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# Cameroon National Day Special

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## Highlighting potential in business relations

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AMBASSADOR OF CAMEROON



The celebration of Cameroon National Day on May 20 falls opportunely at a pivotal moment in the life of Japan marked in particular by the advent of the Reiwa Era.

Thus on behalf of

the people and government of Cameroon, as well as Cameroonians living in Japan, I would like to convey my most sincere wishes for success to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, and wishes for happiness to the illustrious imperial family and the Japanese nation.

To Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the government and the Diet, I likewise extend wishes for great accomplishments.

As the upcoming seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VII) in August will be the first of this new era, I would like to ask for stronger friendship ties and cooperation between Cameroon and Japan based on mutual benefits. This cooperation, which is excellent in some domains, has somehow remained under its real potential in others, and I think it is the appropriate time to engage in deepening our bilateral business relations.

In fact, Cameroon, “Africa in miniature,” is a wonderful investment opportunity given its great potential that the government has been striving for many years to convert into real and sustainable business opportunities for both local and foreign investors.

My country possesses various assets offering opportunities mainly in agriculture, food, infrastructure, telecommunications, energy, water resources, transport and tourism. In terms of agriculture, about 85 percent of the total surface of the country is arable, with barely 20 percent actually cultivated, and our agricultural production includes a large variety of food and cash crops.

Cameroon also possesses 17 million hectares of exploitable forest, making it home to the second-largest forest in Africa. Additionally, the country has 360 kilometers of coastline with the two main port facilities of Douala and Kribi providing ideal access to the central African region. The country is endowed with the second-highest hydroelectric potential in Africa, and its mining potential is rich and diversified with over 50 minerals identified nationwide.

Furthermore, situated at the center of the Gulf of Guinea, Cameroon’s strategic location opens it up to a potential market of 300 million consumers.

The national economy is the largest in Central Africa and one of the most diversified in Africa. It is also worth highlighting

Cameroon’s human resource potential, with a youthful, dynamic and well-educated population.

To capitalize on this huge potential for a substantial and sustainable improvement of the population’s living conditions, President Paul Biya has engaged the country in a strategic development plan aimed at genuinely modernizing economic structures. The government has been implementing this plan for many years and I strongly believe that Japanese experience and expertise could be of great help in tackling the challenges faced so far.

I will end this message by stressing the fact that Cameroon has always been an idol of peace and stability in a conflict-plagued subregion. However, in recent years this stability has been somewhat undermined by two localized security threats. One affects two of our borders with actions of the terrorist group Boko Haram and other armed groups operating in the neighboring countries, and another threatens our territorial integrity with a local armed group claiming to be separatists. In both cases, the government has managed to very effectively contain the threat and is actively working toward a gradual and sustainable return to normalcy.

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