

## Kazakhstan National Day

## Ongoing peace, democracy and economic growth

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AMBASSADOR OF KAZAKHSTAN

On Dec. 16, 1991, the Republic of Kazakhstan declared itself as an independent state, one that chose a path of free and democratic development. Today we celebrate the 24th anniversary of our independence. Over the years, under the leadership of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan made rapid leaps forward in its political, social and economic development. The country has also made significant progress in the international arena and has become a respected and responsible member of the global community.



For us, 2015 has become particularly important as we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the nationwide adoption of the constitution, as well as the 550th anniversary of the formation of the Kazakh Khanate. Thanks to the constitution, which proclaims the country as a democratic, secular, legal and social state, Kazakhstan has achieved economic growth and social welfare. The anniversary of the formation of the Kazakh Khanate demonstrates the deep history of Kazakh statehood and succession in the development of the country.

Since independence, we have created a new economy. GDP grew by 24 times, while per capita GDP reached \$13,000. Kazakhstan has achieved most of the U.N. Millennium Development Goals. Poverty has been reduced by 20 times (from 60 percent to 2.9 percent) and hundreds of schools and hospitals have been built. Our country has become a leader in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) for attracting foreign direct investment of more than \$200 billion.

Now Kazakhstan has the most powerful economic potential in Central Asia, boasting an economy twice the size of our neighbors.

As of October, total interna-

tional reserves of the country are worth about \$100 billion.

Today, more than 100 countries import products made by Kazakhstan enterprises. Every year we launch hundreds of new innovative enterprises, including projects in the field of electricity, energy efficiency and green technologies. Such innovative clusters as deep processing of oil and gas, petrochemicals, machinery, manufacturing of automobiles, aircraft, locomotives and wagons, satellites, electronics and others are being developed. Last year, Toyota Motor Corp. built a factory for assembling 4Runner SUVs in Kazakhstan, an example of successful cooperation with Japan. The agricultural sector is also developing dynamically as Kazakhstan is one of the regional food production centers.

#### Economic challenges

At present, the world economy is facing various challenges. The collapse of world prices for energy and metals sharply increased economic risk and almost all states face serious geopolitical and economic challenges.

For Kazakhstan, the main task at the moment is to maintain achieved economic growth. A new economic policy, "Nurly Zhol," was introduced to tackle economic risks and it should serve as a path for Kazakhstan's dealings with the 30 most-developed economies in the world. It comprises, firstly, measures to counter economic turbulence in the framework of state programs for infrastructure development, and secondly, the continuation of industrialization.

The new economic policy is directed to the continuation of structural economic reforms such as improvement of competitiveness, productivity and the structure of economy and its ability to produce new products and services. It is important to further develop transport, energy, industrial and social infrastructure, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises.

Other countries have shown that the development of infra-

structure facilitates the growth of domestic demand, creates favorable conditions for new industries, business relations, opportunities for enterprises and people and regional economic integration.

Over the next three years \$14 billion will be spent on the construction of new roads, power grids and communications. More than one-third of these will have funds provided by our partners from international financial institutions. There are plans to build a road network based on the ray principle, with roads spreading in the cardinal directions from the capital, as well as new railways, bridges, power lines, schools, hospitals and housing facilities. This will ensure balanced development of all regions of the country.

We expect that the implementation of this industrial and innovative program will lead to a new economy and a new infrastructure framework for the country.

In addition, we are implementing the "Plan of the Nation — 100 specific steps" to implement five institutional reforms that includes more than 80 laws. They will go into force on Jan. 1, 2016. Administrative barriers for small and medium-sized businesses are being removed and governance, education and health are being improved. All these measures will help provide a safety net for our economy.

