

Mr. Hiromichi Watanabe, Minister for Reconstruction Agency

By Madoka Nishina



On December 10, 2018, the International School Network visited the Reconstruction Agency to interview the Minister for Reconstruction, Mr. Hiromichi Watanabe. Although it has been about 8 years since the catastrophe, the reconstruction of Tōhoku has remained to be the most important task for the government. Mr. Watanabe is a firm believer of the hands-on approach and has met with local governments and mayors. He is working hard to listen to the voices of people of Tohoku for a fast recovery. He stated that without the reconstruction of Tohoku, there is no "rebirth of Japan". The most urgent task for the Reconstruction Agency is to bring people back to their hometowns that were affected by the nuclear disaster.

There are still more than 40,000 people who have not yet been able to return to their homes, and reconstruction is continuing in towns such as Ōkumamachi and Futabamachi. Such towns need decontamination work, to reduce the levels of radiation dose, and must be rebuilt so that the people can return to live in a clean environment with a secure access to food necessities, access to medical care, and sound educational system. Despite rumors, Mr. Watanabe noted that in general, the radiation of Fukushima is numerically not too different from that of other places in Japan. He notes that although not complete, the reconstruction of Fukushima has made remarkable instauration. Mr. Watanabe outlined the Reconstruction Agency's next task to be to eliminate the negative reputation of Fukushima, through further encouragement and dissemination of information about Fukushima's safety.



He hopes that people eat Fukushima's food, and visit Fukushima". One project for ameliorating the image of Fukushima and to expand its industries of tourism and agriculture is the Olympic and Paralympic Games of 2020 and the World Cup for Rugby of 2019. The 2020 Olympics torch will be lit first in Fukushima before it is passed around the whole country, and will be going to the disaster areas for a few days. Mr. Watanabe hopes that these international events will be an opportunity for Japan to show its progress in reconstruction, and express gratitude to over 160 countries that supported Japan after the Tohoku Earthquake. Mr. Watanabe explained that Japan received support in various forms, such as through people and donations of necessities and money. He commented how he "cannot thank them enough for their support".



United Arab Emirates Embassy Interview

By Madoka Nishina



On August 16, 2018, the International School Network visited the Embassy of United Arab Emirates (UAE) to interview the Ambassador, His Excellency Mr. Khaled Omran Sqait Sarhan Alameri. As a country composed of 7 different nations, or emirates, UAE is different from any other country in the Middle East. H.E. Mr. Alameri explained that the main cultural value of the UAE is unity. He believes that unity comes from great leadership, caring hearts, and a shared future vision. UAE is a nation composed of almost 200 different nationalities- 80% of the population of the globalized country is from foreign nationalities. H.E. Mr. Alameri noted that



this portrays the openness and tolerance of Emirati people. Furthermore, despite the rapid modernization and development rate UAE is experiencing, the people have never forgotten the value of tradition and hospitality. H.E. Mr. Alameri explained that culture in UAE continues to progress whilst traditions are being preserved, such as clothing- which is also seen in Japan. H.E. Mr. Alameri believes that globalization is a good cause that should be promoted, especially for global economic development, alongside the awareness and respect for differences. UAE is a young country blessed with natural resources, especially oil. Nonetheless, H.E. Mr. Alameri notes that since day one, the nation has identified its main resource to be its people. UAE has a strong focus on education, hosting both Emirati and foreign schools and universities. The UAE receives about 200 million tourists

per year, which is double its population. H.E. Mr. Alameri recommends tourists to enjoy the city life of landmarks and good cuisine, and to see the beautiful nature, especially the clean beach and sea, and the quiet, clear, golden desert.

H.E. Mr. Alameri's passion for working as the Emirati Ambassador to Japan is the connection he has to Japan, as he lived in Japan when he was a high school student. He expressed his gratitude for waking up every day knowing that he is serving both Emirati and Japanese people by contributing to "the prosperous future of both countries". H.E. Mr. Alameri expressed his high expectations for bilateral relations to progress rapidly, and for the peace, prosperity, and stability that the two nations, as Asian leaders with common visions, can bring to the international community in the future.



