

Brazil independence day

Opportunities to invigorate relations

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On this Sept. 7, it is an honor for me to share with the Japanese people the joy that marks the celebrations of the 187th anniversary of the independence of Brazil. I hereby also convey my greetings to the large community of Brazilians living in Japan, on this very happy occasion.



Brazil and Japan have long been very close partners, in spite of the geographical distance that separates our two countries. Starting in the late 19th century with the Japanese immigration in Brazil and increasing with the return of many Brazilian "nikkei" to Japan in the 1990s, the human links between our friendly nations have fostered the development of a relationship based on trust, mutual understanding, common goals and fruitful cooperation.

Nowadays, there are more than 1.5 million Japanese descendants living in Brazil, the world's largest community of Japanese descent. The biggest concentrations are located in

the states of Sao Paulo (in the southeast) and Parana (in the south), but also comprise important presences in nearly all of the vast Brazilian territory.

Thus, I am very glad to highlight that in 2009 we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Japanese immigration in the Amazon region, which has played a significant role in stimulating the sustainable development of that part of our country.

Brazilians also account for the third-largest community of immigrants living in Japan, with roughly 300,000 people, most of whom reside in Shizuoka and Aichi prefectures, and in the Kanto region. Coincidentally, they also represent the third-largest community of Brazilian expatriates in the world.

Last year, as we celebrated the centennial of the Japanese presence in Brazil, the bilateral initiative called "Brazil-Japan Year of Exchange" reasserted the friendship between our countries. The government and people of Brazil rejoiced at the visit of His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Naruhito to some of the cities that have the most intense human and economic ties with Japan.

Most importantly, the year



Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, president of Brazil

of exchange produced very encouraging results as it helped revitalize areas of traditional collaboration such as agriculture, mining and steel, as well as identify new opportunities between the two countries, especially in the fields of science and technology, digital TV and renewable energy.

After 24 years, Brazil and Japan have resumed the institutional relationship in areas of science, technology and innovation, with the second Meeting of the Brazil-Japan Joint Committee on Scientific and Technological Coopera-

tion taking place last May. The committee defined agreements and programs that will benefit joint research in the areas of biotechnology, biomass, nanotechnology, information and communications technologies, environment, remote sensing and space.

Brazil and Japan have also developed very deep cooperation in the field of digital TV. Since the adoption of the ISDB-T standard, Brazil has developed innovations of the Japanese technology in order to adapt it to the social and economic reality of our country. The adaptations have made ISDB-T very competitive for other South American nations. As a result of joint efforts between Brazil and Japan to raise awareness of the advantages of our digital TV system in South America, Peru and more recently Argentina have decided to join ISDB-T.

In the field of renewable energy, Brazil has the world's most extensive use of sugar cane-ethanol as a fuel for "flex" automotive vehicles (including locally built models from Japanese carmakers), which run with any combination of gasoline and ethanol. That results in considerably fewer emissions of greenhouse gases, important business opportunities, and more social and economic development in the countryside of Brazil.

It is noteworthy that only a very small portion of Brazilian arable lands are being employed for sugar cane crops, which have proved to be the most efficient source for ethanol production. Furthermore, Brazilian technology is quite accessible and could easily be employed in poor countries with uncultivated arable lands, such as many African nations, spreading its economic, environmental and social benefits to other parts of the world.

That would allow sugar cane-ethanol production to increase several-fold, without jeopardizing food security or damaging forests, in order to supply the demands of countries like Japan, which need to rapidly find clean and sustainable sources of energy.

By the way, Brazil and Japan have a record of trilateral schemes of technical cooperation with African countries in many areas. The most recent and ambitious project will allow us to stimulate the development of the savanna in Mozambique and possibly elsewhere in the future.

The present year has posed many challenges to the bilateral relationship. Most Brazilians living in Japan have been seriously affected by the economic downturn. As a result, many have chosen to return to Brazil, leaving behind the lives they had built with a hardworking spirit after many years in Japan.

