

Remarks by H.E. Ambassador OKANIWA Ken at the reception to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup>  
anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Kenya

Members of the Kenya Japan Alumni Association, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

This year Japan and Kenya marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations. As the 20<sup>th</sup> Ambassador of Japan to Kenya, I feel extremely lucky to celebrate this occasion with you.

Our friendship has been fostered through numerous exchanges between our two peoples. High profile visits by members of the Imperial Family and our political leaders certainly help but people-to-people exchanges give breadth to our relationship. Japanese Overseas Volunteers and JICA experts who work together with the Kenyan colleagues; Japanese professors who come every year to conduct joint research with Kenyan academics; young Kenyans who study at Japanese universities with government scholarship; Kenyan experts who receive training in Japan; Japanese individuals who help disabled and street children build their lives; and the list goes on and on.

Today I am taking this opportunity to present Commendations to some outstanding contributors. But all the participants present have, in one way or another, have a special link with Japan. I would like to thank you most sincerely for contributing to our friendship. Many of you are featured in photo exhibition inside so I hope you will take a look.

Japan and Kenya have always supported each other in good times and bad. When the terrible earthquake and Tsunami struck Japan in 2011, Kenyans expressed solidarity with the Japanese people. When Kenya was suffering from the COVID19 pandemic, Japan provided cold chain equipment and vaccines to the country.

2023 also proved to be a special year in the history of our bilateral relations. On May 3, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visited Kenya to have a meeting with President William Samoei Ruto. The summit meeting contributed to strengthening our bilateral relations. Another milestone is the establishment of the Kenya-Japan Parliamentary Friendship Group by the members of the National Assembly. I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Group members some of whom are with us. I hope the Group members will visit Japan soon.

Just the other day Japanese universities organized a “Study in Japan Fair” at the Japan Embassy. The event was oversubscribed with about three hundred young student eager to study in Japan. Looking to the future, I am in no doubt that our friendship will strengthen. Arigatou and asanteni sana.                      END