

Georgia Independence Day Special

Georgia-Japan cooperation key to East-West partnership

GIORGI MARGVELASHVILI
PRESIDENT OF GEORGIA



On May 26, 2018, Georgia celebrates the Centennial of the Restoration of its Statehood and declaration of Georgia's First Republic. After the downfall of the Russian Empire, Georgian people

chose their path toward peaceful and democratic development to build a free European country in which the rule of law, democracy and human rights remain fundamental values. We adopted a constitution that was advanced among other constitutions of European countries in that period. Georgia's progressive constitution ensured a system of justice, self-government and the rights of women and minorities. However, the First Georgian Republic existed only for three years, as Georgia once again became a victim of geopolitical rivals.

Throughout the 20th century, the world went through an era of confrontation. We all witnessed various conflicts, numerous challenges, World War II and the fall of the

Berlin Wall that ended the Cold war and led to the dissolution of the Soviet bloc. After the Soviet Union collapsed, Georgia with other nations regained its independence with the same spirit that once established the First Georgian Republic. However, our path has never been simple. We together with other nations gained the victory, but we did not realize this success and received new frontlines and "spheres of privileged interests." Today, Georgia still struggles to defend its statehood; its historical parts — the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions are still occupied by the Russian Federation.

Regardless of difficulties and hardship, Georgia preserved its identity and aspiration toward freedom. We continued our historical mission connecting deferent civilizations, cultures and economic spaces with each other. The uniqueness of Georgian culture had always been its attractiveness to the East and to the West. Living millenniums on this land indicated our essence as we are at least a 23-century-old united nation; we are creators and guardians of our own alphabet. The country made its geopolitical choice toward Western civilization by adopting Christianity 16 centuries ago.

Carrying geopolitically strategic importance, Georgia is located at a critical nexus

of the geostrategic Black Sea and Caucasus region that bridges east with west and north with south. This is a trans-continental cooperation space, which opens inspiring opportunities. Georgia plays significant role in pipelines and railroad projects of global importance. The greatest potential economic corridor that passes through Georgia is the main bridge in trade and economic relations. In the development of the new "Silk Road," our region is the key player that has close cooperation in the field of transport and logistics. Georgia provides access to a market of 2.3 billion via free trade regimes with the European Union, European Free Trade Association, Turkey, China and Commonwealth of Independent States countries that significantly increases the country's attractiveness as a valuable investment destination. The Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with the EU has significant implications for Georgia's economy and provides new opportunities for international trade and economic growth. Stating altogether, Georgia is increasing its role as a trade, transport, logistics and financial regional hub. Our goal is to connect dozens of countries and tens of millions of people in Europe and Asia to one another and thus become a subject of their welfare, development and interest.

Georgia and Japan have always been committed partners. The universal values such as freedom, democracy and peace determines the main basis for our partnership. Both of our nations share same deep pride of ancient culture, history and celebration of our national traditions. Last year, our countries celebrated the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Throughout this period, relations between Georgia and Japan have developed dynamically in bilateral and multilateral formats. We actively cooperate in various spheres such as political, trade, the economy, infrastructure, investments, health care, agriculture, education and tourism. We have impressive progress due to effective functioning of the Japan

International Cooperation Agency. Japanese businesses are actively presented in the Georgian market, and we have huge Japanese investments in significant international projects such as the East-West highway. Georgian products, including old traditional wine, are also presented in Japan. We have a positive trend of deepening mutual understanding and people-to-people contacts through cultural exchange. Japanese sports are popular in Georgia and notable Georgian sumo wrestler Tochinoshin is success-

fully performing in Japan. In 2015, upon our request, Japan changed the official name of Georgia from "Gurujia" to "Jojia," that was highly important for Georgians. It should be outlined that our nations have always been standing together in the most difficult times. In 2011, Georgians donated money to the Red Cross in order to help earthquake and tsunami victims.

The historical partnership between Georgia and Japan is a clear example of how states can cooperate despite the huge geo-

graphical distances. Both countries have uniqueness as they play significant role in trade-economic partnership. Our nations have high potential due to open economies and attractive business environments as Georgia and Japan are key countries in the advancement of the East-West corridor. Therefore strengthening and further developing cooperation carries significant importance in our inconsistent world as future perspectives for transregional partnership lie through unity, intensive partnership, opportunities and development.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.



Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, is home to many historical buildings. EMBASSY OF GEORGIA



Congratulations to the people of Georgia on their Independence Day.

As a Leading Public Safety and ICT Solutions Partner, NEC wishes for further prosperous development of Georgia and hopes for contribution to safety and efficiency of Georgia through proposing NEC's state-of-the-art technologies.



Operation Center
for Monitoring

Video Analytics

Fingerprint
Identification

Face Recognition

nec.com/g-safety

Orchestrating a brighter world

NEC