

**Speech by H.E. Mr. Isao FUKUSHIMA, Ambassador of Japan
to the Republic of Rwanda, at the Birthday Celebration of His
Majesty Emperor Naruhito**

Thursday, February 23, 2023

Honorable Minister of State Eng. Patricie Uwase,
Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners
Distinguished Representatives of International Organisations,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening, it is my great pleasure to celebrate the 63rd birthday of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito, as the National Day of Japan, together with you.

I arrived in Kigali last December and have just recently presented my Letters of Credence to His Excellency President KAGAME, to get my mission completely started.

Last year, Japan and Rwanda celebrated the 60th anniversary of friendship. On this occasion, a summit meeting between Prime Minister Kishida and His Excellency President Kagame was held in November. The two leaders exchanged their reflections on our past cooperation and confirmed our will to work together not only for our bilateral relation, but also in international community to address global challenges and to promote peace and stability in the region.

In May, prior to that meeting, Senior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Ms. Takako Suzuki had visited Kigali to have meaningful discussion with Minister Biruta.

Japan, as a member of the UN Security Council since the beginning of this year, is committed to play an active role in the international community and is ready for working further with Rwanda, as Rwanda, under the strong leadership of President Kagame, has achieved remarkable economic development, plays an important role in regional peace and stability by deploying peacekeepers and is taking the lead in addressing global challenges.

Talking about our bilateral relation, we have developed solid relation of cooperation since 60 years and we are determined to further strengthen development cooperation, trade and investment and people-to-people exchanges. With regard to development cooperation, Japan's priority is given to infrastructure, agriculture, safe water, science and technology education. We are proud of some exemplary projects like efficient power distribution, irrigation development, safe water distribution in Kigali and mathematics and science education by using ICT. We believe that such assistance has contributed to Rwanda's reconstruction and development. And we will continue supporting Rwanda's efforts to achieve the SDGs and VISION 2050, as a contribution not only to the country's development and the welfare of its people, but also to regional stability.

Today, we have among us, a number of Rwandans who have established start-ups in Rwanda after they had studied in Japan through the "ABE Initiative", that is "Master's Degree and

Internship Program of African Business Education Initiative for Youth”, as well as the active Rwandan scholars who had studied in Japan under the scholarship programs. These are good examples of cooperation in human resources.

Honorable Minister,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

To finish my speech, by way of a message to you from His Majesty the Emperor, let me translate some words of His Majesty at the press conference on the occasion of his birthday.

(Quote) “In order to create a world where all people have a place to live in peace, free from sorrow and suffering, I keenly feel the importance for each nation not to think only about its own affairs, but to make efforts to overcome differences and to find a solution in dialogue and in cooperation with each other.”

Thank you all for being with us tonight, I’d invite you to enjoy the well-known Japanese cuisine: sushi, tempura and sake. I wish you a wonderful evening.