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会見

INTERVIEW

Interview of Ambassador Takashi Okada

Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations and Other International Organizations and Head of the Japanese Consulate in Geneva

Ambassador Takashi Okada took office in Geneva in October 2012. Having served the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 28 years, he has covered a broad range of issues. He has been previously assigned in the United Kingdom, Egypt, at the Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, in South Africa and in Thailand (his last position).

"Geneva is not entirely new to me. I was at the Japanese Mission in New York in the 1990s and had the opportunity to attend United Nations meetings", H.E. Mr. Okada said.

What are the main issues you have to address in your capacity of new Ambassador at the Japanese Mission in Geneva?

As the Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations and Other International Organizations, I deal with human rights, humanitarian issues and international organizations.

As the Head of the Japanese Consulate in Geneva, we are covering four Cantons: Geneva, Vaud, Valais and Ticino. We provide services to about 3,000 Japanese residents and to Japanese visitors.



Ambassador Takashi Okada

Do you plan to organize new activities or events in Geneva?

2014 will be the 150th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Switzerland. It will be a year of commemoration with the organization of various events to deepen partnership and friendship. We would like to ask for the participation and support from the people in Switzerland to make it a successful year of commemoration.

What are your first feelings about Switzerland, its economy and culture?

My wife and I have been warmly welcomed in Switzerland. We are very grateful.

To be honest, my first impres-

sion was the extremely high level of prices. However, it is coupled with the high level of incomes, which reflects the high level of productivity and the high quality of life. There is a lot that Japan should learn from Switzerland and its economy.

Have you been satisfied by the 2012 Autumn of Japanese culture?

More than twenty events were successfully organized, and enjoyed large participations. They ranged from traditional Japanese art to cinema, music, martial art and Rakugo.

What are the main challenges that the new government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has to address?

As the result of the election, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has obtained a clear majority. The new Administration has to deal with three major issues: (1) the revival of the economy, (2) the speeding up of the reconstruction, (3) and the rebuilding of the relations with the neighboring countries and the strengthening of Japan-US alliance for the stable security environment in the region.

(Continued on page 2)

動向

SITUATION

Japan's current economic situation

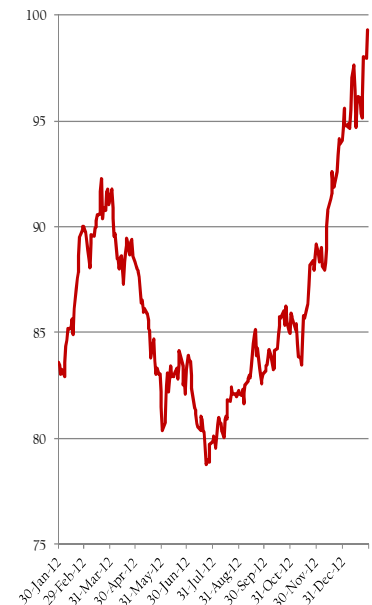
“While the Japanese economy shows weakness recently, signs of bottoming out can be seen in some areas”, emphasized the Cabinet Office in the January 2013 issue of its monthly economic report.

Due to yen's excessive appreciation and to the slowdown of foreign demands, Japan's exports declined 2.8% in 2012 (calendar year) from the previous year. Exports to Asia decreased 5.0% (-10.8% for China, -6.8% for the Republic of Korea) and exports to Western Europe were down 18.0%. However, on the same period, exports to the United States increased 11.7%.

With regard to the excessive yen appreciation and to the deflation,

the Cabinet's report mentions that the “the Government will eliminate deflationary expectations and avoid further deterioration of economy with prompt and flexible economic and fiscal policy management”.

The domestic private consumption is showing signs of improvement. The average of monthly income per household stood at ¥432,681, up 2.0% in nominal terms and up 2.1% in real terms from the previous year. Moreover, value of orders received for construction rose 14.9% in 2012 from the previous year to ¥47,191 billion.



Exchange rates CHF/JPY
Source: Swiss National Bank

会見

INTERVIEW

Interview of Ambassador Takashi Okada

(Continued from page 1)

With regard to the revival of the economy, the new Administration will implement new policies in three fronts simultaneously, i.e. bold monetary policy to break away from deflation and excessive appreciation of the yen, fiscal stimulus to foster demand and prevent business activities from slumping further, and a growth strategy to generate innovations that will result in expansion of employment and income.

