

world/UAE national day

UAE and Japan celebrate their increasingly close ties

H.E. Saeed Ali Al-Nowais
AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES

On this very auspicious occasion of our 38th National Day, I am most honored and privileged to convey, on behalf of the government and people of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), my heartfelt greetings and best wishes to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the government and the great people of Japan. I also extend my sincere felicitations to H.H. Sheik Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, president of the UAE, ruler of Abu Dhabi, H.H. Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, vice president, prime minister and ruler of Dubai, the members of the Supreme Council and rulers of the Emirates, and to people of the United Arab Emirates.

For the past 38 years, the relationship between the UAE and Japan has been characterized by close cooperation in a variety of fields. In fact, both countries share a genuine enthusiasm to promote further dialogues at all levels, widening the scope of cooperation and deepening friendly ties. This year in particular has been marked by a series of momentous events, starting with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on peaceful nuclear energy cooperation signed between our two countries in January to fulfill future power and energy demands. The MOU concerning the potential devel-

opment of peaceful nuclear power will uphold standards of nonproliferation, safety and security. We expect that access to Japanese technology in this field will enable the UAE to meet a massive increase in demand for power and energy in coming decades.

The most significant achievement by the UAE this year was its successful bid to host the headquarters of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) where UAE garnered the majority of votes in Sharm Al-Sheikh. The IRENA headquarters will be located in Abu Dhabi's Masdar City, the world's first carbon-neutral, zero-waste city that is powered entirely by renewable energy. Hosting the IRENA headquarters is proof of our entry into the post-oil era and affirms our readiness to shoulder our international responsibilities and help the world face challenges related to the diversification of energy sources.

I am also happy to say that the UAE placed 28th in the world and first in the Arab region in the promotion of prosperity and general satisfaction with life in a global survey of 104 states, according to a report by the Legatum Institute, an independent research, policy and advisory organization. "Within the UAE, Dubai has moved past dependence on oil exports towards a more diversified economy based on attracting international capital and talent," says the institute.

Such impressive achievements attract foreign investments and create vast business opportunities. The UAE has become a vital center of trade to all companies and businessmen

looking for investment opportunities, ensuring safety, security, stability, transparency of laws and legislation. Those who choose to set up businesses in the UAE will find a hospitable and simple process, an active open economy and an opportunity to penetrate neighboring markets.

The aeronautical agreement that was concluded between our two countries allows our national carriers, Emirates Airlines and Etihad Airways, to both operate direct flights from Abu Dhabi and Dubai to Narita five times a week each. With these new links, it is expected that the number of Japanese travelers and tourists visiting the UAE will increase. I am sure these links will enhance economic and tourism activities as well as cultural and educational relations. I would like to seize this opportunity and extend my thanks to the Japanese authorities concerned for their tireless efforts during the negotiations, which made this important aeronautical agreement a reality.

In terms of energy policy, I would like to assure you that our government will maintain its position as a secure and a reliable oil supplier to Japan. To strengthen cooperation further in this important field, the government of Abu Dhabi and Japan earlier this year signed a memorandum for joint cooperation in the field of energy.

Other aspects of cooperation between the UAE and Japan have been burgeoning as well. There is an effort in the UAE to expand cooperation to include basic industries such as steel, aluminum and petrochemicals.

Mutual visits between our two countries' officials have been rising. In October of this year, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Masayuki Naoshima visited the UAE in the first official visit by a Japanese senior official since the new Cabinet's inauguration in September. He held fruitful talks with high-level UAE officials, including Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces H.H. General Sheik Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. These active exchanges of high officials underpin the importance and emphasis that each side places upon bilateral relations.

The UAE and Japan have always shared the view that education is an essential foundation for nation-building. Many UAE children are now attending Japanese school in Abu Dhabi as a result of a UAE initiative that aims to diversify the education process and foster better understanding of other cultures. The UAE seeks to deepen cooperation in this field further by signing memorandums of understanding and agreements with a number of Japanese universities. As a result of that endeavor, student exchanges have leaped forward. Now there are roughly 40 UAE students enrolled in different Japanese universities and this number will increase in the years ahead.

We would also like to underline the notable progress that the UAE and Japan have achieved in infrastructure development. Japanese builders played a vital role in the construction of Dubai Metro. The world's longest automated driverless metro and the first in the Arab region, Dubai Metro began operating in September. Abu Dhabi has also embarked on an ambitious metro railway project that will alleviate traffic jams and reduce growth in the number of vehicles.

Other Emirates such as Sharjah, Ajman and Ras Al Khaimah have been heavily engaged in massive infrastructure projects that will boost economic output.

Of special significance as well was the move by the JCCME to open a UAE-Japan desk in Abu Dhabi. Such a move will have a significant impact

on bilateral relations and provide lucrative investment opportunities for Japanese companies in the UAE's growing market.