Zambia Embassy Interview

By Madoka Nishina



On August 29, 2018, the International School Network visited the Embassy of Zambia to interview the Ambassador, Her Excellency Mrs. Ndiyoi Muliwana Mutiti.

Zambia is a very diverse country with over 73 dialects, yet H.E. Mrs. Mutiti noted that Zambian people are united and accepting of each others' differences. Zambian people tend to speak multiple languages of different tribal groups, and intermarriage is very common across tribes. H.E. Mrs. Mutiti also introduced that natural parks in Zambia cover much of the land in the country. H.E. Mrs. Mutiti recommends visitors to see the nature of the country such as at a lodge in an elephant trail, and Victoria Falls, the widest waterfall in the world. Zambians live very close to nature

and make various efforts to protect it. Zambia and Japan have shared very strong relations since the nation's independence. Zambia gained independence during the 1964 Tokyo Olympic games, where the participants celebrated and held up the new flag for the world to see. H.E. Mrs. Mutiti hopes that the ties between Japan and Zambia can further strengthen in terms of economics, as the two countries can experience a win-win situation through profits and development, and also culture, as both nations are strong in tourism and culture.

H.E. Mrs. Mutiti's view on achieving peace and prosperity comes from the importance of international and government structures imposing the right policies and programs, monitoring compliance, and addressing challenges. Peace in both internal and international relations must be managed well. H.E. Mrs. Mutiti also noted that regulations must channel resources well to allow for any country to be part of the global economy. In particular, she noted that more developing countries should be able to get wealth for their resources and take their final products to trade.

Finally, H.E. Mrs. Mutiti expressed her message towards students to appreciate the

beauty and friendliness of their nations, and to find out more about other cultures. She hopes more people can discover Africa for themselves without the influence of what mass media portrays. As a female Ambassador, she also expressed her hopes for more women to gain opportunities to build their areas of expertise and rights. She noted that in Zambia, almost 50% of ambassadors are women, unlike in Japan where female Ambassadors are a minority.



Malawi Embassy Interview

By Madoka Nishina



On July 30, 2018, the International School Network visited the Embassy of Malawi to interview the Ambassador, His Excellency Mr. Grenenger K. M. Banda. H.E. Mr. Banda explained that Malawi is known as the "Warm Heart of Africa" because of the people's welcoming, kind, and polite nature. H.E. Mr. Banda believes in the importance of maintaining cultures through first-hand experiences, and the importance of nature, especially as forestry had been his focus of study. H.E. Mr. Banda noted that the contribution of nature is intertwined and appreciated by all people in any sector, and that looking after the environment is the duty of humankind.



Japan was one of the very first countries to recognize Malawi's independence, and the two nations have been sharing a beneficial socio-economic relationship ever since. H.E. Mr. Banda noted that with the help of Japan's technology and skills, Malawi would be able to develop economically, which would benefit both nations. As the Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Banda expressed his aims to improve the friendly relationship between Malawi and Japan at any given chance, in both social and economic aspects. When Malawi gained independence, the nation had to start developing from zero from the neglected industrial development by colonizers. At Malawi's current stage, H.E. Mr. Banda proposes for more small to medium sized enterprises to come to Malawi to produce secondary goods from the Malawi's rich raw materials.

He hopes that this can help Malawi to stop relying on imports for secondary products and save funds for development such as infrastructure and education. For instance, H.E. Mr. Banda noted that Malawi has an excess supply of fruits, but is importing processed goods such as juices from neighboring countries.

Finally, as a message towards students, H.E. Mr. Banda expressed his hopes for more people of the younger generation to be interested in family jobs and intensive labor. He explained that all sectors of the economy are in need of the support from the youth. H.E. Mr. Banda mentioned that with many opportunities that the youth are given in the modern era, students have the duty to study hard and use knowledge and experiences to follow their dreams.



