

ALGERIA

Interview with Ambassador Derragui Mohammed Elamine in Seoul

Algeria warmly welcomes Korean investments, assures full support

Ambassador Derragui Mohammed El Amine underlined the wide set of investment incentives offered in Algeria as well as the large business opportunities in different sectors making of the country a highly profitable destination for Korean and other foreign investors.

Speaking at a recent interview on the occasion of the National Day of Algeria on Nov. 1, 2016, Ambassador Derragui said that Algeria is related to Korea by a unique strategic partnership since 2006 and that the two countries are working closely and in permanent consultation to further strengthen their relationship that achieved this advanced status just in 25 years. Excerpts from the interview follow:

Question: Please introduce in detail the national day of your esteemed country

Answer: This year Algeria will celebrate the 62nd anniversary of the launch of the National Liberation Struggle. The 1st of November 1954, after several resistance



Ambassador Derragui Mohammed El Amine of Algeria is all smiles when the interview with *The Korea Post* touched on the fast-growing ties of cooperation and relations between the two countries.

movements, the Algerian people launched the last rise up against the French colonization using very limited means.

The Algerian revolution, one of the greatest liberation movements in the 20th century, ended up seven and half years later by winning the national independence in July 03rd, 1962 at the cost of one and half million martyrs.

The Algerians will always be faithful and pay respect to those who sacrificed their lives so that the future generations can live in a People's, democratic, independent and developed Republic of Algeria.

Q: What are the important developments scheduled between Korea and your country, including the possible visit of your Head of Government to Korea?

A: Algeria is related to Korea by a unique "Strategic Partnership" since 2006 and our two countries are working closely and in permanent consultation to further strengthen their relationships that achieved this advanced status only 25 years after the establishment of diplomatic relations.

In the same dynamic, Algeria and Korea held in July this year bilateral political consultations between the two Ministries of Foreign Affairs. The exchanges were



The Great mosque of Algeiers under construction. It has the highest Minaret and considered the third largest mosque in the world



Martyr's monument in Algiers symbol of the Algerian revolution



H.E.M Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA, President of the Republic (left) and H.E.M Abdelmalek SEL-LAL, Prime Minister (right) of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

fruitful and further consolidated the mutual understanding and trust between the two parties.

The closest bilateral rendezvous will be the coming visit of the Algerian Minister of Moudjahidine (Veterans) to Korea, scheduled for the second half of November. This visit will certainly open a new chapter in our bilateral cooperation.

In the economic field, our relations are getting momentum. Other than the trade that had grown constantly these last years, more Korean companies are convinced that Algeria, with its abundant resources and strategic position, is the right place to invest.

Last year, Hyundai motors in a joint investment with Tahkout Manufacturing Company, Algerian private company, inaugurated the first Hyundai trucks and buses assembly line in Batna, in the east of Algeria. Its yearly production capacity will attain 22,000 units by 2020. The two partners inaugurated earlier this year a car assembly line in Tiaret in the Algeria's western region. The two plants have already began production. The first Hyundai car assembled in Algeria came out last 29th October, 2016.

We warmly welcome these investments and I take this occasion to invite all the Korean companies to consider more closely the wide investment opportunities offered in different sectors in Algeria as well as the very profitable incentives put into place by the Algerian Government for Foreign investment. In addition, bilaterally, we have agreements of investment protection and double tax avoidance.

This year, the Algerian Government further enlarged the investments incentives scheme through the introduction of a new investment act which entered into force

after its adoption by the Parliament in July. Through this new act, investments in priority sectors (industry, agriculture and tourism) benefit automatically from additional advantages including tax and customs duties cuts, exoneration of VAT, etc. The new act grants equally exceptional advantages for investments representing a particular importance for national economy. More details about these issues are available in the website of the Algerian National Agency of Investment Development ANDI.

Q: What is the volume of bilateral trade, its outlook for the future?

A: Algeria is one of the biggest trade partners of Korea in Africa. Bilateral trade reached 1.7 billion USD in 2015. In 2014, it amounted to 3.3 billion USD. Ten years ago, it was valued at about 500 million USD.

The reduction registered last year is mainly due to the current conjuncture on the oil market, this product representing a large proportion of the value of the Algerian exports to Korea.

As mentioned earlier, the Algerian Government priority is to decrease the dependency on hydrocarbon exports through a strong push given to manufacturing sectors. In this perspective, our bilateral trade will certainly and profitably evolve in the near future towards a new configuration with more important volumes and more diversified and sustainable exchanges.

