

**Speech for Ambassador Kawamura
2020 National Day Reception
February 18, 2020**

The Right Honourable Richard Wagner, Chief Justice of
Canada,

The Honourable Harjit Sajjan, Minister of National
Defence,

Justices of the Supreme Court,

Dr. Robert Oliphant, Parliamentary Secretary to the
Minister of Foreign Affairs,

Senators and Members of Parliament,

Excellencies,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. Bonsoir. It is my great pleasure to
welcome you here tonight to our National Day

Reception. Merci de votre présence à la fête nationale du Japon.

Today we are celebrating the birthday of the new Emperor of Japan for the first time since his accession to the throne last year. It marked the beginning of Japan's new era, Reiwa, which means "Beautiful Harmony". I'd like to express our gratitude to The Right Honourable Richard Wagner, Chief Justice of Canada, and The Honourable Catherine Mandeville as well as Dr. Henry Shibata, representing the Japanese Canadian Community, for their attendance to the ceremony of accession to the throne last October. This year, His Majesty the Emperor is turning 60 years old on February 23rd. Turning 60 is an important year in Japanese culture and is often celebrated as a time to start anew.

Indeed, we are starting another decade of our relationship after many commemorative events held in

Canada to celebrate the 90th anniversary of diplomatic relations between our countries over the past two years. Notable events of last year were the official visit of Prime Minister Abe to Ottawa and the visit of six Canadian cities by Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado.

At the start of this next phase as the new Ambassador of Japan to Canada, I strive to establish a deeper relationship and a more robust strategic partnership between Japan and Canada. Tonight I will mention my three major goals among others. First, I will work to make Japan the most reliable bridge builder between Canada and Asia. Second, I will enhance our economic relationship, especially by actively using the benefits offered by the CPTPP. Japan and Canada are two of the largest economies within the CPTPP, which established high and transparent standards for trade and

investment in the world's growth center. Third, I will give shape to the cooperation under the vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. Our two Prime Ministers have shared this vision. Canada has significantly increased its presence and commitment in the region, not just through CPTPP, but also through Operation NEON to fully enforce the UN Security Council measures and joint military exercise with Japan in the (Indo-Pacific) region. However, the Indo-Pacific needs more Canada. We look forward to more collaboration to reinforce the rules-based order and promote prosperity in the region. Such collaboration between our countries includes a fight against novel coronavirus, COVID-19.

Our two countries have been closely working together in the past weeks. Minister Champagne has been demonstrating a strong leadership, and has been closely in touch with his Japanese counterpart, Foreign

Minister Motegi, on the issue of COVID-19 including the quarantined ship.

This year, Japan will host the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Three concepts among others are important in this year's Games; a More Inclusive Society, a More Sustainable Game delivery and Support for the Reconstruction Efforts. A symbol of inclusiveness at Tokyo 2020 will be the considerable presence of women athletes. 49% of the athletes at the Games are expected to be women, an all-time historical high. The medals are moulded by the metal contained in recycled electronic devices donated by the people of Japan. While the Government of Japan appropriately responds to the current COVID-19 infection we are confident that the Games will be held as planned as John Coates, head of IOC's coordination commission, said in his interview on

February 14 that there was no need for contingency plans to cancel or move the games.

An important part of the relationship between our two countries is the link between our peoples. I'm very happy to see so many friends of Japan from various different fields gathered here today. It is my pleasure to introduce some key contributors to strengthening the bonds between our people. First I would like to thank the Canadian Rugby team. They will receive a commendation later, for their generous help in typhoon-affected Iwate Prefecture. I would also like to thank the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Committees as well as CBC/Radio-Canada journalists for being present tonight. Ms. Mariko Tajiri, Sake Sommelier based in Toronto, led a brief workshop earlier and will answer all your questions related to the Japanese sake served tonight. Finally, I would also like to thank the Ikebana

International Ottawa Chapter for today's Japanese style flower arrangement on this stage.

Tonight, we'd like to give you a glimpse of Japanese Omotenashi, a form of hospitality unique to Japan. Please enjoy the sake, the food and the entertainment provided throughout this reception and make good memories of your time here. Merci encore à tous/ d'être présents ce soir/ pour la réception/ de la fête nationale. I thank you all for being here tonight and wish you all a wonderful evening. Thank you.