Lesotho

Embassy Interview

By Madoka Nishina



On August 2, 2018, the International School Network visited the Embassy of the Kingdom of Lesotho to interview the Ambassador, Her Excellency Dr. Palesa Mosetse.

H.E. Dr. Mosetse hopes that more Japanese people can visit Lesotho and recognize the friendliness and peacefulness of the Basotho culture as well as the economic potential of the nation. H.E. Dr. Mosetse explained that Lesotho has plenty to offer to Japanese people, as the nation is full of natural resources, such as land, minerals (especially diamonds), clean water, and educated people. She explained that the nation is not yet at its potential due to the issue of unemployed youth and unprocessed natural resources.



Many families in Lesotho still rely on subsistence farming, and Lesotho's economy has been "non-existent" because the nation has been dependent on donor funding. H.E. Dr. Mosetse hopes that the nation can rise to the next level of commercial agriculture to feed their population of 2 million, through more research and education especially in the field of agriculture. H.E. Dr. Mosetse aspires more young people to become job creators, especially as education is becoming more outcome-based. Furthermore, since 50% of the people in Lesotho can speak English, Dr. Mosetse notes that there should be no language barriers for Lesotho to strengthen cultural exchanges and investment. H.E. Dr. Mosetse emphasized that Basotho people are very peaceful and caring at heart, especially to their neighbors.

To achieve peace, H.E. Dr. Mosetse believes that people must learn that they are different but equal at the same time despite any differences in ideologies. H.E. Dr. Mosetse noted that peace is not necessarily the absence of wars but also the absence of poverty and hunger, as Lesotho experiences instability despite the absence of wars. H.E. Dr. Mosetse mentioned that the people of Lesotho place a high value on their monarchy, as the key to the nation's unity. She also stated that Basotho people, like Japanese people, tend to be respectful and orderly.

H.E. Dr. Mosetse hopes that people around the world can learn about and appreciate the Basotho culture and its potential. Finally, she expressed her hopes for globalization to bring countries closer together, especially Lesotho and Japan, to further overcome geographical distances.



Cameroon

Embassy Interview

By Madoka Nishina



On August 30, 2018, the International School Network visited the Embassy of Cameroon to interview the Ambassador, His Excellency Dr. Pierre Ndzengue.

Cameroon is a nation that finds diversity in unity, being home to about 250 different tribes. As a diverse nation, H.E. Dr. Ndzengue describes Cameroon to be like "Africa in miniature". Some cultural values of Cameroonians H.E. Dr. Ndzengue introduced include warmth and hospitality, which come from the strong ties of family in Cameroon, of which its inclusion goes beyond generations and even biological ties. H.E. Dr. Ndzengue commented that as "citizens of the world", there is a need for people to have both modern and historical knowledge and appreciation.

H.E. Dr. Ndzengue believes that it is important for the youth to know their history and backgrounds, and overcome difficulties in passing on traditions, such as the use of native languages.

Cameroon and Japan have shared diplomatic relations since 1960. H.E. Dr. Ndzengue explained that the two countries have had a close and friendly relationship. H.E. Dr. Ndzengue expressed his aspirations for more Japanese companies to come to Cameroon and for more Japanese people to learn how the youth of Cameroon live. He wishes to see more person-to-person connections so people can share their challenges and dreams. As an Ambassador, he hopes that more cooperation can strengthen between Cameroon and Japan for the future.

H.E. Dr. Ndzengue explained that poverty is an issue that exists in any country. He believes that policies and projects should target vulnerable parts of the population, such as

children, women, elders, and not just the rich or the majority.

H.E. Dr. Ndzengue emphasized the importance of working hard to achieve peace by tackling the causes of instability. He commented that justice and love are two major factors that bring peace and equality to the world. Furthermore, H.E. Dr. Ndzengue explained that this is one of the most important jobs of diplomacy; people-to-people communication and traveling leads to easier exchanges and understandings for other people, despite any differences in appearances or ways of living.

