

Zimbabwe Independence Day

Great progress seen in education, agriculture and infrastructure

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Today, April 18, Zimbabwe celebrates 36 years of independence that was achieved after 14 years of a protracted armed struggle against British settler colonial rule. Thanks to the people of the republics of Zambia and Mozambique who sacrificed their infrastructure and lives (against the marauding Rhodesian forces) while supporting the liberation movement. We are also grateful to those who provided the resources for our liberation.

As we celebrate this historic day, may I, on behalf of the President of Zimbabwe H.E. Robert G. Mugabe, the government, the people of Zimbabwe and Zimbabweans living in Japan, convey our very warm greetings to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial household, the government and people of Japan for the immeasurable hospitality extended to all Zimbabweans who have visited, or reside in, Japan. I also thank The Japan Times and sponsors for their generosity in making it possible to have this article pub-



lished.

One of independent Zimbabwe's priorities has been the provision of education for all. Many schools and tertiary institutions were built throughout the country. Teachers were trained and today, Zimbabwe has over 8,000 schools, 10 polytechnic colleges, over 14 universities and a number of colleges and vocational training centers. Thus, Zimbabwe boasts more than 92 percent in literacy rates and abundant skills.

Zimbabwe has held elections every five years, the last of which were in 2013. These elections ushered in the current government which was preceded by the 2008 to 2013 inclusive government. The period leading to the formation of the inclusive government saw low economic performance in the country and debt management challenges due to sanctions. Despite these challenges, Zimbabwe continues to pursue policies that benefit its people and remains steadfast in its desire to improve their economic well-being.

Zimbabwe and Japan enjoy cordial relations. Japan understands the uniqueness of Zimbabwe's situation and prefers continued engagement and getting clarification from Zimbabwe on various policy issues of interest to the two countries. The recent official working visit by President Mugabe at the in-

itation of the Japanese government is testimony to this. Our two leaders exchanged views on international issues, particularly the reform of the U.N. Security Council, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) and the Africa Agenda 2063, as well as bilateral issues on investment and infrastructure development in the context of the laws of Zimbabwe.

Aid and technical assistance from Japan is greatly appreciated by the government of Zimbabwe. These enhance mutual understanding and cooperation. In this context, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) continues to provide technical assistance to capacitate institutions and also provides project assistance for community-based irrigation plans to enhance food security at the household and community level, in line with the U.N. Development Goals. Community-based projects have remained a priority on the Japanese assistance agenda.

Trade facilitation through the construction of the Chirundu One-Stop-Border-Post demonstrates cooperation between Japan and Zimbabwe and the South African Development Community (SADC). This facility, while facilitating trade between Zambia and Zimbabwe, is also a key piece of infrastructure in the Northern Corridor of the SADC In-

frastructure Development Program.

Water and Sanitation projects have benefited from Japanese expertise. Japan has been generous in providing much-needed resources through UNICEF for the country's HIV/AIDS prevention program. The management of institutions spearheading these programs has also benefited from the skills development programs by the government of Japan through the human resource development programs by JICA.

Zimbabwe has embarked on a program to rejuvenate and transform its economy through the economic transformation framework, the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-economic Transformation (ZIMASSET). ZIMASSET clusters economic sectors into food security and nutrition; social services and poverty eradication; infrastructure and utilities; and value addition and beneficiation. Two sub clusters were also developed, namely fiscal reform measures, and public administration and governance and performance management. The government, working in close collaboration with technical partners, including the World Bank in some cases, has embarked on many initiatives within the framework to improve the ease of doing business in Zimbabwe. These have included

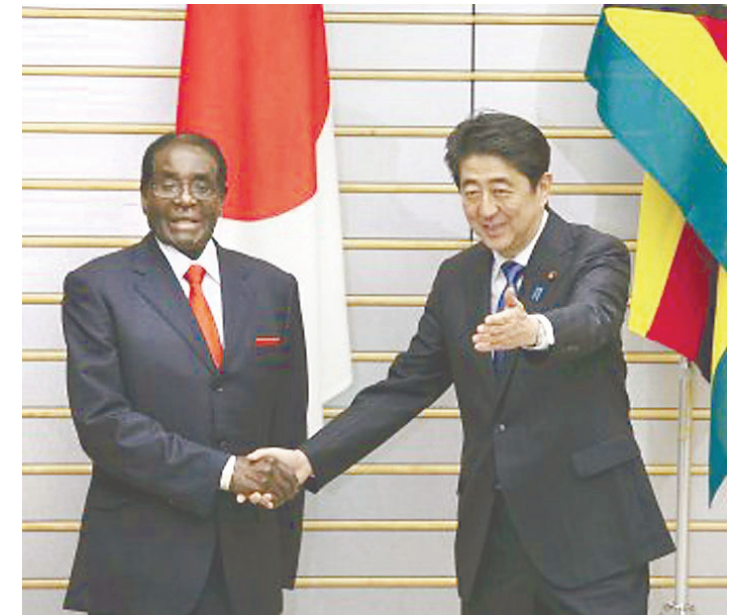
amendments to the Labour Act, and consultations on a new Companies Act that will clearly separate functions of share-holders and directors, entrenching good corporate governance.

The successful conclusion of the land reform program in Zimbabwe has seen more than 300,000 households resettled. With the mechanization of agriculture underway, Zimbabwe should be able to produce adequate food for domestic needs, as well as exports. The government is also focusing on irrigation rehabilitation and expansion to further strengthen food security.

Zimbabwe offers great opportunities for investment in

the fields of tourism, energy, mining, agriculture and infrastructure development. Investment can be undertaken through a variety of company models, including build, operate and transfer; build, own, operate and transfer; joint ventures; public-private partnerships; and limited liability.

The Zimbabwe Investment Authority is at the service of all prospective businesses and is a one-stop facility for any investor, eliminating the need to deal with several offices to obtain licenses and clearance to establish an operation in Zimbabwe. My country welcomes with open arms all who wish to establish businesses in Zimbabwe.



Zimbabwe President Robert G. Mugabe (left) and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shake hands during the president's official working visit to Tokyo on March 29. EMBASSY OF ZIMBABWE

Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Zimbabwe
on Their Independence Day

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