

Remarks by H.E. Mr. HAYASHI Hajime,  
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,  
at the Awarding of the Ambassador's Commendation  
to Professor Dapo Akande  
on Tuesday 6 February 2024

Professor Akande,  
Distinguished Guests,

Good evening.

Today, I have the privilege of awarding the Ambassador's Commendation to Professor Dapo Akande for his outstanding contribution to the progressive development of international law and his tremendous support for Japan's efforts in strengthening the rule of law. While those present here today are certainly aware of Professor Akande's many achievements, I would like to touch upon just a couple of them now.

Firstly, as a member of the United Nations International Law Commission (ILC) since January 2023, Professor Akande has played a pivotal and proactive role in strengthening and promoting a just and peaceful system of international relations based on public international law. His nomination to the ILC is historic, being the first time a candidate was supported by countries from across four different United Nations regional groups, namely the UK, Japan, Kenya, Nigeria and Slovenia. This clearly shows global respect for Professor Akande's expertise and experience, and is testament to his outstanding personality, which serves as a model for others to follow.

Like Professor Akande, the Japanese Government firmly believes the development of international law is essential to building a better world. It is heartening to know that Professor Akande works alongside one of Japan's finest legal experts, Professor ASADA Masahiko, at the ILC. Cooperation between countries, and indeed between individuals like Professor Akande, who strengthen the rules-based international order, is now more important than ever.

As you know, Japan has been a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council since last year and will remain so this year. In January last year, when Japan became a non-permanent member for the twelfth time, the most of any UN member states, Japan took the presidency of the Security Council from the beginning. In that month, Professor Akande briefed the Security Council at the Ministerial-level Open Debate on the Rule of Law chaired by Japan's then-Minister for Foreign Affairs, HAYASHI Yoshimasa. Also, Professor Akande briefed the Security Council once again in July at an Arria-formula meeting on "The 25th anniversary of the Rome Statute: the contribution of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to the maintenance of international peace and security", which was co-chaired by Japan and Switzerland. In the briefings, he emphasised the importance of the observance of international law by states and UN as a forum for the maintenance of international peace and security, and provided constructive proposals on how to enhance the effectiveness of the ICC.

Secondly, I would like to commend Professor Akande for his global educational efforts in public international law to the next generation of international legal scholars and practitioners. For instance, he delivered a keynote lecture at the first Tokyo International Law Seminar at the United Nations University in Tokyo last August. His lecture and interactive communication were highly admired by participating officials and legal experts from Asia and Africa. This is just one example, and I am impressed at how he tirelessly travels the world researching and teaching public international law. It was therefore no surprise to anyone that he was appointed to the prestigious position of Chichele Professor of Public International Law at the University of Oxford last October.

With these and countless other achievements in mind, we are gathered this evening to express our utmost appreciation to Professor Akande for his dedication to legal studies and his determination to promote peaceful, positive and fair relations between countries through public international law. It is, therefore, my distinct privilege to present him today with the Ambassador's Commendation. Please join me in congratulating him on his remarkable achievements.

Congratulations, Professor Akande.