

# Afghanistan National Day

## Working toward self-reliance

**BASHIR MOHABBAT**  
AMBASSADOR OF AFGHANISTAN



Today, on the 98th Anniversary of the National Day of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, I am honored, on behalf of my people and government, to express

sincerest respect and gratitude to Their Imperial Majesties the Emperor and Empress, H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the people and government of the wonderful nation of Japan for your enduring friendship.

Thanks to the continuing support of international partners, of which Japan is prominent, our government and the National Unity Government (NUG) in particular, have made extraordinary progress. For example, our gross domestic product has expanded more than eightfold over the past 15 years and GDP per capita has tripled from \$190 in 2002 to \$620 in 2015. The NUG has taken concrete reform measures, leading to a 21 percent increase in domestic revenue from 2014 to 2015. Additionally, a commission, the

National Procurement Authority, has been established to take results-oriented action against corruption.

Being landlocked, regional connectivity is vital for self-reliance. To this end, H.E. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani signed the Chabahar Transit and Transport Agreement, a pact establishing a strategic transit route with Iran and India. The Five Nations Railway Corridor will enhance economic integration and allow Afghanistan to realize our potential as a hub of regional connectivity.

Women's rights continue to expand, with 27.4 percent of parliamentarians being female. The agricultural sector is making steady progress and investment opportunities have opened in numerous sectors, including health services and construction.

This past year, Afghanistan has made further strides regarding domestic peace and security, particularly through a peace treaty with the Hezb-i-Islami, led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The High Peace Council, now headed by H.E. Mohammad Karim Khalili, has gained new momentum and is seeking to further spread harmony. Japan specifically has assisted with such groundbreaking programs as the Promotion and Enhancement



of the Afghan Capacity for Effective Development and ministry of education scholarships, developing Afghan scholars' capacity, an essential step in furthering the promotion of peace. Additionally, at the Brussels Conference last October, Japan pledged \$1.6 billion to assist Afghanistan over four years.

This year, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Kentaro Sonoura, visited Afghanistan. He had cordial meetings with our president, H.E. Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah Abdullah and H.E. Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai. During his visit, he reiterated Japan's continued assistance well into the future.

Thus, on this momentous occasion, I would like to convey, on behalf of the people and government of Afghanistan, deepest gratitude for Japan's support and assistance. The Japanese people have proven to be true friends. I look forward to the continued deepening of bonds between our great nations.

**H.E. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani (right), H.E. Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah Abdullah (left) and several key Afghan officials attend a NATO conference in 2016.** EMBASSY OF AFGHANISTAN

## History of friendship

**NOBUTERU ISHIHARA**  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MEMBER



It gives me great honor and pleasure to extend my sincerest congratulations to the people and government

of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on the occasion of their Independence Day.

Although bilateral ties between our countries mark their 86th anniversary this year, they actually date back thousands of years to when people of Japan and Afghanistan interacted and exchanged goods via the ancient Silk Road. Since Afghanistan succeeded in securing its democracy 16 years ago, Japan has been a supporter of Afghanistan's rebuilding efforts. Triumphant, under the leadership of the National Unity Government, Afghanistan is moving forward exponentially with its economic policy and transportation restructuring at the regional level, focused on self-reliance.

I sincerely hope that the long-term bilateral friendship will expand and flourish even further.

## CONGRATULATIONS

on the 98th Anniversary of  
the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's  
Independence

HAMID KARZAI  
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



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