

# Ghana Independence Day Special

## Ongoing cooperation helps nurture economic prosperity, friendly ties

**FRANK OKYERE**  
AMBASSADOR OF GHANA



On the special occasion of the 63rd Independence Anniversary of Ghana, I wish to, on behalf of the government and people of Ghana, convey warm felicitations to Their Imperial Majesties

Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, all members of the imperial family, the government and people of Japan for the warm hospitality that Ghana and Japan continue to enjoy.

I also wish to congratulate Japan for the successful enthronement of Emperor Naruhito to the chrysanthemum throne. It is our hope and expectation that the new Reiwa Era of "beautiful harmony" will bring greater innovation and prosperity to Ghana-Japan relations.

This year's independence anniversary's theme is "Consolidating the Gains." It is appropriate and timely, as it reinforces the government's decision to transform the

Ghanaian economy for the benefit of all our citizenry. As the first sub-Saharan African country to gain its independence from British rule, Ghana has — since the fourth republic — enjoyed increasingly stable and deepening democratic governance. This is reflected in the seven successful elections held and peaceful transfers of power. Ghana will again go to the polls on Dec. 7, to choose a president and members of parliament to serve another four-year term.

Over the past three years, President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has accelerated economic transformation and improved the business environment through innovation and private sector engagement. Ghana has recorded a tremendous growth rate, with improved macroeconomic stability. Today, Ghana is one of the best places for doing business in West Africa, and also considered the fastest growing economy in the world, according to the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Report 2019.

The government has laid a solid foundation for accelerated growth of the Ghanaian economy. The digitization of the economy has removed waste in the system and created a business-friendly environment. The activities undertaken by the gov-

ernment contributed significantly to make Ghana one of the highest recipients of foreign direct investment on the continent.

As we work to consolidate these gains, I wish to express deep appreciation to the international community, our development partners and friends of Ghana, and in particular to Japan for their generosity and support. Indeed, since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Ghana and Japan 63 years ago, our two countries have developed a long-standing friendship and strengthened cooperation based on mutual respect, shared common values and respect for international laws.

I am happy to note that relations have remained excellent with exchange of high-level visits between the two countries.

Akufo-Addo attended The Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7) summit in August and held bilateral meetings with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and other senior government officials. He also met with Japanese corporations, including Sumitomo Corp., Toyota Tsusho Corp. and Marubeni Corp. Her Excellency Rebecca Akufo-Addo, first lady of Ghana, also represented the president at the emperor's

coronation last October.

Similarly, Japanese senior officials, including members of the Japan-Ghana Parliamentary Friendship Union, visited Ghana in January to strengthen cooperation with their Ghanaian counterparts, and supervised various projects undertaken by Japan in Ghana. I also note with appreciation that Emperor Naruhito, before ascending the throne, visited Ghana in March 2010, which elevated relations even higher.

These healthy interactions have resulted in the improvement in many sectors of the Ghanaian economy. This is evidenced by Japanese assistance toward improving human development capital through programs such as the Africa Business Education Initiative, building quality infrastructure, as well as the health and agricultural sectors in Ghana. In the area of health, Ghana's prevention and preparedness against public health emergencies has been bolstered by Japan through the construction of an advanced research center for infectious diseases at the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research. The center, which serves the subregion, is contributing to curbing pre-

ventable diseases, while reducing the poverty levels among Ghanaians.

Another significant contribution of Japanese support is in the area of key infrastructure projects such as the ongoing improvement of the Tema Motorway Roundabout; construction of a new bridge across the Volta River on the eastern corridor in the Volta region of Ghana; and the rehabilitation of the 170-kilometer National Trunk Road Yamoransa-Kumasi, which is to commence this year.

In the spirit of collaboration, I am pleased to announce that all is set for the Japan External Trade Organization to open its office in Accra by May 2020. The office will facilitate trade and investment between our countries and boost private sector participation. Furthermore, the successful TICAD 7 summit last year presents our countries an opportunity to strengthen economic cooperation. In this regard, I look forward to continuing my engagement with the private sector of Japan to improve trade and investment. It is expected that the inauguration of the African Chamber of Commerce launched at TICAD 7, will reinvigorate our shared determination toward enticing the pri-

mate sector of Japan to invest in Africa and Ghana. Hopefully, Ghana, as host of the secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement in Accra, will serve as an additional incentive to the private sector of Japan to take advantage of the huge market potential on the continent.

As we celebrate independence, I would like to invite many Japanese to make Ghana their preferred destination for tourism, trade and investment. With abundant skilled individuals and natural resources, Ghana is the world's largest producer of gold and second-largest producer of cocoa, and as always, warm Ghanaian hospitality awaits.

Finally, I wish to express deep gratitude to our corporate bodies and The Japan Times for their sponsorship and publication of this message. To my fellow compatriots, I extend special congratulations to all Ghanaians and acknowledge your significant contributions toward the development of our dear country.

Long live Ghana-Japan relations.

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



The Independence Arch in Accra is part of Black Star Square, also known as Independence Square. EMBASSY OF GHANA

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the Republic of Ghana  
on the Anniversary of  
Their Independence

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