

Uganda National Day

Nation enjoys ongoing fiscal, social growth

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AMBASSADOR OF UGANDA

As we celebrate the occasion of Uganda's 54th Anniversary of Independence, I extend warm greetings from His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and the entire Ugandan public to their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the entire Imperial family, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the honorable members of the Diet, as well as the government and people of Japan for their continued support and friendship for the people and government of Uganda.



It was on this day, 54 years ago in Kampala, that the Union Jack was peacefully lowered and the Ugandan flag was raised. Uganda was one of the few African nations that had a peaceful change of government from its colonial masters. Despite the fact that the nation during its formative years suffered several setbacks, Uganda is now one of the most peaceful countries in Africa, with its last major instability being 30 years ago.

Today, we also would like to introduce Uganda Diaspora Japan (UDJ), an organization

that brings together Ugandans in Japan for the purposes of promoting its culture, education and development efforts. UDJ is a multiracial organization that works in close collaboration with the Embassy of Uganda in Japan. We would like those who are our friends to consider working with the leadership of this group in promoting Uganda.

Tourism

This nation that is known as the "Pearl of Africa," a reference by Sir Winston Churchill in his book "My African Journey," is making a tenacious comeback and is re-emerging as a top tourist destination with more than 1.2 million visitors annually. Uganda boasts numerous UNESCO World Heritage sites, including the Kasubi Royal Tombs, the Nyero Rock paintings and the snow-capped Mt. Rwenzori. It offers a beautiful, natural, peaceful and pristine environment for tourists. It has been ranked twice in a row as the top tourist destination by well-known travel guidebooks. The country has everything tourists need for a fulfilling adventure or relaxing break.

To date, the number of tourists from Japan to Uganda has increased by about 25 percent, but we would like to encourage more Japanese to consider Uganda for their tourism itinerary. Uganda has been ranked second in the world in hospitality and the 54

different tribes in Uganda offer opportunities for diverse cultural tourism.

Trade and investment

Last year, Uganda was ranked the most-enterprising nation, with 28 percent of the adults in the nation owning or co-owning a business. It is therefore not a surprise that the number of Japanese small and medium enterprises in Uganda has increased from 19 to 35 in the last two years alone. We also wish to encourage large corporations to look at Uganda as a potential investment destination. We thank Toshiba, Marubeni and Toyota Tsusho for realizing this potential and investing in Uganda already.

Uganda has made significant progress socially, economically and politically. We have just had successful parliamentary, presidential and local government elections. In this new tenure, Uganda's government has committed itself to fighting corruption and improving the business environment to attract foreign direct investments. Currently, the investment climate is conducive and the government of Uganda continues to assure investors of security and good returns on their investments. Uganda is an ideal hub for business transactions in the East African region.

Infrastructure

To have the country reach mid-

dle-income economy status, our priorities continue to be infrastructure development, trade and investment, tourism and human resource development. The government of Japan has continued to support these priorities in the areas of Kampala metropolitan traffic management through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

In the just concluded sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI) and during the cordial bilateral summit between Japan's prime minister and Uganda's president, Japan promised to continue to support Uganda's infrastructure development efforts. This partnership between the Ugandan and Japanese governments through JICA has already started to bear fruit. As a landlocked country, there has been a dramatic decrease in the number of hours commodities spend at border posts, due to the newly created One-Stop Border Post system. We have completed a number of road infrastructures with Japanese assistance and the country has been connected to electricity grids through this same support. We are grateful for this assistance.

Education

Human resource development is one of the key pillars in our National Development Plan and

Japan has continued to support Uganda in this area through its Ministry of Education, Sports, Culture and Technology, the African Business Education Initiative for Youth (ABE Initiative), JICA and various universities and foundations. The number of students from Uganda studying in Japan has continued to increase and we look forward to more, especially the science and technology field. Research collaborations and vocational training exchanges have continued to grow and for this we commend the people and government of Japan.

As a hub of education in the East African region Uganda receives students from the Great Lakes Region, which has seen the education sector witness tremendous growth in recent years. The Japanese education system and expertise, especially in science and technology, and vocational technical training has been done through the Nakawa Educational Institute. We welcome the interest by the Japa-

nese government to raise this institute into one of the 10 Centers of Excellence in Africa. We still invite private investors to take advantage of the massive investment opportunities that exist in the education sector in Uganda.

We would not have come this far without our partners, both government and private such as the Sasakawa Foundation, the Ashinaga Foundation, Japan Millenium Promise, Terra Renaissance and the many Japanese NPOs and overseas volunteers who have selflessly committed to our social and economic well-being.

As this young nation emerges as a middle-income economy, we commit ourselves to continue to promote cordial bilateral relations between Uganda and Japan, as well as all our partners in development. We believe that the relationship between our partners and us will continue to grow from strength to strength.

Fellow Ugandans, as we launch Uganda Diaspora Japan

today, I urge you to support it, as well as continue to be ambassadors of Uganda wherever you are by promoting our good culture, warmth and friendship. Please also continue to network with other organizations to support not only your families, but our communities back home.

I thank all organizations that supported the publication of this supplement. May God bless you abundantly.

Thank you for your kind attention.

I say all these in accordance with our motto, "For God and My Country."

Congratulations to the People of the Republic of Uganda on the 54th Anniversary of Their Independence



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A giraffe on the bank of the Nile River UGANDA EMBASSY