

REMARKS BY H.E. AMBASSADOR YUTAKA YOSHIZAWA,
AT NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION
ON TUESDAY 4 DECEMBER 2012

His Excellency Mr. Godfrey Olifants, Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources,
Members of the South African Parliament,
Director-Generals and other members of the South African Government Departments,
His Excellency Ambassador Bene M'poko, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and fellow
members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished guests and Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to you all for attending today's Reception to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. His Majesty will be 79 years old on 23rd December. He has been in throne since 7th January 1989, and, therefore, the next year, the year 2013, will mark the 25th year of his reign.

As I arrived in South Africa in March 2012 and presented the letter of credence to H.E. President Zuma in June this year, this is the first occasion for me and my wife to host the National Day reception in South Africa. While I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt appreciation to you all for your support extended to me and to my wife since our arrival and for your support to my Embassy for all these years, I look forward to continued interaction with you, while we stay in South Africa.

The bilateral relations between Japan and South Africa have increasingly become closer in recent years, as they marked the 100 year anniversary in 2010.

Japanese businesses have been extending their activities in areas such as manufacturing, mining and infrastructure building in South Africa. Currently, 108 Japanese businesses in South Africa are creating more than 150,000 jobs. Japanese businesses are also contributing to the transfer of advanced Japanese technology to South Africa.

This year marks the 10th anniversary since the JOCV Program operated by JICA started in South Africa in 2002. In the last decade, 76 Japanese volunteers have been sent to South Africa, including 14 volunteers who are currently active in areas such as mathematics and science education and computer technology all over South Africa. I wish to call your attention to exhibits on their activities shown in this hall today. JICA is also extending technical cooperation in human resources development and infrastructure development.

Also, my Embassy is operating the Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security GGP Program in South Africa, where relatively small scale grants ranging from 50,000 to 100,000 US dollars are provided for building classrooms and medical clinics. In Japanese Fiscal Year 2011, namely from April 2010 to March 2011 period, 11 projects have been funded under this GGP Program.

Cooperation in the area of science and technology has also been worthy of noting this year. In October, 4th Meeting of the Japan-South Africa Joint Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation was held in Tokyo. The Embassy, together with other stakeholders, organized workshops and seminars in areas such as water resources, space science and technology, material science based on precious metal and robotics in South Africa. Also, in November, the 2nd Meeting of the Japan South Africa Water Resources Workshop was held in Tokyo with the participation of Deputy Minister Rejoice Mabudafhasi of Water and

Environment Affairs.

Youth exchange between the two countries is also being promoted. Since 1997, 455 young South Africans stayed in Japan as English teaching assistants under the JET program. Since 1994, 61 South Africans have studied in Japan under the Japanese Government Scholarship Program, including 10 who are currently studying in Japan. In addition, the Center for Japanese Studies at the Gordon Institute of Business Sciences of the University of Pretoria has started operation in 2011 and has become a focal point of interaction among Japanese and South African intellectuals and business people.

Coupled with developments mentioned above, high level exchange between the two countries has also been remarkable this year. In June, Foreign Minister Koichiro Genba of Japan met Minister Nkoana-Mashabane at the margin of Rio+20 and agreed to further strengthen the Strategic Cooperative Partnership between the two countries. In September, Mr. Takahiro Yokomichi, Speaker of the Japanese House of Representatives paid an official visit to South Africa. METI State Ministers Tadahiro Matsushita and Isao Matsumiya visited South Africa in February and October respectively, while Vice Minister Toshiyuki Kato for Foreign Affairs visited South Africa twice in January and October. On the other hand, Trade & Industry Minister Rob Davis visited Japan in May, while Tourism Minister Marthinus Van Schalkwyk and Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan visited Japan for participating international conferences, in February and in October respectively.

I also wish to highlight the fact that, in October this year, President Jacob Zuma conferred the Order of the Companion of OR Tambo to Mr. Toshiro Akiniwa, 87 years old Japanese anti-Apartheid veteran. It is very moving to realize that South Africa still remembers

an old Japanese anti=Apartheid veteran.

Talking of remembering, in March 2011, Japan experienced a massive earthquake and tsunami. On that occasion, 45 members Rescue South Africa Team visited Japan immediately after the disaster, while a number of messages of support and solidarity poured from the people and the Government of South Africa. These gave enormous encouragement to the Japanese people, especially to the people of the affected area, and I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate sincere gratitude on behalf of the people and the Government of Japan.

While Japan is exerting its efforts for reconstruction after the disaster, it will continue its contribution to the economic development of the Africa region. On 1-3 June 2013, Japan will host the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development or TICADV in Yokohama, Japan, in partnership with other stakeholders. This is the 5th TICAD Leaders Meeting, which Japan has been hosting every five years since 1993. At TICAD V, Robust and sustainable economic growth, inclusive and resilient society and building peace and stability will be discussed in relationship to the Africa region. At TICADIV in 2008, 41 African leaders out of 54 African countries participated. It is hoped as many leaders will participate from African countries including South Africa.

May I now invite you to raise your glasses and join me in toasting to the good health of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan and H.E. President Jacob Zuma, to yet enhanced relationship between Japan and South Africa, and to good health and prosperity for all of us present here tonight ?

Kampai !