

**SPEECH BY H.E. MR. KUNIO HATANAKA, AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN
IN THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA ON THE OCCASION OF THE
JAPANESE DRUM CONCERT ON 9 OCTOBER 2012 [Reception]**

Honourable Minister of Sports and Culture Protais K. MITALI, Honorable Ministers, Honourable Members of Parliament, Excellencies Ambassadors, Distinguished representatives of International Organizations and NGOs, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of you who kindly participated in tonight's reception on the occasion of celebrating 50 years of the diplomatic relations between Japan and the Republic of Rwanda. It is my pleasure to say that our two countries have been promoting friendly relations since Rwanda became independent in 1962.

Taking this opportunity, let me briefly explain to you some historical aspects of the relations between Japan and the Republic of Rwanda. The development of our bilateral relations can be traced back in 1965, when Mr. Masaya HATTORI from the Bank of Japan was sent to this country as the second Governor of the Central Bank of Rwanda, or Banque Nationale du Rwanda, under the sponsorship of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Starting from making negotiations successful on the first program with the IMF, he contributed very much to the establishment and development of Rwanda's

financial system. He also made a lot of suggestions in other fields, including the establishments of ONATRACOM and MAGERWA.

In addition to Mr. Hattori, the other famous Japanese whom we should be proud of in relation to Rwanda is Dr. Sadako OGATA. Dr. OGATA, who had been the UN High Commissioner for Refugees between 1991 and 2001, supported Rwanda's repatriation and re-integration processes in the post-genocide era of the mid-1990s. It is also to be noted that thanks to Dr. Ogata's activities, the Government of Japan sent its Self Defense Force to Goma in 1994 in order to secure safety and provide social services to refugees there. In fact, it was one of the first peacekeeping operation missions of the Japan Self Defense Force. She also contributed to the country as the president of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, commonly known as JICA, until March this year.

I would like to mention equally that many important Rwandan figures, most notably His Excellency President Paul KAGAME, have visited Japan in the last 18 years. And, taking such opportunities, Japan has also succeeded in deepening the relationship with Rwanda. I am very much grateful to all those who have contributed to the establishment of our two countries' friendly relations.

Japan has been strengthening its commitment to African development through the process of TICAD, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development since 1993. The TICAD process focuses on ‘accelerating economic growth’, ‘achieving MDGs’ and ‘tackling environment and climate change issues’, all of which Rwanda has also been addressing actively. TICAD V will be held in Yokohama in June next year, and I will closely work with the people and the Government of Rwanda for reflecting the voices of Africa into the expected outcomes of TICAD V.

Honourable Ministers and Members of Parliament, Excellencies
Ambassadors, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the establishment of our Embassy in January 2010, the Embassy has been enjoying a very cordial relationship with the Government of Rwanda. Thanks to your kind assistance, I am proudly saying that since 2010, the Embassy has been expanding its activities, among others, those related to economic cooperation and cultural exchange.

In conclusion, the Embassy will continue to support Rwandan’s efforts toward achieving VISION 2020, and to foster mutual understanding through our

two countries' economic, political, and cultural cooperation. I am highly honoured to be stationed in Rwanda as the Ambassador of Japan in this significant year, and I believe that my responsibility is to deepen the cordial relationship we are enjoying now.

Lastly, I would like to invite you all to a Japanese Drum Concert after this reception.

Let me introduce the musicians coming from Japan for tonight's concert. And next to me are the performers of tonight's concert, Mr. Shuichi HIDANO with Taiko Masters Special. I hope you will enjoy the drums and have a glimpse of Japanese culture.

Thank you for your attention.

Now I would like to invite the Honourable Minister of Sports and Culture to say few words. Please give him a big hand.