

**SPEECH BY MR. TOMIO SAKAMOTO, COUNSELLOR AT THE
EMBASSY OF JAPAN ON THE OCCASION OF THE ICT
RECEPTION ON 12th NOVEMBER, 2015**

-Honorable Francois Kanimba, Minister of Trade & Industry

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Murakaza neza.

Welcome and good evening.

First of all, I would like to thank all of you for joining tonight's ICT reception. I am sorry that Ambassador Ota could not be with us tonight since he is out of the country. I represent him as chargé d'Affaires ad interim at the Embassy of Japan. This is a follow-up of business trip which was facilitated by JICA for ICT Chamber of Private Sector Federation (PSF) and 7 business operators who are in charge of ICT sector that visited Japan in September with the aim to jointly pursue business partnership. I heard that the business trip was successful and some Japanese companies

expressed their interest, furthermore if I may add, some of them reached agreements.

The Rwandan government has been putting lots of efforts into ICT and has a goal to become a regional ICT hub. Therefore, the Japanese government, through JICA, has been working closely in the field of ICT as a strategic partner in this sector in Rwanda since 2010. Since then, we have been focusing on building capacity as well as development of human resource including the establishment of K-lab which is an open space for IT entrepreneurs to collaborate and innovate. It was supported by RDB, ICT Chamber and JICA.

I absolutely believe that ICT has the enormous opportunities and unlimited possibilities. ICT is a key prerequisite sector for transforming the life to the more convenient and smarter one. And it contributes to create a knowledge-based economy which leads to sustainable development. To boost Rwanda's efforts and goal

of becoming a knowledge-based economy, strategic initiatives with Japanese partners are on-going. For example, Kobe Institute of Computing led “K-Initiative” to produce at least 1,000 highly qualified engineers for outsourcing works for Japanese market by 2020. In addition, so far, a total of 14 Rwandan young people are studying at Kobe Institute of Computing in Japan through Japanese Government scholarship programme named “ABE initiative” and JICA training Scheme.

I wish today’s follow up reception will help to create more business opportunities between Rwandan and Japanese companies.

Thank you so much for your attention. Murakoze cyane.