



Letter No. 2/2018

13th December 2018

Dear Sir or Madam,

I have the honour to present my compliments and am delighted to deliver the latest edition of *Japanese Ambassador's Newsletter* to you. First of all, I would like to thank you for your responses via e-mail and letter after the publication of the newsletter's first edition. I was happy to hear that it was of interest to you.

In this edition, I will touch upon some of the recent developments in the context of the Japan-Nigeria bilateral relationship. Those developments include a successful Japan Pavilion at the Lagos International Trade Fair 2018, the Inauguration of Japan-Nigeria Parliamentary Friendship League, and His Majesty the Emperor's Birthday Reception (Japanese National Day reception). I hope you enjoy the contents and I am more than willing to hear your feedbacks, if any.

#### **【Japan Pavilion at Lagos International Trade Fair 2018】**

The Embassy of Japan participated in the Lagos International Trade Fair (LITF) 2018 which was held between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> November. At the opening ceremony of the LITF 2018, I was fortunate to be given the opportunity to deliver a goodwill message on behalf of all the international participants in the trade fair, so I highlighted the importance of promotion of trade and investment relations with foreign countries for the development of Nigeria and wished for a successful trade fair.

At the subsequent opening of the Japan Pavilion, it was my great honour to have H.E. Vice President Prof. Yemi Osinbajo at the Japan Pavilion and together we performed *Kagami-Biraki* (a Japanese traditional ceremony to open Sake barrel with hammers held on special occasions wishing a great success of events). I think this *Kagami-Biraki* performance was conducted perhaps for the first time in Nigeria. After *Kagami-Biraki*, I ushered the Vice President around the Japan Pavilion together with Mr.



Shigeyo Nishizawa, the Trade Commissioner of JETRO Lagos, and visited the exhibitions of several Japanese companies.

Based on the firm belief that products and services of Japanese companies can contribute to an improvement of quality of life of Nigerian people, Japanese companies are now focusing on new trends of Nigerian markets such as cosmetic services, IT, and online businesses, among others. Therefore, the theme of this year's Japan Pavilion, "Made in Japan, Made for Women," was actually in line with the above-mentioned new trends Japanese companies are paying attention to. Under this concept, many Japanese companies demonstrated their products and services designed for women at the Japan Pavilion.

Compared to last year, the number of participating companies increased to more than 30 companies and the visitors to Japan Pavilion hit 50,000. In the end, I was very much delighted to hear the news that the Japan Pavilion won the best pavilion award of this year's LITF.

### **【Inauguration of Japan-Nigeria Parliamentary Friendship League】**

While business interactions between the two countries are gaining momentum, there was an encouraging initiative at political level quite recently. On 28<sup>th</sup> November, the Japan-Nigeria Parliamentary League was inaugurated at a Japanese Parliamentary Building in Tokyo. The parliamentary league is a platform on the Japanese side for legislative collaboration between the two countries.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by a number of Japanese Parliamentary members and senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Among parliamentary members, Mr. Kazunori Tanaka, the Member of the House of the Representatives, will serve as chairperson of the Japan-Nigeria



Parliamentary League. From the Nigerian side, my counterpart, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to Japan, Prof. Mohammed Gana Yisa, his Embassy's staff, and the President of Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation in Asia, Prof. Emenike Ejiogu, were there to celebrate the historic occasion. Although I was not able to attend the ceremony in Tokyo, I sent a goodwill message and expressed my sincere congratulations on this movement towards further strengthening our bilateral relationship.

While I very much look forward to the establishment of a similar organization in Nigeria, I sincerely hope the newly inaugurated Parliamentary Friendship League will play a key role in promoting the relations between the parliaments of both countries and will further strengthen the excellent ties which have been in existence between Nigeria and Japan since the 1960s.

### **【His Majesty the Emperor's Birthday Reception】**

On 6<sup>th</sup> December, I hosted the Japanese National Day Reception to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. Because it was the last occasion to celebrate His Majesty's birthday under the current Emperor as His Majesty the Emperor will abdicate on 30th April 2019, this year's reception had additional importance. While Japan is a unique country in the modern world having an Emperor, His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, as stated in the Japanese Constitution, doesn't have any political power, but is the symbol of the country and of the unity of the people. As I was once serving as a chamberlain to His Majesty the Emperor, I personally felt how profound His Majesty's desire is to dedicate himself to friendship and peace in the world.

During my welcome speech at the reception, I gave an overview of the long-standing friendly bilateral relationship between Japan and Nigeria, and I expressed my hope that the year 2019 would be a huge opportunity for both countries to further deepen their relationship as the Nigerian side will have the

presidential election in February, whereas Japan will host important conferences and ceremonies including the G20 Summit in June, the TICAD 7 in August, and the ceremony for the enthronement of the new Emperor in October.

I also mentioned some of the regions in Japan which a series of natural disasters have hit and affected in the last several years including my hometown, Fukushima Prefecture, where the devastating earthquake and subsequent tsunami hit in 2011. While I drew the audience's attention to the incredible pace of the recovery with efforts and solidarity of the Japanese people, I encouraged everyone to visit Japan, especially those affected areas.



I was rejoiced to see the reception, attended by more than 460 guests, end with a pleasant ambience. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all of the guests for coming to the special reception this year.

#### **【In Closing】**

Before I conclude, please allow me to touch upon a piece of good news which recently made the Japanese people happy and excited. The Japanese city of Osaka was elected as the host city of World Expo 2025 at the general assembly of BIE in Paris on 23<sup>rd</sup> November. I would like to express my deep appreciation for all the supports Japan was given during the election campaign, and I am now quite confident that World Expo 2025 Osaka-Kansai will be a great experience for every participant under the theme of "*Designing Future Society for Our Lives.*"

Last but not least, I would like to extend my compliments of the season and wish you a very Happy New Year!

Yours sincerely,

Yutaka KIKUTA

Ambassador Extraordinary  
and Plenipotentiary of Japan  
to the Federal Republic of Nigeria

\*For further information on the Embassy of Japan's activities in Nigeria, please visit our Website and Facebook page.

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