

Cote d'Ivoire Independence Day Special

60 years of close, constructive relationships with Japan

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AMBASSADOR OF COTE D'IVOIRE



On the occasion of the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the independence of Cote d'Ivoire on Thursday, Aug. 7, I would like, on behalf of His Excellency President of the Republic of Cote

d'Ivoire 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 and the imperial family, and to offer my ardent wishes for their continued health and happiness.

I would also like to convey my warmest greetings to His Excellency Prime Minis-

ter Shinzo Abe, the Government and the friendly people of Japan.

This commemoration coincides with the period of national mourning for the late Prime Minister, His Excellency Amadou Gon Coulibaly, who passed away on July 8.

The celebration of the 60th anniversary is particularly significant, because it means not only the strengthening of social cohesion, but also the return of social peace and economic stability in the country.

Mutual cooperation

Cote d'Ivoire attaches great importance to its relations with Japan, the world's third-largest economy.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of Cote d'Ivoire-Japan diplomatic relations. The year 2014 marked the 50th anniversary

of the inauguration of the Embassy of Japan in Cote d'Ivoire. That year also marked the memorable visit of Abe to Cote d'Ivoire. That was the first visit paid by a Japanese Prime Minister to French-speaking West African countries.

This dynamic continued with the visit to Japan in August 2019 of Coulibaly, who led the Ivorian delegation to TICAD 7 (the Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development), followed by Outtara's visit to Japan on Oct. 22, 2019, for his participation in Emperor Naruhito's enthronement ceremonies.

As for economic cooperation, the exchanges between the two countries has had ups and downs in recent years, without showing a significant progress, considering the complementarity of the

economies of both countries and their enormous potential.

In terms of investment, Cote d'Ivoire welcomed the entry of Japanese companies, including Mitsubishi Corp., Ajinomoto Co., Toyota Tsusho Corp., Modec Inc., Itochu Corp. and Marubeni Corp. But this number is still low, and doesn't reflect the level of political and diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Bilateral agreements

Cote d'Ivoire and Japan reinforced their bilateral and economic cooperation by signing the Agreement on the Promotion and Protection of the Investments on Jan. 13, in Abidjan. This agreement, ratified by the Japanese side on May 16, will enter in force after the completion of the proce-

dures of ratification by the Ivorian side, which are currently ongoing.

Besides this agreement, there are the memorandums of understanding — one concluded between JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization) and CEPICI (Agency for Promoting Investments), and another concluded between the Ivorian Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene and Marubeni Corp. for the renovation of the Medical Center of Cocody. However, some other sectors such as energy, mining resources, infrastructure, industry, agriculture and information technology remain less exploited.

Future prospects

The current agreements constitute a strategic framework of cooperation between

Cote d'Ivoire and Japan, to be completed by other agreements, such as a framework agreement on cultural cooperation and that of a tax convention to avoid double taxation.

In addition to the traditional framework of bilateral agreements, Cote d'Ivoire receives occasional support from Japan, like the recent financial aid to fight against the coronavirus. This aid focuses on strengthening the medical capabilities of five large hospitals in Great Abidjan, as well as the provision of mobility equipment to the national police.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the following companies for their support in sponsoring my message — Marubeni Corp., Mitsubishi Corp., NS Semicon Co. and Toyota Tsusho Corp.



The Ambassador of Japan in Cote d'Ivoire and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cote d'Ivoire at a signing ceremony on July 6, 2020

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 Côte d'Ivoire
on the 60th Anniversary of
Their Independence

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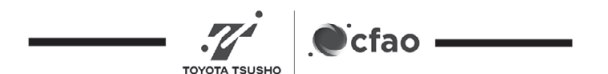
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