

Mauritania national day

A new Mauritania, determined to meet its challenges

Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Jaafar
AMBASSADOR OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC
OF MAURITANIA

On the 49th anniversary of national independence, I have the privilege and great honor to extend my most respectful wishes to Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan, as well as to all members of the distinguished Imperial Family.



It is also a welcome opportunity for me to express to the government and people of Japan the friendship and profound gratitude of the government and people of Mauritania.

I further wish to convey my sincere gratitude to the editors of The Japan Times for giving

me once more the opportunity to address their readers.

The re-establishment of constitutional order that took place in our country after the presidential election of July 18 allowed Mauritania to recover its political stability. This election was a consensual and inclusive process that involved 10 candidates and enjoyed a turnout rate of 64.58 percent in a climate of transparency, as confirmed by the entire body of national and international observers that was mobilized for the occasion.

Beyond the end of the crisis, the nature of the solution adopted by our country has resuscitated Mauritanian democracy, as illustrated by the complete international recognition of the election result.

Today, our constitutional institutions are functioning

normally and the role of the opposition is guaranteed within a traditional democratic process.

One third of the Senate has been renewed in accordance with the Mauritanian Constitution and with the participation of all political parties, and the enlargement of freedoms has led to our country being ranked first by Reporters Without Borders among Arabic countries in terms of press freedom in 2008.

Since the inauguration of H.E. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz as President of the Republic on Aug. 5, Mauritania has achieved resolute progress toward good governance by fighting relentlessly against the chaos and nepotism that have long been affecting the efficiency of our administration.

Within the context of the international economic crisis, the enhancement of our people's living conditions is a central priority that has already led to the implementation of important programs to fight poverty by providing universal access to essential services.

The accelerated repatriation of our fellow citizens who had taken refuge in Senegal and Mali, combined with a consensual resolution of the humanitarian issue, contribute to further strengthening national unity and social cohesion.

Given its highly strategic geographical position at the

crossroads of North and Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as its important potential in terms of mining and fishing resources, Mauritania now offers expanding investment opportunities thanks to the launch of oil exploitation in 2006.

The "Doing Business" program recently adopted in conjunction with the World Bank shall lead to a better business environment and enhance the visibility of investment opportunities in our country.

With four cities — Chinguetti, Ouadane, Oualata and Tichitt — registered as UNESCO World Heritage sites, and the Banc d'Arguin National Park, another registered site that offers Africa's largest protected maritime zone, Mauritania offers tourists a rich and diverse panorama that can be enjoyed in absolute tranquillity.

By joining the Barcelona process and becoming a founding member of the Mediterranean Union, Mauritania's involvement in the Mediterranean sphere is strengthening its presence in an era of prosperity that favors both growth and investment.

Our country stands resolutely committed toward economic liberalism and the realization, within the given time, of the Millennium Development Goals through the implementation of an appropriate strategy to combat poverty.

Its action in this field is stimulated by the assistance

of friendly nations such as Japan, which remains one of the main contributors to public development aid in Mauritania, as well as its main commercial partner in the fishing

sector.

I welcome the opening in three days of the Japanese Embassy in Nouakchott as a new step toward the strengthening of bilateral relations.



Chinguetti Mosque: Founded in the 13th century, Chinguetti was an important cross-Saharan trading hub and a center of Islamic study. It is now a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Congratulations
to the People of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
on the Occasion of the 49th Anniversary of
Their Independence Day



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Known for its commitment to the virtues of peace and tolerance, Mauritania greatly appreciates the values of peace, consensus, friendship and prosperity that constitute the basis of Japan's international role.

Among other things, our country welcomes Japan's global leadership for over a decade in favor of African de-

velopment through the TICAD process, whose fourth summit held last year in Yokohama resulted in important measures that will greatly enhance the development level of African countries.

I am convinced that Mauritania can count on Japan's continued support and friendship as we continue our nation-building effort.

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Banc d'Arguin National Park: This UNESCO World Heritage site is the biggest protected maritime zone in Africa. CHIZUKO KATO