

**Brief Remarks by Mr. Akira Ouchi,
Consul-General of Japan in Karachi,
at the *Ikebana* Workshop,
Co-organized by the Consulate-General of Japan
and Ikebana International Karachi Chapter
on Thursday, May 8, 2014**

Honorable Dr. Nuzat Jamali, President of the Ikebana International, Karachi Chapter,
Respected Mr. Christopher Lim, *Sogetsu* Master from Ikebana International, Singapore Chapter,
Distinguished Members of the Ikebana International, Karachi Chapter,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalam Alaikum.

It is my great pleasure to open the *ikebana* workshop this morning and I would like to congratulate the President of the Ikebana International, Karachi Chapter, Dr. Nuzat Jamali and its members for organizing this workshop on the occasion of a *Sogetsu* master from Singapore, Mr. Christopher Lim's visit to Karachi. I would like to extend my warm welcome to Mr. Lim, for his second visit since last September.

Since ancient times, Japanese people have loved and shown appreciation for flowers and valued them through the change of four seasons. *Ikebana*, the Japanese art of flower arrangement, was created through this close interaction between people and flowers, around the end of 15th century. Over the centuries, *ikebana* has refined its techniques and evolved into an advanced art form. Today, *ikebana* is an internationally renowned art which is practiced and appreciated by people all around the world and I am very pleased to see that here in Pakistan also, through active promotional works by four local *ikebana* groups, *ikebana* has been practiced by many people in Pakistan.

Ikebana is an art which connects people and nature, and I believe that both Japanese and Pakistani people share such common cultural values. This is well expressed in Ikebana International, Karachi Chapter's motto "*Friendship through flowers*". During this two-day workshop, under the guidance of Mr. Lim, I hope you will have an opportunity to practice and enhance your skills of *ikebana*, thereby further contributing to the promotion of *ikebana* in Pakistan.

The Consulate-General of Japan at Karachi will continue to cooperate with the Japanese cultural organizations, including Ikebana International, Karachi Chapter, to conduct activities in introducing Japanese culture to the people in Pakistan including the traditional art of *ikebana*, thereby promoting mutual understanding between Japan and Pakistan. And I truly hope that our cordial and friendly relationship between Japan and Pakistan will bloom and flourish, like flowers, in the years ahead.

Bahot Shukria.

[End]