H.E. Dr. Ndzengue's message towards students is to be more open to learning foreign languages to communicate and learn from others. He hopes that students can seize every opportunity to travel and meet new people to promote better understanding of other cultures among the global youth.



Mexico Embassy Interview

By Madoka Nishina



On August 31, 2018, the International School Network visited the Embassy of Mexico to interview the Ambassador, His Excellency Mr. Carlos Fernando Almada López. H.E. Mr. Almada described Mexicans to have lively qualities, with shared values including spontaneity and flexibility. Moreover, Mexico is famous for its fascinating culture of color and music. H.E. Mr. Almada explained that Mexico is the 6th most visited country in the world, and that tourism in Mexico has not only been a source of revenue and employment, but also a way to build understanding between countries and cultures. Mexicans are especially proud of their culture being a mix of modern, vibrant aspects and older traditions from four thousand years ago. H.E. Mr. Almada believes in the importance



of cherishing traditions alongside modernization, which is a common feature between Mexican and Japanese culture. The Mexican and Japanese economies are complementary in the sense that the Mexican society is much younger than that of Japan. Nevertheless, H.E. Mr. Almada noted that the two countries share many of the same values, such as democracy, and the respect for the international law and human rights. H.E. Mr. Almada is sure that relations between the two countries have potential to become even better in the future.

H.E. Mr. Almada noted that wars are a result of scientific progress. He explained that we must learn from historical experiences to do our best to preserve human life and harmony. H.E. Mr. Almada especially stressed the importance of respecting diversity by using dialogue and law, and the significance of education as the key for any country and society to develop and be productive. Mexico has been focusing greatly on their education, especially with emphasis on technicians and

engineers as an export-oriented country. H.E. Mr. Almada noted that it is a major issue that too many children across the globe do not have adequate opportunities for education. H.E. Mr. Almada's message toward students is to go abroad and "take a look at the world". He strongly recommends to anyone to be curious and open to understanding other cultures, especially as he believes that the future of any country is upon the shoulders of its young people. He wishes that the youth can learn to enjoy life every day and value what they have, including companionships.



Lebanon Embassy Interview

By Nanami Watanabe



On August 1, 2018, the International School Network visited the Embassy of Lebanon to interview the Ambassador, His Excellency Mr. Nidal Yehya. Lebanon is well known for its diversity in nationality, religion, culture, and history. Its population of 5 million people are made up of many socio-political and religious groups, and in order to live harmoniously, they have implemented an intricate network based on the quality of fairness and peace.

H.E. Mr. Yehya emphasized that the people's



love for the land are what unites the country. Lebanon shares a large portion of its border with the Mediterranean Sea, and is also blessed with its beautiful natural resources, especially the Cedar Tree. The tree is said to last about a thousand years, which suggests its cultural and historical significance. It is depicted on its national flag. In 1906, the Meiji Emperor planted 3 Cedar Trees in Shinjuku, and it can still be enjoyed by the general public today. In terms of the relationship between Lebanon and Japan, H.E. Mr. Yehya believes that it is largely a strategic tie, mostly active in the form of trade.

However, he hopes to strengthen relations with the Japanese government, for assistance in supporting the 1.7 million refugees in Lebanon, even though the entire population is just 5 million people.

Although H.E. Yehya expressed that there is more that the Japanese government could do, he showed contentment in their relationship of

their citizens. Many Lebanese engineers do business in Japan and work with some of the top Japanese companies.

H.E. Mr. Yehya also expressed his respect for the efforts made by the Japanese society to achieve world peace. H.E. Mr. Yehya will be attending the Peace Memorial Ceremony in Hiroshima and Nagasaki this month. This year's Niwano Peace Prize, organized by Niwano Peace Foundation, was awarded to Adyan Foundation of Lebanon. He stated that he hopes to see further cooperation between Japan and Lebanon to achieve world peace.

H.E. Mr. Nidal Yehya invited us to the reception for the 75th Independence Day of Lebanon and the 65th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Lebanon on November 21st, 2018 at Shangri-La Hotel Tokyo.



