

Speech by H.E. Mr. Kazuya OGAWA, Ambassador of Japan,  
on the Occasion of the Completion Ceremony  
for The Project for Construction of  
Rusumo International Bridge and One Stop Border Post Facilities  
on 10th January, 2015

Honorable James Musoni, Minister of Infrastructure,  
Mr. John Mongella, Regional Commissioner of Kagera Region,  
Mr. Gerard Muzungu, Mayor of Kirehe District,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Muraho. Habari. Good morning.

It is my great pleasure to come back here today for the completion ceremony of “the Project for Construction of Rusumo International Bridge and One Stop Border Post Facilities”. I would like to thank the Rwandan Ministry of Infrastructure, the Tanzanian Ministry of Works, Rwanda Transport Development Authority (RTDA) and Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS) for inviting me to this important ceremony with Dr. Akihiko Tanaka, President of JICA.

First of all, I would like to commend the project team of JICA and its collaboration with the Ministry of Infrastructure through RTDA on the

Rwandan side and the Ministry of Works through TANROADS on the Tanzanian side, as well as the entire staff working here for successfully completing the project. I visited this site last June for the first time, and I said I was looking forward to coming back for a completion ceremony next time. That desire has come true today. I especially would like to thank Chodai Corporation, Nippon Koei and Daiho Corporation, the Japanese companies which were carrying out the project. Without their efforts, this project could not have been a success. Let me highlight the fact that the project completed within almost the planned period. Japanese people are famous for their punctuality. And I imagine that these Japanese companies also had to work hard to finish all works on time. It is very important since many projects used to be delayed and I am proud of that as a Japanese Ambassador to this country.

Rusumo International Bridge plays a significant role in regional logistics not only for Rwanda and Tanzania, but also for other countries in the East African Community (EAC) and beyond. I understand that the traffic volume through this border has increased much more than expected since the new bridge became available last August. We anticipate the traffic congestion will also be eliminated once the OSBP system, which makes only one stop at the border post instead of the usually required two stops, becomes fully operational in the near future.

Several OSBP projects are ongoing in the EAC region. For that perspective, I hope this OSBP will be a good success one in the entire region. To support its operation, Japan also provides technical assistance for OSBP system.

The effectiveness of this project is not only for regional logistics. Many impacts can be seen. For example, the project employed about 800 local staff every day since the project started in March 2012. Therefore, it can be said that it has good ripple effects throughout the local economy. I heard that the level of living of those staff has become better, for instance, construction of new houses are increasing around this area.

Honorable Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once again, I want to say that I am very glad to have such an important day with you for the completion of the project after two years and ten months since it started without any big accidents. I sincerely hope this project will boost trade, investment and competition, not only in Rwanda and Tanzania but also across the EAC partner countries and beyond, and contributes to the economic development of the region.

Thank you for your attention.

Murakoze cyane. Asante Sana.