

Ethiopia National Day

Country aiming to become center of African manufacturing

Cham Ugala Uriat
AMBASSADOR OF ETHIOPIA

On this day 25 years ago, significant changes of wind swept across Ethiopia when the military regime was overthrown and democratic governance was put in place. We mark this auspicious occasion every year on May 28, as our National Day.

As we celebrate our National Day today, on behalf of the government and people of Ethiopia, I would like to extend my humble best wishes for good health to their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as to the entire Imperial family and the government and people of Japan.

Over 80 years have passed



since the establishment of our diplomatic relations. Since then, the bilateral and people-to-people relations between our two countries have been expanding. I would like to extend our thanks to the government of Japan for their continued support in various sectors. Japan is one of the most reliable partners in the role it has taken in helping in our development efforts in line with our policy priorities. Japan has provided a wide range of development support in the form of grants and technical cooperation in the areas of agriculture, health, education, as well as water resources, infrastructure and human resource development.

While we celebrate our National Day, we also mark Ethiopian Airlines 70th year of excellence. This is a significant milestone in the journey of the airline. It is a multi-award-winning airline registering an average growth of 25 percent in the

past seven years. Ethiopian Airlines is the continent's oldest and fastest-growing airline, connecting Africa to the world and the African continent to Japan in particular. It's been a year since the start of Ethiopian Airlines' flights to Tokyo. The airline is currently implementing a 15-year strategic plan called Vision 2025 with the aim to be the leading aviation group in Africa.

The past year saw a number of high-level visits to Japan, which further strengthened the bilateral relations between our two nations. In his capacity as Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Hon. Abadula Gameda, participated in the G-7 Global Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development toward the 2016 G-7 Ise-Shima summit. Additionally, H.E. Debretsion Gebremichael in his capacity as deputy prime minister and minister for communication and information technology participated in the 13th World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium in Hiroshima, while the Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Tedros Adhanom, attended the Universal Health Coverage in the New Development Era conference in Tokyo.

Further senior-level visits included the Minister for Mines, Oil and Gas, H.E. Tolosa Shagi, attending an Information Cen-

ter for Petroleum Exploration and Production seminar; and Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, H.E. Arkebe Oqubay, paying an official visit to Japan. During their visits, each met with various government officials and companies, further solidifying the warm relations between Ethiopia and Japan.

Another significant milestone was the decision to open an office of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) in Ethiopia. This was officially announced during a meeting between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn on the sidelines of the 70th U.N. General Assembly in New York last September. A memorandum of understanding was signed by Tedros Adhanom, minister of foreign affairs, and Hiroyuki Ishige, chairman and CEO of JETRO, at JETRO's headquarters last December and the office will open soon. I would like to thank the government of Japan for its decision to establish a JETRO office in Ethiopia, as it is an important step to encourage and boost the confidence of Japanese firms to invest in Ethiopia and eventually enhance the promotion of trade and further reinforce bilateral trade and investment relations.

In addition, high-level industrial policy dialogue between the governments of Ethiopia and Japan has been advancing

to improve industrial policy and the investment environment to attract Japanese companies in the priority sectors such as textiles and garments, agro-processing, leather and leather products, chemicals and pharmaceuticals and metal and engineering industries, as well as industrial zone development. With the support of JETRO and other partners, we have organized successful business and investment seminars in which many Japanese firms have had a chance to exchange views on investment opportunities. This, I believe attests to the determination of Japanese firms to take advantage of the opportunities in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's economy has shown continuous growth for the last twelve years, registering double-digit growth annually. We have started implementing the second Growth and Development Plan that aims to transform Ethiopia into a middle-income country within 10 to 15 years by maintaining a yearly economic growth of 11 percent. It targets to transform the economy into further industrialization, double the productivity of the agricultural sector and increase access to services. In our vision to become a middle-income country by 2025, we are carrying out various projects with the aim of becoming the leading manufacturing hub in Africa by 2025. As a top priority to attract leading companies in

the world, we are developing industrial zones in various parts of our country. Taking this opportunity, I invite Japanese firms to get involved in our efforts to develop industrial zones. I can promise that, based on the needs of firms from Japan, the government of Ethiopia will secure land to develop their own parks.

We have also started implementing the Sustainable Development Goals set to be achieved by 2030, aligning with our Growth and Transformation Plan-II. Ethiopia also chaired and successfully hosted a historical event, the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa in July 2015, in which the "Addis Ababa Action Agenda" was finalized as the outcome document. As we have successfully achieved most of the U.N. Millennium Development Goals, the government of Ethiopia is committed to exert all efforts to achieve this post-2015 development agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals, which were adopted by the member states of the U.N. last September in New York.

This year, the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African development (TICAD VI) will be held in Africa for the first time since the inception of the TICAD process. As we prepare for the summit in Nairobi, our country looks forward to enhancing cooperation with other



Representatives sign a memorandum of understanding on opening a Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) office in Addis Ababa. EMBASSY OF ETHIOPIA

African countries in making it a success. Within the TICAD process, we want to express our gratitude to the government of Japan for offering scholarships to young Ethiopians through the African Business Initiative. I believe that this initiative will significantly contribute to enhancing business engagement with firms from Japan and hope that Japan will host more Ethiopian students in the years to come.

Ethiopia has proven to be a stable, secure and reliable partner. We are actively supporting peacekeeping and peace-building processes through the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union. We have contributed to and continue our support for the U.N. peacekeeping operations in various countries since

the inception of U.N. We are committed to continue our contribution to uphold international peace and security and play a leading role in maintaining peace and stability in the horn of Africa. I would like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to the government of Japan for supporting Ethiopia's bid as a non-permanent member of the U.N. Security Council for the term 2017-2018.

I would like also to take this opportunity, on behalf of the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and its people, to express condolences to the government and people of Japan for the deadly destruction caused by the recent earthquakes in Kumamoto and our thoughts and sympathy go to all the affected families.

Congratulations
to the People of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
on the 25th Anniversary of Their National Day


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