

# Georgia national day

## Deepening multilateral relations, cooperation

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AMBASSADOR OF GEORGIA

On the occasion of the Independence Day of Georgia, it is my honor and privilege to address readers of The Japan Times newspaper. First, allow me to extend my cordial greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as to the government and friendly people of Japan. It is my pleasure to convey congratulations on the Independence Day of our country to the small Georgian community all around Japan.



Being guided by the interests of Georgian society, integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures represents the main priority of my country's foreign policy course. Stemming from the goal to ensure the well-being of its citizens, protecting its independence and sovereignty, de-occupation of its territories and restoration of the country's territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders are the main objectives for the Georgian government.

The 2012 parliamentary elections resulted in the first precedent of peaceful transfer of power in Georgia. The new government pays special attention to building and strengthening the country's democratic institu-

tions, establishing a governance system based on the principles of the rule of law and supremacy of human rights, and ensuring sustainable economic development. The mentioned objectives serve as firm proof that Georgia is faithful to European values.

Georgia's rapid progress in improving its business climate has been well documented in a number of international indexes. The World Bank/IFC 2013 Doing Business report placed Georgia in ninth place in the world in terms of Ease of Doing Business. In order to promote and finance innovative projects in Georgia the new government has established the Sovereign Welfare Fund of Georgia, governed by an independent investment

board, focused in high-tech, information technology, medicine and other promising fields. One of the main priorities of our government is to develop the agricultural sector of the economy. A project launched in 2013 includes the Rural and Agricultural Development Fund that will support over 640,000 landowners in Georgia.

With its strong commitment to economic reforms, the government of Georgia managed to revive the economy hit hard by two negative developments: In August 2008, Georgia witnessed Russia's large-scale military aggression, subsequent occupation and illegal recognition of my country's inalienable regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Os-



**Splendor: On the banks of the Mtkvari River lies Tbilisi, the capital and largest city of Georgia. Right: Mount Kazbek is one of the major peaks of the Caucasus and associated in Georgian folklore with Amirani, the Georgian version of Prometheus.** EMBASSY OF GEORGIA



setia. This situation was compounded by the global financial crisis. Nevertheless, Georgia withstood and achieved positive gross domestic product (GDP) growth that equaled 6.1 percent in 2012. One of the core objectives of the new Georgian government is to continue conducting active economic reforms aimed at ensuring economic growth based on the liberalization of the economy, creation of a favorable business climate and development of private entrepreneurship.

The ongoing occupation of Georgia's regions remains as a serious obstacle and restoration of the country's territorial integrity, within its internationally recognized borders remains a national objective. Georgia is constructively engaged in the Geneva International Discussions, a primary venue to ensure the full implementation of the

August 2008 cease-fire agreement. We remain hopeful that the dynamic and proactive international engagement will make it possible to address effectively the alarming security and human rights situation in the occupied regions of Georgia. In parallel, the priority of the new government is to gradually de-escalate the political tension with Russia that must be based on respect for the territorial integrity of my country. Since November 2012, the Special Representative for Relations with Russia designated by the prime minister of Georgia is engaged with his Russian counterpart in discussing issues related to cultural, economic and humanitarian relations. We hope that the steps undertaken by the government of Georgia will be duly reciprocated by Russia.

As the government of Japan puts emphasis on value-orient-

ed diplomacy, which involves spreading universal principles such as democracy, human rights, freedom, the rule of law and market economy, our bilateral relations based on mentioned fundamental values and a common interest carries a paramount importance for my country. Deepening of cooperation with Japan is essential for Georgia. In this regard we look forward to fruitful and continuous interaction in various fields. I am sure that the current visit to Japan of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia H.E. Maia Panjikidze will move the existing productive partnership of the two states up to a much higher level and further develop existing friendly ties.

Georgia continues to deepen its multilateral diplomatic relations and regional cooperation, among which GUAM features as one of the top priorities. In 2013 Georgia took over the chair of GUAM — Organization for Democracy and Economic Development. In this context I would like to highlight the very productive partnership in the GUAM and Japan format, while I remain hopeful that this partnership will be further fostered and promoted in various directions.

With the sense of deepest gratitude I would like to mention political support and development assistance, which Japan has been granting to my country throughout the years. The government of

Japan always supported the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. Japan was among the largest donors at the joint European Union/World Bank Donor Conference held in Brussels in October 2008 for the postwar reconstruction process in Georgia.

We express sincere appreciation for Japan's valuable contribution to Georgia's economic development. Bearing in mind the success stories of Toyota, Mitsubishi, Japan Tobacco and other Japanese companies operating in Georgia, the Georgian government would like to extend an invitation to more Japanese companies in the areas of energy (particularly hydropower, wind and solar), agricultural production, infrastructure development and tourism.

Georgia attaches high importance to further development of inter-parliamentary relations. It is my pleasure to welcome activities of the Georgia-Japan Parliamentary Friendship League re-established in May 2012. We do hope that cooperation with the counterpart Georgian Parliamentary Group of Friendship in the newly elected legislative body will be further promoted and developed.

Allow me to use this occasion to express my strong desire that our friendship based on the principles of mutual respect and equal treatment will be further developed and enriched for the benefit of both nations.

Congratulations  
to the People  
of  
Georgia

on Their 22nd Independence Day  
and the 21st Anniversary  
of  
Georgia-Japan  
Diplomatic Relations



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