

Tunisia national day

Democratic transition can be an inspiration for others

Elyes Kasri
AMBASSADOR OF TUNISIA

It gives me a great pleasure to address the readers of The Japan Times on the occasion of the 56th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Tunisia, and to make a brief statement about my country, the excellent relations of friendship and cooperation between Tunisia and Japan and the new perspectives of the consolidation of those relations.



As the Japanese government and people commemorated a week ago the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011, I would like to renew Tunisia's solidarity and sympathy with the Japanese people, who showed, in the face of a disaster of exceptional intensity, the endurance, fortitude and resilience they have always been respected and admired for.

2011 was also full of challenges for Tunisia. Indeed, a genuine

popular uprising, spontaneous and leaderless, but sustained and remarkably determined, succeeded on Jan. 14, 2011, to put an end to 23 years of despotic and corrupt rule. Quickly, Tunisia became the epicenter of a deep transformational process that went even beyond its borders and inspired peoples all over the region. The Tunisian Revolution for Freedom and Dignity unleashed a deep aspiration for democracy, transparency, accountability, fair and inclusive regional development and economic opportunity for all.

Tunisians are currently writing a new chapter in their history. The Tunisian interim government established on Feb. 13, 2011, set forth the proper conditions for the elections of the Constituent Assembly held on Oct. 23, 2011. The elections were a step in the right direction, as they were considered free, transparent and respectful of people's will, according to all local and international observers. On Nov. 18, 2011, the three major parties that were winners of the elections (the moderate

Islamist party Ennahda together with two center-left parties, the Congress for the Republic and Ettakatol) set up a coalition government that was sworn in on Dec. 24, 2011.

While the constituent assembly is drafting a new constitution meeting the Tunisian people's aspirations for freedom, dignity, democracy and economic opportunity, the coalition government is firmly committed to re-engage the nation in the path of progress and prosperity, and address the daunting challenges of unemployment and unbalanced regional development.

To achieve these goals, we are counting on our own resources, but we also look forward to the support of the free and democratic countries to ensure the success of the Tunisian model. In this regard, I would like to pay a vibrant tribute to the government and people of Japan for their unwavering support to the development process in Tunisia especially after the revolution, both bilaterally and within the Group of Eight's Deauville partnership.

The eighth Tunisian-Japanese

Joint Commission convened on Feb. 13, 2012, in Tokyo, was an excellent opportunity to reaffirm the two parties' determination to further boost the bilateral cooperation and build a win-win partnership.

Tunisia-Japan cooperation goes beyond the bilateral relations. In this context, after having hosted successfully the second edition of The Japan-Arab Economic Forum in December 2010, Tunisia contributes to commitment to ensure the success of the third edition of this forum, to be hosted by Japan in 2012. Tunisia also reiterates its high respect for Japan's commitment to African development through the TICAD (Tokyo International Conference on African Development) process and renews its commitment to actively support the preparation of the TICAD V Summit, to be held in 2013 in Japan, and ensure its success.

It is also worth underlining that the new Tunisia that shares the same values with Japan has many additional advantages to offer, among them transparency, good governance, fair competitiveness and an exceptional geographic location at the junction of Europe, Africa and the Arab countries. Our hope is that the Japanese business community will be fully aware of those comparative advantages and new opportunities, and will take advantage of them more effectively.

While many peoples in the region and even beyond are following the political process unfolding in Tunisia, I would like to highlight the value of the success of the Tunisian democratic transition and economic reforms so that those who are reeling under a despotic and corrupt rule, after having witnessed the success of the Tunisian revolution, would be emboldened to take a chance on democracy and freedom.

While expressing my most sincere appreciation and deep-

est thanks to the managers of The Japan Times and all our sponsors for making possible this media initiative, I would like to convey my heartfelt gratitude to all the friends of Tunisia in Japan for their continuous support and valuable good will to further enhance the excellent relations between our two countries.

In conclusion, I would like to convey to the people of Japan my best wishes for a speedy recovery and reconstruction, and for both the Tunisian and Japanese peoples a year of revival toward a better future.

God bless Japan and long live the Tunisian-Japanese friendship.

Steady democratization leads to hopes for more reform

Yoshiro Mori
PRESIDENT, TUNISIAN COMMITTEE OF THE JAPAN-
AFRICAN UNION PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE



the Republic of Tunisia.

In Tunisia since the revolution in January 2011, there has been the election for the Constituent Assembly and the inauguration of a new government. I would like to express my deepest regards to the government's

It is my great pleasure to convey my warmest congratulations on the occasion of the 56th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Tunisia to the Tunisian people and H.E. Dr. Mohamed Moncef Marzouki, president of

steady efforts for the process of democratization.

Moreover, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincerest gratitude for the warm words of sympathy as well as the relief supply of 60,000 cans of tuna that the Tunisian government provided in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake last March in the midst of its tough economical situation after the revolution.

It is my hope that the reforms in regard to the economic and social aspects of Tunisia continue in the future.

With our renewed solidarity in the wake of the disaster, I would like to express my determination to make my utmost efforts to further strengthen the friendship and cooperative relationship between Japan and Tunisia.



Toward democracy: Following the revolution in Tunisia, elections for the Constituent Assembly are held across the nation on Oct. 23, 2011. EMBASSY OF TUNISIA

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B.S.B. S.A.

(Official Authorized Toyota Distributor in Tunisia)
Rue 8612 Zone Industriel Charguia I-2035 Tunis, Tunisie
TEL: +216-71-20-55-99 FAX: +216-71-20-54-26
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