

Argentina national day

Working together to strengthen bilateral ties

Raul Dejean
AMBASSADOR OF ARGENTINA

Two hundred and five years have elapsed since Argentina established its first national government. It seems like a long time, but we are only a few generations away from the people who turned the dream of the Argentine Republic into a reality, although we still continue making strong efforts to achieve our national aim of every day being more equitable and creating an inclusive society in benefit of all the people who share our soil.

Today, our whole population has a pacifist spirit, including a relevant position against nuclear weapons that decisively contributes to a very important regional integration process in many fields, as not registered before, with all the fraternal people of Latin America, sharing the fundamental principles that our great founding fathers dreamed.

Being a country of immigration, our generous policies have created a great melting pot of races that coexist peacefully contributing to the growth of the country. All that has been achieved so far would not have been possible without the contribution of its more than 40 million inhabitants. The respected Japanese community of approximately 40,000 people is among them and their achievements fill Argentina with pride.

Argentina is the second-largest economy in South America and has a relatively high GDP per capita. It belongs to the privileged group of very high human development index countries and in the last 32 years of uninterrupted democratic government since the return of democracy in 1983, not only has it become very active in promoting local and international human rights policies, but has also developed significant human rights-related projects within various international organizations.

In this regard, within the Human Rights Council of the United Nations, Argentina has introduced various new draft resolutions such as those related to the progressive development of the right to the truth, or the use of forensic genetics in the context of massive human rights violations and forced disappearances. The nation was also instrumental in the creation of the Special Report on the Promotion of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantees of Non-Repetition initiative, presented together

with Switzerland in 2011, among others.

It is also worth mentioning that Argentina has ratified all treaties related to the Universal System for the Protection of Human Rights, including the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons against Enforced Disappearance and Argentine nationals are today chairing prestigious international Agencies such as the International Criminal Court and the U.N. Human Rights Committee.

Although it cannot yet be said that the country has achieved gender equality, important measures have been implemented in order to get closer to such a goal. For instance, from 1991 onwards, all electoral office lists must have a 30 percent minimum of women candidates with chances to be elected and they have outstanding roles in official and private activities.

Regarding economic development, the lack of an international regulatory framework for restructuring sovereign debt — which has a direct impact on poverty, disease, illiteracy and insecurity faced by countries historically affected by foreign debt — has moved Argentina to promote resolution 68/304 in the General Assembly of the U.N. in September 2014, which represents a fundamental step in discussions on debt restructuring.

Bilateral relations with Japan, already lasting for 117 years of friendship since the treaty of 1898, have not solely included the flow of immigrants. Our relationship has been very fruitful and friendly all these years, including very special events and occasions, and I am deeply convinced that they have an outstanding future.

In this regard, political consultations have been institutionalized since 1991 alongside diverse mechanisms to talk about specific matters such as science and technology or cultural cooperation and technical assistance.

Although bilateral commerce has reached substantial figures, it falls short of its real potential. Japan only represents 2 percent of all Argentinean imports and only 1.1 per cent of all our exports. This figure is even lower if compared with the whole of Japan's foreign trade, so there is a huge space to fill for the benefit of both countries. The total of our global export figures is composed of only 21 percent of primary goods, but with Japan this proportion is more than half of the total.

In this field, Argentine interest is to continue fostering bilateral trade growth, especially in valued added goods such as processed foods and invest-

ment promotion. The opportunities are there and benefits will surely come along. Many Japanese companies understood this and, therefore, made significant contributions investing in relevant areas of our economy such as the automobile, auto parts, biofuels, mining and telecommunications sectors. Their aim has mainly been in producing for the domestic market, but also to reach regional markets, especially MERCOSUR partners. Still, its full potential has not been achieved yet.

The most important assets of Argentina are its people, for it boasts a highly skilled and talented workforce, it is a competitive manufacturer of goods with added value and design and has a long tradition in activities such as nuclear energy, spatial and industrial engineering, biotechnology, software and IT, while possessing the highest ratio of researchers to the economically active population in Latin America.

