

Norway constitution day

A season and reason for celebration

Arne Walther
AMBASSADOR OF NORWAY TO JAPAN

Celebrated with joy around the world, spring is a season of new beginnings. It is the season of renewal and hope, especially after emerging from a long, dark, cold winter. Like the "sakura" that heralds spring in Japan, Norwegians take delight in the budding of leaves and the flowering of trees that unfold the beauty and majesty of nature. But that is not all we celebrate each year come spring.

Today, May 17, Norwegians are in a particularly festive mood, at home in Norway and abroad. With children, flags and optimism for the future—all center stage. We are celebrating our National Day in commemoration of our constitution of 1814. We cherish our independent nationhood. We remember our forefathers and mothers, who made sacrifices to gift us our freedom and rights, the foundation of the welfare that we enjoy today. And we are mindful of our responsibilities as members of the wider family of nations with whom we share a common future in a globalizing world.

Having presented my credentials as Norway's new ambassador to Japan to His Imperial Majesty Emperor Akihito only a week after arrival at the height of the breathtaking sa-

kura, this spring marks a new beginning for me as well. I am indeed delighted to celebrate my first May 17 in Japan. And doing so, also celebrate the close and vibrant relationship between Norway and Japan. Our nations enjoy a broad spectrum of cooperation, cultural ties, business relations and warm people-to-people bonds. And we are eager to seize new opportunities to deepen our relationship in all fields.

People to people

The eighth annual Norway Friendship Yacht Race in Enoshima on April 19 was for me a visual pre-taste of our National Day celebration today. Never before had I seen so many Norwegian flags waving in any one place outside Norway. Flags fluttered in the ocean breeze from the masts of sailing boats. From their decks, festive people of all ages, this time many more Japanese than Norwegians, waved their flags enthusiastically.

His Majesty King Harald had been to the waters of this emerald isle 43 years before as crown prince of Norway, competing for an Olympic medal in a sailing event. Among the on-lookers was the Crown Prince of Japan, who later as Emperor, with Her Imperial Majesty Empress Michiko, hosted King Harald's return to Enoshima with Her Majesty Queen Sonja on an official state visit in 2001. In imperial and royal honor, the Enoshima Yacht Club has in the years since held an annual Norway Friendship Yacht

Race. This is a wonderful tradition to carry forward.

Later this month, we will pay special tribute to the Norway-Japan Society when it celebrates its 30th anniversary under the honorary patronage of His Imperial Highness Prince Tomohito. The efforts of the society, fueled by the enthusiasm of its individual members, are further reminders of the importance of people-to-people contacts for our official government endeavors to strengthen bilateral ties and to work together in the family of nations for a sustainable future.

Our bilateral trade is substantial. Japan is our most important partner in Asia after China. We are stepping up our bilateral science and technology cooperation, focusing on the three pillars of energy and environment, material technology and seafood safety. I am also happy to see the increasing cultural exchanges between Norway and Japan, not least in design, music and architecture. From the Land of the Rising Sun, sharing with Norwegians a love of and respect for nature, Japanese tourists are increasingly opting for Norway's scenic and pristine beauty as well-earned guests, not least to see our spectacular fjords and Arctic midnight sun.

Shared maritime affinity

Located on the far side of the Eurasian continent, up north bordering the Arctic, Norway equals Japan in size but not in population. For every 100 Japanese, we can boast only 3½ Nor-



Breathtaking: Fruit trees blossom on the shores of Hardangerfjord. SCANDINAVIAN TOURIST BOARD

wegians! But when four of five of these Norwegians live within 10 km of the sea, you will know that we, although far apart geographically, have many things in common.

For one, we are both big seafood nations. The quality-conscious Japanese consumer eats more fish than any other consumer in the world. Norway is among the largest exporters of fish in the world. I am happy to see that Norwegian Salmon, king crab, mackerel and capelin ("shishamo") are such an appreciated part of Japanese cuisine. In fact, fish and fish products amount to 30 percent of all Norwegian exports to Japan. As seafood nations, Norway and Japan know the importance of sustainable harvesting of living marine resources and have a keen eye on seafood

safety protection.

Seafood cooperation was highlighted last month by the visit to Japan of Norway's Deputy Minister of Fisheries Vidar

Per Christer Lund
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COUNSELOR

Innovation Norway (IN) is integrated in the Royal Norwegian Embassy as its commercial arm. IN supports Norwegian industrial development in national and international arenas through innovation, internationalization and promotion. The IN team in Tokyo combines knowledge and experience from Japanese and Norwegian industry and research. The integration with the Royal Norwegian Embassy has demonstrated effective access and integrity toward Japanese industry, academia, and government for the benefit of Norwegian companies



Ulriksen. It was an opportunity also to celebrate the return of tasty Norwegian shishamo to the Japanese table after our catch had been suspended a few years to allow replenishment of stocks in responsible resource management. Our shared maritime affinity is manifest in long-standing deliveries of state-of-the-art ships from Japanese shipyards to Norwegian shipowners. I had the privilege of participating at the launch of one such ship at the Mitsubishi Shipyard in Nagasaki only three days after my arrival.

