

Ethiopia national day/world

Democratic leadership ensuring accelerated growth

Abdirashid Dulane
AMBASSADOR OF ETHIOPIA

It gives me great pleasure and honor on the 19th anniversary of our National Day to convey on behalf of the government and people of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia my heartfelt, respectful greetings and best wishes to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, members of the Imperial Family, and the friendly government and people of Japan.



This year's May 28 is celebrated soon after countrywide elections successfully took place May 23. Preliminary results from the National Election Board of Ethiopia show a landslide victory for the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and its partner parties. This is the clear acknowledgment by voters of the monumental development achievements of the government under the wise leadership of EPRDF. The election, in which the people exercised their democratic and constitutional rights by peacefully and freely voting for who governs them, is a hard-won right and one of the great achievements of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia's triumph under the

leadership of the EPRDF over the Derg dictatorial regime, which led to the celebration of our National Day today. This election, which the government has taken every effort to make peaceful, free, fair and credible, has indeed solidified the gains achieved in the past three elections; has undoubtedly laid on a strong foundation the democratic and good governance processes; and will certainly boost the myriad socioeconomic transformations that have been taking place in the country.

The country's developmental direction is guided by clear policies and strategies. As we draw close to the adoption of the second phase of the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP II), the country is poised for the registration of the seventh consecutive year of double-digit growth. I am confident that this sound and visionary development undertaking will continue recording unabated successes in the years to come.

Ethiopia and Japan enjoy an excellent bilateral relationship. Japan is kindly supporting the development endeavors of Ethiopia in various PASDEP priority areas, which are directly contributing to the livelihood of the poor. This year it is important to specially note Japan's assistance through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) of the policy dialogue to gain knowledge from the Asian



Leading role: Ethiopian Prime Minister H.E. Meles Zenawi addresses the COP 15 climate change summit in Copenhagen in December 2009, representing Africa as chairperson of the CAHOSCC. EMBASSY OF ETHIOPIA

Developmental State experience, which Japan has hitherto pioneered, and the Industrial Quality Improvement projects through the application of the "kaizen" system, which have started to be implemented under the request of our Prime Minister H.E. Meles Zenawi, and is expected to enrich our future development plans and enhance the competitiveness of our manufacturing industries by improving their quality and productivity.

It is with satisfaction that I note this excellent relationship between the two countries has been further strengthened during the year by the exchange of high-level visits by senior officials of the two countries. At this important occasion I would like to express my appreciation to the friendly government and people of Japan for their tangible, multifaceted assistance.

Sound development policies and an attractive business environment among others have drawn a large number of foreign investors from around the globe, who are interested in setting up businesses in the country. I would like to call upon the business community in Japan to come explore the vast opportunities available for them in the country on the areas of trade, investment and tourism.

The Tokyo International Conference on Africa's Development (TICAD IV) process, which is a development forum of mutual cooperation between Africa and Japan, has been progressing well for the last two years. This has been con-

firmed during the evaluation of the status of implementation of the Yokohama Action Plan by the recent second ministerial followup meeting held in Arusha, Tanzania, on May 2 and 3. The Ministerial Conference at the end of the meeting has acknowledged "overall satisfaction with the significant progress made during the second year of implementation of the Yokohama Action Plan and commended the government of Japan for its efforts to honor all commitments made at TICAD IV" in its final communique. This is a clear recognition of Japan's increased role and its commitment to Africa's development effort and the presence of Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada for the whole duration of the Ministerial meeting in Arusha by co-chairing the meeting and his reaffirmation of Japan's promise to honor the pledges at TICAD IV attest to this fact.

It is needless to say that climate change has become the greatest challenge of our time. Particularly, African countries, which have contributed the least to the problem, are facing the impact of climate change, suffering from the extreme weather that places a large number of their population in the trap of poverty. This has led Africa to adopt a common position by nominating one team who will represent them in all international climate change negotiations. Comprised of 10 African heads of state and government under the chairmanship of our Prime

Minister Meles, the team was formed to ensure that Africa's interests and position are respected in any outcome resulting from the ongoing international negotiation. This Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC), which has diligently worked at COP 15, has again been mandated to negotiate on behalf of Africa for COP 16 in Mexico this year and COP 17 in South Africa in 2011.

It is also important to note that Secretary General Ban Ki Moon of the United Nations has also nominated Prime Minister Meles and former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to lead a High-Panel Advisory Group to mobilize financial resources for developing countries, which the rich countries have promised under the Copenhagen Accord. These are clear recognitions by Africa and the international community of the strong leadership abilities of our prime minister.

Japan has been one of the leading countries in addressing the effects of climate change by announcing the Hatoyama Initiative, which will cut greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent in 2020 compared to 1990 levels. I wish to particularly note with satisfaction that Ethiopia has started to benefit from the support package announced by Japan under the Hatoyama Initiative, which allocates \$15 billion to help developing countries mitigate the impact of climate change, especially in the area of forest conservation.

On another note, last year's Ethiopian Night, an annual event in which cultural interaction between the two countries takes center stage, saw the performance of dancers from an Okinawa traditional dance group and the Mocha Ethiopia Dance Group, who shared their dance delight with the audience at the festive occasion. The event attracted more than 500 participants, including parlia-

mentarians, members of the diplomatic community, government officials, business people, members of the Ethiopian Association, friends of Ethiopia and my compatriots.

