

Oman National Day

A history of friendly, joint cooperation

Khalid Al-Muslahi
AMBASSADOR OF THE SULTANATE
OF OMAN



On the happy occasion of the 46th National Day of the Sultanate of Oman, I have the honor on behalf of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, his government and the people of Oman to convey the greetings and best wishes to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the members of the Imperial family, as well as the government and people of Japan.

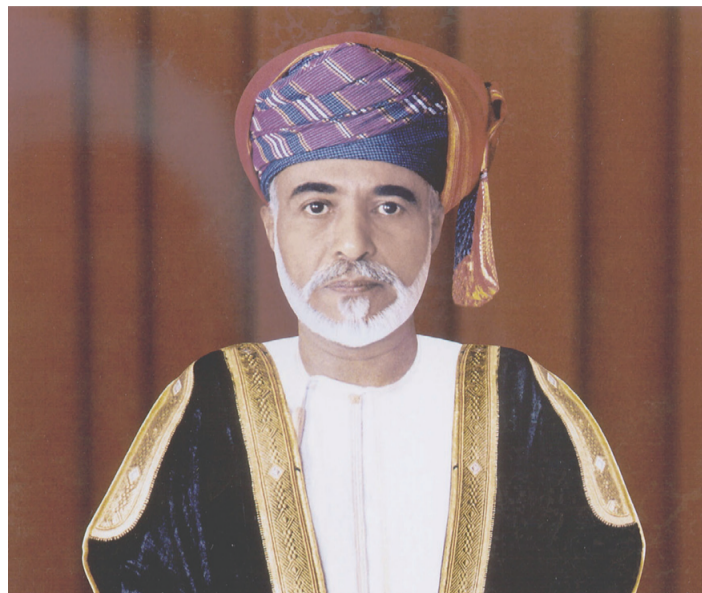
Let me also express my sincere appreciation to H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, honorary chairman of the Japan-Oman Society, for his support and encouragement of the relations between Oman and Japan and wish him success in his significant task of providing leadership to the government and people of Japan. It is the desire of the government and people of Oman that under his leadership, the friendship and partnerships between our two countries will be further strengthened.

I would also like to express our appreciation to the government and people of Japan for the kind cooperation extended to us for many years, and our profound appreciation to all the members of the Japan-Oman Parliamentary Friendship League, the Japan-Oman Society, the Hiroshima-Oman Friendship Association, the Japan-Oman Club and the Japan-Arab Association.

Progress and growth

With great pride and jubilation, the people of Oman celebrate today the glorious 46th national day anniversary of the blessed renaissance under the wise leadership of H.M. Sultan Qaboos, who brought about great transformation in every sphere of Omani life and made Oman an oasis for peace, security and prosperity. The nation expresses its heartfelt gratitude and renews the pledge of loyalty to H.M. Sultan Qaboos for his visionary guidance that leveraged the Omani citizen's potential and aspirations.

The achievements accom-



His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said

plished by the Omani people over the years had one main noble objective set by our leader, the building of a modern, faithful Omani who preserves the deep-rooted traditions and customs of the Sultanate, while making full use of the benefits of modern civilization in building his present and shaping his future.

Since the dawn of the blessed Renaissance in 1970, H.M. Sultan Qaboos has laid the pillars of national unity, which serve as a foundation for the development efforts in all fields, while promoting the value of justice and the rule of law.

The Omani government places great importance on social development with special emphasis on job creation and training opportunities, economic diversification, investment promotion and enhancing the participation of small and medium-size enterprises in the growth of the national economy.

While justice and a balanced development have been two of the key characteristics of Oman's developmental march, the Omani people have much to be proud of. From education and health care to infrastructure and industrial development, the Sultanate has made extraordinary strides in all aspects of nationhood, as well as expanding its friendly relations with other nations.

Since 1976, Oman has implemented successive five-year development plans that utilized oil revenues in building vital infrastructure projects that would serve as a base for Oman's eco-

nomical diversification. It has also made impressive gains in health, education and social services.

