

Senegal Independence Day Special

Multifaceted reforms boost steady socioeconomic development

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AMBASSADOR OF SENEGAL



Today, April 4, Senegal is celebrating the 59th Anniversary of its Independence. I am honored to make use of this auspicious opportunity to convey my respectful greetings to Their Imperial Majesties

Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko and the Imperial family.

I am also pleased to pay tribute to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, members of the government, institutions and people of Japan.

As we are heading toward Imperial succession, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko on the successful Heisei Era and to express to them my respectful wishes of good health and longevity while praying that the upcoming Reiwa Era that will be embodied by the next Emperor, Crown Prince Naruhito, brings more peace, prosperity and happiness to the

entire people of Japan.

While congratulating my fellow citizens living in the very peaceful and welcoming land of Japan, I am also pleased to convey my heartfelt and respectful compliments to the President of Senegal Macky Sall, and extend my warmest congratulations to him on his reelection on Feb. 24.

Over the past 59 years, the Senegalese people have overcome countless challenges and made tremendous efforts toward social and economic development. It is of great significance that Senegal never walked alone while tackling various challenges over the years and always received the support of its partners, among which Japan is one of the most important.

Our partnership covers various fields, including politics, diplomacy, economics, investment and development assistance.

At the bilateral level, through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, and under its official development assistance, Japan has implemented a large number of projects in a range of sectors, primarily health, agriculture, fisheries and infrastructure.

With respect to multilateral diplomacy, on the basis of their several common values and

shared commitment to building a peaceful, prosperous, inclusive and fair world, Senegal and Japan have designed a strong collaboration to address global challenges while supporting each other within international organizations, particularly during their mandates as nonpermanent members of the United Nations' Security Council in 2016–2017.

Thus, I would like to once again commend the important support provided every year by Japan to the annual International Forum of Dakar on Peace Security in Africa.

The Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) VII summit will be held in Yokohama, from Aug. 28 to 30. Since its inception in 1993, the TICAD process, which is still standing as a unique partnership, has steadily enabled mobilization of support for Africa's socioeconomic development, peace and security, governance and human rights agendas through a wide range of national and regional projects in line with the African priorities.

In 2016, the TICAD VI summit held in Nairobi was the very first one to be held on African soil, thus manifesting African ownership of the process. Against this backdrop, Senegal strives to steadily enhance its attractiveness

for business and investment through implementing a three-year Business Environment and Competitiveness Reform Program, to grow into one of the world's best reformers. In that respect, Senegal offers foreign investors a wide range of incentives, as well as an accompaniment plan, including industrial parks and the establishment of special economic zones in Diambiadio, Diass and Sandiara, to increase the private sector's economic opportunities and launch sustainable industrialization. Investment opportunities are growing strongly while the business climate is continuously improving. Over the past few years, the government has made constant efforts in reinforcing the infrastructure sector and the country's connectivity primarily through the construction of roads and highways, ports, airports, new cities, as well as the resorption of the energy gap.

Moreover, in 2014, our president provided the country with a new development strategy aiming at speeding up its march toward emergence under the Emerging Senegal Plan (ESP). The ESP is supported by a vision of inclusive growth for an emerging Senegal in 2035 based on three pillars of structural transformation of the economy, promoting

human capital and enabling governance, peace and security.

The ESP is a revolutionary framework for a new departure toward holistic, integral and sustainable development. The government has thus initiated the disruptive changes that today allow Senegal to follow a new development path. These changes are reflected in actions designed to sustainably raise growth potential, as well as drive creativity and private initiative to satisfy people's aspirations for better lives.

The implementation of the first phase of the ESP, from 2014–2018, has stimulated a new dynamic of economic growth and contributed to the consolidation of the macroeconomic framework. The annual growth rate averaged 6.6 percent during this period against 3 percent between 2009 and 2013.

On Dec. 17, at the Senegal Consultative Group meeting, the government of Senegal presented to its technical and financial partners phase II of the ESP, which covers 2019–2023. During this forum, Senegal obtained financial pledges worth \$14 billion. This amount is three times more than expected and more than twice as much as the first phase.

Phase II of the ESP will hopefully contrib-

ute to robust growth, expected to reach an average of 9 percent over the period. Its Priority Action Plan 2019–2023 comprises a large portfolio of flagship projects covering various fields. Priority sectors and domains include agriculture, horticulture and agro-industry; infrastructure and construction; energy, oil, gas and mining; industry; digital economy; tourism; and finance.

The private sector, both domestic and foreign, is expected to play an important role in the implementation of these projects.

Despite the fact that Senegal is recently bestowed with very important oil and gas deposits, this Priority Action Plan was designed without consideration of the incomes expected from these resources that the country should be producing by 2021.

Lastly, the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Senegal and Japan to be celebrated in 2020, will again give me the opportunity to welcome the exemplary diplomatic relations that bind the two countries.

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



President Macky Sall walks beside First Lady Marieme Faye Sall near the Regional Express Train after inaugurating the line linking Dakar and the Blaise Diagne International Airport on Jan. 14. EMBASSY OF SENEGAL

Congratulations
to the People of the Republic of Senegal
on the 59th Anniversary
of Their Independence



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