My country strongly believes in the importance of international technical cooperation. The experience gained from our double role as recipient of technical capabilities from other countries and as donor of our own capabilities, led us to sign the "Partnership Program for Joint Cooperation between Japan and Argentina." Since 2001 we jointly provide through this program technical assistance to developing countries in order to support their social and economic growth, by efficiently bringing together technological, financial and human resources of both countries.

The combined effort carried out so far in these and other fields are just examples of a broader positive agenda, including trade and investment. Last December, the Argentina Japan Business Committee met for the 23rd time in Buenos Aires, signaling the endurance of this mechanism with the purpose of exchanging ideas in order to strengthen the

bilateral economic and business relationship.

Our economies and the wide range of existing opportunities continue to give a huge possibility to reach levels of surprising satisfaction. For instance, Argentina is very rich in energy resources. We are one of the top producers of biofuel, and possess a promising wind and solar energy industry, as well as outstanding oil and gas resources.

Argentina's vastness and variety of ecosystems is also reflected in the great number of tourist activities that can be enjoyed throughout the country. Each location offers a range of opportunities for visitors to enjoy in close contact with nature surrounded by amazing landscapes to enjoy the most popular recreational and sports activities.

Therefore, it is my conviction that expanding the range of our bilateral relations will result in a meaningful and multilayered dialogue, based upon common visions and interests that will

allow us to benefit each other with all the opportunities that lie ahead.

I wish to convey my sincere respects and wishes of well being to their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko and to all members of the Imperial house of Japan.

I hereby also convey my respectful greetings to the members of the Japanese government and to the members of the Diet, especially those that make up the Japan-Argentina Parliamentary Friendship League.

To The Japan Times and sponsors, my gratitude for this opportunity and to all the people of Japan, my recognition and appreciation for the daily efforts made in benefit of this great and wonderful country.

Here, at the Embassy of the Argentine Republic in Tokyo, we will keep on working and collaborating toward a continued improvement in our bilateral ties for the benefit of both our nations and people.



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Further proactive business cooperation, expansion needed

Ken Kobayashi
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-ARGENTINA
BUSINESS COOPERATION
COMMITTEE

On behalf of the Japan-Argentina Business Cooperation Committee, I am delighted to extend my warmest congratulations to the people and government of Argentina as the country celebrates its 205th National Day on May 25.

First of all, it is indeed an honor for me to be able to de-

liver this message as chairman of the committee. I assumed this position on April 1, 2015, as the successor to Mikio Sasaki, to whom the committee is profoundly indebted for his outstanding stewardship over the past 14 years. I am extraordinarily excited to be a part of a committed team that is working to enhance economic relations between Japan and Argentina.

Looking back upon last year, there were several very encouraging events that should contribute to bringing the two economies much closer together. In May 2014, Argentina reached an agreement with the Paris Club group of nations

(which includes Japan) to repay its overdue debts, and the first installment was paid in July 2014. This development will give Argentina access to credit insurance, loan guarantees and financing provided by export credit agencies.

In December 2014, the 23rd meeting of the Argentine-Japanese Joint Business Cooperation Committee was held in Buenos Aires, nearly five years after the previous such event. Topics of discussion ranged from Japanese investments in Argentina (in areas such as lithium resources, automobiles and the ICT sector) to regional integration both within and be-

yond the MERCOSUR trade bloc. The conference was indeed a success with a record high of 192 participants, reflecting underlying needs for expanded business cooperation between our two countries.

Japan and Argentina have had a long history of interaction, but I am convinced that we are still only at the beginning of what we will be able to achieve together. It is our strong desire for both Japan and Argentina to jointly focus efforts more proactively on making the best of the new opportunities that are increasingly arising as Asia and Latin America draw closer together.

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to the People of the Argentine Republic
on the 205th Anniversary of
Their National Day

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