

Kingdom of Morocco Throne Day

Reforms ongoing in a variety of areas

Samir Arrour
AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF
MOROCCO

Today marks the 17th anniversary of the enthronement of His Majesty the King Mohammed VI. On this auspicious occasion, as ambassador to Japan, I would like to convey my respectful greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the government and the friendly people of Japan.



60 years have passed since diplomatic relations between Morocco and Japan were established and since then the privileged ties that bind the two countries has been continuously enhanced by our friendship.

The bilateral relations between our two countries witnessed tremendous development during the last year, as reflected by several official visits from both sides that consolidated these ties to a higher level.

I seize this opportunity to shed light on a few aspects regarding achievements realized by Morocco on the political, economic and international levels

with respect to the positive evolution of Morocco's relations with Japan.

Since the accession of His Majesty the King to the throne, Morocco has embarked on a large and comprehensive democratic process of reforms in the political, economic and social fields. This process aims at strengthening the rule of law and broadening the scope of fundamental freedoms and human rights. This is being done while taking into account Moroccan specificities, related to a long-standing historical and sociocultural heritage and Moroccan values based on the principles of solidarity, peace and tolerance.

With the adoption of a 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.

With the aim of boosting scientific and cultural reflection on Islam and spreading tolerant Islam in Africa, Morocco launched "The Mohammed VI Foundation for African Scholars." The foundation, which is part of Morocco's soft strategy to tackle radicalization and fight extremism and religious fanaticism through the spreading of moderate Islam, is meant to fos-



H.M. King Mohammed VI

ter coordination between African Muslim scholars with a view to disseminating shared Islamic African cultural heritage.

In yet further evidence of his commitment to promoting religious moderation and tolerance in the region, His Majesty the King inaugurated the Higher Council of the Mohammed VI Foundation for African Ulema in 2016. First announced in June 2015, the foundation brings together 120 ulema, Muslim scholars recognized for their knowledge of Islamic law and theology, from 31 countries in Africa.

The significant economic progress that has been achieved by Morocco is the result of a progressive, smooth transformation process launched in 1999, under the guidance of His Majesty the King, to ensure fair growth with great potential and a larger spec-

trum that guarantees the inclusion and participation of all citizens, strengthening social cohesion and stability.

At the same time, 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, as reflected with the World Bank's Doing Business 2015 report, giving the country an advanced ranking. In addition, a new industrial strategy (for 2014-2020) was launched to drive structural changes and strengthen the country's position in global value chains.

We are very pleased to note that during this year, the relationships between our two countries have continued to develop harmoniously and have diversified to cover a large sphere of activities.

In this perspective, the remarkable development of trade relations and the significant Japanese investments made in recent years in our country helped in making Morocco a favorite destination for Japanese businesses. More than 40 Japanese companies invested and are carrying out their business in a very stable and encouraging environment in Morocco, employing more than 40,000 Moroccan cit-

izens.

It should be noted that Moroccan-Japanese cooperation, particularly with the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, is recognized as a success story that has had a positive and direct impact, especially on the development of infrastructure and equipment of our country, as well as the implementation of the National Initiative for Human Development.

Japan is a strategic partner for Morocco in the development of capacity building in areas such as education and today, academic cooperation is focused on addressing the needs and modernization processes of the areas of research and training human resources.

For many years, Japan has played a major role in the socioeconomic development of our region in general and of Morocco in particular. In fact, a new and improved relationship between Japan and our region and continent is facing global challenges such as beneficial use of natural resources and climate change with a keen focus on sustainable development, renewable energy and socioeconomic progress that has seen support for the various initiatives taken in order to achieve socioeconomic development.

Morocco hosted the fourth

edition of the Japan-Arab Economic Forum in Casablanca on May 4 and 5. This forum represented a great opportunity for the Japanese private sector to seek new investments in Morocco and add to the already established Japanese corporations, which are noteworthy success stories.

Morocco will host this year the 22nd Session of the Conference of the Parties to the U.N. Framework on Climate Change (COP 22) in the city of Marrakech from Nov. 7 to 18.

As a tourist destination, there is certainly no shortage of great attractions in Morocco. The country enjoys a strong sense of culture and a long and ancient history with as many as eight locations designated by UNESCO as World Heritage sites. Most of the cultural heritage sites are historical in nature and provide a wealth of information and form a significant part of the history of mankind.

I would like to conclude my message by reiterating the keen interest of the government of the Kingdom of Morocco 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.

Maintaining economic growth

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, as both investors and tourists. It demonstrates a leading model of economic and social development in the region following the Arab Spring movement.