New sectors of the economy created in the framework of innovative industrialization are becoming the drivers of economic growth in Kazakhstan. Many manufacturing sectors are showing prosperity. In five years, the manufacturing industry grew by 1.3 fold, while the chemical industry and construction materials production both grew by 1.7 times. Production of engineering industry goods more than doubled while exports tripled. More than 800 industrial projects were implemented. This year, the steel industry grew by 15 percent, the chemical industry by 3.2 percent. Manufacturing of mineral products grew by 3.2 percent and production of clothing increased by 4 percent. The World



Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev (right) shakes hands with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during Abe's official visit to Kazakhstan. EMBASSY OF KAZAKHSTAN

Bank and the Asian Development Bank forecast even higher rates of economic growth for Kazakhstan in 2016. Additionally, the economic behavior of our people is changing as evidenced by an increase in productivity of more than 60 percent that has been seen.

Despite the negative impact of the global crisis Kazakhstan has achieved good results. In the Global Competitiveness Index by the World Economic Forum, Kazakhstan is ranked 42nd in the world. In the world ranking of the countries that create the most favorable conditions for business, the World Bank's "Doing Business" report, ranked our country 41st.

This year also saw Kazakhstan become a full member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). This is a milestone in the history of independent Kazakhstan as it is recognition of our country as an equal trade and economic partner. Kazakhstan's accession to the WTO opens new opportunities for our exporters and foreign investors who will come to the key sectors of our economy.

At the same time, we have much more to do. On Nov. 30, Nazarbayev in his address to

the nation, "Kazakhstan in a New Global Reality: Growth, Reforms, Development" outlined new comprehensive anti-crisis and structural changes, which include stabilization of the financial sector, optimization of fiscal policy, privatization and promotion of economic competition, new investment and social measures.

The address introduced a new investment policy. First, we need to attract more private investment with an emphasis on transnational corporations. We should create a favorable environment for attracting "sophisticated investments." This year it was decided to work on the establishment of the Astana International Financial Centre. It will become a regional hub for Islamic financing, private banking and reinsurance. Kazakhstan will become a leading country in the region with strong institutions and a competent, efficient and predictable government. We should have the best technical professionals and world-class infrastructure, while ensuring public order and the personal safety of the people.

Further reforms to improve the investment climate should

be carried out in cooperation with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and other international financial institutions. In order to intensify work with investors, a government council will be established with the aim of attracting investors and improving the investment climate. Similar councils will be established in various regions to attract investment for important local projects.

Second, it is important to develop regional drivers of economic growth. All investment projects need to be regionally implemented. Separate programs will be developed for the following macro-regions: southern, northern, central-eastern and western regions, as well as Almaty and Astana. We need to develop small and medium-sized businesses around large regional projects. Therefore, the business support program, "Business Road Map 2020," will be part of the investment programs of these macro-regions. Above all, measures will be taken to increase labor mobility, aimed at stimulating migration from labor-surplus to labor-deficit regions.

The macro-regions will be connected by a single transport, logistics and communication architecture, created within the "Nurly Zhol" program. Currently, 11 projects are being implemented in the key directions of center-south, center-east and center-west. The construction of the Borzhakty-Ersai and Almaty-Shu railway lines and the ferry crossing at Kuryk Port are underway. These projects have already provided 72,000 jobs.

Third, Kazakhstan will actively explore export opportunities in global and regional markets. These are initially China, Russia, Iran, Mongolia, India, Pakistan and countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Fourth, Kazakhstan will develop the training of technical professionals to the maximum extent possible. Technical and vocational education will become a major focus of investment policy. To do this, training centers will be created with Germany, Canada, Australia and Singapore. They will become models of technical and vocational education for the whole country.

Fifth, measures to increase the innovative potential of Kazakhstan's economy will be taken. It is important to lay the foundations for a future economy. We need to develop expertise in smart technologies, artificial intelligence, cyber-physical system integration, future energy generation, design and engineering. This can be done only through the establishment of an efficient research and innovation system. It will be based on strong research universities and innovation clusters formed on the basis of the "Astana Business Campus" high-tech park at Nazarbayev University and the Technopark "Alatau" in Almaty.

It is expected that the new investment policy will lead to an annual economic growth of 5 percent; double the export of processed goods compared to 2015 and boost it to \$30 billion per year; increase annual investment in the economy by more than \$10 billion, and within 10 years by at least \$100 billion; create more than 660,000 new jobs; and double

labor productivity.

