

Senegal Independence Day

Many opportunities seen in agriculture

Cheikh Niang
AMBASSADOR OF SENEGAL

On the auspicious occasion of the celebration of the 56th anniversary of the Independence of Senegal, I would like, first of all, to express my respectful best wishes of good health and longevity to their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as to the entire Imperial family.



I also thank the government and the people of Japan for their hospitality and friendship and convey my heartfelt and respectful compliments to His Excellency Macky Sall, president of the Republic of Senegal and congratulate my fellow citizens, particularly those living in this welcoming land.

Since its inception in 1993, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) Summit will be held this year for the first time in Africa, thus stressing the shared responsibility in carrying out this unique partnership and signaling, at the same time, a rising Africa in a changing world.

In this new context, Senegal stands as one of the most attrac-

tive countries for investment. This occasion gives me the opportunity to showcase the potential of my country in the very promising agriculture sector.

The agriculture sector employs around 75 percent of the working population and comprises 17 percent of our GDP. Groundnuts, cotton, gum arabic and sugarcane are the primary cash crops, while millet, corn, sorghum and rice are the main food crops. With groundnut production accounting for 40 percent of cultivated land and cotton production for another 33 percent, cash crops have long dominated our agriculture.

In 2012, the government decided to diversify and develop agriculture, a sector that is at the heart of the "Senegal Emerging Plan" (PSE), through a program named PRACAS and dedicated to the recovery and the acceleration of agriculture in Senegal. This shift will enable Senegal, as a member of the Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa (UEMOA) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to switch rapidly from the status of food importer to exporter.

There are four major objectives under the PRACAS program, including, firstly, providing rice self-sufficiency through both irrigated and rain-watered rice and secondly

optimizing groundnut production as part of a value chain approach. Thirdly, the program also specifies the development of horticulture dedicated mainly to exports and lastly the modernization and structuring of livestock farming.

To attain the first objective of rice self-sufficiency, production of this commodity needs to increase from an average of 300,000 tons per year to 1.6 million tons of paddy rice (unprocessed) in 2018 to cover the country's needs.

The government has estimated \$1.35 billion will be required to achieve this goal. Rice self-sufficiency will have positive macroeconomic consequences by reducing imports that cost an average of \$250 million per year and reduce the trade deficit by 16 percent.

Regarding groundnuts, specifically peanuts, the government is expecting production of 1 million tons in 2017. This momentum is accompanied by a political strategy aimed at replacing up to 30 percent of imported oil imported with locally produced oil. This strategy will require much investment to upgrade and expand production and processing facilities.

In this framework, the PSE is accompanied by a number of reforms including the facilitation of access to land and the establishment of a legal framework suitable for exporting companies.

Concerning horticulture, the government has decided to establish between 100 and 150 integrated farms.

The long-term goal is to reorganize production around agropoles to develop processing and agribusiness. From 2000 to 2013, exports in this sec-



Senegal produces a wide variety of vegetables. EMBASSY OF SENEGAL

tor have increased from 9,300 tons to 67,000 tons.

This growth is also accompanied by a diversification of exports from a single-product (green beans) to embrace a wider range to include tomatoes, melons, sweet corn, radishes, watermelon and other items.

Regarding livestock, Senegal still mainly operates in a traditional manner, but the PSE aims to accelerate its development the areas of meat, milk, hides and skins, as well as poultry through investment in building processing and storage facilities.

This sector plays a very important socioeconomic role providing for 350,000 families, or about 3 million people. According to statistics, in 2010 Senegal had about 3 million head of cattle, more than 4 million sheep and 5 million goats, a capital stock of \$1.2 billion but only 10 percent of that capital is used. In 2012, meat production was estimated at 189,729 tons of which 41 percent was beef and 30 percent



A ladoum sheep EMBASSY OF SENEGAL

was poultry.

The biggest challenge in livestock remains the move from an extensive pastoral system toward industrialization and productivity. This transformation requires massive investment in the value chain from farms to slaughter centers through a modernized marketing channel.

In conclusion, it is my hope that Japanese companies, more aware of the tremendous opportunities offered by this unfolding agricultural revolution in Senegal, will invest more decisively in this highly profitable sector, as well as in other promising areas such as infrastructure, energy, natural resources, education, health and fisheries.



President Macky Sall holds a peanut plant. EMBASSY OF SENEGAL

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to the People of the Republic of Senegal
on the 56th Anniversary
of Their Independence



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