

Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida's Interview with The Day
Ukraine, 22th August 2013

Fumio KISHIDA: Economic potential of Ukraine attracts special attention of Japan

Fumio Kishida, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan will be in Ukraine with an official visit on August 24 through 26. It is expected that during the visit on August 25 he will visit the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant. This is the first visit of the senior Japanese official of such rank in recent years. Although Ukrainian officials of the highest rank often visit Japan. Two Ukrainian Presidents and Prime Minister were in this country with official visits.

Q. What does Japan expect from this visit and what prospects do the Japanese see in the development of cooperation between Japan and Ukraine?

Head of the Japanese Foreign Ministry Fumio Kishida told The Day about this in an exclusive interview.

A. I would like to mention two reasons for my visit – the first visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan to Ukraine in the past seven years.

First, I pay special attention to the strategic importance of the fact that Ukraine is geographically located between Europe and Russia. Ukraine is developing an active foreign policy in relations with neighboring countries. I believe that the discussion of the regional situation between the countries brings many benefits to both parties.

Second, economic potential of Ukraine attracts special attention of Japan. Ukraine is a great country with fertile land and population of 46 million people. I can say that Japanese companies are showing great interest in Ukraine due to the fact that it has a high capacity for supplying food and significant economic potential that has not yet been fully realized.

On the other hand, the number of Japanese companies that are operating in Ukraine reaches only about 40. It seems to me that there are great opportunities for the development of economic relations between our countries. In my opinion, in the future favorable investment climate in the country will play the key role for the decision making of the Japanese companies in respect of investment in Ukraine.

During my visit I would like to discuss specific measures to strengthen economic relations between the two countries.

Q. Both our countries have had nuclear accidents. Was the experience of the accident at the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant useful for Japan and will the Fukushima disaster affect the plans of your country concerning the use of nuclear energy and the entire nuclear industry in Japan?

A. Japan experienced such a huge disaster as the accident at the Fukushima-1 in March 2011 and now exerts its best efforts to restore the country. Presently many interested people from Japan come to Ukraine to study the experience and knowledge that Ukraine, a country that has similar bitter experience of large-scale nuclear power plant accident, gained in the process of elimination the consequences of the Chornobyl nuclear power plant accident. During my visit I also plan to visit Chornobyl in order to better understand the measures taken by Ukraine after the accident and fully benefit from this experience in the restoration of our country.

Moreover, I believe that the mutual exchange of experience of Chornobyl and Fukushima tragedies, active presentation of our joint achievements to the international community and efforts to be made to prevent accidents are our responsibility as the countries that have suffered massive accidents at nuclear power plants. Therefore, in May 2012 Japan and Ukraine signed an agreement on cooperation in the area of improving disaster response to emergencies at nuclear power plants, in June the second meeting of the Joint Ukrainian-Japanese Committee, established under the said Agreement, was held in Kyiv. We intend to continue the close cooperation in this sphere.

What concerns nuclear power plants, the most important thing is, certainly, safety. Based on the bitter mistakes of the accident at the Fukushima-1, and also using the experience of Chornobyl, under the guidance of the Committee on the Regulation of Nuclear Power we are going to create a new culture of safety, which would raise the safety level without compromise.