The address also indicates new priorities of social policy. For many years Kazakhstan pursued an active social policy and in strengthening economic growth, we have considerably improved our citizens' quality of life. Despite the challenges facing our economy following the global financial crisis, we remain committed to improving the welfare of our people. In the last decade, the government's social spending has almost tripled in real terms. More than 1.5 million citizens have access to benefits and payments.

Despite the current economic risks, we will continue to provide assistance to our people and support them financially. The president declared from Jan. 1 to increase public health-care worker salaries by 28 percent; public educator salaries by 29 percent; and the salaries of those working in social protection by 40 percent. Additionally, a 25 percent increase in various monthly scholarship payments and social benefits will be implemented, the solidarity pension on the rate of 2 percent over inflation will be adjusted and salaries of civil servants will be increased by 30 percent.

Today only the Society of Universal Labor can become a real basis for an effective economy that is resistant to external shocks. To expand social support for citizens a new "Road Map of Employment" will be developed. This will provide stability in the labor market through the projects of local infrastructure development and beautification of towns and villages. Significant short-term development programs and advanced training sessions will be established and microloan programs for entrepreneurial development will be expanded.

The state's social policy will prioritize extensive investment in human capital. Therefore we will continue to modernize our education and healthcare systems in line with earlier programs. From 2017, the "Free Vocational Education for All" project will be launched.



Clockwise from bottom: Nurly Zhol Boulevard in the capital Astana is well-known as a venue for futuristic art, design and architecture; Workers assemble Toyota 4Runner SUVs at the company's factory in Kazakhstan; Astana will be the first Central Asian city to host an international exposition in 2017. EMBASSY OF KAZAKHSTAN



## Examining future energy trends

One of the major catalysts for the transition of Kazakhstan to a green economy is the International Exhibition, EXPO-2017, which will be held in Astana.

A special feature of the exhibition is its theme of "Future Energy." Today, this issue is particularly relevant, as traditional energy resources are of concern due to their progressive exhaustion and non-renewability. In addition, global environmental threats have forced the world to think seriously about the prospects of developing clean technologies and the search for solutions to long-term energy supply.

We hope that after the EXPO-2017 we will turn its facilities into a technology transfer center. We will try to attract the best from the world and show what we have achieved in Kazakhstan, as well as our plans for the future.

According to the approved plan, construction of all 38 facilities for EXPO-2017 will be completed by December 2016. For Kazakhstan, EXPO-2017 will be a landmark event, as never before has such an international exhibition taken place in Central Asia and the CIS. We are glad for the participation of our Japanese partners in the arrangement of exhibition pavilions.

I would like to emphasize that Japan was among those countries that have supported Kazakhstan's bid to host EXPO-2017. It is obvious that the decision of Japan was connected to the high level of bilateral political, trade and economic cooperation, the strong economic growth of Kazakhstan, as well as the selection of the most relevant theme of the exhibition.

Many of my meetings with the leaders and shareholders of Japanese companies from the Forbes Global-2000 ranking confirm a huge interest among Japanese official and business circles to participate

in EXPO-2017.

In accordance with the concept approved by the government of Japan, it is expected that the Japanese Pavilion will be the largest and will include the latest developments and achievements in the field of green technology and renewable energy sources.

#### Open foreign policy

The economic welfare of the country is inextricably linked to the government's foreign policy. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan as an independent state needed to define its place in world geopolitics, formulate national interests, build a system of foreign policy priorities, thus laying the foundations for its future foreign policy strategy.

The open and transparent foreign policy of Kazakhstan carried out in accordance with the "Kazakhstan - 2050" strategy and the "Concept of Foreign Policy" is one of the factors of successful development of the country. We are developing a broad dialogue and mutually beneficial cooperation with all countries interested in friendship with Kazakhstan based on multi-vector approach.

In establishing mutually beneficial and friendly relations with all our key partners, Kazakhstan proved its diplomatic capabilities to address and resolve important issues of the global security agenda. Our country has chaired a number of key multilateral organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2010 with the holding of the summit in Astana for the first time in 11 years. The country also hosted the ministerial conference of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 2011 resulting in the establishment of the Institute of Food Safety and the Commission on Human Rights of the OIC and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence

Building Measures in Asia (CICA), which is initiated by the president of Kazakhstan; and the country was actively involved in the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan and other regional structures.

