

## Kingdom of Morocco throne day

## Continuing political, economic and social reforms

Samir Arrour  
AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF  
MOROCCO

July 30 marks the 16th anniversary of the enthronement of His Majesty King Mohammed VI. On this auspicious occasion, I, as ambassador to Japan, would like to convey my respectful greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the government and friendly people of Japan.



Almost 60 years have passed since diplomatic relations between Morocco and Japan were established and from day one the privileged ties that bind our countries have enhanced our friendship. Bilateral relations between our countries witnessed tremendous development last year, reflected by official visits from both sides that consolidated these ties to a higher level. I seize this opportunity to shed light on the achievements realized by Morocco on the political, economic and international levels with respect to the positive evolution of relations with Japan.

Since the accession of the king

to the throne, Morocco has embarked on a large and comprehensive democratic process of reforms in the political, economic and social fields.

With the adoption of the new constitution in 2011, legislative elections in November the same year and the subsequent formation of a coalition government, Morocco has gone through the implementation of constitutional reforms at various levels. Advanced regionalization is one of the largest areas of reforms in Morocco. Initiated a few years ago, it seeks to strengthen decentralization and local democracy and ensure integrated economic, social, cultural and environmental development.

The government continues its efforts to meet economic and social challenges and took several measures in 2014 aimed at improving living conditions, job opportunities and social cohesion. Decentralization is set to continue in 2015, notably with municipal and regional elections, to be held on Sept. 4 that will speed up the advanced regionalization and provisions in the 2011 constitution.

The significant economic progress achieved by Morocco is the result of a progressive, smooth transformation process launched in 1999, under the guidance of the king to ensure a



H.M. King Mohammed VI

fair growth with great potential and a larger spectrum that guarantees the inclusion and participation of all citizens. This has produced significant results in poverty reduction, access to education and health care.

Throughout 2014, the government maintained its policy of improving the business climate and encouraging private investment so as to support economic consolidation. These efforts provided Morocco with a qualitative edge reflected in the World Bank report "Doing Business 2015" with an advanced ranking.

Ongoing efforts to strengthen the macroeconomic base through structural reforms and sectoral strategies helped expand the economy by an average of 5 percent in 2014 despite low external demand. Internal and external balances improved, with the budget deficit shrinking

to 4.9 percent of GDP and the current account deficit to 6 percent of GDP. Growth prospects for 2015 and 2016 are a healthy 5 percent with further reduction of the budget deficit.

Triangular cooperation represents the cornerstone of Morocco's policy in its partnership within Africa. In this perspective, the conclusion of a memorandum of understanding between the Japanese International Agency for International Cooperation (JICA) and the Moroccan Agency for International Cooperation (AMCI), during the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V Summit) in 2013, further consolidated partnerships for promoting triangular cooperation for capacity-building and human resources training in areas of common interest to Morocco and Japan.

The TICAD V Summit, which has known unprecedented success, confirms the uniqueness and inclusiveness of a process that positively evolved over the last 20 years and underlines the commitment of Japan to African countries and their fast-growing economies. Morocco is looking forward to TICAD VI that will take place for the first time in Africa in 2016.

Recently, Morocco launched several sector-specific national

development strategies:

Energy: "Solar Energy Generation Project" aims at establishing five power generation plants by 2020 to expand generation capacity to 2,000 MW and materialize generated output to 4,500 GW/h; "Wind Power Generation Program" aims to expand to 2000 MW by 2020

Tourism: "Vision 2020" aims for a twofold increase of tourists; 20 million by 2020

Agriculture and fisheries: "Plan Maroc Vert" aims at modernizing the agricultural sector; "Plan Halieutis" aims at dynamizing competitiveness of fishing

Industry: "Plan Emergence" looks to develop traditional handicraft sector and growing the automobile parts sector and promote aerospace industries and services

Commerce: "Plan Rawaj" aims to increase threefold of current GDP by 2020

IT: "Maroc Numeric" aims at expanding the use of Internet access and automating administrative procedures

Commodity distribution: "Strategic Logistics" looks to establish various distribution platforms

Furthermore, the country is expanding its scope of action and circle of economic and trade

relations beyond the Euro-Mediterranean region toward Africa, the Americas and Asia, underlining an open diplomacy of cooperation and solidarity that reinforces our role in the Arab and Islamic arena.

