

**Video Message by H.E. Hiroyuki Kishino, Ambassador of Japan to Ethiopia  
at the National Day Reception at the Hilton Hotel on 1 December, 2011**

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

*Kibran ena Kibrat,*



*Endemen Ameshachehu! Zare meshet bemenakebrew ye Japan Negus  
seba semenetegna yeledet beal lay seletegenachehu betam amesegenalehu.*

Good evening. I am most grateful to all of you for joining us this evening in celebrating the 78<sup>th</sup> birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. To be honest, His Majesty's birthday is on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December. However, that date falls at a very busy time of the year for many. Therefore, we celebrate our national day in early December before the festive season is in full swing.

This year, I have to start with an apology for my absence on this important occasion. Currently, I am back in Tokyo to receive H.E. Ato Hailemariam Dessalegn, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ethiopia, who has just started his official visit to Japan. Unfortunately, the timing overlapped with today's reception, and I would like to ask for your understanding

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

When I look back on 2011, I find this was a very difficult, heart-breaking year for Japan. On the 11th of March, an earthquake and tsunami of unprecedented scale hit the northeastern part of Japan, the strongest that has ever hit Japan in the past four centuries. About 20,000 precious lives were lost, and over 300,000 houses were destroyed or severely damaged. Several coastal cities were demolished. Even today, 20,000 people are still having a difficult time, living in evacuation centers. The nuclear disaster in Fukushima is also a big challenge. Every time we remember 3.11 our hearts ache. Our prayers are always with the victims.

At the same time, I saw signs of hope both in the strength and vitality of people in tsunami-hit areas to try to recover from the devastation and despair, and in the growing spirit of cooperation and mutual help among our people. I also realized how much we were helped by people all over the world. All kinds of support poured in from so many countries, support that helped people in Japan psychologically, financially and materially. Ethiopia and many other

countries extended their support to us in various forms, such as the dispatch of rescue personnel, materials and donations. We received heartfelt condolences and encouragement from all over the globe. The Japanese people were encouraged by such strong solidarity shown by the rest of the world at the most difficult of times. On behalf of the people of Japan, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Ethiopian Government and people, the African Union and all those who supported us.

Today, strenuous efforts are continued day and night for rehabilitation and reconstruction. Every precautionary measure is being taken to ensure food safety. We are still on the way. It will take time, but I am confident that our efforts will prevail and Japan will revive once again as a new disaster-resilient economic and social model on the global scene.

Despite immediate difficulties, Japan remains committed to African development, fully aware of the importance of our partnership. We will fulfill our commitment made at TICADIV in Yokohama in 2008. We will prepare for hosting the TICADV meeting in Japan in 2013. Our commitment to Ethiopia will also remain unchanged.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Celebrations are a time to rejoice in the good things in life and express our gratitude and appreciation for our positive achievements. They also inspire us to carry on with renewed vigor and determination. On that note, I wish you an enjoyable evening and thank you for joining us to celebrate our national day, marked by His Majesty's 78<sup>th</sup> birthday.

*Betam Amesegenalehu!* Thank you very much.