

Senegal Independence Day Special

Longstanding friendship deepens with strong, dynamic cooperation

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AMBASSADOR OF SENEGAL



It is with honor and delight that I address The Japan Times readership and friends of Senegal living in Japan on April 4, the auspicious occasion of the 60th Anniversary of Senegal's

Independence Day.

On behalf of the government of Senegal, I offer my respectful wishes to His Majesty Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, the imperial family, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and to Japan's people. As the Reiwa Era has entered its second year, I am honored to reiterate to the people of Japan my warmest wishes for peace, health and prosperity, while congratulating once again His Majesty Emperor Naruhito on his enthronement last year. 2019 was a very dynamic year with the local and parliamentary elections followed by the Cabinet reshuffle. Likewise, in Senegal with the reelection of President Macky Sall.

I would also like to greet and congratulate my fellow citizens established in Japan while urging them to remain law abiding and to continue to behave positively.

2020 is special for Japan and Senegal as it marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations and coincides with the 40th anniversary of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) volunteers' presence in Senegal.

Our partnership reached a major milestone when Japan opened its first embassy in the French-speaking states of West Africa in Dakar. An apex of that partnership was the 1984 visit to Senegal by Emperor Emeritus Akihito and Empress Emerita Michiko, then Crown Prince and Princess. This long-lasting and friendly relationship is now stronger than ever and offers solid possibilities for further growth in fields such as politics, economics and academia and covers bilateral and multilateral aspects.

Bilaterally, the strong ties that exist

between Prime Minister Abe and President Sall reflect the dynamism and vitality of this partnership reinforced by the cultural similarity.

This is illustrated by high-level visits of top leaders from both capitals. President Sall visited Japan three times from 2017 to 2019 at the invitation of Prime Minister Abe.

On these occasions, they held fruitful bilateral meetings and repeatedly reaffirmed their firm desire to deepen and diversify bilateral cooperation.

On the Japanese side, Masahisa Sato, former state minister for foreign affairs; Kenji Yamada, parliamentary vice-minister for foreign affairs; and Shinichi Nakatani, Yamada's successor in his position, all visited Senegal during 2018 and 2019.

Through JICA, Japan provides Senegal with multifaceted support, financing projects in priority sectors such as education and training; health; agriculture; hydraulics; fisheries; energy; rural development; and infrastructure.

I would like to recognize JICA's role in promoting growth and human security around the world. JICA has conducted important projects in my country such as the Senegal-Japan Vocational and Technical training center (CFPT-Senegal-Japon), established by Japan in 1984, that has become a flagship, cooperative project and

a regional hub contributing significantly to industrial development by providing companies with highly skilled workers.

Our evolving relationship is becoming more multifaceted, including its trade and investment components. The number of Japanese private enterprises operating in Senegal is increasing. In 2017, Kagome established a branch in Senegal and is currently growing tomatoes in its northern part.

From a bilateral perspective, TICAD 7 constitutes an important milestone in the bilateral relationship as memorandums were concluded between Senegal and major Japanese firms. Events organized by JETRO on summit sidelines allowed Senegal to showcase its investment potential and national products and several Senegalese B2B businesspeople to meet with their Japanese counterparts.

During TICAD 7, Prime Minister Abe also announced that Japanese private investment in Africa will increase and our governments agree on reinforcing economic and commercial ties as well as Japanese private investment in Senegal.

This momentum should be fostered as Senegal is becoming an oil and gas producer. I would like to invite Japanese companies to seize such opportunities.

From Feb. 19 to 21, 2020, Shinichi Nakatani led a public-private joint mission for

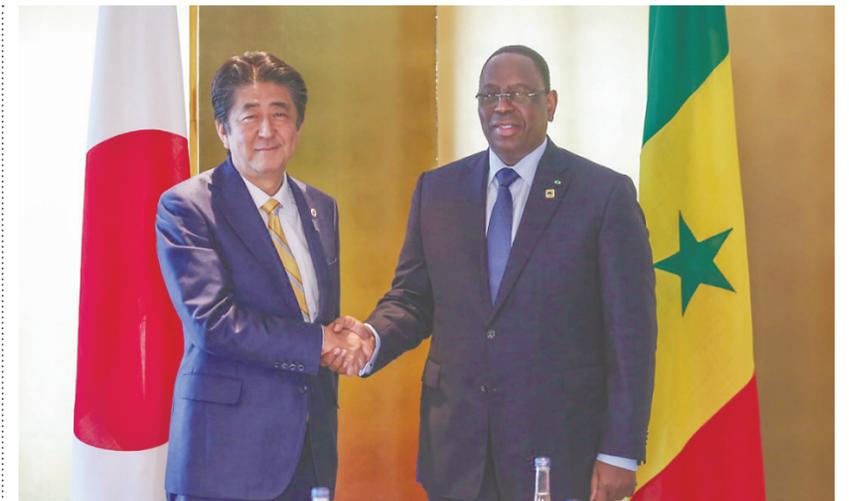


promoting trade and investment to Senegal and met with President Sall and Amadou Ba, the foreign minister. Representatives of more than 20 Japanese companies were part of this fruitful visit.

With respect to multilateral diplomacy, Senegal and Japan have cooperated closely during their mandates as non-permanent members of the U.N. Security Council in 2016 and 2017, as they do within the U.N. Human Rights Council to address global challenges.

Furthermore, Japan provides commendable financial contribution and high-level representation to the annual Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa.

As the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games have been delayed until 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I would



President of Senegal Macky Sall meets Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the Group of 20 summit held in Osaka on June 27. EMBASSY OF SENEGAL

like to commend the Japanese authorities for their efforts in this regard. Surely, the games will give us an opportunity to nurture the values and ideals of the Olympics and deepen grassroots friendship and cooperation through the host town initiative.

In this frame, Senegal and the city of Izumi, Osaka Prefecture, have established a partnership. In this spirit also, the Senega-

lese National Olympic Committee works closely with its Japanese counterpart to benefit from its experience, expertise and support for the success of the Youth Olympic Games to be held in 2022 in Senegal.

I am confident that Japan and Senegal will continue to turn our vision and ideas into realities and contribute to building a peaceful world underpinned by sustainable development.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.

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to the People of
the Republic of Senegal
on the 60th Anniversary of
Their Independence



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