Energy and climate change

Norway takes pride in being an environmentally conscious producer and exporter of energy. Almost 100 percent of our domestic electricity demand is generated by renewable, carbon dioxide emission-free hydropower. We are also making a substantial, reliable and long-term contribution to the security of energy supply of our trading partners. Exports of oil and natural gas account for half of our total exports. Norway is the

world's second-largest exporter of natural gas and the fifth-largest exporter of oil.

Norway recognizes the urgency of global climate change efforts. What is needed is no less than an energy revolution based on innovative new technologies for environmentally better use of fossil fuels and development of alternative, renewable energy sources.

We need to accelerate international efforts to ensure that the climate summit in Copenhagen in December is a success. Three weeks ago, ministers from around the world along with experts on the melting of ice and snow met in the Arctic city of Tromsø—under the chairmanship of our Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Al Gore—to prepare input to the Copenhagen summit. And in 10 days' time, to give further input to the summit, Norway's Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg will host a high-level international conference on "Fighting Climate

Change with Carbon Capture and Storage."

Like-minded partners

Celebrating our National Day and friendship with Japan today, let us also recognize the wider, global issues that require purposeful international cooperation and resolve: the economic downturn, pandemic threats, climate change and environmental degradation, energy security, the fight against poverty and conflicts around the world victimizing innocent civilians. Norway and Japan are like-minded partners at the international forefront, making a difference, working for global solutions to meet these and other global challenges. And there is much more that we can do.

For more information about Norway and Norway-related events in Japan, visit www.norway.or.jp (Japanese) or www2.norway.or.jp (English).

Innovation Norway forges high-tech links

and research institutions. The skill and experience set spans professional areas of ICT, manufacturing, marine and maritime industry, design, and general science and technology.

In 2003, Norway and Japan signed a bilateral science and technology cooperation agreement that is actively maintained by IN and the embassy. The key focus areas under this agreement are energy and the environment, material technologies and seafood safety, and a number of important achievements have been reached during the six-year duration of the agreement.

* Norway is an energy nation, and a global leader in selected science and technology areas of critical interest for Japan, such as carbon capture and storage; exploitation of methane hydrates; solar and

photovoltaic industry, and utilization of hydrogen in the transportation sector. There is furthermore a close and long-lasting relationship between Norwegian and Japanese polar research. The Japanese space agency, JAXA, recently signed an agreement with the Norwegian Space Center for a 10-year satellite launch and data download program.

* The Kyoto International Forum for Energy and Environment (KIFEE) is a long-term relationship between the leading universities in the Kyoto, Osaka and Otsu region, and universities in Trondheim and Oslo in Norway. Every second year, the KIFEE workshops attract around 200 researchers within energy systems, advanced material technology and environment education. The next event is in Trondheim this September.

* The leading Norwegian technical universities and research institutions SINTEF and IFE (Institute for Energy Research) have active cooperation agreements with leading Japanese institutes such as AIST and RITE on energy and environment research, and technology development.

* Seafood is one of Norway's major exports to Japan, and research collaboration on seafood safety, traceability and recently marine bio-prospecting is of essential importance for both countries.

The Norwegian and Japanese governments recognize the importance of science and technology cooperation, and the Norwegian Research Council and Japan Society of Promotion of Science (JSPS) have jointly established a fund for student and researcher exchange.

Sharing a love of the sea and its bounty

Hans Petter Naes
NORWEGIAN SEAFOOD EXPORT COUNCIL
JAPAN REPRESENTATIVE

The sea, the seafood industry and the seafood itself are areas of national importance to Japan and Norway.

The seafood industry is of great importance to Japan; Japan is one of the world's largest seafood markets; and the Japanese are recognized as the most demanding seafood consumers in the world. Japan is also the "origin of sushi" and in the present global sushi food trend, Japan is considered the standard to which everyone else strives.

Norway, on the other side of the globe, shares this focus. With only about 4.5 million inhabitants, Norway is among the largest seafood exporters in the world, exporting high-quality seafood to more than 200 countries around the globe.

This shared interest is the basis for strong cooperation and important trade, beneficial to Japan and Norway.

Norwegian Salmon is recognized around the world as high-quality seafood, and is seen in top restaurants as well as supermarkets. In Japan's highly competitive, and very quality-conscious salmon market, Norwegian Salmon has over the

last 30 years established itself as a valued high-quality alternative. Not least in Japan's sushi restaurants, you will find Norwegian Salmon being enjoyed by demanding Japanese consumers.

Mackerel ("saba" in Japanese) is another important—but not so well-known—area of trade and cooperation. Japan is a country where mackerel has a much stronger position than in other countries, therefore consumers are also demanding and conscious of quality. Norwegian mackerel is found and appreciated all

over Japan, particularly in the salted form—"shio saba."

Another not well-known Norwegian contribution to Japanese cuisine is capelin ("shishamo"). Capelin is appreciated in homes as well as "izakaya" all over Japan and Norwegian capelin is desired because of its quality.

Norway actively promotes its seafood in Japan through the extensive activities of the Norwegian Seafood Export Council. These market activities are also a contribution to the general seafood market and seafood consumption in

Japan as they add to the awareness of high-quality seafood.

This extensive trade in seafood is the basis for long-term good relations, not only between Japanese and Norwegian companies, but between governments, research institutions and the two countries as a whole. These good relations are to the benefit of Norway and Japan. Our firm belief is that processors, trade and consumers in Japan will benefit from close relations in this field for many years to come.

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