

Djibouti national day

Djibouti: A logistics hub promoting peace, stability in the region

Ahmed Arita Ali
AMBASSADOR OF DJIBOUTI

It is my profound privilege on the 37th anniversary of our National Day to express my heartfelt, warm respectful greetings and best wishes to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, members of Imperial family and the friendly government and people of Japan. With a long history of diplomatic ties, Japan remains one of the most reliable development partners of Djibouti in supporting our advancement in line with our policies.



During this last decade the relations between our two countries have been very active, including a historic visit to Djibouti by H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in August 2013 followed by Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera in May 2014, who met his counterpart Minister of Defense Hassan Darar. We highly appreciate the fact that last year the level of bilateral relations in various fields was significantly upgraded and our in-depth political dialogue is a good example of this tendency.

Djibouti has experienced strong economic growth since President Ismael Omar Guelleh's accession to power in 1999, with an average growth rate of over 5 percent last year. This economic success, which might be called "Guellenomics," was accompanied by social stability, which was made possible by a committed pro-poor policy. Djibouti's ranking

is 121st out of 185 economies in the World Bank's Doing Business 2014. Djibouti moved up 61 places in a year.

Through his personal commitment and political stability of the country, the president has convinced foreign investors to develop major projects in the tourism sector, tertiary sectors, real estate and even mining. We are now involving more neighbors and regional partners in several projects to strengthen port infrastructure.

Doraleh's container port is successful in two ways. First, the port was built on a man-made peninsula, taking advantage of the bay's natural depth of nearly 18 meters for container ships (just 30 ports worldwide are as deep). Second, it draws some of the heavy sea traffic transiting on the world's busiest sea route nearby and has become the main port for East African countries. The facility has lived up to its promise. Nearly a million containers a year are shipped through Doraleh, the deepest port in Africa. It is also the top performing container port, with an average of 34 movements/hour/crane, compared to 25 elsewhere.

The Djibouti Ports and Free Zones Authority's aim is to position its ports as a trans-shipment hub, with increased multimodal connectivity. This has led to increased efforts and investment exceeding \$8.43 billion to modernize its current facilities and construct new, modern infrastructure in response to the growing economy of the continent, including seven new ports and maritime mega-projects by 2015. The creation of the Djibouti Ship-



Djibouti President Ismail Omar Guelleh meets with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Aug. 27 in Djibouti City during Abe's visit to the country. CABINET PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE

ping Company will round out the logistical advantages of the country's ports and allow it to play a key role in the transshipment market. Using four medium-sized ships (3,000 tons TEU each), DSC will deliver goods unloaded in Djibouti to East African ports (from Egypt to South Africa), the Gulf countries and India.

Djibouti is committed to supporting international efforts for maintaining peace and security in our region first and in the rest of the world as a responsible player. These are our

policies and the policy championed by President Guelleh.

Tourism

Djibouti is unmatched in its offerings, gathering "some of the world's marvels." Situated on the Red Sea, its waters are home to a coral reef hot spot with a sensational show, with plankton blooms off the coast attracting whale sharks. The location makes it a unique spot for business and, perhaps more surprisingly, for tourism. Its mineral landscapes and stunning mix of natural habi-

tats make it a prime destination for tourists, including hiking adventurers and shark-seeking scuba divers.

From the depths to the peaks, Djibouti offers a variety-filled adventure. The volcano Ardoukoba, which last erupted in 1978, is an exciting spot to visit. Djibouti, with an open skies' policy, acts as a regional hub, giving tourists plenty of travel options to the region. Many companies are now operating from Djibouti Airport, including Air France, Fly Dubai, Turkish Airlines, Kenyan Airways and Qatar Airways will — from this July — liaise with Djibouti and also Ethiopian Airlines will be the first African company which will connect from October 2014 Addis-Abeba to Japan in 13 hours. With this we hope to seize this opportunity to promote tourism industry in Djibouti, as Ethiopia is just a 45-minute flight from Djibouti

We also take this occasion to call upon members of the Japanese private sector to take advantage of Djibouti's exciting business environment and use Djibouti as an entry point to the enlarged and potentially lucrative markets of the

COMESA (Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa) and Arab countries.

Djibouti has a uniquely attractive proposition, offering 10 years of tax exemption for foreign investors. The recent setup of an electrical power supply interconnection with Ethiopia is leading to further improvement in the business environment and a new geothermal project promises better energy availability, making the practicalities of doing business in Djibouti a safer bet.

Youth policy advocated by Guelleh contributes to youth development through education, culture and sport. As a result of these efforts came world champion Ayanleh Souleiman, who put Djibouti back on the sporting map with his 800-meter bronze medal at last summer's World Championships in Athletics in Moscow and a 1500-meter gold at the IAAF World Indoor Championships in Sopot, Poland in March 2014, where the Djibouti national anthem rang out across an athletics stadium for the first time at a world championship. More than 20 years have elapsed since marathon silver



Ayanleh Souleiman celebrates at the IAAF World Indoor Championships in Sopot, Poland in March. EMBASSY OF DJIBOUTI

medals were won by Ahmed Salah at the 1987 and 1991 World Championships. Salah also took the bronze medal at the 1988 Olympic Games and won first world marathon championships in 1985 in Hiroshima, Japan.

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to the People of
the Republic of Djibouti
on the 37th Anniversary
of Their Independence

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