

Senegal independence day

Nations committed to building dynamic partnership

Bouna Sékou Diouf
AMBASSADOR OF SENEGAL

Today, April 4, 2011, Senegal celebrates the 51st anniversary of its independence, a day of pride for all Senegalese citizens.

On this auspicious occasion, I am particularly honored to convey to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, and to the whole of the Imperial family, my deepest respect.

I also wish to pay tribute to the government and valiant people of Japan, and thank them for the warm hospitality they offer me, the embassy staff and our respective families, as well as my fellow countrywomen and men living in Japan.

To the latter, who have always distinguished themselves by their behavior, an openness of mind, a sense of purpose and patriotism, I extend my heartfelt congratulations. I urge them to continuously abide by



the Senegalese people's core value of righteousness, and to always scrupulously abide by our host country's rules, regulations and cultural values.

On March 11, the ghastly magnitude-9.0 earthquake that struck the northeast of Japan triggered off a devastating tsunami that caused thousands of deaths and yet to be assessed huge material damage.

In these very sad moments of mourning and sorrow, the people of Senegal share the pain and grievance of the Japanese people, and stand by them. I wish to respectfully salute the memories of the thousands of victims and to extend my deepest condolences to the bereaved families. I note with profound admiration, that once again, Japan is outstandingly and serenely showing the rest of the world its resilience and pluck. I am convinced that, as it so remarkably did in the past, the

great Japanese people will recover from this tragedy in the shortest possible time.

Spirit of partnership

Since the establishment Oct. 4, 1960, of diplomatic relations, almost 51 years ago, Senegal and Japan have maintained a dynamic, multifaceted and stable relationship. Japan was among the first countries to recognize Senegal's independence. This, in itself, constitutes vivid testimony of the high quality of the relations that so happily bind our two countries.

Under the leadership of His Excellency President Abdoulaye Wade, relations between Senegal and Japan have been further enhanced and diversified during the past few years. President Wade's participation in TICAD III and IV in 2003 and 2008, as well as in the Hokkaido G-8 summit, was decisive in taking those bilateral relations to even greater heights.

2011 was no exception to the intensification process of the bilateral political relations as illustrated by the recent official visit to Senegal in January of Makiko Kikuta, Japan's parliamentary vice minister for foreign affairs.

Noteworthy is the expected official visit to Japan at the invitation of his Japanese counterpart of H.E. Madicke Niang, senior minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Senegal. Both events illustrate the two countries' deep commitment to continue strengthening bilateral cooperation as pledged by Senior Minister Niang and Minister Takeaki Matsumoto, then Japan's state secretary for for-



President of Senegal
Abdoulaye Wade

ign affairs and its minister for foreign affairs, in January in Addis Ababa, on the sidelines of the 18th African Union Executive Council Meeting.

In hailing the exemplarity of Japanese cooperation I note that it continues to be based on mutual respect and a positive spirit of partnership. That cooperation mainly unfolds through JICA's operations in Senegal. As a strategic and long-standing partner, JICA continues to play a critical role in support of the Senegalese government's efforts to implement human development-oriented and rights-based projects.

JICA's multifaceted assistance also contributed to build several infrastructure of national or community interest as well as to accelerate the regional integration process that is of paramount importance to the government of Senegal.

That assistance also extends

to the agriculture, fisheries, water and sanitation sectors, particularly in rural areas. I would be remiss not to mention education and vocational training, areas in which Japan constantly supports Senegal through the construction of hundreds of classrooms and the organization of several training programs throughout the country. The Centre de Formation Professionnelle et Technique (Senegal-Japan Vocational Training Center) is one of the most resounding successes of our bilateral cooperation. The center has gone regional as it hosts today several students originating from 23 different African countries.

Also to be hailed are the achievements of the young Japanese volunteers to whom I pay tribute.

Senegal and Japan have shared values and common beliefs on major global endeavors, more specifically in their quest for a more harmonious and safe global environment. Both countries are convinced that reforming the global governance system continues to be a priority.

