

Cote d'Ivoire Independence Day Special

Cooperation reinforced through aid, mutual business ties

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AMBASSADOR OF COTE D'IVOIRE



On the occasion of the celebration of the 59th anniversary of the independence of Cote d'Ivoire, I would like, on behalf of the President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, His Excellency Alassane

Ouattara, the people and the Government of Cote d'Ivoire, as well as on my own behalf, to express my respectful greetings to their Imperial Majesties, Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, to the imperial family and to form my ardent wishes for their continued health and happiness.

I would also like to extend my warmest greetings to His Excellency Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, to the government and the friendly people of Japan.

Relations between Cote d'Ivoire and Japan cover several fields. I would like to

focus on aspects regarding political and diplomatic relations, economic and commercial relations and cooperation concerning training programs and culture.

Diplomatic relations

Cote d'Ivoire and Japan have maintained excellent political and diplomatic relations for many years.

At the international level, relations between Cote d'Ivoire and Japan are characterized by a convergence of views between two countries on global issues.

At the bilateral level, the relationship is marked by reciprocal visits of high-level dignitaries. The relationship between our two countries is also marked by mutual support for the candidacies of two countries in international organizations as well as by support for positions for the defense of causes for each country.

Economic ties

At the economic and commercial level, relations between Cote d'Ivoire and Japan are at a satisfactory level.

In this regard, I would like to acknowledge the great Japanese companies based in Cote d'Ivoire and to take the opportunity to invite others to follow their example.

Indeed, by deciding to invest in Cote d'Ivoire, any such concerned companies will not regret their choice, because Cote d'Ivoire is one of the most attractive countries on the African continent, having experienced an average annual growth rate of 8 percent for several years.

Cote d'Ivoire is a gateway for Japanese companies and products in West Africa thanks to its two main ports. One is the Port of Abidjan, which is the second-largest port in sub-Saharan Africa after Durban in South Africa. It is the leading port in sub-Saharan Africa for the exportation of tuna. The second port is the Port of San Pedro, which is the main port for the exportation of cocoa.

Moreover, since its independence in 1960, Cote d'Ivoire has been characterized by a liberal economy that allows private companies to thrive.

Cote d'Ivoire therefore notes its appre-

ciation for the current evolution of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) program, in which there is large participation from the private sector. The participation of the private sector within TICAD and the enhancement of peace and stability are two of the three pillars of TICAD 7. Indeed, peace and stability are also two big priorities for Cote d'Ivoire.

Of course, Cote d'Ivoire has taken a number of steps to invite more participation from the private sector under the auspices of the TICAD program. Some of these steps include improvements to the business climate; the creation of a public-private sector consultation committee, with a view toward permanent dialogue between the government and the private sector; the creation of a "Japan desk" for Japanese investors within CEPICI (Centre de Promotion des Investissements en Cote d'Ivoire), the agency in Cote d'Ivoire for the promotion of investments; as well as the creation of a ministry in charge of the promotion of private investment.

The very strong cooperative relationship between Cote d'Ivoire and Japan is also reflected in Japan's support through Official Development Assistance (ODA). The flyover called "Flyover of Ivorian-Japanese Friendship," built on one of the main avenues of the city of Abidjan, the fishing port and the central market of Sassandra, southwest of Cote d'Ivoire, are perfect illustrations of this cooperation.

Diverse exchanges

Cooperation between Cote d'Ivoire and Japan is also developed in the field of training, as evidenced by scholarship under the African Business Education Initiative for Youth (ABE Initiative) and other several training courses in Japan that benefit young Ivorians every year.

At the cultural level, a tour in Japan from Oct. 18 to Nov. 11 of an Ivorian artistic group called Kassou-Tri, was an opportunity for Cote d'Ivoire and Japan to initiate a new dimension of their cooperation.

A tour of a Japanese artistic group in Cote d'Ivoire to be encouraged bilaterally will

consolidate this new bridge between our two countries.

I take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to all members of the Japan-Cote d'Ivoire Friendship Association (JCIFA), chaired by Ambassador Yuji Kurokawa, former ambassador of Japan to Cote d'Ivoire, for their sustained efforts to strengthen the friendship between Cote d'Ivoire and Japan.

To conclude, I would like to express my sincere thanks to The Japan Times for offering the embassy an opportunity to publish my message every year on the occasion of the anniversary of the independence of Cote d'Ivoire. I would like to thank the sponsors of the embassy who have agreed to give their support to the embassy for the publication of this message: Marubeni Corp., NEC Corp., Mitsubishi Corp. and NS Semicon Co.

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



The flyover of Ivorian-Japanese Friendship in Abidjan EMBASSY OF COTE D'IVOIRE

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the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
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