



Dear Sir or Madam,

I have the honor to present my compliments and am delighted to deliver the latest edition of Japanese Ambassador's Newsletter to you. As always, I would like to thank you for your responses to my newsletter. The whole world has completely changed since I issued the last edition in March.

In this edition, let me touch upon five items: 1) Nigeria's 60th Independence Anniversary; 2) Significant efforts made by heroes to curtail the spread of COVID-19; 3) Japan's contribution to the health sector; 4) Japan's contribution to Peace and Stability; and 5) Japan's new Prime Minister.

【Nigeria's 60th Independence Anniversary】

First, let me take this opportunity to congratulate Nigeria on its 60th independence anniversary. As Nigeria's national anthem tells us, the labor of founding fathers including the first President of Nigeria, Nnamdi Azikiwe, and heroes past shall never be in vain. The theme of its 60th anniversary "TOGETHER Shall We Be" is an excellent reminder that Nigeria is standing for freedom, peace and unity. As the Diamond Jubilee logo symbolizes, the Nigerian people are sparkling like diamonds in a variety of fields.



The Government of Japan highly appreciates, in particular, that Nigeria has been steadily promoting democratization. The last twenty years, which count for one third of its sixty-years of independent history, has seen uninterrupted democracy. Nigeria's leadership is crucially important for the stability and democracy in the West African region and the development of the African continent as a whole.

The year 1960 was called "the year of Africa". Among the 17 African nations that gained independence from European countries that year, it was only Nigeria which Japan established diplomatic relations with and where Japan actually opened its Embassy within the year. Since then, the Embassy of Japan has been solely in charge of Nigeria. Therefore, this year marks the 60th anniversary not only of Nigeria's independence but also of our close diplomatic ties. The Japanese people attach a special celebratory feeling to the number sixty because we have twelve horary signs in the oriental zodiac. I am privileged to celebrate this momentous year as the Japanese Ambassador to Nigeria.

【Significant efforts made by heroes to curtail the spread of COVID-19】



When I look back on the last six months, I cannot avoid speaking about COVID-19. Under the current difficult circumstances caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic, I firstly would like to express my highest respect for Nigeria's efforts in the fight against the virus, led by the strong leadership of Nigerian heroes. It was impressive how the Federal Government and relevant institutions responded immediately after the index case was found in Nigeria.

I highly appreciate every intervention implemented to curtail the spread of COVID-19 so far, including the establishment of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 chaired by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Mr. Boss Mustapha, timely provision of information regarding COVID-19 managed by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), and expansion of the testing and isolation centers as well as treatment facilities.

The response made by both public and private sectors also impressed me. In the public sector, many cabinet ministers, state governors, and Nigerian parliament members made a generous contribution out of their salaries to fight against COVID-19. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) governor, Mr. Godwin Emefiele, took the lead in forming the Private Sector Coalition Against COVID-19 (CACOVID) with major companies to provide immense palliatives for suffering people. I also give a round of applause to some Japanese related companies here who joined in Nigeria's fight against COVID-19. The way the public and private sectors work together, the tenacity of the Nigerian people and the spirit of volunteerism are examples to be emulated.

While I commend the countermeasures against COVID-19, please allow me to reiterate my most heartfelt condolences over the loss of Mallam Abba Kyari. I still remember clearly when I met with him at his office after TICAD7 last year. He was a great patriot and a major pillar in the administration who devoted himself to the development of the country. I believe this country will overcome the sadness, losses and many challenges, and will become more resilient.

COVID-19 also highlighted several issues in a wide range of sectors. As a friend of Nigeria, the Government of Japan continues to support Nigeria's development, especially in the health sector and towards peace and stability in the North region.

【Japan's contribution to the health sector】

Speaking of Japan's contribution to Nigeria's development, we have three pillars in our assistance policy toward Nigeria, namely: 1) Building a foundation for high-quality economic growth; 2) Improvement of inclusive and robust health and medical systems; and 3) Promotion of peace and stability.

Regarding the recent developments in the health sector, please let me first express my heartfelt congratulations to all Nigerians as well as to the African people for the Wild Polio Virus free status, which was certified by WHO on 25th August 2020. The Government of Japan contributed the total amount of USD 182.4 million for this feat. I am delighted to see that Japan's contribution substantially helped to achieve this historic moment in the African continent. Having said that, I reaffirm that this is the result of collective efforts of Nigeria and the international community. I would like to congratulate all the relevant organizations and the people. However, I also have to leave a cautious note that this is not yet the end of the game.

Apart from polio assistance, Japan donated thermography, currently used at airports in Nigeria, with the initial purpose to prevent the Ebola virus from entering the country. Our government also delivered at least one Japanese ambulance to every state of Nigeria and FCT, which are now playing a crucial role in transporting patients with Covid-19 and other diseases. I, as the Japanese Ambassador to Nigeria, signed the Exchange of Notes twice for the projects to strengthen the capacity of NCDC and its network laboratories. The Japanese Government also supports the improvement of the health care system through international organizations.



I am also pleased that Professor Isaac Folorunso Adewole, former Minister of Health, has been selected as this year's recipient of The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star, one of the highest orders awarded in the name of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. The award was decided in recognition of his contributions towards strengthening bilateral relations between Japan and Nigeria, especially in the health sector. I would like to express my sincere congratulations to Professor Adewole for receiving this Order.

【Japan's contribution to Peace and Stability】



In terms of peace and stability in Nigeria, Japan continues to offer support towards stability in the North East region through international organizations. Our latest example in this area is the project titled "Strengthening National and Regional Capacities for Peace Support Operations". The project is funded by the Japanese Government and implemented by UNDP in collaboration with the Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, National Defense College. With the commencement of this project, all the commitments announced by the former Japanese Prime Minister Abe during the bilateral meeting with President Buhari at TICAD 7 last year have been put in place.

【Japan's New Prime Minister】

As I described "the former Prime Minister Abe" earlier, Mr. Abe expressed his intention to resign due to health concerns on 28th August. On 16th September, less than three weeks after the announcement, SUGA Yoshihide, who served as Chief Cabinet Secretary under Abe's administration for nearly 8 years, became Japan's 99th Prime Minister.

With the legacy built by Mr. Abe, I will continue to work towards the further development of Japan-Nigeria relations under new Prime Minister Suga's administration.



Source of photo:
the Official Website of the Prime
Minister of Japan and His Cabinet

【In Closing】

If I may borrow the words from President Buhari's message at the unveiling of the theme and logo for Nigeria's 60th Anniversary Celebration, I will make continuous efforts to strengthen the relations between our two countries and continue to support Nigeria to keep sparkling like a DIAMOND.

Finally, yet importantly, I would once more like to express my appreciation for your continuous support and understanding for the Embassy's activities.

Yours sincerely,



KIKUTA Yutaka
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary of Japan
to the Federal Republic of Nigeria

*For further information on the Embassy of Japan's activities in Nigeria, please visit our Website and Facebook page.

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