

**Remarks of H.E. Mr. Tetsuo Shioguchi, Ambassador of Japan,
At the 13th Japanese Language Speech Contest
University of Jordan
Saturday March 13, 2010**

Your Excellency Professor Khalid Karaki
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning

It is a great honor for me to welcome you all here today at the thirteenth Japanese Language Speech Contest jointly organized by the University of Jordan, JICA office in Jordan, the Japanese Community Association in Amman and the Embassy of Japan.

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to all participants in this event for their hard work and courage.

It would not have been possible to hold the thirteenth Speech Contest today without excellent preparation by the University of Jordan. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to His Excellency Professor Khalid Al Karaki, President of University of Jordan, and Professor Dr. Ahmad Majdoubeh and their colleagues who have worked on this contest and realized today's event.

My thanks should also go to all Japanese language teachers dispatched by JICA who have played an indispensable role in the development of Japanese language education in Jordan as well as understanding of Japanese culture.

In addition to these concerned parties in Jordan, I am also delighted to

welcome Japanese language teachers Mr. Makoto Saito and Ms. Yumi Watanabe who came all the way from Syria to join us here today.

Ladies and gentlemen

People say that Japanese is difficult to learn. However, I am hopeful these dedicated contestants can now assure you that it is not.

The University of Jordan and the Embassy of Japan have been working closely to develop the Japanese language study in this culturally diverse society of Jordan for seventeen years. I am encouraged that so many people are trying to master the Japanese language and thereby hoping to better understand Japan and Japanese culture.

I am also very proud to inform you that all efforts in teaching Japanese language in the past decade have started to bear its fruits. A number of Jordanians have been awarded with scholarships by the Japanese government and are currently pursuing postgraduate studies in Japan; others have finished and returned to Jordan while some will start their studies at Japanese universities next month.

Furthermore, the Embassy of Japan in cooperation with Japan Foundation has been running an annual Japanese-Language Program for Overseas Students in which outstanding students of Japanese language are given the opportunity to visit Japan and to deepen their knowledge of Japanese language, society, and culture for the purpose of further encouragement of their study.

In this regard, I am very happy to inform you that all of these great achievements have led to several discussions between Japan and the University of Jordan aiming at establishing a BA course in Japanese-English Language and Literature at the university. I do appreciate the

effort being put so far from the University side; however, I would like to ask for more cooperation in order to realize the birth of this new program. The more effort you put, the quicker we succeed in achieving our plan.

I am hopeful therefore, that you continue to work harder to achieve higher levels of Japanese language ability and motivate your friends and colleagues to follow your steps!

Ladies and gentlemen

I am very much looking forward to listening to your speeches and haikus.

No matter what the results of the contest may be, your participation will be most valuable and be a considerable achievement in itself. I have the pleasure to invite the top winners in this contest for lunch at my residence next Saturday, 20 March to praise you on your accomplishment together with the alumni of former Japanese government scholarship students and new scholars who will leave to Japan in April to pursue their higher education.

Last but not least and as part of the embassy's cultural events, I would like to invite you all, your families and friends to a concert by Hanatemari, a duo by sisters Mikiko and Naoko Goto, in which they will play the koto, a traditional Japanese stringed musical instrument, and the western flute, in the evening of Monday 26 April 2010 at Al Hussein Cultural Center.

For now, let me wish you every success in the study of the Japanese language and good luck at the contest.

Thank you for your attention.