

Zimbabwe Independence Day Special

Partnership bolsters growth in various fields

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On behalf of the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe Emmerson Mnangagwa, the government, people of Zimbabwe and Zimbabweans residing in Japan, I convey in the final days of

the Heisei Era very warm greetings to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the government and people of Japan. I thank them for their warm hospitality to Zimbabweans visiting Japan, residing in Japan and most profoundly for their love and help for the people of Zimbabwe, especially during the hour of need following Cyclone Idai. I thank The Japan Times and the sponsors for their marvelous generosity in making the publication of this article possible.

Today, April 18, under the Second Republic that Mnangagwa lauded during his campaign and as president, we celebrate 39 years of Zimbabwe's independence. We celebrate while painfully remembering the catastrophe of this past March — the ferocious Cyclone Idai floods in eastern Zimbabwe that washed away homes, roads and shops; destroyed vital infrastructure; and triggered mudslides and rockslides that killed hundreds of people. Some are still missing. Livestock, crops — all means of livelihood were washed away. In response, Japan and the international community pledged assistance to the victims. This love and compassion is greatly appreciated by the people and government of Zimbabwe.

We also celebrate following the free, fair, credible, violence-free and internationally observed elections of July 30, 2018. A new biometric, and polling station-based voters roll was used; the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission ran the elections and Mnangagwa was announced winner.

However, post-election tranquillity was tainted by a shooting, an incident that led to a public international commission of inquiry led by former President of the Republic of South Africa K. Motlanthe. The free, fair, credible and violence-free outcome was challenged in court and ensuing court processes were equally observed, with proceedings open to the public and broadcast internationally. As a result, Mnangagwa was declared winner and inaugurated. The elections and court processes gave Zimbabweans in general a sense of pride in their own institutions' management of national processes.

The government's main objective is peace and economic revival. It has reconfigured the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to incorporate international trade, highlighting the importance of economic diplomacy in the country's foreign policy. On the budgetary front, the government launched a three-year Transitional Stabilisation Programme aimed at curbing fiscal indiscipline, reigning in government expenditure, as well as efficient revenue collection and management of the public debt.

Expanding exports to attract foreign direct investment and the Zimbabwean diaspora participating in building the economy are vital. The mantra, "Zimbabwe is Open for Business," is backed by a raft of reform measures. Some parastatals are being privatized, commercialized or liquidated, and improving the ease of doing business is ongoing. Zimbabwe Invest-

ment Development Authority, a one-stop shop for investor projects and investment approvals, has also been established.

This year's budget is dubbed Austerity for Prosperity. The government has deferred expenditure on vehicles and channeled resources to needy areas like health. Additionally, our fuel was very cheap in the region, leading to leakages and arbitrage. The government adjusted the price competitively — a move that caused riots and looting as well as the burning of shops, police stations and private and state vehicles. This was despite the president's warning that economic adjustment would be painful. However, order was eventually restored with minimal loss of life regarding security personnel and protestors.

The government's "engagement and re-engagement" policy has yielded positive results for the economy. Pepsi established a plant in Zimbabwe; exploration for oil was undertaken with positive indications; the refurbishment of the Mutare-Beira railway line; and the development of a deep port and facilities in Beira, Mozambique, the main port for Zimbabwe, has been approved. Expansion of Hwange Power Station is ongoing and National Railways of Zimbabwe recently received locomotives and coaches. Zimbabwe has joined the Kazungula Bridge project. Roads are being repaired and dualized, and Cold Storage Company, long nonoperational, has secured a strategic partner. The government has ceased price controls, favoring persuasion, though unjustifiable price increases occur.

Zimbabwe is striving to rehabilitate infrastructure, attend to the needs of rural communities, and facilitate regional trade. In this regard, Japan has provided tremendous assistance, providing modern equipment and expertise in the rehabilitation



Hwange National Park is the largest in Zimbabwe and the home to over 100 species of mammals. EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

of the Nyakomba Irrigation Scheme. The government attaches great importance to irrigation as a food security strategy, given the region's frequent droughts. Japan is working to improve the northern part of the Makuti-Chirundu road, a section of the Southern African Development Community's North-South Corridor through the Chirundu One Stop Border Post, to facilitate smooth flow of trade.

Regarding social services, Japan constructed classroom blocks and rehabilitated clinics in the Binga and Beitbridge districts, respectively. During the 2016 floods, Japan donated emergency supplies to those affected and this gesture has been made once again to Cyclone Idai victims. Land mine clearance operations are also ongoing; Japan donated to this noble cause. Consequently, Zimbabwe is highly appreciative of Japan's assistance in these areas. Japan's assistance has been ongoing since the early 1980s. Thus, Zimbabwe remains forever grateful to Japan.

Makorokoto, amhlope, congratulations, omedetō!

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

Congratulations

We use a mineral called Petalite from Zimbabwe to make Donabe, a fire-proof casserole pot.

私たちは、ジンバブエ共和国のペタライトという鉱物で、土鍋を作っています。

Peace

平和への願い

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Congratulations

to the People of
the Republic of Zimbabwe
on the 39th Anniversary
of Their Independence

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