

Remarks by H.E. Mr Hiroshi Suzuki,
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,
At the Presentation Ceremony of the Foreign
Minister's Commendation to Prof. Dapo Akande
on 15 December 2025

Professor Dapo Akande,
Mrs Busola Akande,
Your Excellencies,
Esteemed guests,

It is my distinct privilege as Ambassador of Japan to the UK to present the Foreign Minister's Commendation to Professor Akande this evening in recognition of his outstanding contributions to advancing the rule of law in the international community.

The importance of the rule of law is now greater than ever before. As John Locke put it, “Wherever law ends, tyranny begins.”

As we see serious challenges to the existing order in various parts of the world today, it is critically important to uphold the fundamental principle of the rule of law.

As we all know, Professor Akande is a leading authority on international law, and is standing as the UK candidate for the 2026 International Court of Justice election.

Professor Akande has been a prominent figure in promoting research, practice, and education in the field of public international law. He has played a significant role in the progressive development of international law, including through his service as a member of the UN International Law Commission.

He has also made significant contributions in relation to Japan's endeavours to advance the rule of law, and I would like to highlight just a few examples.

First, in collaboration with the Japanese government, Professor Akande has published outstanding research on key topics such as strengthening the role of the ICJ and applying international law in cyberspace, for which he has earned high acclaim.

Secondly, when Japan served as President of the UN Security Council in January 2023, Professor Akande served as a briefer at the ministerial-level open debate on the rule of law, setting the tone for the subsequent active discussions.

Thirdly, in February last year, Professor Akande participated in the advisory proceedings before the International Court of Justice regarding the Occupied Palestinian Territory, representing Japan together with his longtime friend Mr Tomohiro Mikanagi, Japanese Ambassador-at-Large for International Law.

Last, but not least, Professor Akande has contributed to the training of experts in the field of international law, through his many years of dedication to the Tokyo International Law Seminar. This is a Japanese initiative to provide legal training for government officials from Asian and African countries.

Through such activities, Professor Akande has made great contributions in strengthening Japan's endeavours to construct toward a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

Beside every great man stands a great lady. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs Akande. Without your dedicated support, Professor Akande could not have made such an outstanding achievement.

I understand that the British legal system is shaped by custom and experience. The relationship between Japan and Professor Akande is underpinned by many years of fruitful cooperation.

Let me conclude by expressing my ardent hope that, in the face of serious challenges in the world, our partnership to uphold the rule of law will continue for many years to come.

Thank you very much.