

Remarks by Mr. Takeshi OSUGA, Ambassador Extraordinary  
and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Kingdom of Belgium on the occasion of  
the reception to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan

Thursday, 19 February 2026

Excellence, M. Denis Mathen, Gouverneur de la Province de Namur,  
Excellency, Mr. Pieter De Crem, General Commissioner of Belexpo,  
Honorable members of the Federal and Regional Parliaments,  
Excellencies, dear ambassadors,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to welcome you at my residence to celebrate the 66th birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan.

Since this is the first National Day reception for me in Belgium, please allow me to introduce myself and I beg your indulgence for my little bit lengthy speech. My name is Takeshi OSUGA. I moved to Brussels last December with my wife Takako and presented my credentials to His Majesty the King two weeks ago.

I started my diplomatic carrier in 1985 and almost finishing my 41st year. Trained as French speaking diplomate, I served in Japanese embassies in Algeria, France and just before being appointed to Belgium, I was Ambassador to Tunisia. I also served in Indonesia, Iraq, India, and twice in New York at the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations. At the Foreign Ministry, I spend years in regional affairs for Asia, Middle East and Africa, and in sectors such as economic cooperation, legal affairs and UN affairs. I consider myself as multilateral expert, especially in the field of development cooperation.

So, to be frank, I envy slightly my fellow Ambassadors doing multilateral jobs here in Brussels, Ambassador AIKAWA for the EU and Ambassador IZAWA for the NATO who kindly joined me tonight. But, tonight, I am delighted to see so many diplomates representing so many countries, and I feel as if I were attending the United Nations General Assembly.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last year, the UN celebrated its 80th anniversary. Over the past 80 years, Japan has made utmost efforts to prove itself as being a peace-loving nation. Japan has delivered development and humanitarian assistance to almost all developing countries, with a firm belief that economic and social development, combined with equality among people and among nations, would bring peace to the world. And with a firm belief that the trust among peoples and nations, would ultimately help achieve the security and prosperity of Japan.

It's truly regrettable that in recent years, the behavior of some members of the international community has become extremely transactional, short sighted, looking for immediate returns and gains.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now being a bilateral ambassador only to Belgium, my duty is of course, to promote friendly ties with Belgium. It is not an easy task, because our relationship is already excellent, marked

by deep trust in each other. In fact, our historical relations are strongly supported by the enduring ties between the Imperial and the Royal Families. Both Their Majesties the Emperor and the King are of the same age, with a difference of less than two months. And the age difference between their daughters is just five weeks.

Last year, Belgium's participation in Osaka-Kansai Expo under the able guidance of General Commissioner Mr. De Crem, gave us additional opportunity for high-level exchanges. Their Royal Highnesses Princess Astrid and Prince Lorentz visited Japan in June, and three ministers attended the Expo's Belgian National Day event in September.

Now, what more can I do this year?

Of course, this year, we are celebrating 160th Anniversary of the establishment of our diplomatic ties. In collaboration with the Japanese Association (Nihonjinkai) and the Belgium-Japan Association Chamber of Commerce (BJA), and with the support of FPS Foreign Affairs and Regional governments, my Embassy is planning a series of commemorative events. They include a concert in March by the Brussels Philharmonic featuring Japanese composers, an Ikebana demonstration in May at Gent Floralien, a special Japanese performance in July during Ommegang, the Flower Carpet with Japanese design in August at the Grand Place, a Noh theater performance in September at Bozar and many other events throughout this year. Please don't miss them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turning once again to the international chapter, we are facing today a terrible situation. Russia's war of aggression that started four years ago, persisting instability in the Middle East and in Africa, worrisome military trends in East Asia and in the Indo-Pacific. There are tentative to change the status quo by force and by coercion in so many parts of the world. Amidst such severe circumstances, what we need is consistent and coherent diplomacy.

Following the snap election 11 days ago, a new Government led by the Prime Minister TAKAICHI Sanae was sworn in last night. All cabinet ministers were maintained. Foreign Minister MOTEGI Toshimitsu declared this morning at a press conference that he will pursue a diplomacy that combines tolerance and strength to lead multilateral, multi-layered cooperation. I think it's very good news.

We need to work harder to achieve a lasting peace, a peace that lasts much longer than the term of one elected leader of one country. For that, we need trust and solidarity among peace-loving nations, such as Belgium and Japan.

For my part, I will do my best to make Japan-Belgium relations even better and richer. I wish to make the relations between our two friendly, humble and decent peoples that respect each other, to become a model, to be seen as a model and to be envied by all of you.

In closing, I extend my heartfelt wishes for the continued health and happiness of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan, of Their Majesties the King and the Queen of Belgium and of all of you, friends of Japan and Belgium kindly attending tonight's reception.

Thank you very much.