

Speech of the H.E. Mitsuyuki TAKADA, Ambassador of Japan

On the occasion of the National Day Reception.

Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Edi Rama,

Ministers, Members of Parliament, Ambassadors; Dear friends, Good Evening.

Thank you for joining us this evening in celebration of the 63rd birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan.

I also would like to express my great gratitude to you all for your support and cooperation extended our activities in Albania.

This is the first time we celebrate our National Day since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, so it is my great pleasure to see so many friendly faces in one place as we offer our congratulations and best wishes of happiness to His Majesty Emperor Naruhito.

Time passes very quickly. Last year we celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Friendly Relations between Japan and Albania. On this occasion ,thanks to Albanian Government's and our friends support, we organized the Japan Culture Week, to share as many aspects of the Japanese culture with our Albanian friends as possible, and many Albanian people experienced and enjoyed Japanese culture firsthand.

This year, the first year of another 100 years of our good relation, H.E Prime Minister Edi Rama held an official visit to Japan last month. During the visit, there is a summit meeting between two leaders, visit to Hiroshima, a business seminar to promote Albanian products & tourism, with Minister Ibrahimaj, Minister Kumbaro and Minister Krifca, which was very successful and I am pretty sure that we can deepen our relations further.

The relationship between Japan and Albania has been enhanced day by day. On the Political front, both Japan and Albania, as non-permanent members of the Security Council of UN, are working together on various issues, and on the Economic front, the volume of trade between the two countries is on the rise and Albanian Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Japan is planning to visit Japan this year to contact Japanese companies' executives.

On the support of human security in Albania, ever since the establishment of our Embassy in Tirana in 2017, the Japanese government has provided 13 Million Euro in Grants, through JICA and the Embassy, for projects in the fields of healthcare, environmental protection, disaster prevention, and supporting vulnerable groups of society.

In addition, since the 1990, 580 government officials have had training opportunities in Japan. However, I am not satisfied of this and I would like to strengthen this relationship further. In order to achieve this goal, the Embassy will continue to make every effort to contribute to Japan-Albania relations.

Last but not least, tonight, my Japanese chef Mr. Amatsu prepared delicious and traditional Japanese food for you all. We have also prepared Japanese sake and whisky of excellent quality. I hope you enjoy them.

Thank you for joining our reception and I hope you will have a great time. Kampai!