

Sudan National Day Special

Entering a new era of peace and economic prosperity

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At the outset, I would like to felicitate Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, the imperial family, the government of Japan and the friendly Japanese

people on the occasion of the new year. *Akemashite omedetō gozaimasu* (happy new year). Further, I would like to convey my warmest congratulations to all members of the Sudanese community in Japan.

Our celebration of national independence this year coincides with the fourth anniversary of the glorious December revolution, the rebellion of the proud Sudanese men and women and their brave youth, a transformation complementing the meanings of freedom and consolidating their struggles to build a modern Sudanese state anchored on the foundations of freedom, peace and justice.

Sudan anticipates a new era, in light of the recently signed framework agreement for reaching a final refined political agreement that will lead to the establishment of a civilian government that will take charge during the transitional period and work to conceive an atmosphere for free and fair elections that will eventually put the country on the right democratic path.

The recent remarks made by many Sudanese politicians and the Trilateral Mechanism, which includes the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development as facilitators, during the signing ceremony of the framework agreement,

revealed that a final political agreement will be concluded in the coming weeks. This civilian-led government, while benefiting from previous lessons, is envisaged focusing on implementing peace accords, providing fundamental services, advancing the economy and social welfare, maintaining human rights, and, most importantly, setting the scene for elections.

From an economic viewpoint, there are many brilliant opportunities awaiting the new government, the most important of which are Sudan's abundant resources that the world needs against the backdrop of concern over food security. These include gum arabic, sesame, peanuts, corn, hibiscus and many varieties of vegetables and fruits, such as mangoes and grapefruit, as well as livestock, including sheep, cows and camels. Sudan also boasts minerals, water and fertile agricultural land. These enormous resources, along with increasing investment opportunities, especially after the revoking of economic sanctions imposed on Sudan by the U.S. and some legislative and institutional reforms, such as the adoption of the Investment Promotion Law that took place in April 2021,

will move the country toward the wider horizons of economic recovery, which has recently shrunk as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Peace-building remains one of the main tasks of the transitional government, and the most pressing issue is to convince the parties that have not yet joined the peace process, and therefore achieve sustainable and balanced development, notably in areas affected by conflicts. Here, the Sudanese people, as in all other tasks of the transitional government, foresee and appreciate support from the international community.

The international community is fully aware of the pivotal role Sudan is performing in upholding peace and security in a turbulent region, not only in terms of sustaining a safe haven for global shipping in the Red Sea area, which hosts 10% of world trade between Asia and Europe, from the threats of pirates and terrorist attacks, but also in safeguarding Europe from waves of illegal immigrants and refugees.

Recognizing this essential role, the international community has begun to engage positively with Sudan. An ideal instance of this was the exchange of ambassadors between Sudan and the U.S., following

about 25 years of lower representation, as well as accreditation of Sudanese ambassadors in many European countries, including France, Germany, Italy and Belgium, among many others.

No doubt that Japan, as a key player in the international community and a global messenger of peace and development, has doubled this responsibility with its membership on the U.N. Security Council

as a nonpermanent member for the next two years, and, while leaning on a long-standing and distinguished bilateral relationship with Sudan, will spare no effort to contribute to achieving peace and development in Sudan.

To conclude, I would like to thank the staff and readers of The Japan Times for giving me this valuable opportunity and wish them all a very happy new year.



A Roman kiosk stands in the ancient city of Naqa. EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SUDAN

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