

**Speech 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 Monday, September 9th, 2013**

Honorable Ms. Nafissa Baig, President of the Ikebana International, Karachi Chapter,
Honorable Mr. Christopher Lim, *Ikebana* 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 take this opportunity to congratulate the President of the Ikebana International, Karachi Chapter, Ms. Nafissa Baig and its members for their efforts in organizing this workshop on the occasion of a world-famous *ikebana* master from Singapore, Mr. Christopher Lim's visit to Karachi. On behalf of the Consulate-General of Japan, I would also like to extend my warm welcome to Mr. Lim.

Since ancient times, Japanese people have shown a great fondness for flowers. We have shown remarkable appreciation of flowers, valuing them especially for how they mark the cycle of four seasons. *Ikebana*, the Japanese art of flower arrangement, developed as part of 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 attracting admiration among people from every walk of life.

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, you will have an opportunity to practice and enhance your skills of *ikebana* and I hope you will further contribute 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]