#### Nuclear legacy

Kazakhstan is a consistent supporter of nuclear disarmament and calls on all countries for strict observance of the regime for the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Speaking at the 70th session of the U.N. General Assembly, our president urged to make a world without nuclear weapons as the main goal of humankind in the 21st century.

Kazakhstan is one of the few countries in the world that has suffered the consequences of nuclear tests.

There were 468 nuclear tests conducted at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. One-and-a-half million people suffered from the effects of the explosions and a huge territory exceeding the size of a number of European countries was polluted.

More than 20 years ago, the people of Kazakhstan made a fundamental choice in favor of a world free of nuclear weapons. On Aug. 29, 1991, by decree of Nazarbayev, the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site with the world's fourth-largest nuclear arsenal was closed.

In 2009, the U.N. General Assembly declared Aug. 29 as the International Day Against Nuclear Tests.

Kazakhstan's example is especially relevant today when the world is facing the problem of the "spread" of nuclear weapons and the growing threat of nuclear terrorism.

That is why Nazarbayev initiated to take within the framework of the U.N. Universal Declaration to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, which would reflect the commitment of all states to move step-by-

step toward a nuclear weapon-free world.

In August 2012 we launched the international project, "ATOM," designed to strengthen global support for the final and irrevocable ban of nuclear weapons tests and their total destruction.

Creation of a global anti-nuclear movement also is seen as an important tool to achieve this goal. Every person on the planet can and must contribute to the nuclear test ban.

On August 27, 2015 Kazakhstan and the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) signed an agreement on the establishment of the IAEA Low Enriched Uranium Bank in Kazakhstan. The bank will be an important contribution to strengthening the non-proliferation regime. Kazakhstan, as the largest holder of uranium reserves, is planning to develop peaceful nuclear energy. It is in the interest of both our countries and all our partners interested in cooperation in this field.

It is symbolic that with Japan, a country that also has experienced the horrors of nuclear weapons use, we assumed chairmanship of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

During the recent visit of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Kazakhstan our leaders reaffirmed the leading position of the two states in the field of nuclear disarmament adopting a special political statement in support of the CTBT.

#### Regional, global security

We see our mission in the Central Asian region as one of successive strengthening of regional security and stability. We have created a nuclear-free zone in Central Asia and will strengthen regional nuclear-free regime sharing our experience with other regional

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## Maintaining regional and global security

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communities. It is important to point out that Central Asia has become a major player in the settlement of the situation in Afghanistan. Kazakhstan is interested in sustainable and stable development of this country. The military presence in the country should be replaced by development programs aimed at addressing the security threats emanating from Afghanistan.

Kazakhstan is the only net contributor country in Central Asia. Humanitarian aid is provided both bilaterally and through multilateral mechanisms. Currently, Kazakhstan is working on the creation of the National Agency for International Development, "KazAID." One of the priorities of this agency will be the implementation of projects in Afghanistan and other Central Asian countries.

Kazakhstan also assists in other parts of the world. In October 2014 the government of Kazakhstan transferred funds to the U.N. Ebola response multipartner trust fund to combat the Ebola virus. In November 2014 in cooperation with the U.N. Development Program (UNDP) a project to provide support to African countries through the additional training of experts (in the medical, agricultural and oil sectors) was launched. The project aims to increase the knowledge and technical skills through training at leading Kazakhstan universities and companies.

With the UNDP expert support, a program of partnership between government, academia and business structures of Kazakhstan and African region will be implemented for the first time.

In December 2014 Kazakhstan and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) signed an agreement for financial assistance to support a special project of the Commission on Pacific countries members of the group of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The project aims at increasing the capacity of inclusive and sustainable development of these countries.

### Peacekeeping role

Kazakhstan demonstrates a commitment to peacekeeping activities and supports the expansion of U.N. peacekeeping operations. The Kazakh peacekeeping battalion "Kazbat" participated in demining operations in Iraq and our officers participated as observers in U.N. peacekeeping missions.

