

Kingdom of Morocco throne day

New way forward helps nation flourish

Samir Arrour
AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

July 30 marks the 12th anniversary of the enthronement of His Majesty King Mohammed VI. On this auspicious occasion, and as ambassador to Japan of His Majesty, I would like to extend my respectful greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akhito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial Family, H.E. Prime Minister Naoto Kan, the members of the government and the friendly people of Japan.

I would also like to thank The Japan Times for giving me the opportunity to share with its distinguished readers an overview of the most remarkable achievements of my country. It is also an occasion to reflect on the excellent relations of friendship and cooperation existing between Morocco and Japan.

Solidarity with Japan

A few months earlier, Japan experienced an unprecedented disaster that hit the Tohoku region and occasioned huge human and material losses. On this very sad occasion and on behalf of the government and the people of Morocco, I offer my deepest and heartfelt condolences to all Japanese people for the immense loss of human lives and utter devastation following the earthquake that hit the country on March 11, 2011, and the ensuing tsunami and nuclear accident that caused complete havoc.

I admire and pay great tribute to the dignity shown by the Japanese people in the face of this natural disaster, and show due respect to the plight endured by the population of the devastated regions.

The government and the people of Morocco have ever since expressed and continue to express their sympathy and solidarity with Japan in these difficult moments. His Majesty King Mohammed VI conveyed in a

message of sympathy and solidarity to His Imperial Majesty Emperor Akhito his sincere and deepest sympathy and presented his condolences. Spontaneously, dozens of Moroccan citizens assembled in front of the Japanese Embassy in Rabat to show their solidarity with the victims.

The destruction that has been seen in this friendly, great country has profoundly touched the Moroccan community living in Japan. Since the disaster, many actions of solidarity were organized and implemented both by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco and by Moroccan nationals living in Japan.

Immediately after the catastrophe, a group of Moroccans living in Nagoya traveled to Fukushima Prefecture to donate relief to the victims. Other Moroccans living in Japan joined international and national non-profit organizations and volunteered to help victims in the evacuation centers.

The members of the embassy and I traveled to the city of Aizuwakamatsu in Fukushima to comfort the evacuees from the town of Okuma and to deliver some goods to evacuees of the distraught area. With the same spirit of solidarity and sympathy, I traveled to Ishinomaki City, Miyagi Prefecture, with a group of Arab and African ambassadors to comfort victims and distribute goods.

Meanwhile, actions to help the victims and evacuees were taken by ambassadors' spouses. My wife and my colleagues have invested a lot of time and effort to assuage the effects of the disaster on the women and children of the devastated region. They also raised funds and delivered them to the Japanese Red Cross Society.

Today, more than five months after the disaster, I am happy to note that, thanks to the strong spirit of the Japanese people, which I truly admire and respect, and the support of the



King Mohammed VI

international community, the situation and the lives of affected people are improving toward better and safer conditions, and getting back to normal.

New constitution

Commemorating the National Day in Japan is an opportunity to share with the Japanese public and readers of The Japan Times, the current political situation in Morocco and to overview the bilateral relations during this year with Japan.

In the March 9 speech of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Morocco embarked on a profound and substantive constitutional reform. This initiative is the culmination of a continuous process of reforms that started with the reign of His Majesty Mohammed VI, matured with the elaboration by Moroccans, from different walks of life, of a democratic constitution.

The new constitution guarantees the balance of powers between the executive, the legislative and the judiciary under a constitutional, democratic, parliamentary and social monarchy. It is a citizen-based monarchy that upholds the nation's basic policy objectives, fulfilling sovereignty and ultimate arbitration functions.

The constitution provides a detailed, explicit differentiation of the king's powers as commander of the faithful (in charge of the religious domain) and as head of state, symbol of the nation's unity and territorial integrity who performs arbitration functions and who guarantees the nation's democratic choices and safeguards the country's best interests.

The constitution stipulates that the government will emanate from an elected Parliament and be placed under the authority of a head of government who exercises full executive power.

Bilateral relations

In spite of the tragic event of the tsunami, Morocco and Japan continue to work together to enhance their cooperation and to fulfill their role in regional areas as well as in the international arena. Japan always shows great interest in the development of Africa and Arab world. I would like to seize this opportunity to congratulate Japan for the success of the second Japan-Arab Economic Forum held in Tunisia in December. On the sidelines of the event, we witnessed the signing of a Memorandum on Global Strategic Partnership among the Arab Economy and Finance Ministries on the one hand and Japanese Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC) on the other.

