

Mauritania national day

Infrastructure to boost growth, a steady support to democracy

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AMBASSADOR OF MAURITANIA

First, allow me to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt and respectful wishes to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as to the distinguished Imperial family. I would also like on behalf of the Mauritanian government and people to express my sincere congratulations to the Japanese government and people for the steady recovery that has been witnessed in the areas severely struck by last year's devastating earthquake and tsunami.

I further wish to convey my sincere gratitude to the editors of The Japan Times for kindly giving me the opportunity to address their readers.

Today, Mauritania, under the wise leadership of H.E. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, president of the republic, is witnessing a huge progress in infrastructure realization: hundreds of kilometers of paved roads have been built around the country in a couple of years; ports are being expanded (Port of Nouadhibou); wind, solar and gas power plants, expected to sort out the shortage of power, are being constructed in our two biggest cities, Nouakchott and Nouadhibou; water plants are being built to bring drinkable water to



most cities of the country; the broadband Internet has been described as one of the most performing on a regional scale. New hospitals and schools have been built around the country and particularly in areas where thousands of low-income households have been newly relocated. The achievement of such infrastructure in the country worked as a boosting engine to our economic growth, thus leaving a huge, positive impact in Mauritania's living conditions through universal access to basic services, creation of jobs and effective programs to fight against disparities and poverty, thus contributing to preserving the social peace and political stability, both pivotal to a steady democracy.

The president's devotion to good governance and his relentless fight against the chaos and nepotism that has long been affecting the efficiency of our ad-



Resource: The world longest mining train transporting iron ore.



H.E. President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz

ministration adding to his firm determination to fight against terrorism, human and drug trafficking, contributing to the achievement of better results in the management of our natural resources and an efficient control over our borders.

Given its highly strategic geo-

graphical position at the crossroads of North and sub-Saharan Africa, Mauritania offers expanding investment opportunities in not only the fisheries, oil and gas sectors, but also in mining with the iron ore potential of the Taoudeni Basin adding to the recent huge discoveries in gold reserves that would soon lift Mauritania to the rank of biggest African gold producers.

On the political level, the last year saw successful political dialogue between the presidential majority and opposition parties that concluded on the signing of a very comprehensive political accord, which has helped to strengthen the trust among national political stakeholders and contributed tremendously to the reinforcement of the country's democratic experience.

The end of repatriation operations of our fellow citizens who where refugees in Senegal, combined with a consensual resolution of the humanitarian issues through compensation, contributed much to the further strengthening of national unity and social cohesion.

On the international and regional level, Mauritanian diplomacy in the past three years has been very active. The country has further devoted itself effectively to contribute to the tremendous efforts of the international community to help find peaceful solutions to the Syrian and the Malian crises.

In the tourism area, Mauritania is the host of four cities

— Chinguetti, Ouadane, Oualata and Tichitt — registered as UNESCO World Heritage sites, and the Banc d'Arguin National Park, another registered site classified as Africa's largest protected maritime zone.

Mauritania stands resolutely committed toward economic liberalism; the focus on the realization of efficient infrastructure is a clear indicator of its determination to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Mauritania's bid to achieve this goal is stimulated by the generous assistance of friendly nations such as Japan, which remains one of the main contributors to public development aid in Mauritania. In this regard, the Mauritanian government and people acknowledge greatly the positive impacts of Japanese official development aid (ODA) to our vital sectors such as infrastructure, food security, environmental protection, fisheries, health, etc.

The creation, two years ago, of

a Japanese-Mauritanian Friendship Association has greatly contributed to further enhance the relationship between our respective people.

Mauritania appreciates very much the decision of Japanese authorities to keep on with the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) and is looking forward to actively taking part in the upcoming TICAD V, scheduled for June 2013, and determined in the same way to greatly contribute to the success of the third Arab-Japan Economic Forum to be held in December in Tokyo.

Mauritania, on the other hand, is very much thankful to the evolution of the reciprocal visits of high-ranking government officials: last year's visit to Mauritania of then Parliamentary Vice Minister Makiko Kikuta, followed by the dispatch last March of a successful Joint (private and public) Economic Mission that was highly wel-

comed, and the visits to Japan of H.E. Hamadi Ould Baba Ould Hamadi, minister of foreign affairs and cooperation, and the minister of fisheries and maritime economies, followed by the visits last September to Japan of Mauritanian Minister of Economy and Development H.E. Sidi Ould Tah, the Minister of Finance H.E. Thiam Diambar and

Central Bank of Mauritania Gov. Sid'Ahmed Ould Raiss, who were all here to attend the World Bank and IMF meetings held in Tokyo, were another contribution to our efficient bilateral cooperation.

I dare to be certain that Mauritania can count on Japan's continued support and friendship as we continue our nation building efforts.

Congratulations
to the People of
the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
on the 52nd Anniversary
of Their Independence

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