

Mongolia national day

Dynamically on the path of rapid economic growth

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AMBASSADOR OF MONGOLIA

I would like to express my heartfelt greetings to all the Japanese friends on the occasion of Mongolia's National Day celebration — Naadam.

Mongolia is an ancient country celebrating the 2,222nd anniversary of the foundation of Hunnu — its earliest statehood. Mongolia is a young country as well, counting 23 years since embarking on the path of democracy and reforms. It's a country of youth where 70 percent of the population is under the age of 35.

Mongolia abandoned socialism in 1990 and successfully implemented simultaneous political and economic reforms, and has achieved significant accomplishments and been broadly recognized as a model for the new or restored democracies. In this regard Mongolia has been bestowed upon the honorable duty to chair the Community of Democracies.

Youthful Mongolia with ancient history and traditions has kicked off the intensive development. Mongolia is being referred to as the "Paradise of Mineral resources." Indeed, a number of the world's largest deposits of coal, coke, copper, shale oil, molybdenum, gold, silver, zinc, uranium and rare metals are found in Mongolia. Mongolia pursues a policy of achieving the new development through utilization of the resources and development of its infrastructure, processing industry and human resources. The embarkation on the new development path has been met with success. Mongolia has been enjoying a 13 to 17 percent economic growth rate in recent years. Companies from more than 120 countries worldwide,

including Japan, are investing in Mongolia. Rio Tinto invested in the Oyu Tolgoi copper deposit, while companies from Japan, Russia, China, the U.S. and South Korea have expressed their willingness to invest in the Tavan Tolgoi coking coal deposits. The Japanese company Soft-Bank is planning to implement the Asia Super Grid project in Mongolia to build a 35,000-km power network to supply the countries in Asia with solar and wind clean energy. Mitsubishi started the construction of the New Ulaanbaatar International Airport while Marubeni, Itochu, Sumitomo and Sojitz are expressing their interest in participating in the 1,800-km railroad construction project. Sojitz is taking part in the construction of the V Power Plant Station. Marubeni and Toyo Engineering are planning to build a major oil-refinery factory in Mongolia. There are many other potential projects such as building the coal enrichment, coke producing, iron processing factories, to name but a few. Thus, by developing broad international cooperation, Mongolia intends to make its own contribution to East Asia's economic integration. There are vast opportunities for that.

On the bilateral basis, concrete steps have been taken to improve the business and investment environment to expand economic cooperation. Agreement on an export credit line was concluded with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) and an economic partnership agreement negotiation is under way between the two nations.

Mongolia is not far from becoming one of the big exporters of mineral resources, energy and ecologically clean products, and importer of cutting-edge technology and innovations. In this regard the Mongolian meeting of the World Economic Forum, namely Davos meeting, is to be



Strategic partnership: Mongolian President Tsakhia Elbegdorj welcomes Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Ulaanbaatar on March 30 during his visit to Mongolia. EMBASSY OF MONGOLIA

held for the first time in Mongolia, in September.

Strategic partnership

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and Japan, this year the 41st "sakura" has blossomed. For the first half of this period, possibilities of expanding the relations between Mongolia and Japan were limited due to the differences in social systems and ideologies. However, bilateral relations expanded dramatically after the democratic changes took place in Mongolia in 1990.

Since its beginning Japan, more than any other country, has rendered consistent and firm support to the Mongolian democracy. While supporting Mongolia on a bilateral basis, Japan, together with the World Bank, has organized 10 rounds of Consultative Meetings of Donor Countries for Mongolia in Tokyo. Japan covers about two thirds of the foreign and international organizations' aid to Mongolia. Japanese aid has been expanded to every field, such as food, energy, transportation, communication, education, health, culture, etc. The aid rendered

from Japan and the international community assisted Mongolia significantly in overcoming the financial and economic crisis, difficulties in the social life of Mongolian people and in transferring to the market economy, setting the foundation for the new development.

There is a saying in Mongolia, "A friend in need is a friend indeed." The aid and assistance of Japan reached everyone's heart in Mongolia and brought forward radical changes in the attitude and evaluation of Mongolian people toward Japan. Mongolia, alongside with a multitude of Asian countries, had suffered from the invasions of the militarist Japan, therefore the attitude toward Japan was not good, with historical issues to overcome. Nevertheless, the development of relations between Mongolia and Japan worked as a proof of the possibility of mending the past wrongdoings if there was a sincere desire in doing accordingly. Mongolia, which used to be perceived as "the near yet distant neighbor," became a close partner of Japan.

Since the mid '90s Mongolia and Japan have been develop-

ing a comprehensive partnership, which currently is being elevated to the further level of strategic partnership.

The strategic partnership between Mongolia and Japan declared by H.E. Tsakhia Elbegdorj, the president of Mongolia, during his visit to Japan in 2010, consists of five main pillars:

- Trustworthy political relations
- Cooperation on the issues of foreign policy, security, defense and regional affairs
- The mutually beneficial and complementary economic cooperation
- Broad exchange in the fields of culture, education, arts, sports, humanities and local communities
- Mutual assistance on the international agenda

H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, during his official visit to Mongolia in March this year, has put forward a proposal to develop the "Erch initiative," borrowing the Mongolian word for "vitality," aimed at expanding the Mongol-Japan strategic partnership under the following three spirits:

- Spirit of peace
- Spirit of freedom and democracy
- Spirit of mutual assistance

The initiative aims at the development of investment and business environment, and cooperation for Mongolia's sustainable economic development, including fostering human resources and improvement of the infrastructure basis for development.

Within the framework of the intensification of bilateral relations in accordance with the above-mentioned areas, certain cooperation issues will be discussed during the upcoming visit to Japan by H.E. Norov Altankhuyag, the prime minister of Mongolia. During the course of this high-level visit the Mid-term Action Plan for Developing the Strategic Partnership between Mongolia and Japan will be signed.

During the visit to Mongolia

by H.E. Prime Minister Abe, H.E. President Elbegdorj put forward a proposal to initiate the "Ulaanbaatar dialogue" on the security issues in the Northeast Asian region, naming it an "Abe-Ebi initiative" (Ebi is a shortened name of President Elbegdorj). The proposal suggests the restarting of the six-party dialogue on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, holding bilateral and multilateral dialogues and meetings in Ulaanbaatar on the wide range of issues related to the security and cooperation in the region, in particular appealing for holding the 1.5 track meeting between the government experts and researchers of the countries in the region. The Japan-North Korea bilateral meeting could also be considered as an integral part of the above dialogue.

Mongolia initially put forward a proposal to establish the Northeast Asia dialogue mechanism in 2002, and it also declared its territory as a nuclear-weapon-free-zone. Five nuclear power states issued a statement in recognition of our country's nuclear-free status and a special resolution in this regard was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly, thus securing our status.

The example served as an important model for the international community, by highlighting the possibilities of ensuring the security of the country through political and diplomatic means.

In conclusion, I would like to convey the warm greetings of H.E. Tsakhia Elbegdorj, the president of Mongolia, who won the presidential elections carried out in Mongolia on June 26 and was sworn-in as the president of Mongolia for a second term on the July 10, and deliver the president's best wishes to all the readers, wishes of well-being and prosperity to the country and people of Japan, and of further deepening and expanding the relations between Mongolia and Japan.

Congratulations

to the People of Mongolia

on the Occasion of

the Mongolian National Day



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