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189 Nelson Mandela Drive / Rylaan  
BLOEMFONTEIN 9300

T: +27(0)51 407 3244  
F: +27(0)86 589 9944

Enquiries: Mokgosi Lenong  
Email: [mokaosil@motheo.co.za](mailto:mokaosil@motheo.co.za)

**04/02/2010**

WELCOME REMARKS BY HER WORSHIP, THE EXECUTIVE- MAYOR OF MOTHEO DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, CLLR M.E MOILWA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT TO THE FREE STATE PROVINCE BY THE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR, THE HONORABLE TOSHIRO OZAWA, ON THE 04<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2010.

- 1.The honourable speaker, Cllr R. Erasmus.
- 2.The honourable Chief- Whip of the Council, Cllr P. Moeng
- 3.The honourable members of the Mayoral Committee Present
- 4.The honourable ambassador, Mr Toshiro Ozawa,
- 5.The honourable Councillors Present,
- 6.The Acting Municipality Manager and senior officials Present.
- 7.Distinguished Guest,
- 8.Ladies and Gentlemen: And all Protocol Observed.

Program Director,

We are privileged and honoured to be requested to welcome the honourable Toshiro Ozawa the ambassador of Japan, to Motheo District and the Free State Province.

We perform this task thirty- four days after the ninety-eighth birth-day celebrations of the biggest and oldest liberation movements in the African continent, the African National Congress, whose roots are firmly planted in the Free State Province. Remember, the African National Congress was formed here, in Bloemfontein in 1912. The seventh President General of the African National Congress, Dr James Moroka, who managed the movement between 1949 to 1952, was the son of the Free State Province who lived in Thaba Nchu, approximately fifty-kilometres in the east of Bloemfontein.

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Program Director, we welcome the ambassador at a time when Dr Nelson Mandela, The icon of people's struggle for freedom and justice, is celebrating twenty-years of freedom from the shackles of incarceration. The visit of the ambassador becomes a befitting tribute to Dr Nelson Mandela, The African National Congress and the people of South Africa for the success with which they have ensured the defeat of the demons of apartheid and darkness.

Program Director, formal political relations between South Africa and Japan can be traced back to 1910, when Japan appointed honorary consul, Mr J Jeppe in Cape Town. The year 2010 therefore marks the centennial of the establishment of official relations between our countries. Consular relations were upgraded to full diplomatic relations on 13 January 1992.

Program Director, as one of the 2010 Fifa World Cup Host Cities, and in line with the Mangaung 2010 theme, which is "My Mangaung, My 2010", we take this opportunity to invite the honourable ambassador and the people of Japan to take ownership of Mangaung during and after the World Cup by visiting the Free State Province.

We are humble to declare the ambassador welcome in Motheo.

Thank you,  
Executive Mayor

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