At the beginning of 2016, H.M. Sultan Qaboos approved the ninth five-year plan (2016-2020), which serves as the last cycle of Oman Vision-2020 and paves the way for Oman Vision 2040.

The current five-year plan attaches huge importance to the optimum utilization of resources and investment opportunities in different parts of the Sultanate. The plan also sets policies for the further participation of the private sector in Oman's economic growth.

The country is moving forward with its plan to diversify sources of income, reduce reliance on oil revenues and alleviate the negative effects of oil price slumps in the world market.

While the Sultanate endeavors to continue building national capacities, making optimum use of Oman's strategic location, encouraging local and foreign investment and generating more job opportunities for Omanis, it also seeks to enhance its relations with other countries based on mutual respect, non-interference in others' affairs and respect for good neighborly relations. The country also cooperates in regional and international efforts to promote peace and security in the region and beyond.

Oman-Japan relations

Founded on mutual respect, reciprocal trust and friendship, Oman and Japan share 400

years of friendly contacts and 44 years of official diplomatic relations. The interaction and cooperation between the two nations have been growing rapidly on various levels.

The economic and trade ties between Oman and Japan has been the backbone of the long and fruitful relationship that continues to prosper and grow. Japan was one of the first countries to receive Omani crude oil, and the export of oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) has made Japan one of the most important markets for Oman's hydrocarbon exports.

For Japan, Oman has always been a reliable and stable source of energy supplies. In 2015 Oman was ranked 34th among Japan's top trading partners and the third-biggest market for Japanese exports to the Middle East and North African region. Japan is also among Oman's top trading partners.

Although oil and LNG represent the biggest share of Japan's total imports from Oman, imports of aluminum, marine and agricultural products from the country is also significant.

Oman is also a major importer of Japanese automobiles, machinery, chemicals and appliances among other products. A number of Japanese corporations are engaged in large projects in Oman in the fields of oil and gas, electricity and water generation. This vast and voluminous trade and investment relationship makes Japan an important partner to Oman.

While economic relations have been based in these key areas and industries for years, the nature of this relationship is far more complex and is set to grow and diversify as Oman continues to promote investment opportunities, economic diversification plans, developmental and infrastructure projects to Japanese counterparts for possible cooperation in investment, technology transfer and human resource development. Cooperation with Japanese industries is set to become a major aspect of this new area of economic relations between the two nations.

Finance is also an area of potential importance, as Japanese investment and financing in Omani projects continue to expand and provide mutual benefits. To create a more conducive environment for such activities, the Japan-Oman



The old city of Muscat EMBASSY OF OMAN

Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation was signed in January 2014, and the bilateral Agreement for the Protection and Promotion of Investments was signed in June 2015.

Beyond the economic sphere, relations between Oman and Japan have witnessed throughout the years the exchange of high-ranking official visits, from members of our royal and Imperial families, senior government officials, members of parliament and business and academic leaders. Additionally, there have been growing exchanges and cooperation in the fields of culture, tourism, science and education, sports and other areas.

One of the most important aspects of strengthening bilateral ties in today's world is the encouragement of cultural exchanges and understanding. Japan and Oman have recognized this need and given special emphasis to the promotion

of culture through various events and activities. This has included exhibitions, special symposiums and lectures, film screenings, exchanges of Omani and Japanese students, sporting encounters, music and dance performances, cooperation in various academic and research fields and other initiatives and special occasions.

On closing, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to the people of Japan for their kindness and hospitality and to our many friends in Japan for their support and assistance in promoting good relations between our two friendly peoples. I am also indebted to our sponsors, whose generosity has made this supplement possible. I am confident that our relations in the coming days will see the further enhancement of close bonds of friendship between Oman and Japan.



The annual Royal Horse Race Festival displays the sultanate's rich cultural legacy. EMBASSY OF OMAN



View of Nakhal Fort and surrounding palm plantations in the northwest region of Oman EMBASSY OF OMAN

Congratulations
to the People of
the Sultanate of Oman
on the Occasion of
the 46th Anniversary of
Their National Day

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