

Remarks by Mr. Akira Ouchi, Consul General of Japan At the Emperor's Birthday Reception

Assalam Alaikum!

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to extend my heartfelt welcome to you all for joining us tonight in celebrating the 79th birthday of His Majesty the Emperor Akihito of Japan. On the 23rd of December, His Majesty will be 79 years old. The Imperial House of Japan is one of the world's oldest monarchies with the long history of about 2,700 years. And His Majesty Emperor Akihito is the 125th Emperor of Japan, the latest in the oldest continuing line of hereditary monarchy in the world. Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress have brought the Imperial Family even closer to the people of Japan and have traveled many countries promoting friendship and goodwill among the peoples in the world. Their Majesties visited Pakistan in 1962 as then Crown Prince and Princess.

The year 2012 is a very memorable year for Japan and Pakistan, as this year marks the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relationship between Japan and Pakistan. We have carried out a series of commemorative events to further strengthen the friendly relationship between the two countries throughout this year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan has extended ODA to Pakistan an amount of about 5.9 billion US dollars from 1954 to 2010. In the area of emergency aid, Japan provided emergency assistance to Pakistan at the time of earthquake in 2005 and after floods in 2010 and 2011. This year Japan decided to provide emergency relief goods such as tents and blankets, worth 35 million yen, and food, shelters and water etc., worth 4.7 million US dollars through UN organizations.

Pakistan too extended assistance to Japan at the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami in March last year. Pakistan provided relief goods to Japan and the Pakistani people in Japan went to Tohoku region to help victims. I would like to express our sincere gratitude for the generous support from the Pakistani people. A friend in need is a friend indeed. This proves the cordial and friendly relationship existing between Japan and Pakistan.

Lastly, I wish the economic relations, cultural exchange and people-to-people exchange between Japan and Pakistan will be further promoted and I, as the Consul-General of Japan in Karachi, will make every effort to achieve that goal.

Thank you very much, Arigato, and Bahot Shukria!