

Armenia National Day

Ongoing relations strengthen across various areas

Grant Pogosyan
AMBASSADOR OF ARMENIA

A quarter century has passed since Sept. 21 was designated as the National Day of the Republic of Armenia. On this day in 1991 the Republic of Armenia was declared a new independent state, in accordance with international democratic norms after a nationwide referendum. On this occasion of the 25th Independence Day of the modern Armenian state, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to my compatriots, as well as to all our friends in Japan and elsewhere in the world.

Japan was among the first countries recognizing the new Armenian state, and on Sept. 7, 1992, diplomatic relations between the two nations were formally established. The friendly

relations between Armenia and Japan have seen many positive developments since their formation 24 years ago. The mutual establishment of embassies in our capital cities, the friendship leagues by both Armenian and Japanese lawmakers, the cultural groups and friendship associations established in both countries have been boosting our ties and reinforcing our partnership in all areas. Our bilateral relations have been highlighted by various reciprocal visits, the landmark of which was the official visit of the president of Armenia to Japan in June 2012. The recent visit of a Japanese parliamentary delegation to Armenia, led by Seishiro Eto, president of the Japan-Armenia Parliamentary Friendship League, was one more solid step toward deeper bilateral ties, and further high-level visits from Japan will surely broaden the foundation for the next decades of partnership.

In recent years, we have witnessed significant progress in

our cultural exchanges and public-level diplomacy. Many individuals, scientists, musicians and artists have recently participated in events in both Armenia and Japan, contributing to mutual understanding and strengthened friendship between our nations.

The official development assistance projects of the Japanese government that have been carried out in Armenia are significantly helping to improve the economic infrastructure of the country. Such collaboration and technical assistance continues today and our people greatly appreciate the generous help of the Japanese government and the people of Japan. Moreover, Armenia is becoming a tourist destination for a steadily increasing number of our Japanese friends. Advancing business ties, boosting trade and investment in both countries, still remains a collaboration sphere with great potential and Armenia welcomes Japanese industry and entrepreneurs to explore the opportuni-

ties of their presence in our country.

Despite the relatively young age of its modern statehood, the Armenian nation, as one of the longest-lasting civilizations in the world, is proud of its historical heritage, unique language, distinctive culture and rich traditions. While cherishing the nation's past, the Armenian people today are striving to build a modern state that prospers under the commandments of democracy and free-market economy. Over the past quarter century the Republic of Armenia has shown substantial progress in nation building and has demonstrated significant achievements in the economic and social spheres. Armenia's economy is developing in diverse directions, such as in high technology, mining, agriculture, tourism, pharmaceuticals, and chemical engineering among others.

In particular, I wish to mention two currently flourishing industries — information technology and winemaking, both of which have been showing double-digit growth in the past few years. Armenia, with its highly educated population, entrepreneurial spirit and competitive labor costs, has firmly established itself as a technological hub and a reputable outsourcing destination for IT industry enterprises. The majority of the more than 400 companies operating in the high-technology field in Armenia have foreign ownership. Meanwhile, the fast growing number of start-up firms, the

rise of home-grown companies, as well as numerous international exhibitions, make Armenia look a lot like a smaller version of Silicon Valley in the U.S. For those who are interested in learning about IT in Armenia, and especially in collaborating with the companies in our IT industry, I recommend attending the upcoming forum "IT's Armenia," which will be held on Oct. 28 at the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) in the Ark Hills building in Tokyo.

Winemaking has been a millennia-long tradition in Armenia. The discovery of the oldest winery in the world in Areni village, about 100 km south of the capital Yerevan, suggests that people in that area have been making wine for the past 6,100 years. During Soviet times the industry was mainly focused on production of the famous Armenian brandy, concentrating on specific grape varieties for that purpose. Winemaking has seen a true revival recently, in part

through reproducing the traditional grape varieties, and Armenian wines have started to gain recognition and prizes in prestigious wine expos and shows. According to CNN, Armenia is now listed among the top 15 wine-making countries in the world.

Known for their warmth and generous hospitality, Armenian people support the peaceful co-existence of all nations, and are strong advocates of universal human rights. One recent exam-

ple of this is the "Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity" (see auroraprize.com), which was launched last year in Yerevan on the occasion of the Armenian genocide centennial commemoration. This remarkable endeavor, with many distinguished human rights advocates from around the globe, Nobel Prize laureates and celebrities involved in Armenia has become

a focal spot on the global map of humanity. There are 558 nominations for the 2017 Aurora Prize, many of which are people who have shown exceptional impact on saving lives and advancing humanitarian causes.

On this celebratory occasion I wish peace and prosperity to the people of Japan and all readers of The Japan Times around the world.



2016 Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity
EMBASSY OF ARMENIA



More than 100 types of grapes are grown in Armenia today. EMBASSY OF ARMENIA

Congratulations
to the People
of
the Republic
of Armenia
on
the 25th Anniversary
of
Their Independence

JT

JAPAN TOBACCO INC.
JT Bldg., 2-1, Toranomon 2-Chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-8422, JAPAN
Phone: (03) 3582-3111 Fax: (03) 5572-1463 URL: <http://www.jt.com>

*Congratulations
to the People of the Republic of Armenia
on the 25th Anniversary of Their Independence*



Since 1954
SUN REALTY
& INSURANCE CORPORATION
PRESIDENT: SHIZUKO TANI

Homat Royal Suite 101, 14-11, Akasaka 1-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052
Telephone: 81-3-3584-6171 Facsimile: 81-3-3505-0939
E-mail: sun@sunrealty.co.jp <http://sunrealty.jp/>