The historic Etihad Formula 1 Grand Prix, which took place in Abu Dhabi on Nov. 1 at Yas Marina Circuit on Yas Island, attracted a large audience from all over the world and received spectacular coverage in the international media. The event gave a boost to UAE tourism; after the Formula 1 race Abu Dhabi was selected as one of the best 10 cities in the world.

In 2008 the UAE economy expanded by 7.4 percent with a GDP nominal figure of Dh929.4 billion, compared to around Dh729.7 billion in 2007. The swift and effective measures taken by the government following the onset of the financial crisis helped key economic sectors such as construction, real estate, financial services and oil to regain their balance.

While the international financial crisis has affected the whole world, the situation in the UAE is not as gloomy as some mass media try to portray it. Being resilient with strong fundamentals coupled with a wise long-term economic strategy, the UAE economy is more than capable of withstanding the financial crisis and moving ahead confidently. Official statistics show that economic growth will be back on track by the last quarter of 2009 and start of 2010.

On this meaningful day, I have the utmost pleasure to express my gratitude and thanks to the respectable Japanese organizations that have been working relentlessly to elevate our valuable relations. Also I would like to convey my thanks and appreciation to The Japan Times for giving me the opportunity to address the distinguished Japanese people.



Meritorious leadership: UAE President H.H. Sheik Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (right) and Vice President and Prime Minister H.H. Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoumat exchange views in Abu Dhabi. UAE EMBASSY



Masdar City: The world's first carbon-neutral, zero-waste city in Abu Dhabi serves as a new global hub for the intellectual and technological development of renewable energy.

The UAE is a most valued partner

Hiroshi Araki
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-UAE SOCIETY

On the occasion of the 38th anniversary of the founding of the United Arab Emirates, I offer my cordial congratulations on UAE President H.H. Sheik Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, members of the Supreme Council and the people.

In 38 years since the 1971 founding of the nation, Japan and the UAE have been pro-

moting exchanges and relations in various areas, including education, culture and sports, as well as in the economic field, including energy.

At present, the UAE accounts for most Japanese companies in terms of number among those present in the Middle East and Africa regions, and also for the most Japanese residents as well in the regions. Of late, media opportunities to take up things about the UAE have markedly increased, impressing the UAE also as a good tourist location. Moreover, to our delight, regular flights between

Narita and Abu Dhabi-Dubai, and also between Nagoya and Abu Dhabi will come into service next spring, which will certainly contribute to bringing the bilateral relationships still closer.

This association, since its establishment in 1974 and as the sole private friendship organization for the UAE, has been making its utmost to promote the friendly relations in the areas of culture, art and sports. We intend to make further efforts toward still better bilateral relationships in cooperation with those people concerned.

YASUO Fukuda
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-UAE PARLIAMENTARY
FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE

On the occasion of the founding anniversary of the United Arab Emirates, I, on behalf of the Japan-UAE Parliamentary Friendship League, offer my heartfelt congratulations on the



increasing progress and prosperity of the UAE under the outstanding leadership of President H.H. Sheik Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, inheriting the wish of the late President H.H. Sheik Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, the UAE's founding father.

Bilateral relations between Japan and the UAE have been growing more active in various areas, based on brisk traffic in people. Besides the petroleum field, where the cooperative relationship has fared well for as many as more than 40 years, such cooperative relations exist in many other fields, including aviation, education, investment. Some are bearing fruit and others are beginning to bear fruit.

I visited the UAE in March for the first time in three years and had an opportunity to

meet with Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi H.H. General Sheik Muhammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and reconfirmed that exchanges between the two countries have grown steadily more active, further promoting the bilateral relationship.

Regarding tourism, more and more Japanese people have grown interested in the UAE, particularly as the FIFA Club World Cup, also known as the Toyota Cup, will be held in Abu Dhabi in December, in addition to the twilight Abu Dhabi F-1 Grand Prix.

Moreover, Etihad Airways is to inaugurate flights to Japan in spring 2010, in addition to the Emirates Airways routes already in service.

All of this favorable development gives the greatest pleasure to we members of the parliamentary friendship league.

The UAE is now carrying out an ambitious program aiming to make Masdar the world's first city free from greenhouse gas emissions, working hard to replace greenhouse gases with clean renewable energy and contribute to the global environment. I also congratulate the UAE on having invited the secretariat of the International Renewable Energy Agency.

I cordially hope for continued favorable developments in the bilateral relationship. I am confident relations between Japan and the UAE will assume increasing importance in every respect. The parliamentary friendship league remains determined to continue to do its utmost for still better relations between the two countries. Congratulations again on the founding anniversary.

Congratulations to the Government and People of the United Arab Emirates on Their 38th National Day



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