

Kingdom of Morocco throne day

Morocco is joining the elite of global economies

Samir Arrou
AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

Today marks the 14th anniversary of the enthronement of His Majesty King Mohammed VI. On this auspicious occasion, and as ambassador of His Majesty the King of Morocco to Japan, I would like to convey my respectful greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the members of the Imperial family, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the government and the friendly people of Japan.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to The Japan Times for giving me the opportunity to share with its distinguished readers a few aspects regarding the major achievements realized by Morocco domestically as far as the political and the economic levels are concerned, and internationally with respect to the positive evolution

to Morocco's relations with its international partners.

For many years, Japan has played a major role in the development of our region. Through a new and improved relationship between Japan and Africa in facing global challenges, like a more beneficial use of natural resources, climate change with focus laid on sustainable development and socioeconomic progress. This interest was crystallized with the renewed commitment of Japan in the TICAD V summit held in Yokohama in the beginning of June, to accompany Africa in its development process and extend its valuable support for the various initiatives taken by Morocco to achieve socioeconomic development.

Political evolution

A 2013 ranking by the World Economic Forum, assessing of the competitiveness of economies around the world, classified Morocco as "the best performer in North Africa."

Following the adoption of the new constitution in 2011, the organization of elections in No-



H.M. King Mohammed VI

ember the same year and the subsequent formation of a coalition government, Morocco has since embarked in implementing the constitutional reforms at various levels. Many mechanisms were adopted to ensure that harmony with strategic development policies in different sectors is achieved.

Under the leadership of His Majesty the King Mohammed VI, Morocco continues to pursue its efforts to reconcile economic and social reforms with the political progress and democratic practice, while adapting them to the needs and aspirations of its population.

Development strategies

Strategies targeting energy, fisheries, industry, commerce, agriculture, tourism and logistics are

closely developed and monitored in order to respond not only to the national demand for promoting added value and job-generating sectors, but also to provide for a favorable environment for a win-win partnership with Morocco's international partners.

As of today, Morocco's network of highways stands at 1,500 km. Besides, urban transport networks have been upgraded to accommodate the ever-increasing demands of both the population and businesses alike with the environmental prerequisites.

Sound institutions

To accompany and complement the trend for a growing business environment, financial institutions have adapted and developed their strategies to ensure fluidity of business transactions between and among business stakeholders. In this regard, the Casablanca Finance City (CFC) as a financial center aims to provide an attractive environment to bring together various national and international institutions who will contribute to the effective functioning of its business and financial activities.

TICAD V partnership

Japan continues to play a leading role in the development process of Morocco. It has for the last few years contributed considerably to improving the business-

oriented approach that Morocco is seeking to face the major challenges of its economy. This approach has been substantially debated as early as the fourth Ministerial followup meeting of TICAD IV, successfully held in Marrakech in May 2012 and brilliantly wrapped up the 2008-2012 partnership process and paved the way for the summit of TICAD V in Yokohama.

The signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Moroccan Agency for International Cooperation (AMCI) on June 30 will further consolidate the partnership for promoting triangular cooperation as an efficient means for capacity-building and human resources training in areas of interest for both Morocco and Japan.

Economic forum

Along with the TICAD process, Morocco is committed to enhance the Japan-Arab partnership. In this regard, the forthcoming Japan-Arab Economic Forum, the third edition is scheduled for Tokyo in December, represents an important opportunity to pledge for closer ties between Japan and the Arab world toward attaining the objective of strengthening mutual economic relations between Japan and the Arab countries through cooperation in a wide

range of areas including trade, investment, energy, technology, and human resource development as per the resolution adopted by the League of Arab States in 2005.

Diversifying relations

Since last year, the bilateral relationships between Japan and Morocco have been intensified and developed positively to include different areas of cooperation. The business partnership, thanks to the valuable contributions of the Japanese private sector, enjoys more visibility as to the business opportunities in Morocco. This visibility has increased thanks to the regular contacts and meeting opportunities between the two sides.

The forthcoming third session of the Japan-Morocco Joint Committee scheduled for this autumn is yet another opportunity to confirm the commitment of both Japan and Morocco to further enhance both the political dialogue and enlarge the scope of economic and business partnership between our two countries.

Morocco is joining the elite of global economies thanks to diverse free-trade agreements with partners around the globe (the U.S., EU, Africa and Arab World) and offers investors duty-free access to a market of 55 countries representing more than 1 billion consumers and 60 percent of



Strengthening ties: Foreign Ministers Saad Dine El Otmani of Morocco (left) and Fumio Kishida meet on the sidelines of the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) in Yokohama on June 1. EMBASSY OF MOROCCO

world gross domestic product.

