

**Remarks
by H.E. Kazuhide Ishikawa
Ambassador of Japan to the Philippines**

On the occasion of the 82nd Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor
of Japan

9 December 2015, Japanese Ambassador's residence, Manila

Honorable, Albert Del Rosario, Secretary of Foreign Affairs,

His Excellency, Giuseppe Pinto, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps,

Honorable Senate President, Franklin Drilon,

Honorable Senator, Pia Cayetano,

Honorable Secretary of Trade and Industry, Gregory Domingo,

Honorable Governor of Central Bank, Amando Tetangco,

Honorable Members of House of Representatives,

Excellencies, Colleagues of the Diplomatic Corps,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Magandang gabi po / sa inyong lahat. (Good evening to all of you.)

I am delighted to host this reception tonight to celebrate the 82nd Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan.

First and foremost, I would like to thank you for your continued cooperation and support in promoting our two countries' friendly relationship.

This past year has been extremely fruitful and has been marked with significant developments in our relations.

One of the biggest highlights was the State Visit to Japan of His Excellency President Benigno Aquino III in June. In the summit meeting at this state visit, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Aquino jointly declared that the relationship between the Philippines and Japan has now entered the stage of Strengthened Strategic Partnership.

Last month, our two leaders met again in Manila during the APEC Leaders' Meeting. I would like to congratulate the Philippine Government for being able to orchestrate the whole APEC with great achievements. On this occasion too, through a bilateral meeting and a very cozy private dinner hosted by President Aquino for Prime Minister Abe, both leaders have had the opportunity to reaffirm deepened bilateral ties between the two countries.

Next year, we are anticipating even bigger breakthroughs as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Japan. In fact, I am very pleased to announce that, preparations are now underway for the upcoming state visit of their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko to the Philippines next month. Their Majesties visited the Philippines in 1962 when they were crown prince and princess. This is the first time that a reigning Emperor of Japan will come to visit the Philippines.

Keeping in mind all these positive developments under the strengthened strategic partnership, let us keep on working together in advancing our mutual ties for many years to come.

To conclude, please join me in a toast to the continued good health and happiness of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan and to even closer friendship between the Philippines and Japan.

Kanpai ! Mabuhay !