The new government has announced the economic stimulus package of ¥20 trillion, including ¥13 trillion that will come from supplementary budget, which is

now debated in the Diet.

What are the main events scheduled to take place in 2013 in Japan?

On the domestic agenda, the upper house election is due to take place in the summer. At this moment, the governing coalition does not have a majority in it, even though it won at the lower house.

On the external relations, Japan will host the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) in Yokohama. This conference aims to promote the cause of African development and to mobilize international community's effort toward that goal.

What are your wishes for Japan and for Swiss-Japanese relations in 2013?

The recovery from the natural disaster and the economic recovery from the many years of deflation are two wishes in the mind of every Japanese. We already see hopeful signs, like the stock market index going up. We hope to see tangible progress in those two issues.

With regard to Japanese - Swiss relations, we have excellent bilateral relations. I do hope that this wonderful friendship and partnership will go further. I will devote a lot of time this year to prepare the 2014 celebrations.

Japan Night welcomed business and political leaders

About 700 participants took part in the fourth edition of the Japan Night, in Davos, on the evening of January 24.

Following a video-broadcasted speech of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, participants listened to four panel discussions. Among many

other business and political leaders (see pictures), the Japan Night welcomed the visit of Doris Leuthard, Head of the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications.

The Japanese dishes (bentos, sushis...) were provided by Akira

Oshima (Hotel Okura in Amsterdam).

Participants also enjoyed the Japanese beverages (sake, shochu, beers, liquors...). A variety of sake was served by Ueno Gourmet GmbH.

Sadako Ogata, former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and Japanese singer and songwriter MISIA

Yasuchika Hasegawa, President & CEO, Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited and Nobel Peace Prize Muhammad Yunus

On the right: Hiroyuki Ishige, JETRO Chairman



活動

ACTIVITY

Swiss-Japanese New Year's party in Zurich



The Swiss-Japanese Chamber of Commerce (SJCC) held a meeting on January 7, 2013, in Zurich, to celebrate the New Year. This event is called "Shinnenkai" in Japanese.

Following the welcome speech of Henry Wegmann, President of the SJCC, Reto Ringger, CEO and founder of GlobalanceBank, delivered an "outlook on the economic and financial market".

Reto Ringger, CEO and founder of GlobalanceBank (left) and Henry Wegmann, President of the SJCC (right).

He underlined the "double debt crisis" in economy (financial crisis) and in resources (scarcity). He pointed out that this "double debt crisis" will lead to three main consequences: resource efficiency will become a competitiveness factor; critical changes will occur with regard to prices, regulations, politics, migration and technologies; there will be "winners" and "losers" among countries, sectors and corporations. His presentation was followed by a networking cocktail.

行事

EVENT

革新

INNOVATION



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Panasonic announced on January 9, 2013 the development of a 20-inch tablet, featuring a screen's resolution four times higher than Full High Definition, and a high-precision pen.

The tablet was displayed during the International Consumer Electronics Show (CES) of Las Vegas, United States, that took place from January 8 to 11. Panasonic sched-

ules to release it on the market this year.

Creating a new value

The panel has a 3840/2560 resolution with 9.83 million pixels (density of 230 pixels per inch). The pen input's resolution is as high as the panel itself.

While competitors are shifting towards small models, this new tablet is designed to create a new value for users. The 20-inch panel is able to display an A3-size paper in almost full scale, enabling users to read documents such as newspapers and magazines, but also large-scale pictures. It is not primarily targeted at general consumers, while it could be used by many people to play video-



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games. However, it meets the needs of professional users, such as newspaper's editors, designers, architects and engineers.

The tablet uses Windows 8 operating system. Furthermore, it provides a 4GB memory (max. 16 GB) and a 128 GB flash memory drive, wireless, 2.0 USB port and embedded camera with a resolution of 1280X720.

Agenda

日程

AGENDA

- ✓ 4th March: JETRO business seminar in Geneva (Beau Rivage hotel)
- ✓ 15th March: JETRO business seminar in Zurich (Credit Suisse Forum)

JETRO is a government-related organization that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. Originally established in 1958 to promote Japanese exports abroad, JETRO's core focus in the 21st century has shifted toward promoting foreign direct investment into Japan and helping small to medium size Japanese firms maximize their global export potential.

The JETRO Switzerland Newsletter can also be viewed and/or downloaded online:
<http://www.jetro.go.jp/switzerland/newsletter>

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