

Djibouti National Day Special

Strong friendship based on unwavering support

IBRAHIM BILEH DOUALEH
AMBASSADOR OF DJIBOUTI



June 27 marks the 47th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Djibouti and I have the privilege and great pleasure of conveying the warm greetings of H.E. President Ismail

Omar Guelleh, as well as his best wishes for health and happiness, to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako. I also would like to express my best wishes to the members of the imperial family, and my hopes of peace and prosperity to the people and government of Japan.

Japan's steadfast support and friendship for Djibouti culminated with the establishment of the Japan Djibouti Friendship Association in October 2023. The JDFA has a permanent secretariat and brings together committed and experienced experts from industry, government and academia under President Tatsuo Arai, Japan's former ambassador to Djibouti. I am especially grateful to all the Japanese friends of Djibouti for their invaluable help in setting up the JDFA, which has already contributed to some very fruitful discussions during the recent visit to Japan of our minister of infrastructure and equipment.

Over the past year, Djibouti has also welcomed officials from prominent Japanese government agencies, including the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Japan's support for Djibouti is also reflected in our country's steady progress in economic and social development.

In a ceremony on Jan. 31, the Nitobe Inazo Fundamental School opened its doors to the boys and girls of Balbala, a rapidly growing newly designated urban

area to the south of the city of Djibouti. The concept of a fundamental school is to combine free primary and secondary education over a continuous nine-year period. When fully operational, the school will welcome around 2,600 pupils from this catchment area. The planning and construction of the school was fully funded by JICA.

JICA has also provided grant aid for an exciting new major construction project, the Palmeraie Bridge, which will safely span the flood-prone Ambouli River that divides our capital.

The agreement with JICA was signed in January. Technical and cost studies have been completed and JICA has pledged a grant of ¥6 billion (about \$38 million). With construction set to start in August and a completion period of five years, the bridge will provide a total of six lanes, joining National Highway 1 linking Djibouti with Balbala and beyond toward Ethiopia. It will also increase passenger and freight

capacity by 35% to 40%, relieve congestion, reduce journey times, and strengthen the current infrastructure.

Given the political and social volatility in the Horn of Africa, Djibouti is determined to carry out its moral obligations in support of humanitarian operations, and in this context Japan and Djibouti formalized an agreement in January permitting Japan's Self-Defense Forces to use their base in Djibouti whenever circumstances demand.

Djibouti continues to be an active member in international forums to promote regional cooperation and trade and strongly support Japan's initiatives, such as the ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development next year in Yokohama.

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



JICA representative Masayuki Kaneda (second from left), Japanese Ambassador Keiichi Hara (fourth from left), Education Minister Moustapha Mohamed Mahamoud (fifth from left) and President Ismail Omar Guelleh (center) attend the opening of Nitobe Inazo Fundamental School in the city of Djibouti on Jan. 31. JICA



President Ismail Omar Guelleh



The port of Djibouti is located on one of the busiest shipping routes in the world. GETTY IMAGES

Congratulations
to the People of the Republic of Djibouti
on the Anniversary of Their Independence

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