

Uganda National Day Special

Strong bonds built on mutual respect

BETTY GRACE AKECH-OKULLO
AMBASSADOR OF UGANDA



As we mark Uganda's 56th Independence Anniversary and 56 years of Japan-Uganda diplomatic relations, I extend warm greetings from His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda,

Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the government and the people of Uganda to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the honorable members of the Diet, all arms of government and the people of Japan for their continued support and warm friendship with the people and government of Uganda.

Our sympathies and condolences go to the government and people of Japan regarding the loss of lives and properties suffered during Typhoon Jebi and the earthquake in Hokkaido. We pray for their recovery.

Strong Japan-Uganda bilateral relations have been built over the years and continue to improve based on the foundation of mutual respect, inclusive and constructive dialogue and recognition of our diversity.

These relations have been strengthened by a number of significant activities, one of them being the high-level visits of leaders and dignitaries from both countries; such as the visit of Prince Akishino of Japan, ministers, the Japan International Cooperation Agency president, members of parliament, mayors and technical officers. The president of Uganda, the speaker of the Parliament and ministers have visited Japan numerous times.

Additionally, Japan awarded our minister of foreign affairs the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun, the highest-level of Imperial recognition to our country.

There has also been the implementation of development projects in a wide range of spheres. The construction of a one-stop border post, roads, electricity transmission lines and junction improvements are but a few of the infrastructural developments. Moreover, the New Nile Bridge, a highly strategic bridge linking Uganda and the region, will be commissioned this month, and the Kampala fly-over project will be inaugurated this month.

Regarding health, regional referral hospitals are being rehabilitated and equipped, and water and sanitation is being addressed. In education, human resources development has been addressed and the Nakawa Vocational Institute has actively contributed in this field, and is a center of technology transfer in the area of motortronics.

Furthermore, private sector participation has steadily increased. A number of Japanese businesses and construction companies are now doing business in Uganda.

Additionally, on the social level, people-to-people exchanges have been undertaken.

Although the country has passed through politically motivated turbulence, it remains stable and is improving politically, economically and in terms of security. Consequently, Uganda is hosting over 1.4 million refugees from across the African region.

Japan and U.N. agencies have played a very supportive role in refugee support. Japan has already begun implementing their commitment made at the Solidarity Summit on Refugees, held in Kampala in 2017.

As a prelude to the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo, Uganda has secured two host cities — Tateshina and

Izumisano — which have offered to host Ugandan athletes during the training camps preceding the games.

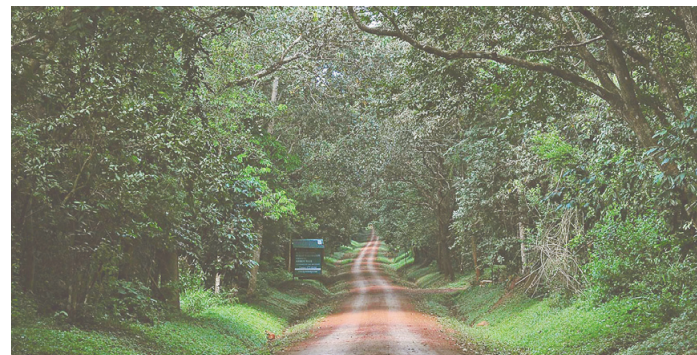
We applaud Japan for their continued win-win engagements with Uganda. Through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development process, Uganda is benefiting under the African Business Education Initiative for Youth and infrastructure improvement. Japan's support to Uganda in the post-conflict rehabilitation of Northern Uganda has been highly appreciated.

This year, we held two business seminars to inform Japanese investors and businesses of opportunities in Uganda. We extend our appreciation to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization's Investment and Technology Promotion Office, Tokyo, for hosting a Uganda-Japan business seminar. We also thank the Japan Cooperation Center Petroleum for also hosting a business seminar. Both seminars were well-attended and successful. We will continue informing the Japanese public of our business and investment opportunities. We also thank the many companies that have shown interest in Uganda and participated in these seminars.

Our trade and investment regime is set to improve as we work on our basic infrastructures to attract more global businesses and become competitive. As a signatory to major international investment and business protocols, and a fully liberalized economy with market access in the region, we hope Japanese investors will consider Uganda as a business and investment destination of choice.

We will combine efforts with Japan to improve our trade relations by promoting a win-win strategy that will encourage the private sector from Japan to invest in Uganda.

Uganda, the Pearl of Africa, continues to shine brightly. Serenely beautiful with fantas-



tic natural scenery complemented by a rich mosaic of hospitable tribes and cultures, flora and fauna, and possessing all of Africa's big five animals in touristic terms, it is ranked as a top tour destination in Africa. Gorilla trekking, water sporting and game drives remain in high demand for Japanese tourists. Please visit the country for tourism and leisure.

Our resolve to be a middle-income economy by 2020 is on course. Uganda will continue to promote cordial bilateral relations with Japan and all of our development partners on the basis of mutual respect and benefit.

Fellow Ugandans, as we assess where we stand today as a nation, I would like to take this opportunity to remind us all to remain steadfast, stand tall and be united.

My deepest appreciation to all the organizations and companies that have supported the publication of our supplement.

May God bless you all abundantly.

Top: The New Nile Bridge on the Nile River is being built in cooperation with Japan. Above: Northwest of Kampala is the lush greenery of Budongo Forest. EMBASSY OF UGANDA

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

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



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