

Wednesday, 2 December, 2015

**Remarks by His Excellency KIYA Masahiko, Ambassador of Japan to South Sudan  
at the National Day Reception on the occasion of  
the 82nd Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan  
at Crown Hotel, Juba**

Hon. Dr. Martin Elia Lomuro, Minister of Cabinet Affairs,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening.

Thank you very much for taking your precious time to join us today to celebrate the 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan.

The year 2015 has turned out to be an important year not only for South Sudan but also for the relationship between Japan and South Sudan. I would like to take this opportunity to briefly highlight major developments of this year.

(Progress toward peace)

Since the crisis started in December 2013, South Sudan went through a difficult period for nearly two years. But as parties concluded a landmark agreement this August and expressed their determination to work together in Juba, the hope for restoring peace in this country is now gaining its momentum.

Japan commends the efforts made by the parties as well as national and international stakeholders and partners to make this breakthrough into a reality. It is our pleasure to witness this progress before the year draws to a close.

We are in full support of continued peacebuilding efforts and actions by South Sudanese themselves in partnership with the international community.

(Japan's cooperation in 2015)

Cooperation between Japan and South Sudan has gained further grounds in 2015 in all four pillars of our support, i.e., infrastructure, agriculture, livelihood, and governance. JICA is taking a great lead in this field.

The ground-breaking ceremony of Freedom Bridge in Juba was held in March

with the presence of H.E. the President and all distinguished guests. The Exchanges of Notes for both the Juba Water Supply project and the Juba River Port project were signed this year toward their completion in two years' time.

It was also in this year that the Comprehensive Agriculture Master Plan (CAMP) was finally drawn up. It is awaiting the approval of the National Legislative Assembly anytime soon.

The Teachers' Training Institute in Rombur started its training courses this spring with JICA's long-time commitment. Japan's assistance to the National Blood Bank also started this spring.

It was just last month that UNITAR Hiroshima launched a fellowship programme for young government and civil society leaders. We also witnessed the launch of African Business Education (ABE) Initiative in South Sudan this autumn and have already received applications for Masters' courses starting from next year.

Other projects equally made progress, but to my pleasure, there are too many to mention today.

(Japan with UNMISS, international organizations and NGOs)

Still, we cannot describe Japan-South Sudan relations without mentioning the activities of the Japanese Engineering Contingent of UNMISS. They are fulfilling UNMISS' mandate that encompasses numerous tasks, ranging from the upgrading of road networks in Juba and beyond to the facilitation of humanitarian organizations' operations.

We would also like to take note of their goodwill activities. The Sakura Project that supports vocational training at MTC Juba started this year, passing on skills such as automobile maintenance and ICT to more than 100 South Sudanese trainees. The Japanese Engineering Contingent represents and demonstrates the virtue of the Japanese people not only in UNMISS but to the local communities in South Sudan.

Japan-South Sudan relations are further enhanced by other key actors. Our country works in partnership with many international organizations in South Sudan, and about 20 Japanese nationals contribute to their activities from within.

Last but not least, Japanese NGOs are working at the grass-root level in collaboration with local NGOs to improve livelihood of the South Sudanese people on the ground.

(High-level exchanges)

All these have nurtured our multi-layered bilateral relationship and expanded its depth and scope, paving the way for fruitful high-level exchanges this year.

In March, H.E. the Vice-President and the Hon. Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management attended the UN Natural Disaster Reduction Conference held in Sendai, which was hit by the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011.

In exchange, South Sudan kindly welcomed the visits of our Defense Minister, Parliamentary Vice-Foreign and Defense Ministers, and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs.

I hope that such high-level exchanges will further grow. TICAD VI Summit next year in Nairobi will definitely be one of such important occasions.

(Roles of Japan and South Sudan in the world)

Having served as Ambassador to South Sudan since April, I am getting to realize the full potential of the relationship between Japan and South Sudan. We embrace a shared mission: to promote peace and prosperity in South Sudan, in Africa and in the world. This we can accomplish through our joint efforts.

This year, as we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, Japan renewed its determination to take the lessons of history deeply into our hearts, to carve out a better future, and to make all possible efforts for peace and prosperity of the world. Japan bears the flag of “Proactive Contribution to Peace”. For us, South Sudan is one of the most challenging yet rewarding places to fulfill this mission.

South Sudan, on its part, can demonstrate its leadership in attaining peace in this country, which will have a wider impact in the whole of Africa and in the world. It is only South Sudanese who can undertake this noble role and address the challenge.

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We can thus work together. Japan has its distinct strength in the fields of quality infrastructure, human security, seamless assistance from humanitarian to development phases, human resource development, and regional economic integration. Japan is also proud to share its own experience of post-conflict reconstruction.

As Japan will serve as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council from next year, we intend to make the most of this position to enhance global peace and security.

(Ownership, partnership and commitment)

Let me conclude my remarks by thanking all of you again for supporting our mission. On behalf of the Japanese community in South Sudan, I greatly appreciate your cooperation. On our side, we will do our utmost to support the ownership of the South Sudanese people, promote our partnership with the international community and deliver on our commitment to peace and prosperity of South Sudan.

Thank you very much for your attention. Shukran jazilan.