

Georgia independence day

Sustained reforms lead to positive developments

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AMBASSADOR OF GEORGIA

May 26 is Georgia's Independence Day, which commemorates the establishment of the independent Democratic Republic of Georgia on this day in 1918. In February 1921, Georgia was annexed by the Russian Red Army and the country regained its independence in 1991.



In a short span of time since the peaceful Rose Revolution in November 2003, Georgia has made remarkable progress in democratization and transition to a market economy. The government of Georgia has implemented wide-ranging economic reforms that have resulted in a dramatically improved investment climate.

Sustained liberal reforms of the civil service combined with low and decreasing taxes have resulted in a 365 percent in-

crease in fiscal revenue since 2004. The government of Georgia has abolished import tariffs on 90 percent of goods. Georgia is a member of the World Trade Organization and benefits from preferential trade relationships with developed economies such as the U.S., the EU and Japan.

Georgia's rapid progress in improving its business climate has been well-documented in a number of international indexes. Georgia was ranked 11th in the world for ease of doing business in the new "Doing Business 2010" report recently released by the World Bank. The Heritage Foundation published its "2010 Index of Economic Freedom" report, where Georgia ranked as the 26th freest economy in the world.

In August 2008, Georgia witnessed Russia's large scale military aggression, subsequent occupation and illegal recognition of the nonexistent, so called "independence" of my country's inalienable areas of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. With a

grave violation of norms and principles of international law, the occupation of Georgia continues, in breach of the Six-Point Ceasefire Agreement of Aug. 12, 2008, despite numerous calls from the international community.

Today, Georgia's primary goal is to achieve the full de-occupation of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia only through peaceful

means and diplomatic efforts, with the assistance of the international community. The main foreign policy priorities for Georgia are NATO membership, intensification of the cooperation with the EU and strengthening of regional economic ties.

In recognition of positive developments of Georgia's economic strength in terms of economic structure and growth

prospects, Standard & Poor's rating services raised its long-term foreign and local currency credit ratings for Georgia to B+ from B on April 12, 2010. According to Transparency International, Georgia is one of the top countries in terms of fighting corruption.

I am pleased to note a number of significant milestones have been achieved in the areas of economic and trade cooperation between Georgia and Japan. Bearing in mind the success stories of Toyota, Mitsubishi and other Japanese companies operating in Georgia, the Georgian government would like to extend an invitation to Japanese companies in the areas of infrastructure development, agricultural production and energy — particularly hydropower, wind and solar projects. A number of Japanese companies have already expressed their interest to invest in the Free Industrial Zone in the Poti seaport.

Georgia is undergoing a revival as a tourist destination,

with spectacular, varied scenery ranging from some of the highest mountains in Europe to subtropical seacoast; architecture mixing Georgian, neoclassical and art nouveau; and rich culture, cuisine and unique musical traditions. We hope that our active collaboration with JTB and other travel agencies will induce more Japanese tourists to visit Georgia and discover its charms.

In the area of culture, the government of Georgia is interested in fostering cultural exchanges between Japanese and Georgian artists and musicians. In February, Georgian prima baller dancer Nino Ananiashvili and the State Ballet of Georgia successfully toured Japan.

Japan's opening of the Embassy in Tbilisi in January 2009 will further strengthen the bilateral relationship. The government of Japan supported the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia, and has demonstrated that it will continue to support Georgia politi-



Seaside city: Batumi on the Black Sea is a big commercial center. EMBASSY OF GEORGIA

cally and contribute to our economic recovery. Japan was among the largest donors at the joint EU/World Bank Donor Conference held in Brussels in October 2008, pledging \$200 million in order to minimize the consequences of the war.

My government hopes that in a short period of time the relationship between Japan and Georgia can evolve from one based on economic assistance to one based on bilateral economic and business cooperation, investment and trade.

Congratulations
to the People of Georgia on the Occasion of
Their Independence Day

Georgian Wine & Dining GAUMARJOS!

1-25-17 Higashi-Gotanda, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 141-0022

11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. 6 p.m.-11 p.m.

Tel: 03-3442-5666

Holiday Sunday



Georgian Orthodox: The Sameba Cathedral in Tbilisi is one of the largest Orthodox Christian cathedrals in the world.