

**Remarks by His Excellency Norihiro Okuda**  
**Ambassador of Japan**  
**On the Occasion of 2013 Canada-Japan Trade Symposium**  
April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013  
InterContinental Toronto Yorkville

Honourable Edward Fast, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia Pacific Gateway;

Honourable Perrin Beatty, President and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

**1. Opening**

It is indeed a great honour for me to be here in Canada as Ambassador of Japan at this precise moment – a moment in which our two nations take strides to mark a milestone in Canada-Japan bilateral relations: the long-awaited Economic Partnership Agreement, or EPA. As I look around, knowing that each and every one of you, who represents the vital foundation of our economy, has put faith in us to forge the best possible deal that leads to a prosperous future, I feel humbled by the weight of our responsibility. Yet at the same time, I feel truly privileged for the opportunity presented to serve you in such a meaningful way.

## **2. Promoting Free Trade**

Just like Canada, Japan is a free trading nation that truly values the market economy. And just like Canada, we are knocking on our neighbours' doors to widen our value network, often as far away as the Middle East or the EU. As you may be aware, currently only about 20% of Japan's total amount of trade comes from the countries and regions with which it has signed an EPA. The number is about 70% for Canada. This, I believe, will change soon, as Japan pushes forward multiple bilateral negotiations with our key partners including Australia, the EU, South Korea and, of course, Canada. On the regional front, Japan is actively pursuing TPP along with Canadians to seize the opportunities promised by this ambitious free trade framework encompassing the Asia-Pacific region.

## **3. Complementarity of Canada-Japan Trade Relations**

With Japan's participation, TPP could provide an opportunity for our two nations to work closely to enhance our mutual benefits within a larger framework. However, Japan's immediate focus is firmly set upon the bilateral deal which we are currently negotiating this week in Ottawa. Although Canada and Japan share a free-trading philosophy, when it comes to our own economic relations, what strikes us the most is our

complementarity, rather than similarity. Thanks to this complementing nature, Canada and Japan already enjoy one of the most mutually beneficial bilateral economic relationships in the world today.

### **(1) LNG**

Take liquid natural gas, or LNG, for instance. Driven by the need to find stable and affordable energy sources, especially after the earthquake and tsunami in 2011, Japan has been actively seeking new supply sources for LNG. Meanwhile, across the Pacific, lured by the promise of large Japanese and other Asian markets, Canadian and international companies are looking for partners to move forward LNG export plans along Canada's West Coast. To seize this opportunity for mutual gains, several Japanese companies, including Mitsubishi, INPEX, JAPEX and Nikki, are already at the forefront, making strategic investments to accelerate the nascent development.

The Government of Japan is firmly behind these industry-led dynamic efforts, and I can assure you that we will continue to provide vital support in cooperation with various government-related agencies such as JBIC and JOGMEC, providing funding and promoting the development of untapped natural resources.

## **(2) Aviation Industry**

Japan can also be one of the most-trusted suppliers of manufactured products for Canadian industries. Take Canada's aviation industry, for instance. Japanese companies have been providing substantial support to the development and production of some of the most popular aircraft made by Canada's own Bombardier Inc., such as the Global, Challenger and CRJ series aircraft, for quite some time, including vital parts such as their wings. It is gratifying to know that Japan plays a part in Canada's robust and dynamic aviation industry.

## **4. Benefits of a Canada-Japan EPA**

These are just a few examples of how extensive and prosperous our economic relations already are. Building on this robust platform, an EPA between Canada and Japan could further enhance and maximize our mutual benefits. This is because, as the Joint Study on a Canada-Japan EPA rightly pointed out last spring, "there remains much untapped potential" in our existing bilateral economic relationship.

Enhanced market access is just the beginning. What we are aiming for is much more ambitious. We want a Canada-Japan EPA to be an agreement that tackles a much broader scope, improving the investment environment, enhancing intellectual property rights, increasing regulatory coordination, facilitating the movement of people and streamlining customs procedures. This is the kind of agreement we envision and strive to achieve, and I can certainly guarantee you that my government will work hard to reach this goal. As we embark on our mission, it is encouraging to know that, last February, Canada's House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade (CIIT) gave its strong endorsement to the conclusion, "as soon as possible," of a Canada-Japan EPA.

## **5. Bilateral Relations Beyond Economics**

However, allow me to point out that Canada-Japan relations are not solely about mutual economic gains. They go much deeper than that. As two like-minded countries which share the fundamental values of democracy, rule of law and fair market economy, Canada and Japan believe in the value of what they provide. And both countries' competitive leadership in advanced research and industries allows them to work together to innovate and create tangible and intangible impacts that benefit all of mankind.

## **Stem Cell Research**

Here, I would like to draw your attention to the field of stem cell research. Canadians can take pride in the fact that one of the most significant medical discoveries in modern history – stem cells – was made by none other than their fellow Canadian researchers right here on Canadian soil, at the University of Toronto, in the 1960s. This groundbreaking feat was later followed up by a Japanese scientist and 2012 Nobel Prize winner in Physiology or Medicine, Dr. Shinya Yamanaka of Kyoto University, who developed induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS cells) in 2006.

When I think about how Canadians and Japanese took turns to achieve excellence over the course of the stem cell research evolution, I am left awe-struck. The depth and breadth of the possibilities our two peoples can generate is simply extraordinary. The Canadian and Japanese governments are actively promoting such cooperation in this field, through the signing of an MOU on joint research projects between the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) and the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) in 2012, for example. It is my belief that, working together, Canada and Japan

could bring about a better and prosperous future for both our countries, and beyond.

## **6. Closing**

On this positive note, I would like to close my remarks. I am confident that, with your unwavering support and expert guidance, we will overcome whatever challenges and obstacles we may encounter along the way. It is your drive and enthusiasm for better opportunities that inspires us to reach that important milestone. Until we achieve that goal, hopefully in the not so distant future, I will be right here for you, seeking and listening to your invaluable input.

So, ladies and gentlemen, let us move forward.

I thank you for your kind attention.