

Speech by H. E. Mr. Hideyuki Sakamoto
at the National Day Reception on 7 December 2016

Hon. Dr. Peya Mushelenga,
Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation,
Honourable Mr Uutoni Nujoma, Minister of Land Reform,
Honourable Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, former Speaker of the National Assembly,
Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers,

Colleagues from the diplomatic corps,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for coming to our National Day Reception today.

As you may know, our actual National Day is the Emperor's birth day which is on December 23th. His Majesty will be 83 years old this year. The Emperor of Japan has no political functions, but he is a symbol of national unity under the democratic constitution.

This reception is the second one here after the opening of our Embassy in Windhoek last year. Throughout this year we have observed our bilateral relations and friendship with Namibia further grow.

On the ministerial level, Hon. Minister of Industrialisation, Trade and SME Development, Mr. Immanuel Ngatjizeko and Hon. Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation, Dr. Itah Kandjii-Murangi visited Japan and had fruitful dialogues for the future cooperation in the fields of trade, science and technology. From the parliament, Hon. Mensah-Williams, Chairperson of the National Council, also visited Tokyo to develop ties with parliamentarians.

As a development forum between Japan and African countries, TICAD 6 was held in Nairobi in August and Hon. Prime Minister, Ms. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila and Hon. Minister of Economic Planning, Mr. Tom Alweendo, and of course, Dr. Mushelenga, joined other heads of

state/government of African countries and Japanese Prime Minister Abe as well as representatives of various international organizations and Japanese private sector in discussing such important fields as Public Private Partnership and capacity building to name but a few.

One of the capacity building projects in TICAD is called "Africa Business Education Initiative (ABE initiative)". This project provides a unique combination of master's degree study at a university and internship in a private company in Japan. Under ABE initiative, five Namibian young businesspersons are currently studying in Japan fully financed by the Japanese Government. We expect that more Namibians will have chances to have first-hand business experience in Japan under this cooperation scheme.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Japanese Development Agency, JICA, started dispatching young volunteers to Namibia in 2006 and this year marks its 10th anniversary. Since its inception, more than 100 young volunteers have been closely working with local communities in various fields such as rural development, civil engineering, IT and education.

Another example of cooperation through JICA is a scientific research collaboration between the UNAM and Japanese universities in the northern regions to introduce a new method of mixed cropping of the drought resilient mahangu and the flood resilient rice. This five-year research project will come to an end soon with a very successful result. Today, we have a sample of the harvest here in the corner of this reception hall and you can try the taste of the new pup made from mixed powder of mahangu and rice, if you are interested.

This year the Embassy has supported several grassroots grant assistance projects particularly in the field of education by constructing school buildings. The total number of school buildings constructed under the scheme reached nearly 30 since its inception.

Japan and Namibia have long years' good cooperation in the fishery sector

as well. Recently a crab processing factory, the first of this kind in Namibia, was inaugurated in Walvis Bay under the joint cooperation of Japanese and Namibian companies. I do hope that the investment will be successful to contribute toward creating more jobs in Namibia.

In this relation, I would like to express my appreciation to Taiyo Namibia and Oshimada Fisheries for their generous contribution of red crabs for this reception. My special thanks also go to the Seaflower of Namibia for their generous contribution of crayfish which is very popular in the Japanese market. I hope all of you enjoy the taste of those Namibian marine products of high quality. If the bilateral cooperation comes to a concrete result and if the result reaches your stomach, the cooperation is surely more convincing.

This year our Embassy has also started with some cultural activities including the Japanese drum performance and a film festival . I hope that our bilateral cooperation in this field will also be further deepen and successful next year.

In concluding my remarks, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very happy new year.

Thank you.