

Ambassador's Speech – His Majesty the Emperor's Birthday – March 1, 2022

Honorable guests, Excellencies,

Good evening.

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to His Majesty the Emperor of Japan on his 62nd birthday on February 23.

C'est un honneur de vous recevoir/et de célébrer /la Fête nationale aujourd'hui. Je voudrais offrir/ mes plus sincères félicitations/ à Sa Majesté l'Empereur du Japon/ pour son 62e anniversaire de naissance/ le 23 février.

I must also take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude and respect to those facing the challenge of COVID-19 head-on, especially essential workers and medical professionals. In his New Year message, His Majesty the Emperor raised the issue of the many people around the world without access to vaccines. Thus, I am deeply proud that Japan and Canada are among the main contributors to the COVAX facility's efforts. Our nations will continue to cooperate, as true friends and partners, to overcome the pandemic.

As another example of this close cooperation, I think of the success of the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, a true demonstration of the power of global unity.

J'ai été ému/ par le courage/ démontré par les athlètes du Canada. Je veux également exprimer ma reconnaissance /envers le Canada pour son soutien aux Jeux.

Between the Kishida cabinet, which took office last fall, and the relaunched Trudeau cabinet, I am confident that our relationship will continue to strengthen, including through further productive meetings between our leaders and foreign ministers. A key area for both our nations is, of course, the Indo-Pacific.

Nobody can deny that today, the Indo-Pacific region has become the growth and strategic center of the world with more than half of the global population and several major economies. A “free and open Indo-Pacific” is essential for security and stable development, and relies on the rule of law. To this end, our foreign ministers agreed in May 2021 to promote further concrete cooperation in six priority areas, including the rule of law, free trade, and climate change. I am greatly encouraged that the Honourable Melanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs, has been carrying on this work for a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” with her counterpart Minister Hayashi in full recognition that acting together is power.

To tackle the imminent challenge of attempts to alter the status quo in the region, it is particularly heartening to note Canada’s involvement in monitoring violations of UN Security Council resolutions, through Operation NEON. I’m grateful for the leadership of the Honourable Anita Anand, Minister of National Defence, in this area.

In economic cooperation, too, Japan and Canada have an opportunity for leadership. As the two largest economies in the CPTPP, we have a historically significant mandate to preserve 21st century high-quality trade rules while cooperating on net zero-emissions and climate change action. We see Japanese investment in Canada trending upwards. This investment prioritizes Canadian employment, such as the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries project with Bombardier, and can be seen as true example of “win-win” economics. Even during the pandemic, Canadian exports to Japan have remained steady. I fully expect to see even more mutual direct investment and trade, including through the CPTPP.

Prime Minister Kishida has emphasized the importance of science, technology and innovation. Japan and Canada are already showing exquisite teamwork in green tech and innovation, including AI and quantum technology. On green growth strategy under our shared 2050 net-zero target as well as the exciting field of space exploration, such as the Artemis mission, I wholeheartedly welcome work in these new scientific fields,

including the final frontier of space. I look forward to seeing what our nations can do together on the path to the future.

Together, Japan and Canada can lead with our shared values, including the rule of law, on high-quality trade, scientific advancement, and inclusive, sustainable development, especially in the rapidly growing Indo-Pacific. After all, the Indo-Pacific region is and will remain of great importance to Canada as a fellow democratic economic power on the Pacific Ocean.

It is thanks to technology that, even during the pandemic, I have been impressed by young people's commitment to bridging the Pacific. This partnership between our nations is furthered by human exchanges; thus, I am determined to ensure the full resumption of exchange programs as soon as possible.

I am also excited by the wonderful chance for exchange offered by Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai, which Canada recently announced it will join. Its theme of "designing future society for our lives" fits with Japan-Canada cooperation especially well!

In closing, I would like to thank each and every one of you for your efforts in developing Japan-Canada relations.

En terminant, j'aimerais remercier/ chacun d'entre vous/ pour vos efforts/ envers le développement des relations entre le Japon et le Canada. J'ai hâte/ de vous revoir/ en personne très bientôt!

Thank you.