

Sudan independence day

Resource-rich Sudan builds investor-friendly environment

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AMBASSADOR OF THE SUDAN

Today Jan. 1, 2009, the Republic of the Sudan commemorates with pride the 53rd anniversary of its independence.

On behalf of the government and people of the republic, I wish to convey heartfelt greetings and best wishes to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, Prime Minister Taro Aso, and the government and friendly people of Japan. I would like to seize this opportunity to thank The Japan Times for its long support to our embassy, and express our best wishes for a very happy, peaceful and prosperous new year to the distinguished readers of this newspaper. Our sincere congratulations are also extended to our Sudanese compatriots living in Japan.



2008 witnessed remarkable achievements in Sudan-Japan relations. The fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 4) in Yokohama was a major milestone in Afro-Japan cooperation. In recognition of the momentous significance of the TICAD process,

the government of Sudan sent a strong delegation to the conference led by President Omer Hassan Ahmed El-basheer.

2009 will be the first year in which the Yokohama Action Plan enters its implementation stage. The Sudan government will continue to support and fully participate in all endeavors specified under the plan.

During 2008, bilateral cooperation between Japan and Sudan continued to blossom. There were several ministerial visits in both directions between Tokyo and Khartoum.

My government is most grateful to the people and government of Japan for the assistance extended to the people of Sudan in the form of food aid, peace building, and construction of schools, hospitals and water systems. I must hasten to commend the Japanese nongovernmental organizations that are providing vital services in our villages. I believe that 2009 will usher in a higher level of bilateral cooperation between our two countries in all areas of mutual concern.

The following is a short catalog of facts about Sudan.

Nature: Sudan is the largest country in Africa and the tenth largest in the world, sharing borders with nine countries: Egypt, Libya, Chad, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Eritrea. This vast territory measures about 2.5 million sq. km, which is about 8.3 percent of the land mass of Africa.

The northern frontiers of Sudan are in the arid Sahara Desert while the southern frontiers are in the tropical rain forest of central Africa. In between these vegetation and climatic extremes lie the vast sudd swamps and the savanna grassland. About 13,000 sq. km of Sudan is covered by water. The most distinctive feature in the Sudan is the Nile, the longest river in the world, and its tributaries.

Not surprisingly, Sudan is inhabited by people of different ethnic identities, cultural practices and religious beliefs. Sudan has been characterized as "the melting pot of African and Middle Eastern cultures."

Natural resources: Sudan's most important inanimate (nonhuman) resource is its agricultural potential. It has

more than 80 million hectares of arable land supported by rain water, surface water (rivers and lakes) and subterranean reservoirs. Sudanese pastures support 121 million head of sheep, cattle, goats and camels. The fisheries and forestry sectors provide a large percentage of our protein and domestic energy needs at present, but the two hold great promise for further development into yet another sector of Sudan's monetary and export economy.

There is no accurate inventory of Sudan's mineral resources. Petroleum extraction has reached 500,000 barrels per day and could increase with more investment in other oil fields. Metals like gold, copper and others are believed to exist in the country.

Economy: The economy of Sudan is moving toward a liberal and open-market economy, and getting ready for globalization. Regulations and policies have been implemented to give noted advantages to foreign investors. These policies include nondiscrimination on the basis of foreign/national projects, exemption for capital goods, and many other incentives and

guarantees provided by the Investment Encouragement Act of 1999. Remarkable changes in the structure of the Sudanese economy have occurred with the emergence of oil as a source of revenue, which created massive demand for infrastructure to meet the expanding economic activities. The economy of Sudan is expanding.

The resources are available coupled with a favorable and encouraging environment. The Japanese business community is invited to look closely at the opportunities available in different sectors in Sudan.

Tourism: Sudan's environmental diversity creates equally diverse tourist attrac-

tions. The Red Sea coast, which extends for more than 700 km, provides tourists with opportunities for diving, underwater photography, boating and water skiing. The Red Sea enjoys many gulfs and coral reefs free from pollution.

The country enjoys ancient heritages and antiquities. These heritages are centered in the north, particularly Naga and Maswarat, where there are remains of pyramids and temples. Many of them are still lying unearthed. The ruins are considered as World Heritage archaeological sites by UNESCO. The savanna belt is home to probably one of the world's largest and most diverse zoos of flora and fauna.

Efforts are under way to construct an infrastructure that will open the area for global research and tourism.

Politics: The government has a firm belief that the full utilization of its enormous natural resources cannot be achieved without finding a comprehensive political settlement to internal disputes. The signing of the historic Comprehensive Peace Agreement in January 2005 has opened an unprecedented window of opportunity to turn the devastation of years of war, displacement and underdevelopment into a new era of peace and prosperity.

Sudan's vast natural resources and significant human capital offer enormous

development potential. Now is the time to consolidate and broaden the partnership that has been formed between the parties to the peace accord, civil society and the international community in order to realize the vision of a unified Sudan that responds to the needs of its diverse people.

The government is doing its best to find an end and final settlement to the Darfur problem through negotiations with the armed movements in Darfur. Also the government assures the international community of its readiness for negotiations at any time set by the mediation.

On behalf of the staff of the Sudanese Embassy in Japan, I wish the entire diplomatic corps in Japan, and all our friends in various ministries and agencies a Happy New Year.

Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of the Sudan
on the 53rd Anniversary of Their Independence Day
and wishing them a future of Prosperity and Peace.

Sudanese Community in Japan
www.sudan-japan.com

Congratulations
to all Sudanese on the 53rd Anniversary
of Our Independence Day



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