Within Asia, Japan is a privileged partner for Morocco, with whom relations have been intense, diverse and touching upon all sectors. The opening of a JETRO bureau last December and the assignment by JICA of a senior expert for promoting Japanese investment in Morocco are strong signals of mutual trust and willingness of the Japanese government to support and encourage more Japanese companies to settle in Morocco.

Moroccan-Japanese cooperation, particularly with JICA, is considered to have had a positive impact, especially on the development of our country's infrastructure, as well as the implementation of the National Initiative for Human Development. Additionally, JICA's president paid a visit to Morocco in July 2014, followed by a visit by the director general of the Moroccan Agency for International Cooperation from July 22 to 25.

I would like to commend the valuable efforts of Japan in promoting stronger ties with Morocco and widening their scope to promote economic growth,

cultural ties and further understanding of the rich cultural heritage of both countries. I would like to conclude my message by reiterating the keen interest of the Moroccan government to further develop and consolidate

the existing excellent relations with Japan within the framework of a win-win spirit that accommodates the interests of each of our two countries and fully responds to the needs and aspirations of our peoples.

## Growing interest in tourism

Haruko Hirose  
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-MOROCCO ASSOCIATION



On the occasion of Morocco's Throne Day, I would like to extend my sincere and heartfelt congratulations to His Majesty King Mohammed VI on behalf of all members of the Japan-Morocco Association.

On this auspicious occasion, I would also like to express 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 other members of the Royal Family, as well as to the people and government of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Under the leadership of the king, Morocco continues its steady economic growth, maintains peace and security and warmly welcomes foreigners, both as investors and tourists. It has been a leading model of economic and social development in the region in the wake of the Arab Spring.

The relationship between Japan and Morocco has always been excellent and on the eve of the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Morocco, I am very happy to note that many more private Japanese companies are interested in investing in Morocco.

I have noticed a significant increase in the number of Japanese TV programs and magazine articles featuring Morocco, and that Japanese people are becoming familiar with a variety of Moroccan products such as argan oil, olive oil, salted lemon, tajine cooking and babouche slippers. Morocco is now a very popular tourist destination for Japanese travelers, particularly women.

Last year, we were honored to have the visit of Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Hasna. I understand that many more exchanges of key people are scheduled for the latter half of this year. To promote friendship and better mutual understanding, the Japan-Morocco Association will continue to organize various events with the cooperation of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Japan, including monthly lectures related to Morocco, seminars on economic relations and the annual Moroccan Evening at the Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo, to take place this year on Nov. 10.

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of our diplomatic relations next year, we plan to organize a New Year's Forum in January, a special tour to Morocco in February and other events. We welcome new participants to these events. Please consult on our web site for details.

## Strengthening and consolidating bilateral relations in all sectors

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 and the people and the govern-

ment of Morocco on the auspicious occasion of the 16th anniversary of the enthronement of His Majesty King Mohammed VI.

Since the beginning of the decade, under the guidance of the king, Morocco has engaged in a profound and accelerated transformation across all domains, notably political, economic, social and cultural. This has been done with the ambition to create a modern and democratic country that is open to the world and fulfils the expectations and aspirations of the Moroccan people.

In recent years, I have had the opportunity to meet, either in

Japan or in Morocco, with a number of important Moroccan policymakers such as the head of the government, the president of the House of Representatives and the president of House of Councillors.

These meetings gave me the opportunity to touch upon the progressive development of the relations between Japan and Morocco in all fields. It was an honor to meet H.E. Mohamed Cheikh Biadiallah, president of

the House of Councillors and have a friendly conversation during his official visit to Japan last September; a visit that gave a fresh impetus to the long-standing privileged friendship between our two countries.

Furthermore, I would like to commend the participation of young Moroccan parliamentarians in the Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians held in Tokyo in May. Their contribution was highly remarkable

owing to their substantive and active contributions to the conference's workshops.

As president of the Japan-Morocco Parliamentary League, I would also like to visit Morocco soon to enhance and consolidate this relationship based on shared values of democracy, pluralism and mutual interest in expanding our cooperation in all fields in light of the celebration in 2016 of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplo-

matic relations between Morocco and Japan.

The Japan-Morocco Parliamentary League is very eager to expand its acquaintances with members of the Moroccan Parliament to further strengthen our cooperation, particularly in the field of business. We, the Japan-Morocco Parliamentary League, are very proud of this evolution and are very keen on continuing to accompany Morocco in its development process.

## CONGRATULATIONS

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