

Emperor's Birthday Reception

November 15, 2018

On November 15, the Embassy of Japan celebrated the 85th birthday of His Majesty Emperor Akihito of Japan. The event was graced by Honourable Henry Mussa, Minister of Information and Communications Technology with over 200 dignitaries from government, business, the diplomatic corps, and civil society in attendance. Various companies and organizations including the Japan Tobacco International, Beforward; Central East Africa Railways; TOYOTA Malawi; Marubeni Protechs; Gyros Corporation; Millennium Promise Japan; and JICA exhibited their activities. Furthermore, guests were treated to delicacies that included Japanese dishes and the famous Japanese rice wine known as Sake. Another highlight of the function was the performance of the national anthems of Japan and Malawi by local primary school pupils who have been mentored by Japanese volunteers.

Ambassador's Remarks

Ambassador Kae Yanagisawa, explained that the Emperor as the Symbol of the State and Unity of the People has stood by the people in times of joy and sorrow and has maintained active interaction with all corners of society. She also explained that this would be the last Birthday Reception for the reigning Emperor as he would be abdicating the throne on 30 April 2019 with the approval of cabinet leaving the throne to His Imperial Highness, the Crown Prince Naruhito who will be enthroned on 1 May 2019.

The Ambassador also thanked H.E. President Arthur Peter Mutharika and the international community for the sympathies and solidarity extended to Japan following a series of severe disasters that hit Japan this year.

Whilst lauding 10 years of a resident Embassy which has consolidated a cordial relationship that dates back to 1964, Ambassador Yanagisawa also cited examples of successful cooperation with Malawi including the ongoing construction of the terminal buildings at Kamuzu International Airport and promotion of the martial art of Judo, which emphasizes spiritual mental and physical development. The Ambassador also mentioned that Malawi is the largest recipient of Japanese volunteers who rewardingly have very fond memories of Malawi even long after their tour of duty. She also commended beneficiaries of various Japanese Government academic scholarships and training programs for valuing capacity development and Malawi's development.

Looking ahead, Ambassador Kae Yanagisawa commented that 2019 was a very important year for the Japan-Africa relations in terms of the Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7) scheduled for August 2019. The Ambassador touted TICAD as a platform for enhancing Africa's development with emphasis being placed on African ownership, partnership with the international community; and engagement of the private sector as the major engine for economic transformation.

Commenting on the 2019 tripartite elections, Ambassador Yanagisawa called for peaceful, free, fair and transparent elections adding that she looked forward to the implementation of the Political Party Bill. She urged all election stakeholders including political parties, the media, electoral commission and the voters to assume full responsibility saying the success of the elections depended on them. The Ambassador also called for the continuation of all national and sectoral strategies and policies even after the elections in order for Malawi to make positive change.

The envoy also urged the participation of women in politics and expressed hope for a safe level playing field and expressed the need for women leaders to diligently promote and safeguard the rights and empowerment of women in Malawi. And coming from a country with a low level of women's participation in politics, she conceded the importance of promoting women leaders as a means of having inclusive and peaceful societies.

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Amb. Yanagisawa welcoming guests



Amb. Yanagisawa and Hon. Minister Mussa



A scene from the official program



Amb. Yanagisawa and Hon. Minister Mussa stopping at a Japanese company booth



Speech by Amb. Yanagisawa



Media conducting interviews to Amb. Yanagisawa

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Ambassador's Chef, Mr. Nonaka preparing
Yakitori and Tempura



Sushi corner



Amb. Yanagisawa in Kimono and Embassy staff in Yukata
Some Yukatas are made from Chitenje