In this regard, I want to express my gratitude for the measures that Japanese authorities, private companies



Cultural heritage: The Pelourinho quarter in Salvador is home to the finest ensemble of 17th- and 18th-century colonial buildings in Latin America. CHRISTIAN KNEPPER

and organizations from civil society have been taking aimed at allowing Brazilians to continue their lives in this country, if they so wish.

Moreover, the world financial crisis has been having a sharp effect on bilateral flows of trade, which had registered in 2008 the most positive performance in the last two decades (growth of 44 percent in a single year).

I am confident, though, that once the world economic crisis is over, Brazil and Japan may rapidly recuperate the lost ground, and start a new virtuous cycle of trade and economic bilateral relations.

Despite adverse international economic conjuncture, the macroeconomic foundations of Brazil have proved to be solid and the policies pursued over the last years have been demonstrated to be correct. The economic stability we have worked for during more than a decade is a reality to which Brazilians have become closely attached.

With each passing year, more and more Brazilians experience an improvement of their life conditions, thanks to the always present concern of conciliating economic growth with policies that address the important social challenges we face. Moreover, Brazilians fully enjoy their long-conquered political freedom and are very watchful of the proper functioning of our consolidated democratic institutions.

We are, therefore, very optimistic that, once the world economy starts to recover, we will be able to further strengthen our development process. In this connection, the partnership between Brazil and Japan shall only be reinforced by the opportunities that are going to arise from this new cycle of — hopefully — continuous and healthy economic growth.

For instance, to boost economic performance, the Brazilian government has been implementing the PAC (the Portuguese-language acronym for "Program for Growth Acceleration"), which comprises numerous projects in the fields of infrastructure, energy and social investment.

Among these projects, it is worth citing the institutions



Leading light: A night view of the Avenida Paulista in Sao Paulo, Brazil's largest city

of a new high-speed rail line between the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo — our two largest urban concentrations, located in the economic heart of Brazil — with an extension to Campinas — a new high-tech pole and important international gateway in the countryside of Sao Paulo State. This project alone previews investments of tens of billions of dollars, for which Brazil is seeking foreign partners that offer outstanding technological transfer conditions, among other advantages.

Brazil is also very eager to deepen cooperation with Japan in multilateral forums in order to play an active role in searching for constructive approaches to the issues that shall determine tomorrow's peace, stability, progress and sustainability worldwide.

While I am writing this arti-

cle, Brazilian and Japanese diplomats are making a strong effort in New York City to push forward the negotiations on the reform of the United Nations Security Council. Being partners in the "G-4," our two peace-loving nations share the understanding that only with an amplified number of permanent and nonpermanent seats in the UNSC will we be able to restore the legitimacy, representativeness, efficacy and credibility of the decisions taken by that pivotal multilateral body on international security issues.

Brazil is also willing to work with Japan toward a nuclear weapons-free world. Having abdicated in our constitution from nonpacific uses of nuclear power, Brazil hopes Japan employs its uncontested authority — as the only country in history to have been attacked with atomic bombs — to give international impetus against this senseless menace.

Also, we consider that the current world economic crisis

has provided evidence that developing countries need to participate more in the decision-making processes on matters that affect everyone. Therefore, Brazil has been attaching a lot of importance to ongoing negotiations in the G-20 and in the World Trade Organization.

Last but not least, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Japanese people for exercising their civic right in the Aug. 30 general election and extend my greetings to the newly elected or re-elected representatives in the Lower House.

It is my wish that Japan can quickly overcome the challenges that have been posed over the last year by the world financial crisis. I am certain that the best way to prevent new crises from dragging down our progress is through international cooperation. In this sense, we shall strive to intensify the ties that have been so beneficial to Brazil and Japan for more than a century.



Expression of faith: Designed by Oscar Niemeyer, the Metropolitan Cathedral of Brasilia was dedicated May 31, 1970. Its 16 90-ton columns represent two hands moving upward to heaven.

Congratulations

We Express Our Sincere Congratulations to the People of Brazil on the Occasion of the 187th Anniversary of Their Independence



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Christ the Redeemer: The 38-meter-high Cristo Redentor statue stands atop the 700-meter peak of Mount Corcovado overlooking Rio de Janeiro.