

# Mauritania national day

## Leadership guides diplomacy for security, peace, development of Africa

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Firstly, allow me to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt and respectful wishes to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko of Japan, as well as to the distinguished Imperial family. I



would also like on behalf of the people and the government of Mauritania to express my admiration to Prime Minister H.E. Shinzo Abe, his government and the Japanese people for their resilience, patience and commitment to international peace and dedication for a better world.

I further wish to convey my sincere gratitude to the editors of The Japan Times for kindly giving me the opportunity to address their readers.

Today, Mauritania, under the wise leadership of Presi-

dent of the Republic H.E. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, is witnessing huge progress in infrastructure realization, having seen hundreds of kilometers of paved roads quickly built around the country and the expansion of the port of Nouadhibou. Additionally, wind, solar and gas power plants, which are expected to address power shortages, are being constructed in our two biggest cities, Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, in addition to water plants being built to bring potable water to most of the country's cities. New hospitals and schools have been built around the country, particularly in areas of low income households. The achievement of such infrastructure in the country has worked as an engine for our economic growth, having a huge positive impact on Mauritania's living conditions through universal access to basic services, creation of jobs and effective programs to fight disparities and poverty. This has also contributed to pre-

serving social peace and political stability, both pivotal to a steady democracy.

Given its highly strategic geographic position at the crossroads of North and Sub-Saharan Africa, Mauritania today offers expanding investment opportunities not only in fisheries and oil and gas, but also in mining with the iron potential of the Taoudeni Basin adding to the huge discoveries in gold reserves that will soon lift Mauritania to the top ranks of African gold producers.

The creation two years ago of the Nouadhibou Free Zone demonstrates the determination of Aziz to bring the economy of the country to the level which guaranties foreign investors secure activities.

On a political level, inclusive general and local elections took place last December, organized by the independent electoral commission (CENI) under the supervision of the international community.

The electoral commission showed its capacity to orga-

nize transparent and fair elections on the occasion of this year's June 21 presidential elections.

Aziz was reelected without any contest to the election results and the government of Mauritania appreciated Abe's decision to send a special envoy to represent him at the president's Aug. 6 inauguration ceremony.

Under the leadership of the president, a sub-regional organization, the G5 SAHEL, was created with Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Tchad to fight against terrorism and all forms of trafficking. The group also aims to take measures for employment, encourage investments and fight against poverty.

As President of the Africa Union, Aziz has undertaken many initiatives to ensure the key role of Africa in the global community.

Aziz co-chaired many forums and meetings on behalf of African states, notably the African-European Union Summit, the first African-U.S.

summit, a high-level conference on the environment and sustainable development in New York and the G20 summit in Brisbane, Australia.

His devotion to African stability was also shown by his successful mediation between the Malian government and the armed groups in northern Mali. Aziz orchestrated a cease-fire agreement last May, bringing the parties back to the negotiating table. His facilitation was lauded by the international community.

He was also active in resolving the political situation in Burkina Faso, following the departure of that country's president.

The involvement of the Mauritanian army in peace-keeping operations in Cote d'Ivoire, Sudan and Central Africa is also another sign of the commitment of Mauritania to the necessity of global diplomacy for peace and stability in Africa.

Mauritania stands resolutely committed to economic liberalism and the focus on the

realization of an efficient infrastructure is a clear indicator of its determination to achieve the U.N.'s Millennium Development Goals. Mauritania's bid to achieve these goals is stimulated by the generous assistance of friendly nations like Japan, which remains one of the main contributors to public development aid in Mauritania. In this regard, the Mauritanian government and people acknowledge greatly the positive impacts of Japanese official development aid to our vital sectors such as infrastructure, food security, environmental protection, fisheries, health, the extension of ports and others.

The Japanese-Mauritanian Friendship Association is also contributing well to the further enhancement of the friendship between the two peoples.

Japan continues to play a key role in Mauritanian development by financing many projects:

- Extension of the fishing port in Nouadhibou
- Important contributions



H.E. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, president of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

for social development and to assure the security and sanctity of human rights

- Food security

Mauritania is strongly committed to strengthening its cooperation with Japan both through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development and the Arab-Japan Forum.

I dare to express certainty that Mauritania can count on Japan's continued support and friendship as we continue our nation-building efforts.

### Congratulations

to the People of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania  
on the Occasion of the 54th Anniversary of  
Their Independence



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