

The Emperor's Birthday Reception

On December 7th, 2011, the Embassy of Japan hosted a reception to mark the 78th birthday of His Majesty Emperor Akihito. The Emperor's actual birthday falls on December 23rd but the reception was held earlier in view of the fact that December 23rd is a busy period of the festive season. The 78th birthday celebration was particularly special for the Japanese people as it was also an opportune time to celebrate the support and solidarity received from the world over on the occasion of the Great Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunamis on March 11, 2011.



Left to right: Ambassador Fujio Samukawa; Mrs. Terue Samukawa; Mr. Shigenobu Kobayashi, Deputy Ambassador; and the Guest of Honour, Hon. Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International



Ambassador and Mrs. Samukawa welcoming Mr. Patrick Kabambe, Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

The reception was held in the Viphya Room at Capital Hotel from 18:00 hours and the guest of honour was Hon. Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

Around 154 guests attended the reception including cabinet ministers; government officials; the Speaker of Parliament and Members of Parliament; members of the diplomatic community and international organisations; business persons; and Japanese nationals. The program kicked off with speeches by H.E. Ambassador Fujio Samukawa and Hon. Prof Arthur Peter Mutharika respectively.

In his remarks, Ambassador Fujio Samukawa reiterated the gratitude of the people and the Government of Japan to His Excellency Prof. Bingu wa Mutharika and the people of the Republic of Malawi and also the business and international community in Malawi for the invaluable support rendered to Japan on the occasion of the March 11, 2011 earthquake.

The Ambassador then remarked that on a brighter note, 2011 had marked 40 years of active and fruitful cooperation between Japan and Malawi. He then briefly touched upon ongoing project



Guests listening attentively to speeches

Hon Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika, on the other hand, began his remarks by conveying a best wishes and congratulatory message from H.E. President Bingu wa Mutharika to His Majesty Emperor Akihito and the people of Japan. He then thanked the Government of Japan for contributing to Malawi's development even when faced with challenges such as natural disasters and economic slow-downs.

The Minister also remarked that Malawi would continue to expand and sustain its bilateral cooperation with Japan on a win-win basis for the benefit of both countries. He also mentioned that Malawi would be supporting Japan in international fora such as the UN. To this effect, he announced Malawi's support for Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

Hon. Mutharika also said that it is his hope that in accordance with Japan's wishes of assisting African countries to become self-sustained; Malawi would become self-dependent in ten years time."

The Minister ended his remarks by toasting to the continued success and health of His Majesty the Emperor and also to the further consolidation of the Japan-Malawi ties.

After the speeches, guests were treated to a variety of finger snacks and Japanese delicacies such as vegetable and prawn tempura, and sushi as they mingled around.



The Guest of Honour, Hon. Prof Arthur Peter Mutharika delivering his remarks



Guests toast to the health and success of the Emperor



Hon. Jean Kalilani, Health Minister; Hon. Reene Kachere, Gender Minister; and Hon. Ephraim Chiume, Justice Minister were among the guests



A cross section of guests mingling



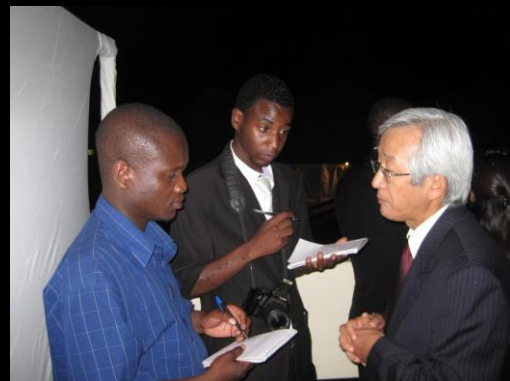
The Guest of Honour sharing a joke with Hon. Ken Lipenga, Finance Minister (far right) and Hon. Ephraim M. Chiume, Justice Minister (right) as Ambassador and Mrs. Samukawa look on



The Guest of Honour being treated to Japanese delicacies



Guests sampling Japanese dishes



The Ambassador being interviewed by journalists