

Remarks of Ambassador Kitano at the farewell reception

December 1, 2022

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of my wife Yoshie and myself, allow me to thank all of you and welcome you to my farewell reception.

I am delighted and honoured to have you all in attendance today. But, at the same time, I have mixed feelings. I am leaving Ireland in one week and will go back to Japan.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the valuable help, support and cooperation extended to my colleagues and me during my tenure. Thanks to you, I am delighted that I can look back on my term with feelings of fulfillment, satisfaction and delight.

Since I have served in this country for three years and three months, allow me to look back my term here by referring to in three key points.

The first is the pandemic. My term here was largely affected by COVID-19. Our lives and activities were limited. But, at the same time, I was able to witness the strong sense of solidarity and compassion of Irish society. I felt, in this country, the motto “we are all in this together” was very much real.

The second is Taoiseach Micheál Martin’s visit to Japan in July this year. This visit produced a Joint Statement entitled “Taking Forward Partnership with Shared Ambition,” aimed at enhancing our bilateral relationship to a new, higher level. I am certain that this document will serve as a beacon for our future relationship. I am delighted and proud to be a part of this whole process, working closely with then Irish Ambassador to Japan, Ambassador Paul Kavanagh,

current Chief of Protocol of DFA.

The third is my personal interest about Ireland. This country fascinated me. I was so intrigued by Ireland that I wrote a book on its contemporary history. In Japanese, not in English, though. There are not many books on Irish history in Japan. On contemporary history, much attention has been paid to only two areas, independence and the Troubles. I wanted to fill the gap, in tracing the change and transformation Ireland has undergone in its politics, economy and social values since the beginning of the twentieth century. Although this was my humble personal work, it helped me to understand this country better and discharge my official function.

Given my attachment to this country, it is with sadness that I am leaving. But, my journey with regard to Ireland is not over. On my return to Japan, I will finish my career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and start my next chapter of life. I feel I was lucky to have Ireland as my last post. People are open and welcoming and I had my work done. I do not have a clear idea of my future activities. However, I would like to remain connected with Ireland in some way or another. I don't know how many of you will agree with me to use a quote by Ernest Hemingway on Paris. But, as far as I am concerned, I would say this. Wherever I go for the rest of my life, Ireland will stay with me.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.