Kazakhstan sends military officers as observers to U.N. missions in Haiti, the Western Sahara, Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia.

At the same time, our country has a clear position that peacekeeping operations should be carried out only in accordance with U.N. Security Council resolutions and with full observance of all norms of international law.

We are committed to the protection of civilians from all forms of violence and aggression and the rights of women

and children in armed conflict. Our country is making efforts to improve the practical implementation of U.N. Security Council resolution on the role of women in preventing and resolving conflicts. Kazakhstan is firmly committed to strengthening the rule of law and good governance in the work with the U.N., the OSCE and the Council of Europe to further implement democratic reforms. The election of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2013 to the U.N. Council on Human Rights for a three-year term was a reflection of the country's determination to make human rights and democracy and the rule of law and fundamental freedoms the cornerstone of progressive development both in the country and at the international level.

Kazakhstan supports all initiatives aimed at building confidence in international relations, peace and security based on international law.

### Fighting terrorism

A series of recent terrorist attacks that took place in Paris once again confirm the need to build cooperation between states. We constantly speak out on the unacceptability of terrorism in all its manifestations. As such, Kazakhstan supports the efforts of the international community in the framework of the U.N. in the fight against terrorism and extremism cancers. I think that one way to achieve this would be the initiative of our president to establish a Global Counter-Terrorism Network under the auspices of the U.N.

Kazakhstan is determined to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. Therefore, our country has launched its bid as a non-permanent member of the U.N. Security Council in 2017-2018.

Kazakhstan's candidacy was put forward in accordance with the principles of fair and equitable geographical rotation and adequate representation of all member states of the Asia-Pacific Group in the U.N. Security Council. Kazakhstan and the Central Asian region for the first time launched a bid for a place on the U.N. Security Council.

Our campaign is focused on the global nuclear issues, as well as water, food and energy security, as these problems exist on every continent.

In light of the involvement of Kazakhstan in a number of regional and global processes, and taking into account our strong position in mediation and confidence-building, Kazakhstan stands as an honest broker, known for its integrity, efficiency, balanced approach and neutrality to all international players, states and organizations in the framework of multilateral diplomacy.

We see that now countries of the Asia-Pacific Group, in particular the representatives of South and East Asia, are actively engaged in the activities of the U.N.

In this regard, considering the preservation of the principles of fair and equitable geographical rotation and



Kazakhstan is bidding for a seat on the U.N. Security Council in 2017-2018. EMBASSY OF KAZAKHSTAN

adequate representation of all member states of the Asia-Pacific Group on the U.N. Security Council, as well as equitable geographical distribution of posts for members of Asia-Pacific region in the U.N. system, we believe that it would be fair if this regional group for the first time would be represented by a Central Asian state, namely Kazakhstan.

Given the level of bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and Japan, I would like to express my hope for support by the leadership and people of Japan for Kazakhstan's bid to become a non-permanent member of the U.N. Security Council in 2017-2018.

### Promoting diversity

Kazakhstan has been and remains committed to the idea of interreligious and intercultural dialogue. The Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Astana has become the main platform for the development of intercultural and interreligious dialogue between East and West, North and South. We are grateful to the Association of Shinto Shrines for continued participation in this forum, including its active contribution to the fifth Congress, which was held in June.

We are continuing efforts to promote diversity for peace and sustainable development

in the framework of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures in 2013-2022 initiated by Kazakhstan and proclaimed by the U.N. General Assembly.

Kazakhstan is strengthening its cooperation in the major integration of unions of various regions of the world, including in Europe (EU, OSCE, Council of Europe), the Asia-Pacific (ASEAN, ACD, APEC, CICA), Eurasia (ASEM, EAC, CIS), the Americas (OAS, CARICOM, Union of South American Nations) and Africa (African Union).

As you know, our president is an active supporter of integration projects not only regionally, but also globally. He initiated formation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). We consider the EAEU as a positive factor for our country. Kazakh producers have gotten unlimited access to the capacious market of the member states. We only need to work on improvement of competitiveness of our goods and services to gain a foothold in this large market.