On this occasion, the Moroccan Agency for Solar Energy and the Japanese New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO) have signed an agreement on cooperation in renewable energy to benefit from Japanese expertise in the development of solar panels. The agreement provides for pilot projects in the

area of solar panels, the strengthening of cooperation in energy management and the development of joint projects for the production of solar energy.

The follow-up Third Ministerial Meeting of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) IV, held in Dakar in May, is another sign of Japan's engagement for socio-economic development and stability of the African continent. The engagement of H.E. Takeaki Matsumoto, minister for foreign affairs, during the meeting to continue support and assistance to Africa, in spite of the financial difficulties of the country following the tsunami of March 11, sent a good signal to the international community of the strong will of Japan.

On the sidelines of the meeting, H.E. Latifa Akhrichech, state secretary for foreign affairs and cooperation, held a meeting with her counterpart from Japan, H.E. Chiaki Takahashi. The two high-ranking officials' talks emphasized the excellent relations existing between the two countries and welcomed the new opportunities offered to the business community in Japan to further develop these relations.

H.E. Koro Bessho, deputy minister for foreign affairs, traveled to Morocco in April to preside with his counterpart, H.E. Youssef Amrani, over the second edition of the joint committee between the two countries. Moroccan officials greatly appreciate that, in spite of the dire situation of the country after the disaster, Japanese authorities were keen on participating in this meeting. The meeting with the Japanese delegation was among the last commitments of Amrani as vice minister before taking his new position in Bar-

celona as the secretary general of the Union for the Mediterranean (UPM).

In early 2011, an economic prospecting mission from Morocco Expo took place to prepare a Moroccan business mission to Japan and to identify potential interests of Japanese businesses in buying Moroccan products. The business mission was rescheduled for December to allow for further investigation and prospecting.

This year, we are pleased to report that H.E. Tetsuro Kawakami was nominated a honorary consul of the Kingdom of Morocco in the Kansai region, in recognition of his achievement in promoting strong relations between Morocco and Japan. Kawakami is a renowned businessman who has extensive experience in presiding over many successful and regulatory bodies. The honorary consulate based in Osaka, will certainly contribute to ensure a presence in such an important economic area and will foster closer economic cooperation between the Kansai region and Morocco.

The packages of economic reforms coupled with the leveling of Moroccan companies in key economic sectors have had a positive impact on the economic indicators of the country.

In the midst of economic turmoil, particularly in Europe, the Moroccan economy continues to show signs of resilience. A growth rate of 4.1 percent in the gross domestic product was registered in 2010 and is expected to reach 4.3 percent in 2011. According to HCP, a governmental economic planning authority, a 4.9 percent growth rate was reached in the first three months

of 2011 and the inflation rate stands at around 2 percent. The budget deficit remains at a controlled rate with a good level of foreign direct investment, which reached over 64 billion in 2010.

Morocco continues to develop its economic infrastructure in the service of its economy particularly with regard to transport in line with the economic policy of fostering the international partnerships and promoting sound economic cooperation with its world partners.

Most recently, the Rabat tramway has been operating and has bestowed the capital city with modern and high-standard transportation fluidity respective of the environment and responsive to the needs of the users. The same project is underway in Casablanca to allow the vibrant economic center of the country to further develop its transportation and its infrastructure. The project will be operating in 2012.

The first high-speed train (TGV) linking Tangier to Agadir was launched in 2009. The first section between Tangier and Casablanca has entered the implementation phase. The TGV line of 600 km linking Casablanca to Agadir will be launched in the near future. Upon completion of the project, the time from Tangier in the north to Agadir in the south will be reduced by almost three hours.

Development strategies

In order to upgrade its economy and infrastructure, Morocco launched several sector-specific national development strategies:

The Green Morocco Plan is a very important landmark project. To be enacted over a period of 10 years, this plan aims at developing the agricultural and

food production sectors at a cost of about \$13.8 billion. The project consists of a yearly investment of \$1.4 billion.

With a view of becoming a regional renewable energies hub, owing to its assets for wind and solar energies, Morocco, besides offering an attractive business environment, has promoted a new law to develop renewable energies and a new law dedicated to energy efficiency.

The Moroccan Solar Energy Project represents a regional investment opportunity. It is one of the biggest projects in the world, with a target of 2,000 megawatts, an estimated cost of \$9 billion with government funding of \$1 billion. Five sites of 10,000 hectares were selected: Ain Beni Mathar, which was inaugurated this year; Ouarzazate in which Japanese companies are taking part; Sebkhate Tab; Fom Al Oud; and Boujdour.

