

Good evening, Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this reception on the occasion of our national day, the birthday of His Majesty, the Emperor of Japan, Akihito.

I am very glad to see you all here today.

His Majesty, the Emperor of Japan, Akihito will reach his 78th birthday on 23 December.

The Emperor had caught a slight cold early last month, but well recovered and resumed his official duties last week.

I arrived in Kiev as new Ambassador of Japan to Ukraine on 10 October and presented the letter of credence to the President, His Excellency Mr. Yanukovich on 16 November.

In terms of my background, I have a long career of working for the wide range of activities on science, technology, education, culture and sports at Japanese government.

Therefore, personally, I am very much motivated to make the best use of my career and network and firmly determined to serve for further promotion of the friendly relations between Japan and Ukraine.

Almost 9 months have passed since Japan had the unprecedented tragic disaster of the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami, and also the following accidents at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station in March.

The Ukraine's reaction was as quick as any other countries.

Not only the Government but also citizens of Ukraine expressed sympathy and offered us extremely kind support.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for all the help offered by Ukraine.

Japan with good unity of people will continue to be fully engaged in the efforts to restore and reconstruct the country as our highest

priority task so that Japan's rebirth can be realized as soon as possible.

When looking back further the past year, we had a very important, historical turning point this year.

The President, His Excellency Mr. Yanukovich visited Japan in January.

The President and our Prime Minister signed the "Joint Statement on Ukrainian-Japanese Global Partnership".

Based upon the Joint Statement, our bilateral cooperation is going well; for example, holding of the 3rd Joint Meeting of the Coordinating Council for Economic Cooperation, start of negotiations on the bilateral treaty aimed at mutual promotion and protection of investments, progress of the first Yen Loan project "Boryspil State International Airport Development Project", enforcement of the Green Investment Scheme under the Kyoto Protocol, holding of the 2nd meeting of the Japan-Ukraine Commission for Science and Technology Cooperation, visit of many Japanese delegations to Chernobyl NPP, steady implementation of KUSANONE Human Security project, development of cooperation under the "GUAM plus Japan", 40th anniversary of the sisterhood relations establishment between the cities of Kyiv and Kyoto, and many others.

In addition, on 26 January 2012, Japan and Ukraine will mark the 20th anniversary of establishment of the diplomatic relations.

We are planning a series of cultural and other events both in Kiev and Tokyo.

I wish the important relationships between Japan and Ukraine will further develop in all the spheres on both levels of government and citizens.

Before concluding the speech, let me convey my deepest gratitude to you all once again for the indispensable support addressed to the sufferers from the March disaster.

These bonds between Japan and Ukraine as well as international community will be forever remembered by the Japanese.

Thank you very much.