

Remarks by Ambassador UYAMA
on the occasion of the Emperor's Birthday Reception
February 21, 2024

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to Japan's National Day reception commemorating the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. His Majesty turns 64 on Friday, 23rd of February. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for joining us in this celebration.

This year marks the beginning of a new era of the Kingdom of Denmark, with the succession of the throne. I would like to extend my deepest appreciation and respect to Her Majesty Queen Margrethe for her significant contribution to the friendship between our two countries during her 52-year reign. I would also like to express my sincere congratulations to His Majesty King Frederik the 10th for the enthronement. I am confident that deep and enduring friendship between the Japanese Imperial Family and the Danish Royal Family will further enhance the bond between our two countries.

The year 2023 -last year- was a particularly fruitful year for the bilateral relations between Japan and Denmark. Most notably, last October a long-awaited visit by Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen to Japan was realized. She and the Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida issued the Joint Leaders' Statement on the deepening of strategic partnership between Japan and the Kingdom of Denmark. They agreed to enhance cooperation in a wide range of areas from security and defense to renewable energy, healthcare, welfare technology, life sciences and quantum technology, and renewed their determination to advance together to solve common challenges.

I am delighted that Japanese companies have made significant investments in Denmark in such sectors as Power-to-X and biologics in recent years, which can bring a solution to various global challenges. I would also like to highlight the business conference focusing on welfare technology, which Vejle Municipality organized this month in close collaboration with our Embassy, inviting Japanese and Danish experts. This was a splendid example of cooperation for inspiring each other to address common challenges. We also see a big potential of business, research and cultural cooperation with Greenland and Faroe Islands. We will make further efforts to enhance cooperation this year.

During Prime Minister Frederiksen's visit to Japan the two leaders shared common views on turbulent international situations and expressed strong opposition against any unilateral attempts to change status quo by force anywhere in the world.

Next Saturday will mark two years since Russia launched brutal aggression against Ukraine. The resolve of the international community to defend the principles of the UN Charter and international humanitarian law is tested. The world should not be fooled by Putin's propaganda and false narratives. The death of a prominent dissident leader Aleksei Navalny is another reminder of the despicable cruelty of Putin's regime. An appeasement policy would never work toward the evil dictatorship. There is no other way but to continue unwavering support to Ukraine for pushing back Russia the aggressor to achieve a fair and lasting peace.

International law and human dignity must be upheld in the Middle East as well. Hamas should be strongly condemned for the atrocious terror attacks and should immediately release hostages. However, the mass killing and immense suffering of civilians in Gaza cannot be justified. It is crucial to achieve sustainable ceasefire to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza. As a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council Japan continues to assume responsibility for defending international order based on the rule of law and protecting vulnerable people in cooperation with trusted partners including Denmark.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Next year, from April 2025, Japan will host the World EXPO in Osaka under the theme of "Designing Future Society for Our Lives". I am pleased that Denmark will join the EXPO together with other four Nordic countries and showcase the Danish model of trust, sustainability and innovation in the Nordic Pavilion. I would also like to stress that Japan has greatly improved its investment climate for foreign companies with world's leading R&D capabilities and qualified workforce. I do hope that Danish companies expand their activities and investment in Japan.

Last but not least, we have prepared tasty Japanese food inside the tent on the terrace. In addition, over there, we offer fresh scallops of the highest quality from Hokkaido, the northern part of Japan, as well as Japanese sake and shochu, a distilled spirit. My chef Mr. Atsushi Suzuki will demonstrate sushi making with the scallops. Please do not miss this

unique opportunity to enjoy extraordinary Japanese scallops imported specially for this reception.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Noriko Serizawa, Ms. Michiko Suzuki and Ms. Mayumi Naruko for their beautiful performance of the Japanese and Danish national anthems. My appreciation also goes to my chef and all the staff of our Embassy, who have worked hard to make this reception happen. I would like to thank my wife Mariko as well for creating the flower arrangements here, and over there, in the other room, next to the golden screen.

Now, let me propose a toast, wishing for the long lives and good health of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan as well as Their Majesties the new King and Queen of Denmark, for wider and deeper friendship between Japan and the Kingdom of Denmark, and for the happiness and prosperity for all of you. Skål! Cheers!

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