WFP Interview

By Madoka Nishina



On September 14, 2018, the International School Network visited the World Food Programme (WFP) to interview the Director of the Japan Relations Office, Ms. Naoe Yakiya. The WFP is the largest humanitarian agency with its missions focused on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2 and 17: “Zero Hunger” and “Partnerships for the Goals”. Ms. Yakiya believes that addressing problems of hunger should not be just driven by sympathy but by urgent need. Because WFP is a voluntary organization, the Japanese office of WFP has the role of raising funds from the Japanese government, private sectors, and individuals.

The Tokyo Office of WFP is also important for its dissemination of information not only to the Japanese government but also to the general public in order to gain support. Ms. Yakiya’s duty as the director of WFP Office in Japan is connecting WFP to the Japanese society, attained by integrating Japanese policies in WFP, as well as sharing WFP’s policies with Japan. Furthermore, Ms. Yakiya added that WFP has a role for implementing logistics, which helps various services and systems such as transportation and air.

World hunger has increased over the past year by 6 million, which had been the first increase in 10 years. Ms. Yakiya’s passion for WFP started when she worked in Iraq, where WFP’s large influence allowed her to realize the “power of food” as a basic need. Ms. Yakiya explained that food assistance not only eradicates hunger but also improves various areas in life including health, nutrition, education, and environment. Furthermore, lack of food security is troublesome beyond individuals as



it causes social problems such as radicalism, which leads to conflicts, and global economic impacts on commodity supply and prices. Ms. Yakiya explained that hunger and conflicts have a spiral relationship, as rising food prices (especially due to climate extremes and weather shocks) worsens conflicts, which leads to critical economic situations especially for the poorer and vulnerable populations (such as refugees and internally displaced people). Ms. Yakiya emphasized that peace can only be achieved upon the eradication of hunger and poverty, and that such problems are relevant in Japan as its economy is not self-sufficient. Ms. Yakiya hopes that more people can be aware of the reality of hunger as a worldly issue.

UNIDO Interview

By Madoka Nishina



On August 29, 2018, the International School Network visited the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), to interview the Director, Dr. Yuko Yasunaga. UNIDO is an international organization working towards poverty reduction, inclusive globalization, and environmental sustainability. The Tokyo Office, Investment and Technology Promotion (ITPO), works to encourage Japanese industries to invest in developing and emerging countries, and to promote technological transfers from Japan to overseas.

Dr. Yasunaga noted that the objective of UNIDO goes beyond aid, as it helps nations develop their own industries to earn income

by themselves. With the eradication of poverty, people can learn to care for others, which is the first step towards peace and harmony. Dr. Yasunaga commented on the importance of improving “value added” as the starting point of industrial development. Because primary resources have volatile markets, he explained that industries can be developed by selling these initial products at higher prices with value added.

Dr. Yasunaga hosts various seminars and symposiums, especially about investments to Africa. Dr. Yasunaga believes the African continent has high potential as an investment destination, due to its rapid urbanization and economic and population growth. He explained that Japanese companies can teach knowhow for infrastructure to further ameliorate African industrial advancement. Dr. Yasunaga noted that investment to Africa is a challenge for Japanese companies because of geographic, cultural, and linguistic distances, which were nonexistent for the case of the Japanese investment to ASEAN countries since the 1980s.

Nonetheless, Dr. Yasunaga realizes that spurring investment is a gradual process, like how the ASEAN case took 20 to 30 years. Patience is needed for African investment as Japanese companies must familiarize themselves with the African culture and people and realize the strong mentality and expectations Africans have towards Japanese cooperation. So far, there are 200 Japanese companies in South Africa and 50 to 60 in Morocco, but less than 10 in other countries. Dr. Yasunaga’s goal is to bring 100 Japanese companies to Africa.

