
Lesotho National Day Special

Honoring growth and varied exchanges

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AMBASSADOR OF LESOTHO



On behalf of the government, the people of the Kingdom of Lesotho and myself, I'd like to take this opportunity to convey warm greetings to the people and government of Japan

on the occasion of our National Independence Day, which we celebrate every year on Oct. 4, marking independence from Britain.

Lesotho is fondly referred to as The Kingdom in the Sky or The Switzerland of southern Africa because of the stark beauty of its rugged, mountainous terrain and the unique state of having the highest lowest elevation point in the world. Lesotho is also uniquely the only country in the world landlocked by one country.

Lesotho (then Basutoland) was united by King Moshoeshe I around the early 1800s. During this time, Moshoeshe I fought a series of wars with Boer settlers who were trying to colonize his land. After losing a great portion of his territory, Moshoeshe I sought help from Britain. Basutoland was then declared a British protectorate in 1868 and regained independence in 1966.

On a diplomatic level, Lesotho and

Japan share a long-standing, bilateral relationship that has grown stronger — the highlight being a historic, high-level visit to Japan by King of the Kingdom of Lesotho, His Majesty Letsie III, and Her Majesty, Queen Masenate Mohato Seeiso from Nov. 20 to 28, 2016. Their Majesties visited various places in Japan, including the disaster-affected areas in Tohoku in solidarity with the affected people. The partnership between these two countries is based on a shared understanding on issues of common interest.

I am confident that our relations will continue to prosper for the mutual benefit of our peoples, in the years to come and during my assignment. Therefore, this week, I'm privileged to be welcoming three ministers from Lesotho; the minister of foreign affairs and the minister of development planning for the Tokyo International Conference on African Development ministerial meeting 2018 and the minister of communications, science and technology for the Science and Technology in Society forum in Kyoto.

It is important to note that I only arrived in Japan about four months ago. During this time, I have already visited Kanagawa, Hiroshima and Nagasaki prefectures where I was exposed to the rich Japanese culture. My first impressions about the Japanese is their sense of punctuality. This, I will forever carry with me even after the end of my tour and return to my country. I have observed with awe,

people running around with briefcases on the street. I was further amazed by the prominence of big clocks in every corner, which I suppose are the reason behind the punctuality. Back in my country, we have "African time" (an allowance that I may be late for an appointment so please exercise the virtue of patience). Being a comparativist by nature, I have further observed the humility, kindness, humanity, politeness, respect and friendliness as qualities of Japanese people to be admired.

Due to my academic background, I hope to interchange educational philosophies and innovations that will further engage tourism in all spheres. I have already visited several educational institutions and connected with colleagues in that area.

Finally, let me tell you how Lesotho celebrates independence day. Oct. 4 is a national holiday marked with flag-raising ceremonies, speeches, colorful parades and processions, performances and other cultural and festive activities. The official reception is held in the capital city of Lesotho, Maseru, presided by the king in the presence of the prime minister and high-level dignitaries.

Khotso, pula, nala (peace, rain and prosperity).

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