

Zimbabwe Independence Day Special

Starting a new chapter of global relations

TITUS M.J. ABU-BASUTU
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF
ZIMBABWE



On behalf of the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe H.E. Emmerson Mnangagwa, the government, the people of Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean residents in Japan,

I convey very warm greetings to Their Imperial Majesties, Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the government and people of Japan. I thank them for their hospitality to all Zimbabweans visiting and living in Japan. I thank The Japan Times and the sponsors for their generosity in making the publication of this article possible.

Today, on April 18, Zimbabwe celebrates 38 years of independence. We do so under a new dispensation following a peaceful transition upon the resignation of Robert Mugabe as president on Nov. 21. This saw Mnangagwa's inauguration on Nov. 24. It is most heartening to Zimbabweans that the transition was peaceful and in compliance with the constitutional processes of Zimbabwe.

The new administration is building on the development framework Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transforma-

tion, prioritizing the growth and expansion of the economy. This demands that all Zimbabweans at home and abroad do everything possible to develop the economy to create employment for young and well-educated Zimbabweans. The president declared: "This task, however, of projecting our country as a welcoming investment destination remains a collective responsibility for all Zimbabweans across the political divide. This, therefore, demands that we subordinate our partisan and personal interests to the higher objective of building a strong economy for the benefit of both current and future generations."

Consequently, driven by agriculture and mining, the priority of the new administration is growing the economy. To this end, the government has expanded the Special Maize Production and Input Substitution Program, dubbed Command Agriculture, to cover other cereals and crops like sorghum, wheat and tobacco, as well as livestock. This program is funded by the private sector and entails timely availing of inputs to the farmers by the private sector under government coordination. Therefore, Zimbabwe's economy is projected to grow by 4.7 percent, riding on the performance of agriculture, in the main, and mining. With the agricultural value chain fully exploited, supported by mining and complemented by manufacturing and tourism, high employment will be attained.

On foreign relations, the new administration has adopted the policy of re-engagement

with the international community, thus starting a new chapter in Zimbabwe's relations with the international community. The re-engagement process addresses relations with international financial institutions and governments with a goal of harmonizing points of view and understanding, as well as honoring obligations to various institutions. To this end, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs now encompasses international trade as well. Consequently, the mantra for the new government is, "Zimbabwe is Open for Business," where security of investment is guaranteed. To buttress this, the indigenization law has been amended, removing the 51-49 percent (indigene-investor) thresholds in enterprise ownership, except in diamonds and platinum mining.

As we celebrate 38 years of independence, we also look forward to holding elections in three months' time. The government has assured that the elections will be peaceful, free, fair and credible and has invited international observers to monitor polling. Already, observers are visiting and engaging with stakeholders in this pre-election phase.

The government of Japan's support in the biometric voter registration process, by availing resources to the elections' management body of Zimbabwe to effectively carry out the critical voter registration exercise, is greatly appreciated. This is in addition to many areas where Japan has provided developmental infrastructure support, such as dam construc-

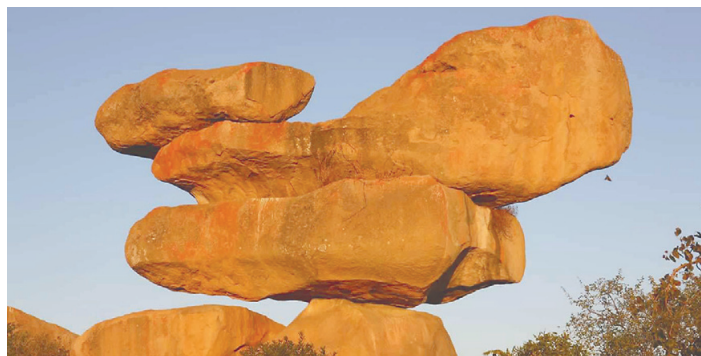
tion, irrigation construction, one-stop border posts, international bridges, hospital infrastructure and equipment support.

The conduct of a transparent, peaceful, free, fair and credible election is a critical economic development phenomenon that builds peace in a developing country. Peace is critical in attracting capital and, in turn, growing the economy, hence "Zimbabwe is Open for Business." Welcome, investors!

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.



Samora Machel Avenue, a main street that runs through the center of Harare.
EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE



The Chiremba Balancing Rocks, located 13 km southeast of Harare, are the most famous of similar formations found in many parts of Zimbabwe. EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

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to the People of
the Republic of Zimbabwe
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