Dr. Yasunaga’s advice for students is to “do exciting things in exciting ways”. He noted that sometimes it is inevitable that life brings us boring tasks, but it is always important to aim for excitement. He hopes that students can strive to make their life activities and studies more exciting and worthwhile.



Kanagawa International School

Kindergarten Class Age : from 2 years old
 Regular Class : Monday to Friday 9:00-14:30
 Saturday Kindergarten Class : Saturday 9:00-14:00
Elementary Class Age :6 to 12 years old
Middle school Class Age :11 to 15 years old

• **Totsuka School**
 3940 Totsuka-cho, Totsuka-ku, Yokohama
 • **Fujisawa School**
 17-1 Minami-Fujisawa, Fujisawa



Ghana

Embassy Interview

By Madoka Nishina



On August 31, 2018, the International School Network visited the Embassy of Ghana to interview the Ambassador, His Excellency Mr. Frank Okyere.

H.E. Mr. Okyere introduced the potential aspects Ghana and Japan can bring to each other. Ghana is a nation full of nature, with harmonious animals and an abundance of natural resources. H.E. Mr. Okyere noted how Ghana can benefit from Japan's management skills and technical knowhow, while Japan can gain from Ghana's mineral resources, including bauxite, magnesium, iron ore, lithium, oil, gas, dolomites, and diamonds.

H.E. Mr. Okyere hopes to see more Japanese investors to Ghana so its resources can be turned into products that can benefit both countries. There are now 44 Japanese companies in Ghana, which H.E. Mr. Okyere hopes to raise to 65. H.E. Mr. Okyere explained that he is actively working so that people can "find Ghana worthwhile" to cooperate with. As the first step towards world peace, H.E. Mr. Okyere believes in the importance of mutual appreciation; continuous interactions on the international level are needed, through forums and compromises, to achieve world peace. H.E. Mr. Okyere explained that Ghanaian people value peace, respect, and love for traditions. Ghana has been a peaceful and leading human-rights nation in Africa, without civil wars nor political conflicts.

H.E. Mr. Okyere expressed his hopes to see "Ghana beyond aid". He commented that financial aid is a short run solution, so Ghana should move away from asking for money in the form of loans and grants. Instead, he explained that efficiency must be improved so that institutions such as schools can maintain their running costs in the long run, and that jobs can increase for future stability. Despite the absence of civil wars, many Ghanaians leave the nation through hardships,

like refugees, in search of better jobs elsewhere. H.E. Mr. Okyere dreams of an equitable world without such mass immigration. H.E. Mr. Okyere noted that people must be more appreciative and encouraging of peace and must focus on channeling the opportunities of resources. He hopes that students can especially appreciate the world more and open up.



Madagascar

Embassy Interview

By Madoka Nishina



On September 14, 2018, the International School Network visited the Embassy of Madagascar to interview the Ambassador, Her Excellency Ms. Mireille Rakotomalala.

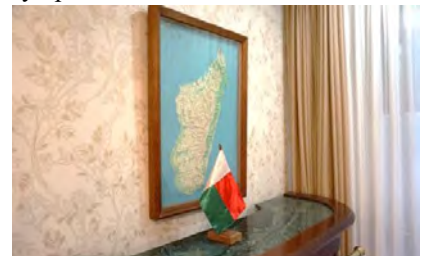
Despite being far across the globe, Madagascar and Japan share various similarities, especially as island countries. H.E. Ms. Rakotomalala explained that many of Madagascar's traditions and lifestyles, including its formation, is similar to that of Japan. Malagasy and Japanese people both eat rice as staple food, and live in harmony with their societies and environment. H.E. Ms. Rakotomalala also mentioned that Malagasy and Japanese people share values of respect, especially for elders and ancestors, and harmonious and polite lives by nature.



Millions of years ago, Madagascar was connected to the Asian continent, where it formed a language similar to Indonesian. As an island country with few outside influences on its traditions, Madagascar has sacred languages and diverse nature and cultures that have been a very fascinating part of its history, and an attractive research area.

