

I wish you a happy new year 2015.

One year and nine months have passed since I assumed my duties as Japanese Ambassador to Rwanda in March 2013.

It seemed that 2014 was a landmark year for Rwanda, which commemorated the 1994 Genocide for the 20th time, making it a turning point for a greater leap for further development from this sad history. Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, is a clean and beautiful city with lots of green. Urban infrastructures including roads are well prepared, and many international conferences have been held recently. The number of tourists also has been increasing. In addition, the World Bank's survey "Doing Business" ranked Rwanda among top three countries in Africa together with South Africa and Mauritius last year.

There were significant outcomes for bilateral relationship between Japan and Rwanda in 2014, and the year brought an unusual number of VIPs visit to the country. The Parliamentary Secretary for Finance visited in May to attend the Annual Meetings of the Boards of Governors of the African Development Bank and the African Development Fund. And MPs of the Japan-AU Parliamentary Friendship League, and the Public and Private Sector Joint Mission for Promoting Trade and Investment headed by the Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs visited in August respectively. Thanks to seminars and media reports introducing Rwanda in Japan from the beginning of last year, I think Rwanda has caught more interests from Japanese people and companies. I also delivered lectures about Rwanda in several places in Japan when I went back for official duties and holidays. I gave my speeches titled "Africa's Miracle: Rwanda" in Takamatsu, Koriyama, Shizuoka, Kobe and Tokyo taking different opportunities. There were many questions from participants during Questions and Answers session after my speeches, and I found that to be a good response from the audiences. I hope we could further improve and develop this bilateral relation based on great outcomes of last year.

Since November 2014, the Embassy started to cover Burundi, which is located south to Rwanda. Burundi is on the beautiful Lake Tanganyika with lots of greens even compared to Rwanda. I have already visited the country twice, and it seems that the prolonged civil war affected the

economic development of the country. The presidential election will be held this year and the development in future in Burundi will certainly depend on the results of the election. I wish a fair, transparent, inclusive and peaceful election will be held.

Regarding this homepage, we always try to do our best for improving and enhancing the contents. We would appreciate your input whether in form of requests and even constructive criticisms you may have to this homepage.

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Kazuya Ogawa, Ambassador of Japan to Rwanda