

Zimbabwe Independence Day Special

Pushing for economic change and growth

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April 18 marks the Independence Day for the Republic of Zimbabwe. It is a day on which the war for the liberation of the country was declared over amid great jubilation. It is a day

when Zimbabweans look back and reflect on the many challenges overcome and also look forward with determination to achieve more for their country. Land mines planted by the anti-liberation regime remain a grim reminder of the bitter, protracted and bloody road to independence as they are being lifted painstakingly. Today Zimbabwe marks 41 years of independence.

On behalf of Zimbabwe President Emerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, the government, the people of Zimbabwe and Zimbabweans in Japan, I convey greetings to Their Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, the government and the people of Japan. We are grateful for their hospitality to all Zimbabweans in Japan and to those who have had the chance to visit Japan.

We celebrate our independence anniversary amid a COVID-19 pandemic, which has cost many lives directly and indirectly and disrupted economic and social activities the world over. Our hearts go out to all who have lost their loved ones, relatives, friends and fellow citizens. I wish to thank The Japan Times and the sponsors for their generosity in publishing this article.

As we celebrate our 41st independence anniversary, I pay tribute to all health personnel, services and institutions everywhere for their determination in the global fight to contain the COVID-19 pandemic through care and vaccination programs, thus establishing a strong defense against the virus. We salute them. We are embracing and implementing all strategies and practices to minimize the spread and impact of COVID-19.

Zimbabwe is happy to have received good rains this season and looks forward

to a bountiful harvest in 2021. We celebrate this because the climate change phenomenon has brought many challenges to our country, region and continent in terms of availability of water for household use, animals, energy, food production and commercial production. Stress in agriculture has had a negative effect in the attainment of the U.N. sustainable development goals as resources are diverted to mitigate the impact of food inadequacy in the country.

The second republic under Mnangagwa since 2017 has focused on transforming and reforming the economy under the theme "Zimbabwe is Open for Business." This has seen an economic shift from imports to exports, the resuscitation of domestic production in both agriculture and manufacturing, the expansion of mining, value addition and beneficiation, the taming of inflation by attending to economic fundamentals, reintroduction of the local currency, legal and other reform processes to encourage domestic investors and attract foreign investment to spur economic activity, greater development and employment creation. These activities and programs were spearheaded under the Transitional Stabilization Programme from 2019 to December 2020. At the beginning 2021 a new program was adopted to guide development processes for the next five years. This is the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1).

As we celebrate the 41st independence anniversary, we do so with the NDS1 in mind. This is a home-grown program to address our domestic economic challenges with a view to increasing production, growing our formal economy, turning mining into a \$12 billion enterprise, upgrading

and modernizing infrastructure, improving and streamlining our transport services, integrating the economy with the region's within the strategies of the South African Development Community, creating employment, enhancing value addition, mechanizing and modernizing agriculture, growing and increasing exports and making the country an attractive foreign investment destination.

The NDS1 "outlines the policies, legal and institutional reforms, programmes and projects for identified national priorities that will be implemented over the strategy's five-year lifespan. This will help to achieve accelerated, high, inclusive, broad-based and sustainable economic growth and development over a five year period." The NDS1 was a result of an extensive and structured consultative process involving stakeholders.

NDS1 builds on the successes and challenges of the TSP, whose focus was on, among other things, stabilizing the macroeconomic environment and the financial sector, thus laying the foundation required for economic growth. Therefore, it aims at steering the economy toward an average growth rate of 5% a year. The broad objectives of NDS1 include strengthening macroeconomic stability, low and stable inflation, a stable exchange rate, inclusive and equitable real growth in the gross domestic product, promoting new enterprise development, employment and job creation, and industrializing and modernizing the economy. The objectives will be matched by strengthening social infrastructure and social safety nets, ensuring sustainable environmental protection and resilience, and encouraging good gover-

nance and corporate social investment.

The development strategy prioritizes some 14 areas, namely economic growth and stability; food security and nutrition; governance; moving the economy up the value chain and structural transformation; human capital development; environmental protection, climate resilience and natural resource management; housing delivery; information communication technology and digital economy; health and well-being; transport, infrastructure and utilities; international engagement and re-engagement and image building; social protection; youth, sport and culture and devolution. These are the areas the NDS1 is targeting on the principle that Zimbabwe's foreign policy champions friendship with all and enemy to none.

Zimbabwe and Japan have enjoyed good bilateral relations since 1980. Japan's support in many projects, programs, the



Left: The revival of Zimbabwe Iron and Steel Co. is expected to boost its productivity, mineral beneficiation and value-addition chain. Right: Tourists view wild game while canoeing in Mana Pools National Park, a World Heritage Site in northern Zimbabwe. THE HERALD



biometric voter registration processes, and drought impact mitigation measures via the U.N. agencies attest to the good relations between Zimbabwe and Japan. The projects in capacity-building regarding community food production, orienting small-scale farmers to grow to sell rather than grow and sell are some of the many ways Japan has been engaged in Zimbabwe. Assistance in land mine clearance

thereby availing land for economic use is another area of tremendous assistance. The ongoing road improvement project on the North-South corridor to facilitate smooth regional and intraregional trade is ample demonstration of the support enjoyed by Zimbabwe from Japan. Happy 41st anniversary.

Makorokoto! Amhlophe! Omedeto gozaimasu!

Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Zimbabwe
on the 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

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