Education as driving force

Notwithstanding the importance of human resources development, important progress has been achieved in the area of education, training, close collaboration between universities, research institutes, civil society and think-tanks. Thanks to the Japanese government program Global 30 launched in 2009, many achievements have been realized toward its implementation. The organization in Rabat on Oct. 23 and 24 of the third summit of university presidents from Japan and North Africa is a crucial indication of the advanced status so far achieved in terms of academic collaboration and human resources training and development between the Japan and the Kingdom of Morocco.

Tourist attractions

There is a never-ending list of Moroccan attractions for the average visitor to enjoy. The main starting points are the more popular cities such as Marrakech, Tangier, Fes and Casablanca. At each of these places, you will find the usual hodgepodge mixture of medinas, bazaars and riads. You will also find superb beaches and classy hotels for your comfort and pleasure.

While noting with ample satisfaction the pace of progress so far achieved in terms of our relations with Japan, I would like to reiterate the keen interest of the government of the Kingdom of Morocco to further develop and consolidate the existing excellent relations within the framework of a win-win spirit that accommodates the interests of each of our countries and fully responds to the needs and aspirations of our peoples.

Enhancing cooperation to help Morocco's further development

Kenji Kosaka
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-MOROCCO PARLIAMENTARY LEAGUE

On behalf of all members of the Japan-Morocco Parliamentary League, I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt congratulations to His Majesty, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Moulay Al Hassan, Her Royal Highness Lalla Khadija, Her Royal Highness Lalla Salma, the Royal Family, the people and the government of Morocco on the auspicious occasion of the fourteenth anniversary of the accession to the throne of His Majesty King Mohammed VI.

Under the leadership of H.M. the King Mohammed VI, Morocco has successfully brought about profound changes, continuing the successful development processes in many fields that shaped the Kingdom of Morocco as a modern state and fulfilled the expectations and the aspirations of Moroccans.

My visit to Morocco in May and my discussions with the head of government, Prime Minister Abdelilah Benkirane, the President of the House of Representatives Karim Ghallab, Mohamed Cheikh Biadillah and Saad Dine El Otmani, minister of foreign affairs, allowed me to appreciate very much the progressive development of the relations between Morocco and Japan in all fields, especially on the cooperation and political levels.

I also had the opportunity to hold discussions with H.E. El Otmani during his last visit to Japan on the occasion of the TICAD V summit held in Yokohama in June.

The Japan-Morocco Parliamentary League is keen to contribute to further develop contacts with its peers in the parliament of Morocco to further enhance our cooperation, particularly in business and entrepreneurship.

The working visit to Japan of H.E. Abdelkader Amara, minister of trade, industry and new technologies, in mid-June contributed to increasing visibility in terms of the opportunities offered to Japanese companies to extend their business scope to Morocco and beyond.

We in the Japan-Morocco Parliamentary League are very proud of this evolution, and will continue to work to accompany Morocco in its development process.

Seigi Hinata
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-MOROCCO ASSOCIATION

On the occasion of 14th anniversary of enthronement, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco, on behalf of all members of the Japan-Morocco Association.

On this auspicious occasion, I would like to express also my sincere greetings to Her Royal

Highness Princess Lalla Salma, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Moulay Al Hassan, Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Khadija and all other members of the Royal Family as well as the people and the government of the Kingdom of Morocco.

I am happy to note that the bilateral relations between Japan and Morocco continue to be on a steady development track in various fields such as the economic and technical cooperation, the investments in the private sector, tourism and others.

This good state of our relationship was confirmed and fortified when Foreign Minister Fu-

mio Kishida met with Moroccan Foreign Minister Saad-Eddine El Otmani for a bilateral meeting during the TICAD V international conference held in Yokohama early last month.

We understand that there will be further close cooperation in the new technology areas such as photovoltaic energy and wind power energy.

Now I would like to report on the various activities to promote friendship between Japan and

Morocco initiated by the Japan-Morocco Association. As readers may be aware, our association is an entirely private sector volunteer-based organization, but we have seen a steady growth in the membership numbers in parallel with the gradual recognition of Moroccan culture in Japan.

Currently, we are increasing the number of cultural programs offered to the Japanese public such as the events to enjoy Moroccan cuisine at Moroccan res-

taurants in Tokyo or to experience argan oil and mint tea at public facilities, and they all became our popular programs with a full house of participants every time.

Also last year's big annual event, Moroccan Night, with Moroccan music, food and entertainment, attracted more than 300 visitors. We will be planning another big night in November at Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo with the cooperation of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in

Japan. We work closely with the embassy to realize various cultural and economic events on a yearly basis so that all the Japanese participants to these events can deepen their understanding of Morocco as well as Japan-Morocco relations.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate my sincere wish to strengthen further the existing excellent relationship between the people of Japan and the people of Morocco.

Congratulations
on the 14th Anniversary of the
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