



lationship between our two countries has become closer than ever before. Last June, we received two tractors as a gift from the

Japan Agricultural Cooperatives for use in the city of Lobito. In an effort to further boost support, in August the Japan International Cooper-

ation Agency signed a loan agreement for the Power Sector Reform Support Program to provide Angola a loan of up to ¥23.64 billion.

As chairman of the committee and head of the Research Commission on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Strategy of the Liberal Democratic Party, I am committed to providing support in every way possible for the strong and sustained

growth of Angola, especially in supplying technical assistance to effectively make use of the vast land and abundant water supply for rice cultivation.

In closing, please allow me to again extend congratulations to the people of Angola, and I wish a continued happiness and prosperity to Ambassador João Miguel Vahekeni and everybody at the embassy.

Congratulations
to the People of the Republic of Angola
on the Occasion of Their Independence Day

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