

Senegal independence day

Relations a reflection of Japan's commitment to Africa

Gabriel Alexandre Sar
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC
OF SENEGAL

Today, April 4, 2009, Senegal celebrates the 49th anniversary of its independence. On this special occasion, I would like to thank The Japan Times for giving me once again the opportunity to address the Japanese people among which Senegal has many friends.

From the outset, I would like to renew to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, and all members of the Imperial family my most respectful greetings and best wishes for their health and happiness.

I also feel duty bound to ex-

press my sincere thanks to the people and government of Japan for the kind hospitality extended to the members of Senegal's Embassy in Tokyo, and to all the Senegalese nationals living in Japan.

Such warm hospitality amply illustrates the excellent relations that have been prevailing between Senegal and Japan, and have been going from strength to strength over the years.

I congratulate my fellow nationals living in the archipelago, and I encourage them to continue to abide by the rules and customs of this land so as to be worthy of their Japanese hosts' confidence, and respect. Japan is one of Senegal's most

important development partners and the assistance from the government of Japan covers various areas, including agriculture, fisheries, education, health, infrastructure, etc.

A loan agreement was recently signed with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation for the financing of part of the Dakar-Bamako highway, one of the most important overland routes in the subregion, a major connection between the capital city and other towns, and a crucial link with Mali, one of Senegal's main trading partners.

This support is indeed a tremendous boost to the effort that the government has been making to equip the country with good infrastructure, a prerequisite for development.

It is gratifying to note that, in addition to the government of Japan's traditional forms of assistance, the Japanese private sector is more and more interested in my country, which has been striving to create a business environment so as to attract foreign direct investment.

In September 2008, under the implementation of recommendations from the fourth International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) held in Yokohama last year, important joint trade

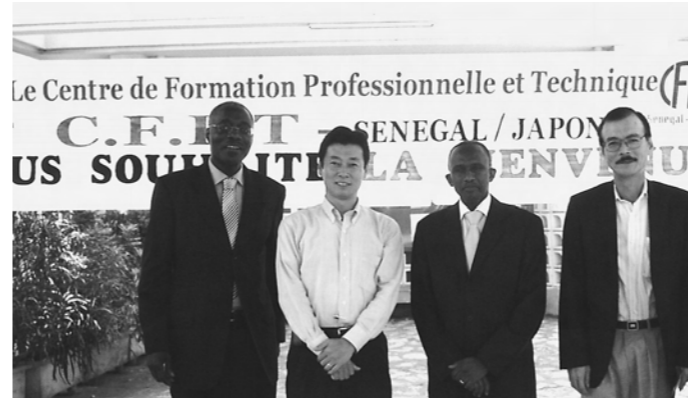
and investment missions were dispatched to several African countries to enhance the Japanese private sector's participation in Africa's development efforts.

The three days they spent in Senegal enabled the members of the mission not only to exchange views for more than three hours with H.E. President Abdoulaye Wade but also to see for themselves the various efforts by the Senegalese authorities to make it easy for foreign businesses to operate in the country.

The measures adopted to attract foreign investment and promote economic development include the "One-stop shop" and the fact that it now takes only 48 hours to establish a company.

In this respect, the "Agence pour la Promotion des Investissements et des Grands Travaux" plays a crucial role as, throughout the registration process, it assists foreign companies setting up business in Senegal. Information on the whole range of investment opportunities and procedures to establish a company is available on its Web site: www.apix.sn.

I would like to take the opportunity to actively encourage Japanese business people to visit Senegal, a politically stable country offering a safe



Working together: Pictured at the Senegal-Japan Center for Vocational and Technical Training in Dakar are (from left) Senegal's Ambassador to Japan Gabriel Alexandre Sar, Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Yasutoshi Nishimura, center director Ousseynou Gueye and Japan's Ambassador to Senegal Takashi Saito. Their visit was part of the joint private-public trade and investment mission led by Nishimura to Senegal in September 2008.

environment that favors private enterprise.

I would also like to commend the sterling work that the Japan International Cooperation Agency has been doing for many years in Senegal in the field of technical cooperation. It is indeed a showcase for the cooperation between Japan and Senegal. JICA, whose head office for West Africa is in Dakar, provides my country and others in the subregion with valuable assistance in various areas.

The Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers also deserve special mention for all their

hard work and dedication in a different cultural environment, in remote areas of the country and, sometimes, under very harsh weather conditions. Theirs is a praiseworthy commitment to help and reach out to other people in an effort to foster stronger solidarity among countries throughout the world.

A few days ago, the first TICAD IV ministerial followup meeting took place in Gaborone, Botswana. Despite the global financial crisis and its economic difficulties, Japan renewed its commitments to pur-

sue and even expand its cooperation with Africa. In this regard, Japan has undertaken to "gather the voices" of Africa and be the "mouthpiece" of the continent at international forums, including the Group of 20 meeting in London, to urge the international community to

help Africa confront the severe negative impact of the crisis on its economies.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the government and people of Japan for the wide variety of assistance they provide to Africa, and to Senegal in particular.

CONGRATULATIONS

SENEGAL INDEPENDENCE DAY

Cooperation through Projects
in the Environmental Sector



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JAPAN TECHNO CO., LTD.

Flos Bldg.,
19-7, Hatagaya 2-chome, Shibuya-ku,
Tokyo 151-0072, Japan
Tel: (03) 6703-0510 Fax: (03) 3373-5751
E-mail address: jat-tyo@jat.co.jp
URL: <http://www.jat.co.jp/>



Talking shop: Japanese and Senegalese businessmen meet at the Dakar Chamber of Commerce and Industry.