The comparative advantages with which Morocco is blessed namely its strategic position; its multiple agreements with the European Union, the United States, Arab countries and many African countries represent a big incentive for attracting foreign investors from around the world.

All of these major projects have been carried out across the country unhindered by the global economic gloom. These projects provide business opportunities for international companies, particularly for the Japanese private sector. I notice, with great satisfaction, that Morocco is attracting an ever-increasing number of Japanese companies, which contributes in part to the economic development of the country.

I will conclude my message by wishing a quick recovery for the Tohoku region and its inhabitants. I am convinced that Japan will come out stronger and more prosperous from such a difficult and unprecedented, tough experience.

Excellent Japanese-Moroccan relationship continues growing stronger

Seigi Hinata
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-MOROCCO ASSOCIATION

On the occasion of the 12th anniversary of the enthronement of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to His Majesty on behalf of all members of the Japan-Morocco Association.

On this auspicious occasion, I would like to express also my sincere greetings to Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Saima, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Moulay Al Hassan, Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Khadija and all other members of the Royal Family as well as the people and the government of the Kingdom of Morocco.

I am happy to note that the bilateral

relations between Japan and Morocco continue to be on a steady development track in various fields, such as in economic and technical cooperation, and investments in the private sector, tourism and other areas.

We have learned with great pleasure that the second Joint Commission Morocco-Japan was held in Rabat in March 2011 and both nations reaffirmed their willingness to further promote bilateral relations in various areas.

We are also encouraged to learn that new areas of cooperation between private sectors, such as in the solar energy area, are being jointly explored and moving forward.

At this juncture, we would like to express our appreciation for the messages of condolences and sympathies we have received from all levels of Morocco in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake

and tsunami that hit the northeast region of Japan this March.

And particularly, we extend our appreciation for the voluntary humanitarian assistance that was kindly provided by the Embassy of Morocco to the people suffering in the city of Aizuwakamatsu, Fukushima Prefecture.

The Japan-Morocco Association works closely with the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Japan every year to realize various events of interest to the general public. Our association organized its annual event La Soiree du Maroc in November 2010 with great success in close cooperation with the Embassy and Royal Air Maroc.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate my sincere wish to further strengthen the existing excellent relationship between the people of Japan and the people of Morocco.

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Kingdom of Morocco throne day



Helping hands: Staff members from the Embassy of Morocco unload relief supplies for the evacuees from the town of Okuma in Fukushima Prefecture on April 15. EMBASSY OF MOROCCO

Expanding friendly ties further through all cooperation levels

Yuichiro Hata
SECRETARY GENERAL, JAPAN-MOROCCO PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE

On the auspicious occasion of the 12th anniversary of the accession to the throne of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, and on behalf of the Japan-Morocco Parliamentary Friendship League, I would like to seize this happy occasion to extend my warmest greetings and heartfelt congratulations to His Majesty, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Moulay Al Hassan, the members of the Royal Family, the government and the people of Morocco.

In fact, the excellent relationships binding the Imperial Family of Japan and the Royal Family in Morocco have strengthened the commitment of high-level officials from both sides to work together in order to consolidate these relations.

Japan and Morocco share so many noble values that have recently marked both the bilateral and multilateral levels of cooperation. Both countries have been enjoying very friendly relations based on a deep faith in

peace, dialogue and cooperation. In the economic aspect, Japan and Morocco also share the same interest and ideals in promoting new partnerships between the two countries, in particular in the clean, renewable energy sector. I would like to encourage Japanese companies to participate in the new projects in Morocco.

The announcement of His Majesty of the revision of the constitution on March 9, 2011, was a very important event in the life of the Moroccan nation. The new constitution, which was approved by Moroccans in a referendum on July 1, is considered to be a very advanced stage in democracy building, in Morocco in particular, and in the whole African and Middle Eastern region in general.

We should congratulate Moroccans for their success story in acquiring a very advanced road map that enables the construction of a Morocco for the new millennium, a Morocco that is a role model and a beacon of hope for the entire region.

To conclude, I would like to convey my heartfelt congratulations to His Majesty and the people of Morocco on the Throne Day celebration with a strong wish to make relations between our friendly countries expand even more.

Congratulations
on the 12th Anniversary
of the Accession to the Throne of
His Majesty King Mohammed VI

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