

**Speech by H.E. Mr. Kazuya OGAWA, Ambassador of Japan,  
on the Occasion of the Birthday Celebration of His Majesty  
the Emperor of Japan on 28th November, 2013**

Honorable Louise Mushikiwabo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation;  
Honorable Members of Parliament; Your Excellency Ambassadors and High  
Commissioners; Distinguished Representatives of International Organizations;  
Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen,

Murakaza neza.

First of all, I would like to thank all of you here tonight for joining our National Day reception to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty Emperor Akihito who turns 80 years old this year. In fact, His Majesty's birthday falls on 23rd December but since this date coincides with Christmas holidays for many of you, we have decided to celebrate it in advance.

I assumed my duties as Japanese Ambassador to Rwanda and arrived in Kigali last March. Nine months has passed since then, but my first impression for Rwanda has not changed. In fact, I have a much broader and better impression now. For example, I found the people of Rwanda "serious and diligent", and it is a pleasure to work with them. Actually, there are some similarities between the people of Japan and Rwanda, I think. I like the beautiful landscape and the mild climate here in Rwanda, too.

In July, I availed myself of a holiday and drove all the way across the western half of Rwanda. We participated in the famous gorilla tracking and enjoyed beautiful scenery of Lake Kivu and Nyungwe National Park. While we drove, we saw well established tea plantation up hills and people arduously working there. Those were very impressive for me. During this trip, I became

strongly aware of the high potential of tourism in this country. I would like to recommend Rwanda, the beautiful country of thousand hills, to more Japanese people for their destination.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On a point of view of economy, I understand that Rwanda is trying to drive economic growth by making it a country built on ICT and Finance. Also Rwanda has placed Kigali as an international hub airport in air transportation network of Central Africa. I think Rwanda utilizes its limited resources in the right direction in an effective and efficient manner. It is said that the economic development of Rwanda is a “Miracle in Africa”. I sincerely hope Rwanda could be a leading country in Africa in the future, and I am sure it is possible.

Turning our eyes to the economic situation in Japan, there is a sign of breakaway from deflation spiral and prolonged economic stagnation after the advent of the Abe administration. The implementation of the three “arrows”, namely monetary policy aimed at dispelling the deflation mindset, flexible fiscal policy aimed at igniting the dampened economy and the Growth Strategy to stimulate private investments, has the desired effect on Japanese economy, which is getting on the right track these days.

A good news was brought to Japan last September. Tokyo was elected to host the Olympic Games in 2020. This news certainly encouraged Japanese people, especially those who suffer from the aftermath of Great East Japan Earthquake two years ago and invigorated further its economy. We would like to thank for your support rendered and promise to do our best for the success of Tokyo Olympics.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In early June, the Government of Japan hosted the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, more commonly known as TICAD V, together with the other co-organizers: the African Union Commission; the United Nations; UNDP; and the World Bank. For the Government of Japan, it was such an honor to have President Kagame in Japan for TICAD V, and very appreciated that the President played a leading role in encouraging lively discussions.

Under the framework of TICAD, Japan has implemented various projects focusing on areas of water and sanitation, agriculture, education, and infrastructure here in Rwanda. Since my arrival, I signed the Non-Project Grant Aid to promote the Government of Rwanda's socio-economic development efforts, and attended the launching ceremony of the "Project for Improvement of Substation and Distribution Network of Electricity" and the inauguration ceremony of the "Project for Rural water Supply Phase 2". In the meantime, I am very happy to see the progress of the Project for Construction of Rusumo International Bridge and One Stop Border Post Facilities. We have also implemented Grant Assistance for Human Security Grassroots Projects in areas such as primary education and gender, and contributed assistance to refugees and returnees, through the United Nations organizations such as UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF and IOM. In area of peace consolidation, the building of Rwanda Peace Academy has completed under Japanese cooperation, and many courses have already commenced this year. I am sure that the Japanese assistance, which covers a broad range of areas, contributes to the economic and social development of Rwanda, and I promise you that Japan will continue and expand our Official Development Assistance projects.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last year, Japan and Rwanda celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our diplomatic relations. This year is a beginning of another 50 years. I will do my best to further strengthen the already existing friendly relationship between Japan and Rwanda. In other words, the Embassy will work hand in hand with the Government of Rwanda and all of you here.

Now, I will round off my speech with a little advertising of Japanese Sake, which is brewed from rice. People tend to imagine sake is hard liquor because of its clear liquid like Vodka, but actually, its alcohol percentage is almost same as wine. Tonight, we will serve you high quality Sake. I hope you will enjoy it.

Ladies and gentlemen, please allow me to propose a toast to the good health of His Majesty Emperor Akihito and His Excellency President Paul Kagame, as well as to the happiness of all of you here present.

Thank you for your attention.

Murakoze cyane.