

Her Excellency M. Evan Gabro, Minister of Immigration and Displacement

Excellencies, Distinguished guests,
Good evening.

Thank you so much for joining us today. It is a great honor for me to celebrate today the birthday of H.M. the Emperor Naruhito in the city of Baghdad with Iraqi and foreign friends together. His Majesty turns 64 years old on February 23rd.

I would like to seize this opportunity to introduce to you the words of His Majesty the Emperor for starting this New Year.

He said “I would like to offer my sympathy to the people in Japan impacted by earthquakes, heavy rains, typhoons and snowstorms. My heart aches for the many lives lost in the wars and conflicts around the world. These events once again remind me of the importance of striving for mutual understanding and cooperation in order to build a peaceful world. I hope that people will continue to support one another with compassion and the coming year will be a bright and hopeful one for people in our country and worldwide”

I myself as Ambassador of Japan to Iraq entirely agree with the Emperor in his spirit. Japan succeeded in its reconstruction after World War II. Over 160 years of modernization process, Japan has become a country that respects universal values such as democracy, freedom, basic human rights and rule of law. As a promoter of global peace and universal values, Japan continues to facilitate mutual understanding and cooperation among different stakeholders in order to realize peace and stability in the region and around the globe.

Iraq has also come a long way to have realized a current peace and stability. Japan, as a true friend of Iraq including myself, has been always supporting Iraq to build peaceful and prosperous society. To this end, we are particularly supportive of the efforts of PM Sudani's

Government to realize a sustainable growth driven by the private sector. I strongly cheer for all young Iraqi entrepreneurs to change the landscape.

Building on the long-lasting cordial relationship, Japan is ready to further contribute to economic and social development of Iraq through both public and private channels so that our bilateral relations will be much stronger.

On the back of Dragon that will fly high this year, I look forward to seeing a brighter future of Iraq together with all of you.

[end]