

Sudan national day

Believing in peace, socioeconomic prosperity more than ever

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The year 2011 was another great rendezvous for a sumo wrestling match between the Japanese and the will of nature and fate. The legendary industriousness, relentless perseverance, valor and patience demonstrated by the people of Japan in face of the March 2011 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown was inspiring to all the nations of the world. The Japanese have shown the world, once again, how magnificently they can shoulder the tribulations of



time. The moral and moderate material support shown by the nations of the world, on the other hand, is just a payback of the generous and bounteous assistance that Japan has donated, either directly through its own national agencies or indirectly through United Nations specialized agencies, missions and other international organizations to many nations of the world.

For the people of Sudan the year 2011 was equally a hard and difficult one. After the decision of the people of South Sudan to secede, through the process of the referendum of Jan. 9, 2011, in respect of the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of Jan. 9, 2005, Sudan has witnessed serious political, social and economic repercus-

sions. The country was obliged to make the organizational and structural adjustments necessary to absorb these repercussions at all levels. Nevertheless, although Sudan has lost its position as the largest country in Africa, it still ranks third among African countries (after Algeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and 16th in the world with an area of 1,882,000 sq. km, bordering South Sudan, Egypt, Chad, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Central African Republic and Libya.

At the political level, the high-ranking positions, the Cabinet as well as the civil service had to be reformed to cover the absence of our Southern Sudanese sisters and brothers in all these ranks. It is worth mentioning that, nearly five months after the withdrawal of the ministers of South Sudan, a broad-based national government was formed in December, comprised of 14 political parties and affiliations, in an attempt to harmonize the national strategies to address the imminent challenges of the post-secession period. Abdelrahman Elmahdi, of the Umma Party and son of former premier Sadig Elmahdi, and Jafar Elmerghani, a member of the politburo of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), were appointed assistants to the presi-

dent of the Republic of the Sudan. Many prominent figures from the opposition parties have been appointed for important positions and portfolios. The government is now continuing a national dialogue for an amendment of the constitution, open to almost all options, including the change of the political system.

The economic sector is the one that suffered most from the split of the country, with South Sudan taking away almost two-thirds of the country's oil production. In search for compensation, the Sudan is trying its utmost to diversify exports through inducing more domestic and foreign investments in agriculture, agro-industry, and the mining and energy sectors. The country continues to export oil, the encouragingly increasing gold, copper, chromium, cotton, sesame, groundnuts, gum arabic (acacia gum), sugar, hibiscus, oil seeds, fruits, vegetables, grains, pulses, livestock, leather and medical gas, to different destinations, including China, India, Egypt and rich countries in the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula as major trade partners.

Sudan has, so far, used only 16 million hectares of its arable land, which exceeds 80 million hectares, of which 4.4 million hectares are irrigated and 11.6 million

hectares are rain-fed. More water is abundant in the River Nile and its tributaries, Sudan's most precious natural endowment. Rainwater, estimated at 1 trillion cu. meters per year, has not yet been adequately used while huge reserves of underground water remain to be explored.

Efficient use of these available water resources requires the development of appropriate irrigation technologies and information on efficient irrigation methods, determination of crop water requirements, irrigation intervals and water harvesting techniques to serve the country's new strategy for agricultural expansion, called the Agricultural Revival or Al-Nahda Alzirrayia. These programs may serve as well in preserving the environment, enhancing the situation of food security, alleviating poverty and even combating desertification in some semi-desert areas, goals boldly targeted in international agendas destined for developing countries.

In recent years, encouraged by the success of the oil exploration activities, the economic liberalization policies, the strategic location of the country, the reasonably developed infrastructure, the development in the communications network and the adoption of new

investment-encouraging laws, a noticeable increase has been noticed in the direct foreign investment in Sudan.

In the field of tourism, Sudan, the land of old Nubia, the kingdom of black Pharaohs, is endowed with many touristic sites and resources. The National Archaeological Museum in the capital Khartoum contains many beautiful ancient Nubian objects, including two temples rescued by UNESCO and moved from the Lake Nubia area, and different sizes statues of black Pharaohs. In the north of the Sudan tourists can enjoy, along the charming Nile banks, visiting the sacred Jebel al-Barkal Mountain and its temple, dedicated to the Pharaohs of the New Reign and to their patron Amon.

Tourists can also enjoy the marvellous pyramids of the royal necropolis of Meroe located at about 3 km from the Nile on some hills covered with yellow sand dunes. More than 40 pyramids stand out with their sharp shapes against the clear sky, together with some small funerary temples with the walls fully decorated with bas-reliefs that show the king's life and the gods. The archaeological site of Musawwarat, the recently restored temple of Apademak and the



Electricity: Built on the Nile's fourth cataract, the Merowe Dam in northern Sudan is the largest contemporary hydropower project in Africa. EMBASSY OF SUDAN

Roman kiosk temple are yet another testimony of the richness of the Sudan's ancient history.

On the other hand, the Red Sea coast, gulfs and coral reefs, which extend for more than 700 km, provide tourists with opportunities for diving, underwater photography, boating and water skiing.

Finally, pertaining to bilateral relations, Japan has graciously associated itself with the developed nations of the world in pledging its assistance to Sudan in view of helping to overcome the difficulties of the post separation era. In October 2011, a high-level joint public and private sector Japanese delegation, led

by the Hon. Ryuji Yamane, parliamentary senior vice minister for foreign affairs, visited the Sudan, South Sudan and Kenya to boost the economic ties with our countries. The Japanese investment in agriculture, agro-industry, energy and mining is now most welcome, encouraged and appreciated. I am quite hopeful that the visit would pave the way for more engagement and interaction between private and public sectors in both countries. It is worth noting that Japan Tobacco has completed, last November, the legal procedures for the purchase of the Sudanese Haggard Tobacco company operating in both Sudan and South Sudan.



Land of black Pharaohs: The Nubian Desert of northern Sudan is filled with many touristic sites. EMBASSY OF SUDAN