

C'est un grand plaisir pour moi de vous accueillir ce soir à la réception pour célébrer le 82ème anniversaire de Sa Majesté l'Empereur du Japon.

Je suis arrivé à Ottawa il y a sept mois en avril dernier. Et c'est la première fois que je donne cette importante réception au Canada. Je me permets de saisir cette occasion pour brièvement revoir le déroulement des relations bilatérales entre le Japon et le Canada au cours de l'année passée.

2015 has witnessed further development in already excellent Japan-Canada relations in various areas. I name some examples; (1) in political area, the important visits from Japan of ministers and many members of the Parliament; (2) in security and defense area, the 13th Symposium on Peace and Security in Ottawa and the visits of high ranking defense officials; (3) in economic area, the agreement in principle on the TPP for which both Japan and Canada worked hard together with 10 other participating countries; (4) in tourism area, the record high number of Canadian travelers to Japan; (5) in cultural area, a variety of Japanese cultural events in Canada and the increasing number of young Japanese and Canadians participating in various exchange programs.

The highlight of our bilateral relations was certainly the first formal meeting between our two Prime Ministers, Mr. Abe and Mr. Trudeau, held on the margins of the APEC Leaders' Summit in Manila on the 18th of this month, only 2 weeks after Mr. Trudeau's Government was officially inaugurated. And I had the privilege to attend this important meeting as well as the meeting between our two Foreign Ministers that preceded the Prime Ministers' meeting.

The two leaders discussed a variety of issues of mutual interest against the backdrop of increasingly complex global economic and security circumstances. They agreed on the importance of continued bilateral and multilateral

cooperation on global issues such as the fight against terrorism after the recent Paris attacks and the climate change to be addressed at the COP21 that has just started today in Paris. Both expressed support for the concept of free trade in general and expressed optimism regarding the benefits that will flow from the TPP agreement, although open and transparent consultations will be required in Canada.

Together they committed to further strengthening the Japan-Canada bilateral relationship in various fields such as security and defense, economy, energy including LNG, science and technology, and culture. In May 2016, Prime Minister Abe will host the G7 Leader' Summit in ISE-SHIMA, Japan, and welcome Mr. Trudeau to Japan where he visited many years ago as a small boy with his father.

The mutually beneficial economic partnership as well as shared values and ideals have made the two countries natural friends and allies. I believe we are now entering a new and exciting era in Japan-Canada relations and I look forward to working together with all the people concerned in the both public and private sectors.

Je voudrais saisir cette occasion pour exprimer ma gratitude au Gouvernement du Canada et au peuple canadien pour le soutien en faveur de l'Ambassade du Japon. Mes remerciements s'adressent également à mes chers collègues et amis du corps diplomatique.

Pour terminer, j'aimerais bien présenter mes meilleurs voeux pour la santé et le bonheur de Sa Majesté l'Empereur du Japon et à vous tous présents ici ce soir ainsi que pour l'avenir du Canada et du Japon.