

Gabon National Day

Special economic zone offers easy access for business

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THE GABONESE REPUBLIC

Today, on Aug. 17, we celebrate the 56th anniversary of Gabon as a sovereign country. On this joyous occasion, it gives me



great pleasure to convey, on behalf of the President of the Gabonese Republic H.E. Ali Bongo Ondimba, members of the government and the Gabonese people, to the readers of The Japan Times, our best wishes for peace, those for good health and prosperity to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito, Empress Michiko and the whole Imperial family. We also wish to extend warm greetings to the Japanese government led by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Diet members and the friendly people of Japan.

Our heartfelt greetings go also to the small community of fellow Gabonese citizens, students, officials and friends of Gabon in Japan, Indonesia and Malaysia, countries that belong to our diplomatic constituency.

This year, we would like to introduce the Nkok Special Economic Zone (SEZ), only 30 km from the capital Libreville and evolving since its launch in 2011, this zone should be attractive for the Japanese investors with true interest in business opportunities in Africa and especially in Gabon.

Economy, industry

With many opportunities for growth in various sectors, Gabon boasts a growth rate of 6 percent. Gabon is the top country in Central Africa in the World Bank 2015 Doing Business report and the government has been implementing effective regulations with the aim of facilitating foreign direct investments and securing their protection.

For the fourth consecutive year, the Wall Street Journal

Index of Economic Freedom ranked Gabon as the most liberal economy in the Economic Community of Central African States.

With 3.7 billion barrels of recoverable oil reserves, more than 30 billion cubic meters of natural gas proven reserves, 900 mining operations of which more than 1 billion tons of iron reserves and 250 million tons of manganese, Gabon is certainly endowed with hydrocarbons and mineral resources. 12.5 million hectares of mature forests, 800 km of coastline and 5.2 million hectares of arable land position Gabon as a country having great forestry, fishery and agricultural potential.

Nkok SEZ

With standardized ISO 14001:2004, the Nkok Special Economic Zone spreads over 1,126 hectares. The zone represents the materialization of the policy for the economic diversification of Gabon through the establishment of such zones to service various industries in the processing of Gabon's natural resources and other raw materials in a sustainable manner.

Incentives

The SEZ offers no tax on div-



Ali Bongo Ondimba, president of the Gabonese Republic, Head of State

idents, no tax on property, repatriation of 100 percent of funds and a reduction of the electricity costs compared to those applied outside the SEZ. Additionally, the labor laws are relaxed for those investing in the SEZ as far as the number of foreign workers is concerned.

Multimodal evacuation

Abutting the four-lane National Road 1, the Nkok SEZ ensures a multimodal evacuation with three branch lines on the railway that crosses the zone, as well as a dedicated road from Nkok to Owendo, the country's main port 40 km

from Nkok. A 230-m-long dock with a 3.5-m-draft that can accommodate barges with a capacity of 1,000 tons for the hauling of goods to the port of Owendo is also being constructed.

Storage capacity

A 120,000 sq.-meter storage area, a 1,500 twenty foot equivalent unit (TEU) container terminal with a 3,500 TEU extension to come, as well as a timber yard, provide customs storage with special arrangements in the zone for raw materials and manufactured products before clearance.

SEZ administration

The Administrative Authority of the Nkok SEZ (AAN) is focused on customized support for the companies already established in the Nkok SEZ — as well as those planning to enter the SEZ — by facilitating their administrative formalities under the laws and legislations in the Republic of Gabon and in the Nkok SEZ.

The AAN works with the 17 administrations represented within the one-stop-shop. AAN speeds up the completion of various formalities, including the creation of businesses, the registration of companies and employees with the National

Social Security Fund and the granting of work permits. Additionally, the AAN assists with the granting of residence permits such as visas, entry authorizations, residence permit for business purposes and more. The administration also assists in the packing and sealing of containers for export and the validation of the exemption of the value added tax (VAT).

Nkok SEZ entry

The AAN works to assist companies with the various steps while asserting the values of integrity and efficiency. These steps include buying a plot with the Gabon Special Economic Zone (GSEZ), the partner of the AAN responsible for selling plots and developing infrastructure. Additionally, the AAN assists in business creation, setting up companies in compliance with the standards prescribed by the Orga-



Model of the Nkok Special Economic Zone EMBASSY OF GABON

nization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa, as well as assisting with the Investment Promotion Agency in the Single Window Clearance. The AAN and the GSEZ also issues licenses granting the right

to operate in the SEZ. The AAN, through its taxation and custom divisions, provides companies with VAT and duty exemption certificates for the purchase of goods and services in Gabon and the import

of equipment, while the division of the National Agency for Urban Planning, Topographic Works and Land Registry, based in the single window clearance facility, grants construction permits.

Congratulations
to the People of the Gabonese Republic
on the Occasion of the 56th Anniversary of
Their Independence

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