

Ghana Independence Day Special

Good relations continue to prosper

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AMBASSADOR OF GHANA



Once again, March is here with us, and Ghana is celebrating her 62nd Independence anniversary from British colonial rule in 1957. As Ghanaians around the globe celebrate this very special occasion, it is my singular honor and pleasure to convey, on behalf of the President of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the government and people of Ghana, greetings.

It is my honor to convey warm greetings from the president to Their Imperial Majesties, Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, all members of the Imperial family, the government and people of Japan, for the continued friendly relations that exist

between Ghana and Japan.

May I also use this medium to extend special felicitations to the diplomatic community, friends of Ghana and our development partners on this occasion.

Incidentally, Ghana's 62nd independence anniversary is equal to the number of years of diplomatic relations between Ghana and Japan. Many Japanese and Ghanaian children continue to celebrate the life of Hideyo Noguchi, the renowned Japanese scientist who came to Ghana in 1927 to research yellow fever. This selfless act of heroism became the cornerstone of the excellent relations between Ghana and Japan.

In recognition of his accomplishment, the government of Ghana, in December, renamed the road in front of the Japanese Embassy in Accra "Dr. Hideyo Noguchi Street."

It is worthy to note that 2018 was an active year for relations between Ghana and Japan, with several political and economic delegations visiting both countries. Ghanaian officials fully engaged with their

Japanese counterparts on several issues including finance, infrastructural development, energy conservation and capacity building in various sectors, as well as health and agriculture-related matters. Ghana was also fully represented at the TICAD (Tokyo International Conference on African Development) VII Ministerial Meeting held in Tokyo in October.

These high-level engagements were crowned with the visit of Akufo-Addo in December. During the visit, the president paid a courtesy call on Emperor Akihito at the Imperial Palace. The president also held bilateral talks with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and held several meetings with private companies such as Sumitomo Corp., Toyota Tsusho Corp. and a few nonprofit organizations.

The president also gave the keynote address at the Ghana-Japan Investment Forum, which was organized by the embassy with the kind support of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The investment forum was highly successful having a total of around 181 Japanese and 28 Ghanaian companies participating. The president, in the tradition of all Ghanaian presidents who have visited Japan, also traveled to the town of Inawashiro in Fukushima Prefecture, despite it being blanketed in snow, to visit the Hideyo Noguchi Memorial Museum.

One would not be surprised to realize that now, Ghana and Japan's relationship has moved from *tomodachi* (friend) and is closer to *kokoronotomo* (soul mate).

These close ties are necessary to ensure a partnership for development, which is Japan's aim and objective for TICAD, as well as Ghana's development vision of a Ghana Beyond Aid. As many of us are aware, many are working hard for the much-anticipated TICAD VII to be held in Yokohama this year. In regards to the Ghana Beyond Aid vision, Ghana is seeking to accelerate the structural transformation of her economy, create jobs for the youth and wean herself

off excessive dependence on foreign aid. Over the last year, Ghana has implemented a paperless customs clearance processing system, which in turn has moved the country up six notches in the 2019 ease of doing business report. It is our hope that Japanese businesses will be greatly encouraged to do more business in Ghana, even more so when the planned JETRO Ghana office is established in Accra.

The theme of the 62nd independence anniversary is "Celebrating Peace and Unity" to commemorate achieving peace among the people of the north, and also to reiterate Ghana's role as the beacon of hope and peace in Africa. The logo for the anniversary is a traditional *adinkra* symbol, which means *obi nka obi* (no one should bite the other).

For those of us in Japan, celebrating peace and unity is equally fitting, since these two qualities bode well for Ghanaians and their fellow Ghanaians in Japan, as well as Ghanaians and our Japanese hosts living and working together in Japan.

2019 will be busy for all of us who live in Japan. One of the most exciting events will be the coronation of the new Emperor in May to usher in a new era. Japan is also hosting the G20 summit for the first time in Osaka. Other meetings to be held include the Finance Ministers' and Central Bank

Governors' meeting, the Foreign Ministers' meeting, and other ministerial meetings that will take place at eight different cities in Japan.

As the current president of the G20, Japan has a big leadership role to play in the world's economy to advance discussions toward resolving the myriad of issues now facing the international community.

At the same time, the G20 summit is a perfect opportunity for people from all over the world to see and experience the wide-ranging appeal of the various regions that will host these meetings.

Japan will host the 2019 Rugby World Cup, providing business opportunities for the private sector from the many numbers of tourists and rugby enthusiasts who will flood Japan. Ghanaians also look forward to the unique experience of living in a country that is hosting a World Cup.


We at the Embassy of Ghana look forward to actively participating in all the exciting events that lie ahead, and our appeal is that like the traditional *adinkra* logo that marks our 62nd independence anniversary.

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



President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe meet in Tokyo on Dec. 11. EMBASSY OF GHANA

Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Ghana
on the 62nd Anniversary of
Their Independence



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