

Zimbabwe Independence Day Special

Pledge to economic growth remains firm

TITUS M.J. ABU-BASUTU
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF
ZIMBABWE



On behalf of President of the Republic of Zimbabwe Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, the government, people of Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean residents in Japan I convey, during the

Reiwa Era very warm greetings with hearty congratulations on the enthronement ceremony to Their Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the government and people of Japan. I thank them profoundly for their warm hospitality to Zimbabwean visitors and residents in Japan, as well as their love and help for the people of Zimbabwe during times of distress. I thank The Japan Times and the sponsors for their generosity in making the publication of this article possible.

Today, April 18, Zimbabwe under the leadership of Mnangagwa celebrates its 40th anniversary of independence. We celebrate our independence amid the world challenge of COVID-19. Zimbabwe joined the world in implementing various measures to prevent the spread and mitigate the impact of this pandemic on the people and economy of Zimbabwe, consulting and collaborating regionally and with the World Health Organization. Our condolences go to those who have lost loved ones in Zimbabwe and Japan in this pandemic as well as Typhoon Hagibis.

Zimbabwe is transforming its economy following a series of challenges over the past years. It adopted the Transitional Stabilization Programme (TSP) running from October 2018 to December 2020. The TSP was formulated to rein in government expenditure and transition the economy to a free market economy, hence the mantra, "Zimbabwe is open for business."

Complementing the program, the government enunciated a foreign policy boost of engagement and reengagement encapsulating transactional and transformational diplomacy. The boost aims to revive the economy, encourage export generation, transform the environment

and institutions, and attract investors and visitors alike. This necessitates a review and alignment of all laws with the 2013 Constitution. The process has seen over 140 pieces of legislation aligned, and some repealed. There has been reform of the business environment, yielding improvements in the ease of doing business, resulting in Zimbabwe improving its World Bank rankings by 15 places and landing in the top 20 reformers. To that end, the Zimbabwe Investment and Development Agency has been established, providing a one-stop shop for investors.

The main boost centers on building an economy that will help Zimbabwe become an upper-middle-income country by 2030. Thus, the government has had to religiously abide by the TSP, inculcating fiscal discipline and ensuring that expenditure remained within the budget while curtailing public borrowing, hence the realization of budget surpluses over the year. In pursuit of the TSP, the Staff-Monitored Program, under the International Monetary Fund, was adopted to turn the economy around. Priorities include tight fiscal discipline and strict budgetary control to address budget and current account deficits, hence the budget surplus; improved current account position due to increased exports and declining imports; reducing the size of the government to contain the wage bill; and increased support for the productive private sector focusing on export-led recovery.

Further, the government launched the National Trade Policy, National Export Strategy and National Industrialization Policy. There are many other economic reform measures undertaken, such as the

introduction of the national currency, parastatals and state enterprises reform, establishing an Anti-Corruption Commission to aggressively combat the scourge of corruption. The commission has initiated empowering legislation for forfeiture to the state of proceeds from corruption. These are some of the many reforms being undertaken to cleanse the business environment while resuscitating the economy.

Zimbabwe and Japan enjoy good bilateral relations. Mnangagwa attended TICAD 7 in Yokohama where cordial meetings were held with Abe and the Diet. The minister of foreign affairs and international trade met with Japan's minister of foreign affairs. Japan has extended a lot of assistance to Zimbabwe over the years, the latest of such being the completion, hand-over and commissioning of the Nyakomba Irrigation Scheme in March. Prior to August, work on the improvement of the North-South Corridor to facilitate the smooth flow of traffic for trade and passengers was launched in Zimbabwe. All these and many other projects are funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Development of skilled workers and capacity building in requisite skills is yet another area where Japan is much appreciated. Humanitarian assistance from Japan has been critical for Zimbabwe in mitigating natural disasters. This includes via the World Food Program, Cyclone Idai-related mitigatory interventions through UNICEF, agricultural support for smallholder farmers and human food security support at grassroots level, education in human-wildlife conflict and dam construction at communal level. In the area of health, Japan has

been critical in assisting in the refurbishment of central hospitals in Harare and Bulawayo. This has been a continuation of support extended to Zimbabwe over the years.

As we celebrate our 40th independence anniversary, we greatly appreciate the support we have received from Japan in the development of our infrastructure and skilled workers. We will focus on economic development and the business environment to further improve the ease of doing business to make Zimbabwe a destination of choice for foreign investment. To fellow Zimbabweans in Japan, as we celebrate our 40th independence anniversary, I implore all to abide by the guidance given by the authorities to minimize and contain the spread of COVID-19.

Congratulations, Makorokoto, Amhlophe, Omedetō gozaimasu.



Prime Minister Shinzo Abe welcomes President Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa at TICAD 7 held in August in Yokohama. EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Zimbabwe
on the 40th Anniversary of
Their Independence

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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

四日市萬古焼五十鈴窯 **内山製陶所**

Uchiyamaseitousyo Co. Ltd.

1-979 Nishiakuragawa, Yokkaichi, Mie Pref. 〒510-0812
TEL: 059-332-6157 FAX: 059-332-0350

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