

Rwanda National Day Special

Bright future for enduring Rwanda-Japan relationship

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AMBASSADOR OF RWANDA



On the occasion of the Liberation Day of Rwanda, I am delighted to convey my best wishes to the readers of The Japan Times and the Rwandan community in Japan.

On this auspicious occasion, it is my honor to extend on behalf of the government of Rwanda, our warmest greetings and best wishes of good health, happiness and well-being to Their Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, the imperial family, government and the friendly people of Japan.

On this July 4, Rwandans are celebrating the 26th anniversary of the liberation of Rwanda. It is a historic day when the Rwandan Patriotic Front under the leadership of H.E. President Paul Kagame stopped the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi and liberated the country from the genocidal forces. This year also marks 58 years of independence, which coincides with the 58th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Rwanda and Japan. Our countries established diplomatic relations in 1962. This occasion provides an opportunity to reflect on the strength of our bilateral relationship and celebrate important milestones in this friendship.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, Rwanda and Japan have enjoyed friendly bilateral relations and warm friendship. Under the leadership of our president, our connection has grown even stronger, driven by mutual respect and shared values and vision for prosperity of our two nations. The highlight in our bilateral relations was the official visit of the president to Japan in 2019 when he held high-level discussions with his counterpart H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The visit laid the foundation for closer ties and stronger cooperation on a range of bilateral matters. The president is a regular participant in the Tokyo International Conference on African Development. Japanese senior officials, including ministers and Diet members, have visited Rwanda.

There is a growing people-to-people and cultural connection demonstrated by the increasing number of Japanese volunteer corps in Rwanda and Rwandan students in Japan. These interactions have injected momentum into our relationship and

deepened our friendship.

Over the last 26 years, Rwanda has transformed into a stable, secure and safe democratic country. Thanks to the visionary leadership of our president, Rwanda has become the second-fastest growing economy in Africa over the last decade; with an average gross domestic product growth of 7.5 percent per year since 2007. The country has a stable currency, and inflation has been contained below 5 percent in a free-floating exchange rate and free market system. This is due to a strong economic performance, good policies and strong economic governance.

The quality of life and welfare of the Rwandan people, human resources and skills has greatly improved due to increased access to education, health care, social protection and social economic infrastructure.

Rwanda is an easy place to do business for private investors. The country has built a very attractive business environment. Rwanda is ranked the second-easiest place to do business in Africa and 58th glob-

ally according to the 2020 World Bank Doing Business Report out of 190 countries assessed using 10 indicators in doing business. For example, it takes six hours to register a business in Rwanda and business registration services are available online. The country offers attractive tax and nontax incentives to investors, in addition to efficient facilitation and red carpet treatment from the Rwanda Development Board as a one-stop center for all investments to Rwanda.

Rwanda has emerged as an important regional hub for information and communication technology, banking and financial services and air connectivity.

The country has built transparent institutions of governance, has a policy of zero tolerance for corruption and eased access to administrative services. Most government services are offered online through an easily accessible platform called Irembo. Rwanda has transparent, democratic and inclusive institutions; anchored on a free market economic system. The country has

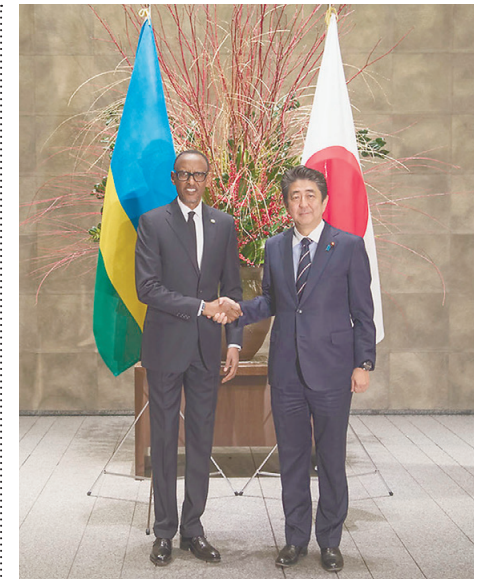
closed the gender gap by increasing female participation in governance and decision-making. Today, Rwanda has the largest percentage of women in parliament in the world with over 60 percent of Rwanda's parliament being women.

Rwanda is committed to Pan-African integration and plays an active role in key regional and global initiatives. Our president was chairperson of the Africa Union in 2018, is the current chair of the East African Community and the president has helped champion the reform and institutional strengthening of the African Union. Rwanda is among the top five United Nations member countries contributing troops and police personnel to international peacekeeping missions. Rwanda is active in several international and regional institutions, including the Francophonie and the Commonwealth; and is a thought leader and model in strategic initiatives like Smart Africa, the World Economic Forum, Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement, Africa Green Revolution Forum and United

Nations Broadband Commission.

Japan has been a key and reliable partner in Rwanda's transformation. Japan has made significant contributions to Rwanda's development through economic cooperation, technology transfer, technical assistance and capacity development. Through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, Japan has supported programs for infrastructure and agriculture development, water and sanitation, access to electricity and regional integration. Japanese businesses and the private sector have invested in Rwanda in agriculture, information and communication technology and in business and technology startups. I take this opportunity to encourage more Japanese companies and business leaders to invest in Rwanda, which offers numerous investment opportunities and incentives.

Rwanda is an attractive tourist destination for Japanese travelers. The country is home to the famous mountain gorillas and offers rich attractions in wildlife, eco-tourism and enchanting flora and fauna.




President Paul Kagame shakes hands with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe before a summit meeting on Jan. 8, 2019, in Tokyo. OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Japanese tourists will receive a visa on arrival at any port of entry to Rwanda and air connectivity to and from Rwanda is very easy through major transit hubs in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Europe and North America.

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

Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Rwanda
on the Anniversary of
Their Independence
and Anniversary of
Their Liberation Day




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