

## The reception in celebration of the 66<sup>th</sup> Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan

On 19th February 2026, the Embassy of Japan hosted the Emperor's Birthday Reception in celebration of the 66th Birthday of His Majesty Emperor of Japan.

The reception was attended by distinguished guests from various sectors, including the Guest of Honour, Honourable Roza Fatch Mbilizi, Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development; Members of Parliament; Mayor of Lilongwe City; members of the Diplomatic Corps; and representatives from the public and private sectors.



The Embassy, JICA staff members and Sangalala Choir

The reception began with the national anthems of Japan and Malawi, beautifully performed by the Sangalala Choir, comprised of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), Japanese United Nations staff members, and staff of the Embassy.

In his remarks, Ambassador Naito reflected on the significant milestones achieved over the 62 years of diplomatic relations between Japan and Malawi, and expressed his continued commitment to maintaining and further developing a friendly and cooperative relationship between the two countries. In response, Honourable Mbilizi expressed sincere appreciation for Japan's longstanding cooperation and friendship with Malawi, and toasted to the good health and happiness of His Majesty the Emperor, the prosperity and well-being of the Government and people of Japan, and the continued enhancement of cooperation between Malawi and Japan.

Other highlights of the evening included the traditional Japanese sake barrel opening ceremony (Kagami Biraki – 鏡開き), symbolizing prosperity and good fortune, performed jointly by

Ambassador Naito and Honourable Mbilizi. Guests also enjoyed Japanese food and a sake tasting booth featuring a variety of traditional Japanese sake. Japanese companies and NGOs showcased their products and services, further demonstrating the growing economic ties between the two countries.

Ambassador Naito's full speech: <https://www.mw.emb-japan.go.jp/files/100982141.pdf>



Speech by Ambassador Naito



Kagami Biraki by Ambassador Naito and Hon. Mbilizi



Japanese food



Japanese sake and plum wine



Sangalala Choir



Companies and NGOs



ONENESS by singer & song writer Akiichiko



Development cooperation videos



Guests