H.E. Ms. Rakotomalala explained that Madagascar has a traditionally matriarchal society, yet women's roles still have areas of improvement. The Ambassador herself has been working with passion for creating ideas, having worked professionally in music, politics, and teaching at universities. H.E. Ms. Rakotomalala expressed her hopes that more people can see that this world is magnificent, and that everything should be valued. She explained the problem that there are too many people in the world who are greedy and money-driven, which has been the reason of conflicts and wars, alongside the problem of differences and domination.

H.E. Ms. Rakotomalala expressed her hopes for more students to enrich human connection by learning and engaging in foreign cultures and languages. She also expressed her respect for the Japanese educational system. H.E. Ms. Rakotomalala has always been interested in Japan. She noted that especially recently, people in Madagascar from a young age are exposed to Japanese cultures. Finally, H.E. Ms. Rakotomalala conveyed her aspirations for more Japanese people to learn about the positive aspects of Africa, especially as Japan is opening up to the world through the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.



Kosovo Embassy Interview

By Madoka Nishina



On August 13, 2018, the International School Network visited the Embassy of Kosovo to interview the Ambassador. His Excellency Mr. Leon Malazogu.

Kosovo recently celebrated its 11th year of independence and is working to solidify their national identity. H.E. Mr. Malazogu expressed that Kosovar people throughout times of occupation have kept their identities close to heart. He hopes that through kindness, Kosovo can return the favor of the international community who helped them reach independence and beyond.



H.E. Mr. Malazogu expressed that Kosovo, as a young nation, has great potential and a lively and friendly attitude. The average age of the population is 27 years old, illustrating the nation's promising future. Because Kosovo is rapidly changing, H.E. Mr. Malazogu believes that visitors of Kosovo can discover things about the nation that differ from what is depicted in media.

H.E. Mr. Malazogu expressed his appreciation towards the Japanese value of perfecting the strength of teamwork and harmony, which he believes is a similar value shared with Kosovars.

Furthermore, H.E. Mr. Malazogu believes that people should live more in sync with nature. He explained that people should not use more resources than needed, as it not only harms the environment but also leads to conflicts. Upon studying peace, H.E. Mr. Malazogu noticed that one of the main reasons for wars is disparity, as well as the availability of weapons. He hopes that people around the world can contribute to peace by cooperating with each other more.

Japan has recognized the independence of Kosovo very early, and 2018 marked the 10th year of diplomatic relations. H.E. Mr. Malazogu expressed his gratitude towards Japan, especially as Ms. Sadako Ogata 20 years ago had spoken out about the violation of human rights Kosovo experienced.

Japan and Kosovo now share high level visits,

investments, and cultural links. For instance, Japanese shitake mushrooms hold their biggest factory in Europe in Kosovo. As the Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Malazogu hopes that the two countries can increase trade and strengthen networks and cultural links.

H.E. Mr. Leon Malazogu invited us to the piano concert and reception for the 10th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Kosovo and Japan and the 11th Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Kosovo on March 14th, 2019 at Hotel Okura Tokyo.



H.E. Mr. Kadri Veseli, the President of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo

Moldova Embassy Interview

By Madoka Nishina



On August 17th, 2018, the International School Network visited the Embassy of Moldova to interview the Ambassador, His Excellency Dr. Vasile Bumacov.

Moldova is a nation with a long and rich history. H.E. Dr. Bumacov explained that Moldova is united by its Romanian language as well as its unique old traditions, including dancing, folk music, cuisine, and drinks such as natural wine. Moldova is putting great efforts, especially among the youth, to maintain and its traditions and recover those that have been lost during Soviet times. H.E. Dr. Bumacov recommends tourists to see places that are close to nature, such as the oak forests, churches and monasteries, fruit and



