

C'est un grand plaisir pour moi de vous accueillir ce soir à la réception pour célébrer le 83^{ème} (83rd) anniversaire de Sa Majesté l'Empereur du Japon.

Looking back, we have seen dramatic or even drastic changes worldwide since our last National Day Reception a year ago. In contrast to this turbulent world scene, however, is the relationship between Japan and Canada, a bond that is steadfast, diverse and based on shared fundamental values, which has been steadily advancing.

The highlight of the year was the first official visit to Japan by Prime Minister and Mrs. Trudeau just before the G7 Ise-Shima Summit in May. As well, a total of 11 Canadian Ministers visited Japan in the past year. You can see photos from these visits exhibited in this ballroom. Suffice to say that there have been 3 Prime Ministerial meetings and 3 Foreign Ministerial meetings in the first 6 months of the Trudeau Government. PM Trudeau and PM Abe agreed to create a "new era for Japan-Canada cooperation". So, we are setting sail on a new journey to promote our relations under three pillars.

The first pillar is the economic partnership which has been the basis of our bilateral relations. We hope to expand our trade and investment in both directions. For that purpose, our two Prime Ministers agreed on 5 priority areas. They are infrastructure, energy, science and technology, business environment and investment, and tourism and youth exchanges.

We have witnessed some progress in our economic relations. There are 750 offices of Japanese companies established in Canada and its number is increasing with new entrants in such areas as apparel and video games. And the largest automobile manufacturer in Canada today is Toyota.

With respect to trade, although the volume has not recently grown, I believe there is a great potential for expansion. In this regard, Japan values the important role of the TPP for Japan and Canada as well as for other colleagues in the Asia Pacific. Japan believes in free trade and intends to exert all the efforts to fight against protectionism and promote free trade including the TPP.

The second pillar is the security cooperation. As Japan and Canada are neighbors across the Pacific, Japan welcomes Canada's increasing interest in the Asia Pacific where the economy is fast growing. However, we have to note that the stable security environment in the region is essential to ensure sound economic activities. It is, therefore, only natural for Japan and Canada, both aspiring to contribute to international peace and prosperity, to further deepen security cooperation in the Asia Pacific as well as globally.

The third pillar is cultural, educational and youth exchanges. We should be pleased that Canada is very popular in Japan and Japan is well liked in Canada. However, our knowledge of each other may not be very profound. I believe that these exchanges contribute to the deepening of mutual understanding between our two peoples. The Embassy of Japan has been organizing and will organize various Japanese cultural events in Ottawa. And the youth exchanges between our countries are steadily increasing thanks to agreements

between universities and such exchange programs as the JET Programme, Working Holiday, and *Kakehashi* Project to name just a few. Japan also welcomes Canadian travelers whose number reached a record high in 2015.

Looking ahead, 2017 will mark the 150th Anniversary of Confederation, and 2018 will see Japan and Canada jointly celebrating the 90th Anniversary of their diplomatic relations. And then come the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020. All of these occasions will serve as further opportunities for our two countries to endeavor on a journey, in a new era of cooperation, to get even closer across the Pacific.

Before concluding, I would like to draw your attention to our booths presented by Japanese companies and agencies operating in Canada in order to showcase their services and products.

I hope you will enjoy the Japanese cuisine that was registered as Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO when I was Ambassador to UNESCO as well as superb sake I selected in my capacity as Sake Samurai.

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.