The occasion was graced by the Honorable Degefe Bula, the speaker of the House of Federation, and his delegation, who was visiting Japan at the kind invitation of the President of the House of Councilors, H.E. Satsuki Eda. He gave a keynote speech at the event. The Honorable Dr. Shozaburo Jimi and Tetsuro Yano of the House of Councilors, and Dr. Sadao Umeda, president of the Ethiopian Association of Japan, also gave valuable remarks on the occasion. All emphasized that such events will deepen the friendship and play a meaningful role in further strengthening the people-to-people relationship between the two countries. It is important to note that a brief appearance by the popular "enka" singer Ikuzo Yoshi gave the event extra gleam and luster. Thanks go to the Ethiopian Night organizing committee comprising the Ethiopian Embassy, the Ethiopian Association of Japan, Ex-JOCV members, the Mocha Ethiopia Dance Group and numerous volunteers whose contributions were pivotal for the success of the event. On this festive occasion I would like to show my appreciation for the outstanding effort of the Ethiopian Association of Japan, the Mocha Ethiopia Dance Group and other friends of Ethiopia in strengthening the bond of friendship between the two sisterly countries and their peoples.

Finally, allow me to express my strong words of gratitude to The Japan Times and the kind sponsors of this special page — Toyota Tsusho Corporation, Eagle Shipping Japan, Ltd. and Brooks Co. Ltd. — for giving me this golden chance to address the esteemed readers of this great newspaper on our National Day.



Boosting relations: An Ethiopian delegation led by the Hon. Degefe Bula, speaker of House of Federation, visits the House of Councilors accompanied by its president and vice president, the Hons. Satsuki Eda and Akiko Santo, and other members in October 2009.

Friendly exchanges expand with the economic growth

Shozaburo Jimi
FORMER CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-ETHIOPIA PARLIAMENTARIAN FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE; UPPER HOUSE MEMBER

As former chairman of the Japan-Ethiopia Parliamentarian Friendship League, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the government and people of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on the occasion of the 19th anniversary of their National Day.



Under the leadership of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Ethiopia has continued its efforts to eliminate poverty, mainly through industrial development led by agriculture, and this is the sixth consecutive year that its economic growth has reached more than 10 percent, which is admirable and which I respect. Friendly exchanges between

Japan and Ethiopia have been satisfactorily expanding. On the initiative of Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's administration with the exchange of notes between the governments, grant aid has started for the forestry preservation plan, the food assistance and food security project for underprivileged farmers in March, and for the water supply project for the rural Tigray Region in May. It is a great pleasure for me as one of the promoters of the bilateral friendship exchange activities that Japan's aid will serve to provide stability to Ethiopian people's lives and lead to prosperity.

As former chairman of the parliamentarian friendship league and as secretary general of the People's New Party, which plays a role in the ruling government, I will do my best for the further development and enhancement of the friendship and exchanges between Japan and Ethiopia.



Gaining popularity: Cut flowers from Ethiopia, seen at the International Flower Expo 2009 at Makuhari Messe, are getting increasing acceptance in Japan.

Rewriting histories of mankind, modern nation

Sadao Umeda
PRESIDENT, THE ETHIOPIAN ASSOCIATION OF JAPAN

On behalf of the Ethiopian Association of Japan, I am pleased to extend our sincere compliments and congratulations to the friendly people and government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on the auspicious occasion of their 19th National Day.



We are very glad to see that firm bilateral bonds between Japan and Ethiopia have grown over extensive areas

year after year in both governmental and private sectors since the two countries resumed diplomatic relations in 1955.

I am very delighted to have learned more about the diverse and multiple aspects of Ethiopia and its people since I joined the association. Six years have passed while cultural exchange activities between Ethiopia and Japan have been increasingly energetic. Intriguing events vigorously arranged by the association's members, their friends and volunteers from both countries with close collaboration from the Ethiopian Embassy have brought me even closer to Ethiopia.

With the debut of the Ethiopi-

an Pavilion for the Osaka Expo in 1970, the cultural exchange, exhibitions and products displayed therein attracted many Japanese people. This triggered the voluntary group that existed at the time, the Japan-Ethiopia Friendship Association, to officially register itself with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan in 1971 under the present name of the Ethiopian Association of Japan. This new organization declared its aim in its charter "to promote mutual friendship and good will between Japan and Ethiopia in the economic and cultural fields." Since then, such relations have been supported continuously and I am sure the activities of the association are now widely recognized.

Ethiopia is a treasure house of archaeology and a romantic country full of natural and cultural assets with eight World Heritages.

In October, just one year after the closing of the memorial Ethiopian Millennium Year, astonishing news came out from the field of archaeology. Back in 1994, professor Gen Suwa of the University of Tokyo and his group found fossil teeth of the 4.4 million-year-old "Ramidus" in Ethiopia, and with the remains of the skeleton gathered during the 15 years since then, their study finally concluded that it climbed up trees and likely walked upright, 1 million years before "Lucy"

emerged in history as the first member of the human lineage. This hominid was nicknamed "Ardi" and illustrated on the front cover of the famous magazine Science, in which this discovery was ranked as the top news of 2009. The hard and enduring effort by the professor's group is surely to rewrite new pages in the history of mankind. It began in Ethiopia.

Since TICAD IV of 2008 focused on sustainable growth of African countries, there has been steady progress according to the followup mechanism set forth in the Yokohama Action Plan. It is gratifying that Ethiopia is now achieving double-digit economic growth every year. It is rewriting the modern history of the nation's economy as well.

I am confident that the relations of the two countries, Japan and Ethiopia, will be enhanced further through many occasions, both by governmental approaches and by people-to-people contacts as we have been witnessing. This association will continue its endeavor to promote our mission, with our members and with all of our friends, and thus contribute to world peace together.

In closing, I would like to offer my profound wishes that our excellent relations will be maintained and to pray for the success, progress and prosperity of Ethiopia and its peace-loving people.

Congratulations

to the People of

the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
on the 19th Anniversary of Their National Day



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