

(tentative translation)

Letter of Gratitude from the Mayor of Iwanuma City to the people of South Africa

After the Great East Japan Earthquake on 11 March 2011, Iwanuma city situated in the center of Miyagi prefecture suffered heavy damage. In the direct aftermath of the earthquake, the Rescue South Africa team was dispatched to the city on a rescue and relief mission. Later, a South African music group with links to Japan, the Drum Café visited the city to encourage its citizens.

On 4 November, the Mayor of Iwanuma City, Mr. Tsuneaki Iguchi, has sent a letter of gratitude addressed.

To express gratitude to the people of South Africa:

After the earthquake, members of Rescue South Africa came to the devastated area on a rescue and relief mission. Immediately they visited the shelters to encourage the evacuees. In Iwanuma City, there were fewer casualties than in other devastated areas, so our difficult situation was not covered so much by the media and few celebrities visited our city. Then, the people of Iwanuma City all the more appreciated those from broad from so far away in Africa came to comfort and encourage us. It is a wonderful memory for us that they presented us with a small football with the same design that used at the FIFA World Cup.

In October, six months after the earthquake, a Drum group from South Africa came to our city under the “Everybody smile project” produced by Plan Japan. They performed a piece called “Jembe” with students from a primary school. The students enjoyed this very much and they must have healed from the emotional damage from the earthquake.

The other day Ms. Tokiko Kato, who is famous singer in Japan, invited us to her concert and we heard that she would go to South Africa. I once again felt connected to South Africa so I asked her to convey this message to you.

Thanks to your support, Iwanuma city is now in the process of reconstruction. We will continue to make efforts to bring back smiles in the citizens’ faces.”

Thank you so much.

Mayor of Iwanuma City
Tsuneaki Iguchi