

Jason Saroni and Tumelo Sebete Visit Yokohama

It may be recalled by readers that in May 2008, the City of Yokohama in Japan hosted a big meeting of the Japanese Government with African Heads of State and Government under the framework of an economic cooperation programme called Tokyo International Conference for African Development, otherwise known only as TICAD. Well, within that context, Yokohama, as host city, decided to tie up that event with its own, then oncoming plan for the celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the opening of the Port of Yokohama in 2009. As one of its planned activities for the celebration, the City of Yokohama took the decision to acknowledge and commemorate its hosting of the meeting of

African Heads of State and Government by including an event which draws in the participation of Africa. What better way could there have been than to bring in the children of Africa to Yokohama to know them and for them to know the people of Yokohama and Japan. An act which bears no other significance than to say 'We love you. Let us be friends'. Indeed, what other greater attribute of humankind is there that can beat love. Yokohama was pretty smart to imbed itself in the minds and affections of the African children in this way. In so doing, it served a much higher purpose of building bridges for peace and harmony in the world. What a far-sighted act!



The Ambassador, H.E. Mokhele Likate and Mrs. Likate, his family and staff members are seen here with the two students visiting Yokohama. Also present are some friends of the Ambassador's family.

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In this great event, Lesotho was represented by two of her beautiful children. Dare I say, also brilliant. Jason Saroni and Tumelo Sebete were the top boy and girl in the 2008 Lesotho Examinations Council J.C. Results from Lesotho and St. Boniface High Schools, respectively. Their selection was, therefore,

to the time and the days following the sad closure. They were hosted by volunteer Yokohama families with whom they clearly bonded as the stresses of separation when it was time to go were evident in the faces of the host families and the children from Africa. Friendships were formed, indeed. Friendships



Jason Seroni and Tumelo Sebete pose for a picture at the Ambassador's residence.

above board, clean and very much deserving. As did the others, they made us proud as they both, at different occasions, stood and represented their group in giving addresses and passing votes of thanks. Nicely brave kids, heh! What else given their track record.

The programme commenced on the 7th with arrivals and came to an end on 12th July, the departure day. What a week that was. Lesotho-Tokyo was abuzz with the "Lesotho kids" in the weeks leading

with Japanese but also with African students participating because they, too, were meeting for the first time. But it was an end of a programme that had taken them on a complete tour of Yokohama and meetings with its Mayor, visitations to a cross- section of schools (elementary, commercial and science frontier highs), Nissan Motor assembly plant and so on. It was an experience we hope the kids will cherish and seek to replicate in later lives.