

**Remarks at the Signing Ceremony for a Grant Contract
for LL equipment and Learning Materials at Mekelle
University, Tigray
by H.E. Hiroyuki Kishino, Ambassador of Japan to Ethiopia
at his Residence on 5 November, 2010**



This is a most joyous occasion for me to sign a grant contract with Professor Mitku, the President of Mekelle University.

The project, the contract for which we have just concluded, is to extend a grant of about USD100,000 (one hundred thousand) for the procurement of LL equipment together with learning materials for the Japanese Language Unit of Mekelle University.

Mekelle is a celebrated university in Tigray. The Japanese Language Unit was established there two years ago as the first and the only one to date in advanced Ethiopian educational institutions. In the previous semester, whereas 300 applied for the Japanese language course, only 60 students were registered because of the constraints of the facilities. Therefore, the Embassy of Japan decided to recommend this project to Tokyo for approval.

Through this project, 46 units of LL equipment will be installed in a new space, and additional learning materials will be supplied. Then, up to 200 students can take the Japanese language course under the guidance of two instructors. In addition, not only elementary courses but also intermediate and advanced courses can be offered. In this way, I do hope that both the quality and quantity of the Japanese language education will be significantly improved at Mekelle University.

In concluding, let me share one more hope. Professors, please encourage undergraduate and graduate students to study further, beyond just the language, to understand various aspects of Japan such as history, culture, society, economy, politics and so on. If several scholars emerge in the future who are specialized in Japanese history, Japanese arts, Japanese politics, Japanese economy, etc., then the Japanese Language Unit may develop into a genuine Department of Japanese Studies. I am looking forward to seeing a Center of Japanese Studies at Mekelle University some day as the first one on the African continent. To this end, if the Embassy of Japan can be of any help please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.