

Senegal independence day

Ties with Japan deepen after 50 years of freedom

Gabriel Alexandre Sar
AMBASSADOR OF SENEGAL

Fifty years ago on April 4, Senegal became independent. Exactly six months later, on Oct. 4, 1960, Japan recognized the new state and diplomatic relations were established. Bilateral relations based on friendship and multifaceted cooperation have since been going from strength to strength.



I would like to seize this opportunity to express, on behalf of the government of Senegal and on my own behalf, my deepest respect and consideration for Their Majesties the Emperor Akihito and the Empress Michiko. To all the members of the Imperial Family I wish excellent health, happiness and a long life.

The Japanese are held in the highest esteem by my country because of their virtues of modesty, honesty and passion for hard work.

In the history of nations, five decades represent a relatively short period, yet Senegal, like several other African countries that gained independence in the 1960s, has made considerable progress in modernizing the state, entrenching democracy and improving the living conditions of the people.

Indeed, the past 50 years have witnessed the patient building and consolidation of a modern nation based on "The common will to live in togetherness," to quote the beautiful formula coined by Senegal's first president, the late Leopold Sedar Senghor.

This policy has enabled the country to enjoy political stability and maintain its territorial integrity while cultivating good neighborly and friendly relations with the countries of

Africa and the rest of the world. In the process, Senegal has been enjoying the support of many friendly countries, among which Japan has pride of place.

Therefore it gives me great pleasure to praise the Japanese cooperation and in particular the key role played by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in assisting my country's development efforts. With its comprehensive and integrated approach, Japan's assistance covers all sectors of development. In the education sector, the assistance has been massive, with classrooms being built throughout the country and training seminars organized for teachers and educa-

tion personnel.

The Japan-Senegal Vocational Training Institute, a symbol of Senegal-Japan cooperation, provides a whole range of technical and vocational training not only for young Senegalese but also for nationals from other countries of West Africa and beyond.

In the health sector, in the fields of water supply, agriculture, fisheries, environment protection significant advances have been made thanks to the support of Japan, among other development partners.

Recently, JICA has decided to focus its activities on three particular regions: Louga, Kedougou and Tambacounda.

I would also like to mention the young Japanese volun-

teers who, each year, forsake the modern comforts of life in Japan to go and assist people in faraway places where they have to tackle sometimes harsh living conditions in a culturally different environment. Their courage and generosity set an example to the youth of the world and to all those who strive to usher in a world of solidarity. My country is a staunch advocate of a world of peace and fraternity.

A few days ago Senegal celebrated the 10th anniversary of the democratic and peaceful change of administration, which took place on March 19, 2000, when His Excellency President Abdoulaye Wade was elected after having spent 24 years in opposition.

Thanks to bold and sweeping reforms initiated under the wise guidance of President Wade, Senegal is now able to offer a truly business-friendly environment with simplified procedures for establishing and running a company. Special emphasis has been put on infrastructure development with the building of a turnpike that crosses the capital city Dakar and of a new international airport in Diass, as well as numerous other initiatives aimed at providing the country with a network conducive to its development.

By the same token, the Monument to the African Renaissance that was inaugurated April 3 in Dakar in the presence of several heads of state and government was built by His Excellency President Wade as a symbol of the continent's determination to put an end to "Afro-pessimism" and demonstrate to the world that a mature Africa is in control of its own destiny.

This gives me the opportunity to urge Japanese businessmen to invest in Senegal. The country of "teranga" (the second name of Senegal in view of its people's sense of

hospitality and openness) is ideally located on the west coast of Africa, has a well-equipped international harbor in the capital city and is only a few hours away by plane from the major European capitals.

Dakar offers all the necessary conditions of security and comfort to foreign businesses and investors. In addition, and in order to encourage trade and investment in agriculture, tourism, fisheries, agro-industry, energy and information and communication technologies, Senegal has signed several "non-double taxation agreements."

Despite the current global economic situation, the new Japanese administration has

re-affirmed its determination to abide by the commitments made at the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV), namely to double Official Development Assistance to Africa and Japanese direct investment in the continent by 2012.

I strongly believe that Japanese companies should take part in this generous cooperation process: more than assistance, Africa needs investment in order to develop. The new, so-called win-win partnership that is called for is one in which all those involved stand to benefit.

To conclude, I would like to express my very best wishes



Independence: The former palace of the French governor is now the Presidential Office Building. EMBASSY OF SENEGAL

to my fellow citizens currently living in Japan. I encourage them to continue distinguish themselves as hardworking, honest, law-abiding people worthy of the warm hospitality offered to them by the friendly Japanese people.

I also would like to renew my heartfelt thanks to The Japan Times for having given me, as in previous years, this opportunity to send a message to its readers and celebrate with them the Independence Day of Senegal.



Never forget: On the UNESCO World Heritage island of Goree, 3 km off the coast of Dakar, "The Door of No Return," from which millions of Africans unwillingly exited their homeland, serves as a reminder of the Atlantic slave trade.

**Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Senegal
on the 50th Anniversary
of Their Independence**

 **TODA**
TODA CORPORATION

7-1, Kyobashi 1-chome, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-8388, Japan
Phone: 03-3535-1591 Fax: 03-3561-5745
<http://www.toda.co.jp/>

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Flos Bldg.,
19-7, Hatagaya 2-chome, Shibuya-ku,
Tokyo 151-0072, Japan
Tel: (03) 6703-0510 Fax: (03) 3373-5751
E-mail address: jat-tyo@jat.co.jp
URL: <http://www.jat.co.jp/>