

Madagascar National Day Special

Bilateral relationship sees continued growth

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June 26 marks the 60th Anniversary of the recovery of the Independence of the Republic of Madagascar. On this auspicious occasion and on behalf of His Excellency Andry Rajoelina, the government and the Malagasy people, I would like to extend a message of felicitations to my fellow Malagasy citizens living in Japan and encourage them to endeavor to become bridges that can further enhance the mutual understanding between the Malagasy and Japanese people. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to The Japan Times as well as all our partners for their messages of support on this occasion.

Japan stands among the first countries to recognize the Republic of Madagascar on July 5, 1960, while diplomatic ties were established in September 1962. The

two countries have enjoyed friendly relations, marked by fruitful cooperation and high-level visits over the years.

In August 2007, His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Akishino, then-His Imperial Highness Prince Akishino, and Her Imperial Highness Princess Mako made the first ever visit to Madagascar by a member of the imperial family of Japan, to observe biodiversity and forest reconstruction. The first visit of a Malagasy head of state to Japan took place in May 2008 on the occasion of the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV).

Our ties have continued to grow. From Japan, Kenya Akiba, member of the House of the Representatives, visited as a special envoy of the prime minister to the inauguration ceremony of our president in January 2019. Then, Yoshihiro Seki, then-state minister of economy, visited in February and Kenji Yamada, then-parliamentary vice minister of foreign affairs, visited in March.

From Madagascar, the president; Naina Andriantsitohaina, then-minister of foreign affairs; and Lucien Ranarivelo, minister of agriculture, livestock and

fishery, visited Japan on the occasion of TICAD 7 last year. On the sidelines of the conference, the Malagasy head of state held a summit meeting with His Excellency Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The two leaders exchanged their views on further developing and strengthening the bilateral ties between Madagascar and Japan. Additionally, the President of the National Assembly Christine Razanamahasoa visited Japan as a representative of the Malagasy head of state for the enthronement ceremony of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito.

Japan's technical and economic cooperation with Madagascar dates back to 1965 and, under the auspices of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, has made remarkable contributions toward improving education, agriculture, health, key infrastructure and living conditions of the Malagasy people. In the view of expanding scope of cooperation under the TICAD 7 umbrella, urban planning and development, decentralized cooperation, access to sustainable quality infrastructures to support the backbone of a productive ecosystem and entrepreneurship are being pursued.

Considering its vast potential in agriculture, tourism, transportation, energy, fishing, mining, among other sectors, coupled with a strategic location in the Indian Ocean along major maritime routes, Madagascar stands as an attractive destination for investment. Sumitomo Corp. operates Japan's main investment project and is responsible for one-fourth of Japan's imports in nickel and cobalt.

While being open to investment, our vision of development focuses on building a future in harmony with our main assets: our human diversity and our outstanding nature. Madagascar, the fourth-largest island, stands as a "Treasure Island" with extraordinary and unique biodiversity. Efforts to value and preserve its pristine uniqueness through tourism are being deployed, while prospecting for its sustainable use in medicine and cosmetics.

To conclude and in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, I would like to take this opportunity to convey words of deep gratitude to the health professionals on the frontlines of the crisis and words of hope and encouragement to people around the world in these trying times. Our gratitude is



President Andry Rajoelina meets Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Yokohama in August 2019 during the seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development. PRESIDENCY OF MADAGASCAR, JAPAN/2019

extended to the government of Japan who contributed to the fight against COVID-19 in Madagascar with funds of €1 million, disbursed in two phases.

Confident that Madagascar-Japan relations will further grow in the coming years to mutual benefit, I wish continued

progress and prosperity for the friendly people of Japan.

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



Map of Madagascar

Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Madagascar
on the 60th Anniversary of
Their Independence



Signing ceremony of the MOU between Madagascar and Daiho in 2019



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