Q: What are your competitive fields of industry and products attractive to Korea and what are the Korean products and services that your country might wish to import?

A: Food, agriculture and petro-



Sheraton Hotel in the city of Oran in the West of Algeria

chemicals products are the most promising exports of Algeria. Algerian wine, figs, dates, olive oil, potatoes, honey and many other food products are currently exported to many countries around the world. Leather and textile products as well as pharmaceuticals are making their way to international markets, too.

DJAZAIR EXPORT fair, held yearly in Algeria, is an excellent venue for Korean importers wishing to know more in detail about Algerian products and to get in touch with Algerian operators. The next edition (the 6th) will be held in May 2017.

Q: Who are the Korean companies (in addition to the Jaebeol business groups) actively engaged in the promotion of economic cooperation between Korea and your country?

A: Over 400 Korean companies, including 23 firms established in Algeria, are doing business in Algeria in different fields: construction, energy, design and architecture electronics, automobile, home



View the coast of the city of Oran in the West of Algeria



The "Opera d'Alger" inaugurated by H.E.M Adelaziz BOUTEFLIKA, the President of the Republic on October 20th, 2016. Its main Theatre can receive 1400 spectators



Petrochemicals complex in the city of Skikda in the East of Algeria

appliances... etc. Big conglomerates like Samsung, Hyundai, Daewoo, LG are present in Algeria for more than 20 years.

Today, numerous small and medium enterprises, encouraged by the success stories of many Korean companies in Algeria, are more and more interested to explore the strong potential of the Algerian economy.

Q: What are the areas in your country where you want Korean companies to invest and what are the areas where you wish your businessmen to invest in Korea?

A: As I mentioned earlier the priority sectors for Algeria are industry, agro-industries, etc., where Korean investors can bring technology, knowhow and market competitiveness. When it comes to geographical location of activities to create, for the sake of a balanced regional development, the Algerian government put priority on the development of the central (highlands) and southern regions of the country. More advantageous incentives are offered for investments in these regions, designated as "Zones to promote", where a "Derogatory regime" is applied.

This strategy is beginning to show results. Many investments, especially in the field of mechanical

and textile industries are located there. The Tahkout manufacturing Company - Hyundai motors joint plants are justly located in this area. Additionally, the government designated and funded the realization of 42 new industrial parks around the country in order to increase the land offer and boost the dynamic of regional development.

Q: What are the attractive tourist destinations of your country?

A: There are hundreds of attractive sites for tourists in Algeria as it is very large and diverse country, rich in terms of culture, food, climate, geography, art, architecture... etc.

The Algerian Sahara is a place of sublime beauty. Its oases are a true paradise in earth. Visiting the Tassili n'Ajjer, in the extreme south, with its lunar scenery and unique sunset, is far more than tourism. It's a unique spiritual experience. I highly recommend it for any tourist visiting Algeria.

Tourists must also experience the splendid beaches along the 1600 km Mediterranean coastline and discover the rich cultural and historical sites disseminated all over the country, such as the multiple roman ruin sites, the Islamic and ottoman sites, located in the cities of Algiers, Tlemcen, Constantine, Annaba, Batna...

Q: What is your view of Korea

and the Korean people before and after your arrival here?

A: I have visited Korea in 2012 to participate in Korea-Africa Forum as Director-General for Asia and Oceania. Even though my visit was very short, I have been marked by the hospitality of the Korean people and the advances achieved by the country.

As Ambassador in Seoul, I am in a daily contact with the Korean people and culture. I totally confirm the impressions I've just mentioned, and now, naturally, I can understand better the Korean society and appreciate its true genius. The proud and the manner in which Koreans promote their culture, for instance, are admirable.

Q: Please introduce yourself in detail, including your career, family and hobbies.

A: I was appointed as Ambassador of Algeria to the Republic of Korea in April 2015. I'm married and I have two children: a boy and a girl. I started my diplomatic carrier 39 years ago after graduating from the National School of Administration of Algiers. I served as Ambassador in Iran and Uganda. In Uganda I was accredited also to Burundi and Rwanda. Earlier, I have been respectively Charge d'Affaires and Counselor at the Algerian Embassies in Belgrade (former Yugoslavia) and India. ♫



The International Center for Conferences (CIC) in Algiers inaugurated by H.E.M Adelaziz BOUTEFLIKA, the President of the Republic on September 3rd, 2016. Its main auditorium has a capacity of 6000 places.



Algerian traditional costume exhibited by Korean mannequin in Seoul