

## Greeting from Ambassador Masahiro IMAI

Dear Visitors,

My name is Masahiro IMAI and I assumed the role of Ambassador of Japan to Rwanda at the end of 2019. I had worked in a trading company for 39 years before being appointed to this post and have an experience working in Africa in the past specifically in Algeria. However, it is my first time to work in Rwanda therefore, I am delighted to take up this new challenge in my life and I look forward to discovering this country of a thousand hills.

Before starting my job in Kigali, I expressed my aspiration to the leaders of Japan and Rwanda, namely Prime Minister Shinzo ABE and President KAGAME, to put my utmost priority and knowledge on invigorating business ties between the two countries. I think there is a difference between diplomatic service and business: business seeks to maximize profits, while diplomacy seeks to maximize national interests.

Nevertheless, I personally believe that doing business and doing diplomacy are fundamentally the same. First, both in business relationship and diplomatic relationship, it is essential to pursue benefit not from the perspectives of immediate gain and loss, but from the long-term perspectives that can be sustainably inherited to the future generations. Second, both in business relationship and diplomatic relationship, we should never give up endeavors to reach mutually-beneficial conclusion by enlarging the total portion of profit to be shared, rather than competing for a limited portion of profit.

Last year, H.E. Mr. Paul KAGAME visited Japan twice and the number of Japanese companies opening in Rwanda has been growing as of today, it has reached 30. This is a testimony that Japan and Rwanda have been maintaining well their close relations. It would be my greatest pleasure if my experience as businessman could contribute to strengthen our current good relations and to give tangible structures to unexplored business opportunities.

Japan has a long history of working with Rwanda for its agricultural development, and last year, Japan and Rwanda signed the Exchange of Notes (E/N) for Japan's yen loan to Rwanda of 10 billion yen (approximately USD 91 million), "Sector Policy Loan for Nutrition Improvement through Agriculture Transformation." Moreover, this year, the

Embassy of Japan celebrates the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its establishment.

In this way, Japan-Rwanda relationship has been developing steadily and the Government of Japan will continue to contribute to the development of Rwanda. I would like to deepen multilayered exchanges between both countries and strive to contribute to strengthening the relations. Therefore, I would like to reinforce Japan-Rwanda relations together with you.

Last but not least, we would like to engage in our work such as provision of the consular services and securing safety the security of Japanese citizen in Rwanda as well as quick provision of necessary information, so that the Embassy can be useful and profitable for all of you.