

Mauritania National Day Special

Working toward peace and security

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AMBASSADOR OF MAURITANIA



At the outset, I would like to express my highest gratitude and sincere appreciation to the prestigious newspaper The Japan Times for providing me the opportunity, on the 62nd anniversary

of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania's National Day, to highlight the state of bilateral cooperation between my country and Japan, and some of the achievements of the Mauritanian government.

Furthermore, please allow me to extend my wishes for continued good health and success to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, and all members of the imperial family. I also express to the government and people of Japan the sincere friendship and profound gratitude of the government and people of Mauritania for their generous and constant support.

The state of our bilateral relations is solid due to very strong diplomatic ties. The two countries share common values of peace, security and mutual understanding through cultural exchanges, dialogue and bilateral cooperation. On the other hand, the two countries lend support to each other on the world stage for the mutual interests of their peoples. Mauritania values Japan's stances on issues related to peace and security, and a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

I would like to seize this opportunity to hail the leadership of Japan for its risk-awareness role, and for actively reminding the world of the devastating consequences

of weapons of mass destruction.

2022, which is coming to an end, is certainly a year for reflection and assessment, given that the past two years were scarred by the COVID-19 pandemic and its negative effects on public health, the economy and many other areas. It is precisely in the aftermath of these difficult circumstances that the eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development took place in Tunisia, marking the second time it was hosted in Africa. This edition solidified the Africa-Japan bond and demonstrated the spirit of working together that animated actors from both parties to help reduce suffering in both regions and overcome other challenges.

Japan has once more risen to the occasion.

In addition, Mauritania's constructive participation in both the preparatory sessions leading to the summit, and during the summit itself, was testimony of our commitment to the framework of TICAD and its agenda. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and the Mauritanian Abroad Mohamed Salem Ould Merzoug, who lead the delegation, gave a speech on behalf of His Excellency President Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani, in which he highlighted the country's vision regarding TICAD and its contribution toward peace, security and climate change.

He also reiterated the country's commitment to opening itself to all partners and offers of cooperation, be they regional or international, that would contribute to building peace and security.

In addition, the minister underscored the pivotal role that Mauritania is playing in stabilizing the subregion through strong engagement by fulfilling its requirements in the G5 Sahel framework to eradicate violent extremism, hate speech and radicalization, which are the main causes of terrorism pro-



President Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani
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liferating in the Sahel Region, and also by sharing the country's own experiences.

Since Ghazouani's election in 2019, Mauritania has achieved significant progress with economic, social and political reforms. The government has put in place a mechanism of political dialogue and consultations through which it discusses all important issues with the political parties' main leaders, plus a policy of social inclusiveness. This is contributing tremendously to pacifying the political landscape and has helped ease tensions between the government and the opposition. The government has also set high priorities in combating poverty and helping those left behind by the economic gap, via cash transfers, health insurance, employment opportunities and education.

On the economic level, the government has taken concrete steps to diversify its economy and roll out the welcome mat for



A fishing boat crew unloads a catch of Atlantic bluefin tuna.

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foreign direct investment. Our hope is to see more Japanese seize this opportunity and form partnerships with the Mauritanian private sector to boost economic ties between our countries. Earlier this month, the IMF and the government concluded an agreement on a programme of economic reforms aiming at preserving the macroeconomy stability, strengthening the foundation of a sustainable and inclusive growth, and reducing poverty.

According to the IMF, Mauritania showed robust economic recovery. Economic growth rose to 2.4%, and the institution has forecast that growth will reach 5.3% this year. This performance is mainly attributed to increased private consumption and investment, and improved services sector performance, as well as to the measures taken by the government during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To conclude, please allow me to underscore Mauritania's commitment to enhancing cooperation with Japan through bilateral exchanges — with the hope that the Japanese private sector will explore and invest in the country's huge untapped natural resources — and through the frameworks of TICAD, the Arab-Japan forum, the United Nations and the African Union Foundation's Agenda 2063.

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 Islamic Republic of Mauritania
on the Anniversary of Their Independence



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