

Egypt national day

Toward a stronger strategic partnership

Dr. Walid M. Abdelnasser
AMBASSADOR OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC
OF EGYPT TO JAPAN

July 23 every year marks the National Day of the Arab Republic of Egypt. It is a day that offers Egyptians the opportunity to reflect on their past achievements and look forward to an even brighter future, and as always, it allows us to express our satisfaction at the state of Egyptian-Japanese relations and continue our joint action to solidify the partnership between our two countries.

I would like, on this occasion, on behalf of H.E. President Mohamed Hosny Mubarak, and the government and people of Egypt, to convey my deepest respect to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, and to Prime Minister Taro Aso. I would also like to express my gratitude to the government

and people of Japan for the sincere friendship they have consistently accorded Egypt throughout the years.

We have witnessed during the past 12 months a series of developments that have contributed to the enhancement of our relationship with Japan, including the important visit to Egypt by H.I.H. Princess Takamado in late June and early July this year, the first visit by a member of the Imperial family to Egypt since May 2000. Many of these came amid the momentum generated by the meeting that took place between President Mubarak and Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda in June 2008, which propelled both countries to embark on a set of new initiatives aimed at further deepening the solid foundations of their partnership.

The framework for our ongoing cooperation was concretized by the Egypt-Japan



President Hosny Mubarak

Partnership Program that was adopted during President Mubarak's visit to Tokyo in 1999 with a view to further enhancing the cooperation between our two countries. This program has been and remains the driving force behind our efforts to strengthen our

bilateral relationship. Furthermore, our long-standing tradition of engagement with Japan has underpinned Japan's recognition of Egypt's geopolitical importance, and pivotal role in the security and stability of the region, and enshrined Tokyo's willingness to strengthen its partnership with Egypt as its strategic hub in the Arab world and Africa.

With Egypt having assumed the presidency of the Nonaligned Movement starting this month, Egyptian-Japanese cooperation will have even more positive ramifications for world affairs.

We have been working to elevate bilateral consultations. In this regard, we held the first session of the Strategic Dialogue between our two countries, which encompassed a broad array of political, economic and cultural issues of bilateral, regional and international interest, in Cairo this May between Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone and his Egyptian counterpart, Ahmed Abuelgheit.

Egypt and Japan are moving forward with a number of bilateral projects that will leave an enduring imprint on the history of our bilateral cooperation. We are, for example, proceeding with the construction of The Grand Egyptian Museum, which will be completed with generous assistance provided by the Japanese government in the form of a long-term loan of almost \$300 million.

We also signed the agreement establishing the Egypt-Japan University for Science and Technology (E-JUST), the first Japanese University outside Japan, in Cairo on March 26. Building on the momentum generated by E-JUST, we jointly and successfully concluded the "Japan-Egypt Year of Science and Technology in 2008" that laid

the ground for further collaboration between our two countries in this sphere.

Last year witnessed total Egyptian exports to Japan climb to more than \$1.6 billion, whereas the overall volume of trade between both countries surpassed \$3.4 billion. While we are satisfied with this growing trade relationship, we are nonetheless eager to further expand this relationship, particularly Japanese investment in Egypt.

Egypt welcomed about 108,000 Japanese tourists last year, making it a primary destination for Japanese travelers overseas. However, these figures reflected a slight decline compared to 2007, due to the negative repercussions of the global financial crisis.

2009 was declared the "Egypt Tourism Promotion Year in Japan." In this context, an inauguration ceremony was held in Tokyo under the auspices of H.I.H. Princess Takamado on Jan. 29. The second event took place March 26 in the form of a media gather-



Imperial event: Egyptian Ambassador Dr. Walid Abdelnasser with Prime Minister Taro Aso and his wife at the Akasaka Imperial Gardens, Tokyo, on April 16 during the annual spring garden party hosted by Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko

ing attended by numerous Japanese participants together with Osama Saraya, editor in chief of the daily Egyptian newspaper Al-Ahram. The

third event was represented by three performances by the Reda folk dance group, the oldest in Egypt and the Arab world, from April 1 through 6.

