

Switzerland National Day Special

Partners for sustainable, healthy future

ANDREAS BAUM
AMBASSADOR OF SWITZERLAND



Dear readers of The Japan Times,

It is a great honor to address you on the occasion of our National Day, the first one for me since I arrived in Japan last year.

As tomorrow, August 1, marks 730 years since the birth of Switzerland, we were supposed to celebrate our National Day in Tokyo at a beautiful floral garden, together with the Swiss community.

The pandemic situation, a real test for our resilience, has led us down a different path. Celebrations must take place in private and safe settings.

Yet, signs of improvement are clearly in sight.

The vaccination campaign is well advanced in Switzerland, and vaccines are now being deployed at full speed in Japan. As a result, on the travel front, certain quar-

antine modalities have been eased for our Swiss residents coming back to Japan.

The Olympic Games, held under very challenging circumstances, offer proof that global events are still possible. To all our talented athletes: We stand with you and wish you well!

On the occasion of the opening ceremony, Swiss President Guy Parmelin traveled to Tokyo and met with Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga. Together, they reiterated our long-standing friendship, rooted in mutually beneficial business exchanges for more than 150 years, and a commitment to close cooperation, especially in science and trade.

The recent developments around free trade, both globally and within the Indo-Pacific region, reinforce the importance of Japan as a partner that shares our values and engagement for a strong multilateral order. Japan represents a pole of stability in a region both dynamic and challenging. Today, Switzerland is the sixth-largest foreign investor in Japan, while Japan ranks eighth as an export market for Switzerland, and constitutes our largest foreign investor from Asia. Japan is one of the eight priority

countries defined in Switzerland's foreign policy strategy.

Remarkably, in spite of the pandemic situation, Swiss high-tech firms and the Swiss framework for research and development continue to trigger strong interest among Japanese companies and investors. The acquisition of ABB Power Grids by Hitachi Ltd. last year is one of the most compelling cases, as it also highlights how renewable energy is expected to boost growth in the power grid market. I can also mention Avaloq Group AG, a Swiss-based global leader in digital banking that joined NEC Corp. for its next phase of growth. I am very glad we could support a new partnership between Japan's e5Lab, a consortium in maritime transportation, and Switzerland's Almatech SA, a naval and space engineering company that is working on a zero-emission speed shuttle boat.

During his visit, the president announced the opening next year of Switzerland's new consulate in Osaka, first and foremost dedicated to strengthening our relations in research and education.

Sustainability, decarbonization, healthier and more resilient economies powered by



President Guy Parmelin with Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga

AYAKO SUZUKI

cleaner technologies, as well as solutions for ultra-aging societies are more than ever topics of common interest for Japan and Switzerland. The 2025 World Expo in Osaka, taking place five years before the symbolic year 2030, will constitute an important platform to assess the world's progress toward the U.N. sustainable development goals. Switzerland has officially confirmed its participation with a pavilion dedicated to innovative solutions for a greener and more prosperous future.

Let us work together on the path to recovery with dynamism and mutual trust. Happy Swiss National Day!

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

Congratulations
to the People
of
Switzerland
on the Occasion
of
Their National Day



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