vegetable markets, and village lifestyles. Japan has recognized the independence of Moldova very quickly despite the nation's times of pressure, and last year marked the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Japanese people have been increasingly visiting Moldova, and as the Ambassador, H.E. Dr. Bumacov aspires to make bilateral ties even closer. For the future, he hopes that Moldova can be part of the bridge between Japanese and European exchanges, with increased trades (especially of Moldovan cherries) and investments to Moldova. H.E. Dr. Bumacov shared with us the value of education as being the key to societal health, peace, and sustainability. He explained that instead of prohibiting people from undertaking harmful lifestyles, people should be educated about consequences

and how to live healthier. Similarly, he noted that peace and reduction in violent behaviors can be attained through teaching people history and the consequences of war, languages to promote understanding, and the value of life. He hopes that negotiation and trades can replace fighting for a more peaceful coexistence of religions and peoples. Hence H.E. Dr. Bumacov's message towards students is to travel and focus on the joys of learning. H.E. Dr. Bumacov has high hopes for the younger generation of the world to learn from and take care of the older generations.



Afghanistan Reception

The Ambassador H.E. Dr. Bashir Mohabbat invited us to the reception for the 99th Independence Day on November 7, 2018 at the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.



Nigeria Reception

The Ambassador His Excellency Prof. Mohammed Gana Yisa invited us to the reception for the 58th Anniversary of the Independence of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on Monday, 1st October 2018 at Hotel New Otani.



Myanmar Reception

The Ambassador H.E. Mr. Thurain Thant Zin invited us to the reception for the 71st Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on January 24th, 2019 at the Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.



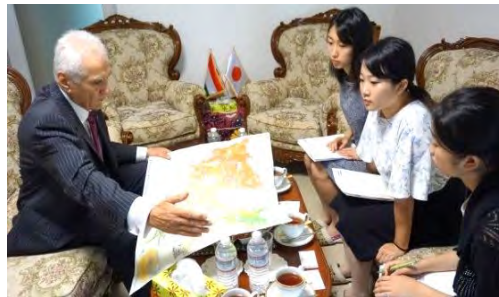
Tajikistan

Embassy Interview

By Madoka Nishina



On August 22nd, 2018, the International School Network visited the Embassy of Tajikistan to interview the Ambassador, His Excellency Mr. Hamrokhon Zarifi. Tajikistan is a nation with a very rich history. H.E. Mr. Zarifi mentioned that Tajiks are very fond of preserving their cultural identities, holding their traditional and rural lifestyles to heart. H.E. Mr. Zarifi introduced that a unique quality of Tajikistan's preserved tradition includes its clean language which is unmixed to the extent that ancient texts dating back to the 10th and 11th centuries can be read and learnt without difficulties.



Tajikistan and Japan have had contact since the 7th and 8th centuries through transactions on the Silk Road.

H.E. Mr. Zarifi noted that despite being geographically far, the two nations share similarities in culture and style in aspects such as Buddhism, women's traditional dresses, and calligraphy. Furthermore, both Tajiks and Japanese share respect for their history, language, and cultural identity. The natural environment of Tajikistan is a quality of the country that H.E. Mr. Zarifi feels fond of. Tajikistan is home to beautiful high mountains and large glaciers, with lakes at higher elevations than that of Mount Fuji. H.E. Mr. Zarifi explained that the Tajik mountains

generate 60% of the water in Central Asia. H.E. Mr. Zarifi commented that Tajikistan and Japan have been sharing a good relationship, especially in the political aspect. H.E. Mr. Zarifi's passion as the Ambassador has been to improve economic and trade relations as well as cultural relationships between the two countries. H.E. Mr. Zarifi aspires to strengthen bilateral ties in fields such as tourism, visas, and lectures. Furthermore, H.E. Mr. Zarifi appreciates that Tajikistan and Japan are working on similar issues such as water and peace building. H.E. Mr. Zarifi explained the importance of patient politics in pursuit of peace. He believes that peace comes from dialogue, on both the individual and political levels, and stressed upon the importance for students and young diplomats to study political sciences and learn from past experiences. H.E. Mr. Zarifi's message towards Japanese students is to appreciate and respect the efforts and achievements the past generations have done for Japan, and to continue that initiative to constantly improve the country.

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