

Happy New year! This year as well, we would like to upload fresh information once a month to convey the current situation in Uganda. Thank you for your continued support this year.

### **1. New Year in Uganda**

I spent the year-end and New year holidays in Kampala. In this country, where there are many Christians, the 25<sup>th</sup> is Christmas Day and the 26<sup>th</sup> is Boxing Day, both national holidays. Christians and non-Christians are in holiday mode during the second half of December. Public schools in Uganda are closed for the end of the school year from the beginning of December until the end of January. The entire town seemed to be on holiday, with many people out shopping, and the restaurants and bars were thriving.

From New year's eve to New year, many restaurants seemed to be busy with customers celebrating the New year till midnight. Along with a loud bang, fireworks begin to go off from all over the city. I was surprised at how much preparation they had made. I think it lasted quite a while. It used to last for three or four hours, almost until dawn and after that, regulations were put in place and there is now a time limit.

The new year has begun with a strong sense of enthusiasm from the people of Uganda who are welcoming the New year with hopes of peace, stability, and development.



Fireworks to celebrate the New Year

## **2. Completion of the Kampala Flyover construction and road upgrading project (commonly known as the Kampala Flyover).**

Uganda is a landlocked country, meaning it doesn't face the sea. At the same time, it borders Kenya, Tanzania, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda, making it a key logistics and transportation hub in East Africa. Kampala, the capital city, is located in the center of the city, and traffic is at capacity due to rapid population and economic growth. Congestion is severe in Kampala city, especially at major intersections, making it difficult to travel short distances.

Even moving takes a long time. Through JICA, Japan has provided support for the construction of roads and other facilities. The Kampala Flyover project involved making major intersections in the city, three-dimensional and widening existing roads. This project, which began in September 2015 in the form of a Yen loan (loan to the Ugandan government), was originally scheduled for completion at the end of 2020, but the project is now almost complete.

Traffic has already started on the flyover. It is packed with cars commuting to work and school, boda bodas (motorcycle taxis), matatu (shared taxis), and large trucks. In addition to a World Bank project considering the introduction of electric buses for public transportation, projects are also underway to extend and connect railway lines with neighboring Kenya and Tanzania. The integration of the East African Community is making steady progress.

The two big infrastructure projects in Uganda are the Kampala flyover and Nile Bridge Construction Project (a new bridge that spans the Nile river in Jinja City, located at the source of the Nile river), which was completed in September 2018. This was introduced in this column in September 2024.

What we could not have foreseen at the time of designing the grade crossing was the explosive increase in traffic, including boda bodas (motorcycle taxis). Another challenge will be traffic safety education and thorough enforcement of rules in response to increased traffic volume. This time, as part of a related project (Kampala City Traffic Control Improvement Project), traffic lights have been installed and put into operation throughout Kampala. Until then, there were only one or two traffic lights. In order to further improve the efficiency of energy use in the huge Uganda, we will promote infrastructure development and at the same time improve the safety and security of the people. If this is the case, I think that efforts will be required in the future.



Traffic signals installed in Kampala city



Kampala grade-separated intersection improvement at the Flyover