

# Kenya National Day Special

## New horizons to explore as relations deepen

**S. K. MAINA, M.B.S.**  
AMBASSADOR OF KENYA



Dec. 12 marks the 55th Anniversary of the Republic of Kenya's Independence. Accordingly, on this auspicious occasion, I wish to convey on behalf of the government and people of Kenya

residing in Japan, warm greetings and best wishes to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the government and friendly people of Japan.

Allow me once again to convey on behalf of the government and people of Kenya, heartfelt condolences for the loss of lives and destruction of property following the natural disasters that affected parts of southwest Japan following devastating typhoons and the earthquake in Hokkaido. The Kenyan government expressed its solidarity with the people of Japan by donating one ton of Kenyan tea to the Japanese government for distribution to the affected victims. I also take this opportunity to congratulate Japan on winning the bid to host the 2025 World Expo by a big margin.

Japan has remained a key and reliable development partner to Kenya throughout our 55 years of bilateral relations. Indeed, Kenya is the biggest recipient of Japanese

overseas development assistance in sub-Saharan Africa. Kenya hosted the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in August 2016 in Nairobi, the first one in Africa since its inception in 1993. Our bilateral cooperation has been based on five key pillars, namely economic infrastructure and private sector development; agriculture; the environment, water and sanitation; human resource development; and health. The partnership is in tandem with our national economic blueprint, Kenya Vision 2030.

It is important to note that under the sponsorship of the United Nations Office for Outer Space, Kenya took its first step into the space technology when the University of Nairobi, partnering with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency developed its first nano satellite, the KiboCUBE satellite (1KUNS-PF). The satellite was successfully deployed to orbit from the International Space Station on May 11. This launch signifies Kenya's resolve on technological and innovation advancement in space science. The satellite will be used to collect data on wildlife, weather forecasting, disaster management, food security surveillance and more.

Further to this, we are calling upon Japanese information communications and technology (ICT) firms to take advantage of Kenya's advanced ICT infrastructure to make a footprint in Kenya. It is worth noting that Kenya has mobile internet speeds twice the

global average at 13.7 megabits per second and the highest mobile phone penetration in East Africa. ICT is an ideal sector for Japanese investment. The MPESA, mobile phone-based money transfer, financing and micro-financing service that allows users to deposit, withdraw, and transfer money and pay for goods and services easily using mobile phones, is a local innovation that has won global accolades.

In this article, it is important that I highlight the "Big Four" strategy, which refers to the government's targeted four priority socioeconomic areas for investment in the next four years, namely, manufacturing; affordable housing; food security; and quality, affordable health care for all. The government has offered incentives to investors in manufacturing for export diversification and value addition. Focused subsectors include ICT, fish processing, textiles, apparel and cotton, iron and steel, oil and gas, mining, construction materials and agro-processing.

In the agricultural sector, which accounts for 26 percent of gross domestic product, employs more than 70 percent of Kenya's population and is the main source of livelihood for the majority of population who live in rural areas, yet Kenya faces food insecurity. The government targets to achieve 100 percent resilience on food security and nutritional value. To this end, an additional 700,000 acres of land has been set aside for growth of staples such as maize, beans and rice through public-private partnerships. Investors on post-harvest loss prevention technologies, fishing and aquaculture, fish processing, manufacture of animal feeds and



**President Uhuru Kenyatta and Ambassador of Japan to Kenya Toshitsugu Uesawa at a completion ceremony for Phase 1 of the Ngong Road project in Nairobi on March 22.** EMBASSY OF KENYA

small and medium-sized enterprises in the food value chain will receive government incentives. Therefore, prioritizing the "Big Four" opens new horizons for Japanese companies investing in Kenya.

The Blue Economy is earmarked to play a crucial role in the future economic growth of Kenya. I would like to take this opportunity to express sincere gratitude to the government of Japan for co-hosting the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference (SBEC) that Kenya hosted from Nov. 26 to 28. The Blue Economy is a new frontier that world states should fully embrace, as reflected in the success of the SBEC in Nairobi. Indeed, our oceans, seas, lakes, rivers and other water resources hold great promise for contributing toward the success of the Vision 2030 Agenda and the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that Kenya is preparing for TICAD VII in Yokohama in 2019; Kenya participated in the TICAD ministerial meeting held in Tokyo, from Oct. 5 to 8 under the leadership of Ambassador Monica Juma, the Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs who on the sidelines met Japanese counterpart, Hon. Taro Kono, among other dignitaries. She reaffirmed our commitment to the TICAD process as a forum through which Japanese government addresses Africa's development issues. Indeed, Kenya and Japan's strategic partnership continues to deepen as we explore new horizons.

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



**Japanese gantry cranes that are used to move containers at a shipping terminal in the Port of Mombasa.** EMBASSY OF KENYA

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on the 55th Anniversary of  
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