



SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. FUJIO SAMUKAWA

AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO MALAWI

ON THE OCCASION

**OF AMBASSADOR SAMUKAWA'S FAREWELL RECEPTION
AT SUNBIRD CAPITAL HOTEL (VIPHYA ROOM), LILONGWE**

ON 24TH SEPTEMBER, 2013.

**❖ Our Guest of Honour, Mr. Ephraim Abel Kayemebe M.P.,
Deputy Minister of International Cooperation in the Ministry
of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation,**

❖ Honourable Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers,

❖ Members of Parliament,

**❖ The Dean and Members of the Diplomatic Corps and
International Organizations,**

❖ Senior Government Officials,

❖ Members of the Press,

❖ Distinguished Guests,

❖ Ladies and Gentlemen.

Allow me to start by extending my heartfelt appreciation to each one of you for kindly setting aside some time out for busy schedules to grace me with your presence this evening. Thank you very much indeed!

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to add that I am most grateful that my stay in Malawi accorded me the opportunity to meet all of you and many other wonderful and unique individuals whom I now fondly call friends and colleagues and whom I have come to rely on for advice and support. It is therefore only proper that I make use of this occasion to register my deepest thanks and appreciation for all the invaluable support.

I would also like to express my profound gratitude to Her Excellency President Joyce Banda and the Government of the Republic of Malawi for the continuous support rendered to me and the Embassy and for the cordial and flourishing relations between Japan and Malawi.

Furthermore, permit me to re-convey my appreciation for the kind gesture by the late President Bingu wa Mutharika to host a function in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the Japanese volunteers' activities in Malawi at the State House in August 2011. This was indeed a great honour to the volunteers as they were publicly recognized for their efforts and were also accorded a rare opportunity to explain their activities to the then President.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, one of the notable things during my tenure was the similarity of the situations experienced by both Japan and Malawi. For instance, the year 2011 proved to be a challenging year for Japan following the earthquake and tsunamis disaster and a stagnated

economy. As you may recall, the tsunamis caused extensive damage to infrastructure including a nuclear power plant, and consequently led to radiation leaks at the plant. Sadly, thousands of people lost their lives whilst thousands others remain missing.

Although this was one of the worst tragedies in Japan's history, the people and Government of Japan managed to face the disaster with much resilience and bravery because of the overwhelming support from the international community including the Republic of Malawi. As such, it will please you, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, to know that Japan is on the way to its full recovery. I would however like to once again express Japan's heartfelt gratitude for the support rendered during and after the tragedy. Also accept my deepest appreciation for the solidarity of the people and Government of Malawi during the commemoration of the first anniversary of the disaster last year.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, in the case of Malawi, 2011 was also a challenging year following a deteriorating economy and an unprecedented shortage of fuel and forex. This situation was unfortunately compounded with worsening relations with the donor countries. And as some of you may recall, these unfortunate events led to a number of public demonstrations, one of which regrettably resulted in the lost of 20 innocent souls. This was indeed a difficult period for Malawi.

Distinguished Guests, on the other hand, just as Malawi experienced a transfer of political power in 2012 following the demise of former President Bingu wa Mutharika; Japan also experienced a change in political administration following a general election that saw Prime

Minister Shinzo Abe being voted into power. The smooth transition of power when the former President Bingu wa Mutharika passed away was most certainly a defining moment in the political history of Malawi because it demonstrated political maturity and democratic progress.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, meanwhile, as Her Excellency President Joyce Banda's administration embarked on addressing the country's economic challenges through various initiatives such as the Economic Recovery Plan (ERP); His Excellency Prime Minister Shinzo Abe also embarked on economic reforms to revive Japan's stagnated economy through a recovery plan popularly known as Abenomics. Permit me, therefore, to commend President Joyce Banda for prioritizing Malawi's economic recovery. It is my sincere hope that the gains made so far will materialize into the full recovery of the economy in the near future.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, another striking similarity is that this year saw both countries hosting important development-oriented conferences. Japan hosted the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V), which was attended by 39 Heads of State and Government including Her Excellency President Joyce Banda. The people and Government of Japan remain deeply grateful and indebted to Her Excellency President Banda and the Republic of Malawi for President Banda's valuable contribution to the success of TICAD V.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, on the other hand, as you are well aware, Malawi successfully hosted the 33rd Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community (Sadc). It gives me great pleasure, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, to

congratulate Her Excellency President Joyce Banda and the people and Government of the Republic of Malawi for the successful hosting of the Sadc Summit.

Furthermore, it is with great joy and admiration that I convey the felicitations and best wishes of the people and Government of Japan to Her Excellency President Joyce Banda and the people of Malawi following the election of President Joyce Banda as Chairperson of Sadc. In this connection, following Tokyo's successful bid to host the 2020 Olympic Games; it is with great pleasure that I also convey Japan's heartfelt appreciation for the support rendered to Japan's bid to host the games.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, all in all, I have enjoyed my stay in Malawi and will forever treasure the experience. I will also cherish the many success stories of our bilateral cooperation and exchange of high level visits, which were mutually beneficial and significantly consolidated the Japan-Malawi relations.

You will therefore be pleased to know that the construction of the South Rukuru Bridge on the M1 Road in Rumphi; the rehabilitation of public secondary schools in the southern and central regions; the installation of a state-of-art air navigation system and solar system at Kamuzu International Airport; and the construction of a secondary school teacher training college in Lilongwe are but a few of the most recent examples of our bilateral cooperation during my tenure.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, although I am sad to leave Malawi and the many wonderful friends and colleagues, I find comfort in the fact

that goodbyes are not forever; they are just temporal gestures made in anticipation of a future meeting.

Distinguished Guests, in concluding my remarks, I would like to convey my best wishes to each one of you. I also wish Her Excellency President Joyce Banda good health and continued peace and prosperity for the people of Malawi.

So until we meet again, thank you all very much!