The fourth event took the form of a tour by the Egyptian Arab Takht classical Arab music ensemble, with performances



Inaugural night: (From left) H.E. Ambassador Dr. Walid Abdelnasser, H.I.H. Princess Takamado and Tourism Counselor Ibrahim Khalil pose for photographs at the launch of "Egypt Tourism Promotion Year in Japan 2009" on Jan. 29 at The Imperial Hotel in Tokyo.

Egypt: 'an old and important friend of Japan'

Masahiko Komura
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-EGYPT
PARLIAMENTARIANS FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE

As president of the Japan-Egypt Parliamentarians Friendship League, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to H.E. President Mohamed Hosny Mubarak, the government and people of Egypt on the occasion of the National Day of the Arab Republic of Egypt.



Egypt, which had been enjoying high economic growth until last summer, faces such difficulties as declining foreign currency revenues due to the worldwide recession since last autumn. Nevertheless, it has maintained economic growth of more than 4.0 percent and we would like to express our respect to the government of Egypt, which achieves such steady economic growth under the leadership of President Mubarak.

Egypt is a leading country that plays a significant role in working for peace and stability in the Middle East and Africa, and an old and important friend of Japan. I have visited Egypt many times, including during my

tenure as minister of foreign affairs. I am glad to note that there have been important exchanges of high-level missions between us for the past year.

In October, Dr. Hani Helal, minister of higher education and scientific research, came to Japan, and held a meeting with Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone to accelerate bilateral cooperation in the field of science and technology. He also attended the STS (Science and Technology in Society) forum in Kyoto, as well as the Japan-Africa Ministers Conference on Science and Technology. This May, Foreign Minister Nakasone visited Cairo, and held a series of fruitful meetings with President Mubarak, Foreign Minister Ahmed Abuelgheit and other high-level Egyptian government officials.

Recently, from June 29 through July 4, H.I.H. Princess Takamado visited Egypt and held meetings with first lady Susan Mubarak, Maged George, minister of state for environmental affairs, and other eminent people of the government, as well as attending the groundbreaking ceremony for the Prince Takamado Memorial Visitors Center, which is under construction in Aswan. This was

the first Imperial visit to Egypt since 2000, when Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Takamado were there. I am convinced that these visits will contribute to further deepening our bilateral relations.

Various cooperative projects have been implemented between the two countries for the past year. Especially, we are witnessing a remarkable development of cooperation in the field of science and technology. With regard to the Egypt-Japan University for Science and Technology (E-JUST), which aims to establish a university with Japanese-style education and research serving the needs of human resource development in Egypt, Arab and African regions, the "Agreement concerning the Establishment of the Egypt-Japan University for Science and Technology," which establishes the framework of cooperation between the two governments, was concluded and came into force this month. I understand that the university is due to open in September. I welcome this valuable development for deepening our relationship.

Last year was also designated as the "Japan-Egypt Year of Science and Technology in 2008," based on an agreement between our

governments. Throughout the year many events and programs were held in the field of science and technology, and this commemorative year concluded with a lecture by Dr. Mamoru Mori, executive director of the National Museum of Engineering Science and Technology, and a famous former astronaut. We are continuing to promote vigorous cooperation and exchanges in this field.

Moreover, the government of Egypt has designated this year as the "Egypt Tourism Promotion Year in Japan 2009" and many events promoting tourism are being arranged by the Embassy of Egypt in Japan. I hope more and more Japanese people will become familiar with Egypt through these events.

The Japan-Egypt Parliamentarians Friendship League and I are determined to make our utmost efforts to further enhance this excellent bilateral relationship.

Last but not least, I would like to express my best wishes to President Mubarak and the people of Egypt for lasting good health and prosperity, as well as my deepest appreciation for the tireless efforts of H.E. Dr. Walid Mahmoud Abdelnasser, ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to Japan, for our two countries.

Warmest Congratulations

to the People of
the Arab Republic of Egypt
on the Occasion of
the 57th National Day



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