National goal

In its ambitious socioeconomic development program, Senegal is aspiring to become an emerging state, driven by a dynamic private sector. In this perspective, a certain number of areas have been clustered within our Accelerated Growth Strategy, which calls for a world-class business environment, the ultimate objectives of which are to boost productivity and wealth creation, promote the private

sector's productive capacities in several key areas of high potential, including agriculture and agro-business, fisheries, tourism and culture, textiles, ICTs and teleservices.

Through the implementation of new tax and customs reforms, investors are given more incentives and protection to operate in a more secure and transparent business environment. The adoption of such reforms has enabled Senegal to be ranked among the top five reformers in the world by the 2009 Doing Business report.

In accordance with the key priorities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and as an enabling implementation tool of the Accelerated Growth Strategy, strong emphasis is placed on the construction of large-scale transport infrastructure. In this context, the government has begun work to expand and modernize the port of Dakar, renovate the rail system, expand the road network, including the construction of a toll highway from the capital to the soon to be launched international airport of Diass, located about 40 km from Dakar.

With the construction of such an airport infrastructure and the recent launching of our flagship, Senegal Airlines, our country is set to become the main West African intercontinental air transportation hub.

Furthermore, following his election by his peers to lead the NEPAD infrastructure High Level Group of Leaders, President Wade has recently announced the resumption of the first phase of the Dakar-Djibou-

ti railway project.

With all those projects underway, Senegal offers tremendous opportunities for Japanese private firms, particularly now that Japan has rightly placed more emphasis on economic and resource diplomacy, as well as on exporting its infrastructure technologies and boosting the Japanese private sector overseas, including on the African continent. Energy infrastructure also represents a top priority for the Senegalese government. Great efforts are being made in that area, including in rural electrification. I invite Japanese investors to seize those great opportunities in Senegal, a country where the energy market has a promising future, particularly renewable energies.

In order to capture more foreign direct investments flows, our government has adopted a new tax and customs reform. Therefore foreign investors are offered several incentives such as a three-year tax holiday. Besides, foreign investors benefit from similar rights as nationals as they can enjoy 100 percent ownership of a firm.

In spite of the unfavorable international economic climate in 2010, Senegal's economy has performed remarkably, with a 4 percent GDP growth compared to the 2.2 percent growth in 2009. This was achieved thanks to a dynamic primary sector, particularly following the successful implementation of the Grande Offensive pour la Nourriture et l'Abondance (Great Agricultural Initiative for Food and Abundance — GOANA), but also thanks to the

excellent performance of the telecommunications sector, which has been the main booster of our economic growth for the last decade.

Senegal within TICAD

In early May, my country will have the signal honor of hosting the third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) Follow-up Ministerial Meeting. Government officials from Africa and representatives from the United Nations, the World Bank, the African Union Commission, regional economic communities, the private sector and civil organizations will meet their Japanese counterparts to explore realistic ways of accelerating Africa's development. This event, which will constitute a midterm assessment of the 2008 Yokohama Action Plan implementation, is expected to consolidate the dynamic partnership between Japan and Africa.

Japan made good commitments at TICAD IV 2008 and is on track to double by 2012 its Official Development Assistance to Africa as well as its direct investments in the African continent. Japan's expertise and technology is always welcome in our continental endeavor to build a large network of industrial and transport hard infrastructure all over Africa to further boost economic growth.

At a time when Africa is, despite several challenges, making remarkable progress achieving the Millennium Development Goals, Japan's doubling of its investments would contribute to substantially accelerating the pace.

For that to come about, Senegal's unflinching commitment to the partnership between Japan and Africa remains constant and enabling.



Bilateral relations: Bouna Sékou Diouf (right), ambassador of Senegal to Japan, is conferred with the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette of Japan, by Takeshi Saito, then ambassador of Japan to Senegal, on behalf of the government in 2009. EMBASSY OF SENEGAL

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Congratulations

to the People of
the Republic of Senegal
on the 51st Anniversary
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Urban mobility: Numerous intersections showcase the construction of a large-scale transport infrastructure network in Dakar. EMBASSY OF SENEGAL

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