The relationship between Japan and Morocco has always been excellent and this year marks the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Morocco. I am very happy to note that many events are being organized to celebrate this special year. The Japan-Morocco Association conducted a New Year's Forum in January and organized a special tour to Morocco in February. Morocco hosted a Japan-Arab Economic Forum in early May in Casablanca and many private Japanese companies visited Morocco that were impressed with their visit and renewed their interest in investing in Morocco. Furthermore, the sixth Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD VI) will be held in Nairobi in August. Many private companies that are interested in investing in Africa are finding Morocco as the gateway to doing business in Africa.

We had an official visit by Morocco's industry minister in May, while his Japanese counterpart, Motoo Hayashi, visited Morocco on the occasion of Japan-Arab Economic Forum. Additionally, there are various exchanges of many other important personalities planned.

TV programs and magazine articles featuring Morocco and the country as a tourist destination continue to be very popular, as are a variety of Moroccan products such as argan oil, olive oil, salted lemon, tajine cooking and babouche slippers.

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 and seminars on economic relations. We will participate in Morocco Week, which will be held in the Flower Festival Commemorative Park in Gifu Prefecture in October.

Additionally, the annual Moroccan Evening at the Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo, is scheduled to take place this year on Nov. 8 and new participants to these events are welcome to consult our website for details on taking part.

Nation offers stable access to the region

Kenji Kosaka
FORMER PRESIDENT, JAPAN-
MOROCCO PARLIAMENTARY LEAGUE



As a former president of the Japan-Morocco Parliamentary League, as well as a long-time friend of Morocco, on behalf of all league members, I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt congratulations to 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 government of Morocco on the auspicious occasion of the 17th anniversary of the enthronement of His Majesty King Mohammed VI.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Morocco. I am pleased to note that since 1956, both countries have built a strong bilateral relationship. I would like to express profound respect to those from our two countries who have made efforts to advance this friendship.

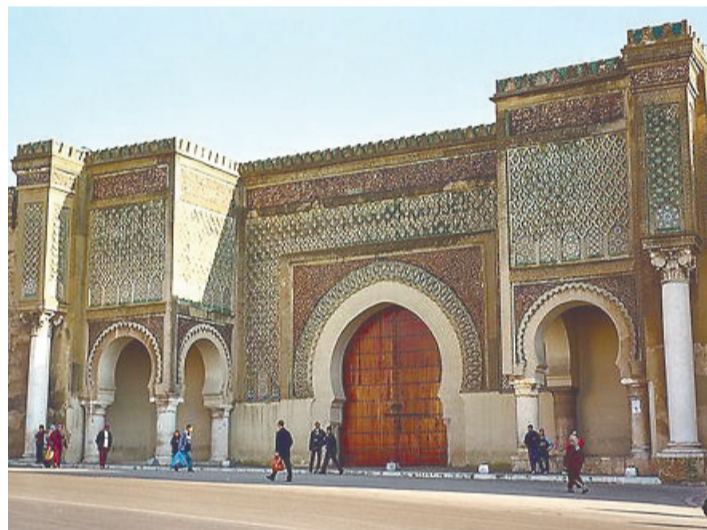
Last month, I resigned from the Diet post that I had held since 1990, while also opting out of the Japan-Morocco Parliamentary League, whose presidency I had been holding since May 2007. During my service, I had the great honor of visiting Morocco in May 2013. During

my visit, I discussed ways to consolidate our relationships with H.E. Abdelilah Benkirane, head of the Moroccan government, and H.E. Karim Ghellab, chairman and president of the House of Representatives. I also had the honor to discuss with H.E. Mohamed Cheikh Biadillah, president of the House of Councillors, parliamentary cooperation between our two countries during his official visit to Japan in September 2014.

In recent years, the Middle East and the North Africa Region are experiencing upheavals. However, under the initiative of the king, Morocco remains one of the most stable countries in the region. Thanks to this stability, Japanese companies are expanding their business both with, and in, Morocco. As a man who loves Morocco deeply, I sincerely hope that the relations between our two countries will be further strengthened in all fields, including political, economic, social, cultural and others.

Morocco was once known by the name of "Maghreb El-Aqca," which means Far West. On the other hand, Japan is known as a country in the Far East. I hope with sincerity that these two countries located respectively in the Far West and Far East will deepen understanding and cooperation with each other.

I hope the Japan-Morocco Parliamentary League will continue to contribute to accomplishing many of these objectives.



Bab Mansour Gate in Meknes is widely considered to be one of the most beautiful gates in Africa. EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO



Marrakech is home to the 12th-century Jardin Menara gardens. EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

Congratulations on the 17th Anniversary of the Accession to the Throne of His Majesty King Mohammed VI

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CONGRATULATIONS

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We have organized the Japan Argan Oil Association for the purpose of spreading argan oil in Morocco.



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