

AMBASSADOR'S SPEECH ON THE 54TH ANNIVERSARY OF UGANDAN INDEPENDENCE, 9TH OCTOBER 2016

The Honorable Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs:

Honorable Shinsuke TAKEI

Honorable Members of the Diet

Excellencies colleague Ambassadors

Members of Uganda Diaspora Japan

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for honoring us with your esteemed presence today despite this day falling in the middle of a public holiday. It is a sign of your support and love for Uganda for which we are very grateful.

I thank the Almighty God for his guidance and leadership to us all up to today.

On this occasion of Uganda's 54th Independence Day Celebrations, I convey warm greetings from His Excellency President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of the Republic of Uganda and the entire Ugandan public to their Imperial Majesties the Emperor and Empress, the entire Imperial Family, the Prime Minister, Mr. Shinzo Abe and his government, the honorable members of the Diet as well as the people of Japan for their continued support and friendship to the people and government of Uganda.

It was on this day, 54 years ago, in Kampala, that the Union Jack was peacefully lowered and the Ugandan flag raised. Uganda was one of the few African nations that had a peaceful change of government from its colonial masters. Despite some setbacks during its formative years, Uganda is now one of the most peaceful countries in Africa. Its last major instability was 30 years ago.

Today, we also would like to introduce to you Uganda Diaspora Japan, an organization that brings together Ugandans in Japan for purposes of promoting its culture, education and its development efforts. UDJ is working in close

collaboration with the Embassy of Uganda in Japan. We would like our friends and well wishers to consider working with the leadership of this group to promote Uganda in Japan.

Tourism

This nation is called the *Pearl of Africa*, a reference by Sir Winston Churchill, in his book, “*My African Journey*”. It is indeed the polished pearl of Africa. It is re-emerging as a top tourist destination with more than 1.2 million tourists annually. She boasts of numerous World Heritage sites such as; the Kasubi Royal tombs, the ancient Nyeru Rock paintings, the snow-capped Mt. Rwenzori at the equator and the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest. It has been ranked twice in a row as the top tour destination by known travel guide books. To date, the number of Tourists from Japan to Uganda has increased by about 25% from July 2014 to July 2016 but we still encourage more Japanese to consider Uganda in their touristic itinerary. Uganda has been ranked second in the world in hospitality. The fifty four different tribes in Uganda offer opportunities for diverse cultural tourism.

Trade and Investment

Last year, Uganda was ranked the most enterprising nation, with 28% of the adults in the nation owning or co-owning a business. It is therefore not a surprise that the number of Japanese SMEs in Uganda has increased from 19 to 35 in the last two years alone. We wish to encourage large corporations to look at Uganda as a potential investment destination. We thank Toshiba, Marubeni and Toyota Tsusho for realizing this potential and investing in Uganda already. We are happy also to note that Komatsu, Sumitomo Corporation and Zenitaka are already working with Uganda. .

Uganda has made significant progress socially, economically and politically. We have just had a successful Presidential, Parliamentary, and Local Government elections. In this new tenure, the government of Uganda has recommitted itself to fighting corruption and improving the business environment in order to attract foreign direct investments. Currently, the investment climate is conducive and the Government of Uganda continues to assure investors of security and good returns on their investments. The country is the business hub in the East African region.

Infrastructure

To lift the country to a middle income economy, our priorities continue to be infrastructure development, trade and investment, tourism and human resource development. The Government of Japan has continued to support these priorities.

In the just concluded TICAD VI and during the bilateral summit between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan and President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda, which was very cordial, and mutually beneficial, Japan recommitted funds to continue to support Uganda's infrastructure development and humanitarian efforts. The partnership between Government of Uganda and Government of Japan is bearing fruits. As a land locked country, we appreciate Japan's assistance in developing One-Stop Border Post System as well as in the many infrastructure development projects in the country.

Education

Human Resource Development is crucial to our National Development. Japan has continued to support Uganda in this area through MEXT, ABE Initiative, JICA, respective universities and private foundations. The number of students from Uganda to Japan has increased and we look forward to more especially in the field of Science and Technology. Research collaborations with universities and sectoral training programs by JICA have continued to grow and for this we commend the People and the Government of Japan.

Uganda is a center of educational excellence in the East African region. Students come from all over the Great Lakes Region to study in the country. Japanese education system and expertise especially in science and technology and vocational/ technical training has been implemented through Nakawa Vocational Institute. We welcome the interest by the Japan Government to raise this institute into one of the ten Centers of Excellence in Africa. We also invite private investors to take advantage of the massive investment opportunities that exist in the Education sector in Uganda.

We would not have come this far without our partners, both government and private such as the Ssasakawa Foundation, the Ashinaga Foundation, Japan Millenium Promise, Japan-Uganda Socio-Economic Development Association

(JUSEDA) and the many Japanese NPOs and overseas volunteers who have selflessly committed to our social and economic wellbeing.

And so, as this young nation emerges as a middle income economy by 2020, we recommit ourselves as Uganda to continue to promote cordial bilateral relations between Uganda and Japan and other countries of accreditation as well as good multilateral relations with other development partners. We believe that the relationship between us and our partners will continue to grow from strength to strength.

Fellow Ugandans, as we launch Uganda Diaspora Japan today, I urge you to support it as well as continue to be ambassadors of Uganda wherever you are by promoting our good culture, our warmth and friendship. Please also continue to network with other organizations in order to support not only your families but also our communities back home.

Thank you all for your kind attention.

“For God and my Country”.