

**Toast by Ambassador Barry Faure
Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Diaspora**

**On the Occasion of the 66th Birthday of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito
and the Foundation Day of Japan**

Your Excellency Sakuta Makoto San, Resident Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Seychelles,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

(Salutations to be finalised by Protocol)

It is a great pleasure to join you this evening in celebrating the 66th birthday of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito.

On behalf of President Patrick Herminie, the Government and the people of Seychelles, I extend our warmest congratulations and sincere wishes for His Majesty's continued good health and happiness. We also convey our best wishes to Her Majesty Empress Masako and to the people of Japan, whose friendship with Seychelles we deeply value.

This occasion allows us not only to honour His Majesty, but also to reflect on Japan's remarkable national journey. From its rich cultural heritage to its transformation into one of the world's most advanced economies, Japan stands today as a global exemplar of innovation, discipline, resilience and social cohesion. Its leadership in science and technology, its commitment to education and its distinctive cultural traditions continue to inspire nations across the world. Seychelles is proud to join Japan in marking this national day and to reaffirm the values we share: respect for multilateralism, peaceful cooperation and sustainable development.

In this regard, Seychelles deeply respects Japan's principled stance on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. As the only country to have experienced the devastation of nuclear weapons, Japan has consistently advocated for a world free of nuclear arms and for the strengthening of the global non-proliferation regime. Seychelles strongly supports these efforts and shares the conviction that lasting security can only be achieved through dialogue, trust-building and the progressive elimination of weapons of mass destruction. At a time of growing geopolitical tensions, Japan's moral leadership in promoting peace and disarmament carries particular weight and relevance.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the past year, relations between Seychelles and Japan have continued to deepen across a broad spectrum of cooperation. Our engagement within the framework of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) reaffirmed the strength of Japan's partnership with Africa and underscored our shared priorities, including economic resilience, human development and climate action. Seychelles greatly appreciates Japan's consistent support through TICAD, which remains an important platform for dialogue, investment and mutually beneficial collaboration.

Seychelles was also honoured to participate in Expo 2025 in Osaka. Japan once again demonstrated its exceptional capacity to host a world-class exposition that celebrated innovation, sustainability and cultural diversity. Through this platform, Seychelles was able to showcase its unique heritage, tourism potential and blue economy initiatives to a global audience. We commend Japan for its generous support and outstanding organisation, which ensured the success of this global event and strengthened international exchange.

The Expo International Exchange Programme, which welcomed ten young Seychellois students to Japan, was particularly meaningful. Their immersion in Japanese culture and society has enriched their perspectives and strengthened the people-to-people bonds that underpin our bilateral relations. It is through such exchanges that lasting friendships are formed and the next generation is inspired to sustain our partnership.

Maritime security remains a cornerstone of cooperation between our two countries, reflecting our shared commitment to a safe and stable Indian Ocean. We are grateful for Japan's support in the construction of the new Maritime Police Headquarters and we look forward to the donation of a patrol vessel later this year. These initiatives significantly enhance Seychelles' capacity to safeguard its maritime domain and contribute to regional stability. They also demonstrate Japan's tangible and enduring commitment to the security and prosperity of our region.

Our collaboration in education continues to yield lasting benefits. Through the MEXT and JICA scholarship and training programmes, many Seychellois students and professionals have pursued studies and specialised training in Japan. These opportunities not only build skills and expertise but also cultivate mutual understanding and lifelong connections between our peoples.

Cultural diplomacy equally remains vibrant. The recent fourth edition of the Japanese Film Festival, featuring seven films screened at the International Conference Centre of Seychelles, once again highlighted the strong interest of Seychellois audiences in Japanese cinema and storytelling. Cultural exchange broadens horizons and strengthens empathy, reinforcing the human dimension of our partnership.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The year 2026 will mark fifty years of diplomatic relations between Seychelles and Japan. This golden jubilee is not merely a commemoration of the past; it is an opportunity to renew our shared commitment to a future defined by innovation, sustainability and inclusive growth. As small and large island nations with deep maritime identities, we share a particular interest in ocean stewardship, disaster resilience and climate action. These areas will continue to offer promising avenues for enhanced cooperation.

Before concluding, allow me to express our sincere appreciation to His Excellency Ambassador Sakuta and the dedicated staff of the Embassy of Japan. Their professionalism and tireless efforts have played a vital role in advancing our bilateral ties, and we remain grateful for their steadfast commitment.

As we celebrate His Majesty Emperor Naruhito this evening, we also celebrate the enduring friendship between Seychelles and Japan – a partnership built on trust, mutual respect and a shared vision for peace and prosperity.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I now invite you to rise and join me in a toast:

To the continued good health of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito and Her Majesty Empress Masako;

To the wellbeing and prosperity of the people of Japan;

And to the lasting friendship between Seychelles and Japan.

Thank you.