Kazakhstan remains a firm supporter of the idea that the EAEU is possible only on the principles of volunteering, equality, mutual benefit and the pragmatic interests of each member country.

Today, some politicians and experts fuel global public fears



The fifth Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions took place in Astana on June 10 and 11, bringing together representatives of all major religions for dialogue. EMBASSY OF KAZAKHSTAN

with the mythical "reincarnation" of the USSR. We believe that the arguments in this respect are far from reality and groundless. There is no institutional framework for the reintegration of the Soviet Union. All have become part of history as the republics and people of the former Soviet Union have built their own statehoods. This is a view that is shared by all leaders of EAEU.

We are convinced that participation of states in integration will act as an incentive for the industrialization of national economies providing jobs for people, creating favorable conditions for business development, etc. Integration will be successful if it ensures the welfare of people, gives them new opportunities for fair and equitable labor, first of all, in their own country.

### Kazakh-Japan relations

This year opened a new page in relations between Kazakhstan and Japan. Thanks to the friendly and trusting relationships inherent in strategic partners, Kazakhstan and Japan have made significant progress in mutually beneficial economic and trade cooperation.

The last few years have seen breakthroughs as a result of a significant cooperation in the industrial, energy and financial sectors. Last year, bilateral trade amounted \$1.7 billion.

The total amount of Japanese foreign direct investment into our economy over the past five years has grown by 15.1 percent and exceeded \$6.3 billion. More than 50 Japanese companies successfully operate in Kazakhstan and there are more than 30 joint ventures.

Kazakhstan and Japan have created a solid foundation for full cooperation and strengthening partnership. We have been successfully cooperating on a bilateral basis and within international organizations.

The visit of our president to Japan in 2008 boosted investment and technological cooperation as the leaders of both countries identified and outlined the prospects of economic partnership.

An additional impetus to the further comprehensive cooperation between two countries was given by the historical visit of Abe to Kazakhstan in October.

Despite the fact that our president and Abe have met three times in recent years on the sidelines of major international forums, the visit strengthened friendly and personal relationship of two leaders.

An important part of the visit was dedicated to the trade and economic cooperation taking into account the existing untapped potential and complementarities of two economies.

Our two leaders took part in a business forum that gathered

over 400 people, including more than 200 representatives of Japanese companies.

During the event, 15 documents were signed to step up joint cooperation in the fields of nuclear energy, oil and gas exploration, chemical industry, agriculture and other.

Kazakhstan showcased to the Japanese side its favorable geographical location and transit potential for the deliveries of Japanese goods and products to the European market, and back through the logistics terminal in the port of Lianyungang (China), the highway connecting Western Europe and Western China and the free economic zone "Khorghos-Eastern Gate."

Leaders of our countries also discussed the issues of regional security, cooperation within international and regional organizations, as well as initiatives, including those within the frameworks of the U.N. and the CICA. Kazakhstan and Japan have identical positions on all issues of international security.

It should be noted that in Astana Abe announced a strategic vision of Japan in Central Asia.

### Closer ties

While expressing overall satisfaction with the level of relations between two countries I would like to stress that at present Kazakhstan and Japan are

interested in closer trade, economic and investment cooperation, especially in the fields of energy, rare metals, petrochemicals, machinery, communications, agriculture, space, processing industries and other strategically important areas.

We are consistently making efforts to create favorable conditions for Japanese companies and investments in Kazakhstan, as well as to ensure their efficient operations in our country.

We are actively working on the formation of the appropriate legal base and, thanks to the efforts of both countries in recent years, we have signed three important documents. These are the convention for the avoidance of double taxation, an agreement on the peaceful use of nuclear energy, as well as an agreement on liberalization, encouragement and protection of investments.

These documents will facilitate full participation of Japanese corporations in the implementation of the strategy of industrial and innovative development of Kazakhstan.

I hope that dynamically developing relations between Kazakhstan and Japan at various levels will further expand political, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation between our countries.

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to the People of the  
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on the Occasion of  
the 24th Anniversary of  
Their Independence

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