

**SPEECH BY H.E. KAZUYA OGAWA, AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN, ON THE
OCCASION ON SMART RWANDA DAYS ON 18th JUNE 2013**

Honorable Amb. Claver Gatete, Minister of Finance & Economic Planning,

Honorable Jean Philbert NSENGIMANA, Minister of Youth and ICT,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentleman,

It is my great pleasure to be present at this closing session at SMART RWANDA DAYS. I am delighted to see many government officials, international experts, people from civil society and private sector and development partners in this two days conference in order to share vision for Smart Rwanda and good practices of Smart Development in different countries, also to discuss smart solutions to problems in this country. Your presence is evidence of a high interest in and enthusiasm for Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as smart solutions, which I believe will lead Rwanda to effectively achieve its development goals and economic growth.

Japan is one of the important partners which have supported ICT sector in this country. We assisted in drafting National ICT Strategic and Action Plan Phase

3(NICI3) which is fundamental to not only activities in ICTs sector but also all activities through ICTs. Also, K-lab is another good example of our assistance.

Mr. YAMANAKA, expert of the JICA in ICT contributed to the drafting of NICI 3 and also launched the idea to create this interactive space in the center of Kigali.

K-lab, which stands for Knowledge lab, was established to provide open technology space for students, fresh graduates, entrepreneurs and innovators who work on their idea and project to turn them into viable business models. I visited several weeks ago K-lab. I myself witnessed that many students and young business persons were working with computers or engaging in discussion. At K-lab, people can be provided with both technical and business assistance by experienced mentors.

In the beginning of this month, the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) was held in Yokohama, Japan. I heard a symposium under the theme of "ICT innovation with collaboration between Rwanda and Japan" was a huge success at official side events of TICAD V. This symposium focused only on Rwanda among African countries, because Rwanda is considered as one of the most innovative countries in ICT. To this

symposium, Hon NSENGIMANA minister of Youth and ICT sent a video message and two delegations from Rwandan chamber of commerce. More than a hundred people participated and the discussions were very much animated. This symposium was organized by Kobe Institution of Computing with the support of JICA and JETRO. It would not be an exaggeration to say that when it comes to Rwanda, not only Gorilla or Coffee, but also ICT comes up to people's mind.

At the TICAD V, Japan expressed its support to science and technology since we understand promoting knowledge based infrastructure enables innovation and boosts productivity. In this country, Japan continues strengthening ICT human resource development mainly through Tumba College of Technologies, where ICT is one of three main departments.

Although I am not an expert in this domain, I have the impression that the ICT can be applied in every field of human life and those who gain the technology of application can not only improve their life style but also lead the markets.

In concluding my remarks, I understand that during two days conference, all the participants had very fruitful discussions and I commended the efforts made by both Rwandan government and the World Bank for the success of this conference. It is my sincere wish that participants to this conference will create smart solutions under the shared vision for Smart Rwanda and make those solutions a reality.

I thank you.