

令和6年度天皇誕生日祝賀レセプション岩屋外務大臣挨拶

Excellencies, distinguished guests, today I am honored to welcome you here to this reception to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor. It gives me a great pleasure to mark such an auspicious occasion together with you all.

On February 23, His Majesty the Emperor will celebrate his 65th birthday. During the past year, as the symbol of the State and of the unity of the People of Japan, Their Majesties the Emperor and the Empress have demonstrated their dedication to the country and its people, sharing their joys and sorrows.

In June last year, Their Majesties visited the United Kingdom. Moreover, they have been actively involved in a number of meetings and tea ceremonies with dignitaries from all over the world. I am truly grateful to His Majesty for fostering international goodwill.

And I would like to join you in wishing His Majesty the Emperor a very happy birthday.

Today, the international order faces growing challenges. Competition among nations is intensifying. Under such circumstances, I feel that diplomacy is becoming more and more important.

It is an important role of Japan's diplomacy to protect the "rule of law," which is the foundation upon which all nations can enjoy peace, stability, and prosperity. In order to lead the international community from division to cooperation, I will firmly promote a diplomacy of dialogue and cooperation as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

This year, Japan will hold Expo 2025 Osaka from April. I will make every effort to advance international exchange in business, culture, science and technology, as well as to further promote Japan's charms to a wider audience.

Today, we have prepared a delightful meal using high-quality and delicious ingredients from disaster-stricken areas such as the Tohoku region and the Noto Peninsula, as well as sake and shochu from my home prefecture of Oita. We will also serve sparkling sake provided by the Awasake Association.

In fact, in December last year, “Traditional knowledge and skills of sake-making with koji mold in Japan” was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. We will take this opportunity to further promote the appeal of Japanese sake and related products to the international community.

We hope you will enjoy the food and drinks we have prepared. I now propose a toast: to the continued health of His Majesty the Emperor, the prosperity of the Imperial Family and the good health of everyone who kindly joins me this evening.

Cheers!