

Speech by Ambassador Uyama at the Emperor's Birthday Reception

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Japan's National Day reception celebrating the 65th birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for joining us in this celebration.

Over the past year, the strategic partnership between Japan and the Kingdom of Denmark has been deepened by high-level exchanges and cooperation across various sectors.

The visit to Denmark by Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan last May and the recent visit to Japan by Ms. Christina Egelund, Minister for Higher Education and Science, have boosted cooperation in quantum science and technology. Mutual visits of members of the Danish Parliament and the Japanese Diet have inspired each other. The visit to Japan last summer by Mr. Høgni Hoydal, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Faroe Islands, generated momentum for Japan-Faroes relations.

I am very pleased with significant growth of Japanese investment in Denmark in key sectors such as green energy, healthcare and life sciences. Leading Japanese companies and their Danish partners are manufacturing green methanol, green hydrogen, biopharmaceuticals, and other innovative products that can contribute to sustainability and human well-being. We hope Danish companies increase investment and expand their activities in Japan as well. The appointment of Mr. Jais Valeur, former CEO of Danish Crown, as Honorary Consul-General of Japan in Vejle will surely give another impetus to the bilateral relations with his extensive business experience and network.

I am also delighted with the growing interest in Japan among Danes. In 2024, we saw a remarkable 30% increase in the number of Danish visitors to Japan, reaching a record high of 41,000. Japan was recognized as the best travel destination outside Europe in the Danish Travel Awards 2024. Opportunities for youth exchanges have also been strengthened by the recent revision of Japan's working holiday system which now allows Danish nationals to obtain a visa twice in their lifetime.

This year we are looking forward to the golden opportunities to further enhance our relations. The EXPO 2025 in Osaka will start in mid-April, where Denmark will be part of the Nordic Pavilion and showcase the Danish model of sustainability and innovation. I am particularly excited and honoured that His Majesty the King of Denmark will pay an accession visit to Japan and attend Denmark Day at the EXPO on the 24th of April. This event will offer a great opportunity for Danish businesses to discover new avenues in the Japanese market and foster deeper understanding between our two nations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, in the extremely unpredictable and dangerous times, the international community is facing a global governance crisis. The international order based on the rule of law is at stake. All the countries must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other States in accordance with the UN Charter.

Three years have passed since Russia launched brutal war of aggression against Ukraine. North Korea's involvement in the war underscores the inseparability of security in Europe and Asia. Attempts to end the war are facing a crucial test. As history shows, appeasement policy and unilateral concessions to evil dictators would never bring a lasting peace. The world should not be misled by Putin's malicious propaganda and disinformation. It would be a grave mistake if Putin would be granted a reward for the aggression and war crimes. "Peace through strength" in a true sense should be imposed on Russia the aggressor to achieve a just and lasting peace. Japan will continue unwavering support to Ukraine along with Denmark and other partners.

In the Middle East, all the parties must implement the agreement on the release of hostages and the ceasefire in Gaza in a good faith to end immense suffering of civilians. Japan will continue efforts to improve humanitarian situations and towards a two-state solution.

Denmark will play a pivotal role as a member of the UN Security Council and the EU presidency later this year. Japan will continue to strive to uphold an international order based on the rule of law in cooperation with Denmark. Japan will also strengthen relations with Greenland and the Faroe Islands, recognizing the increasing strategic importance of the Arctic region and their crucial roles in the Danish chairship of the Arctic Council.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Now I would like to highlight some special features of today's reception. You will find a table loaded with tasty Japanese food in the tent on the terrace, and a dedicated booth in this room featuring highest quality scallops from Hokkaido, young yellowtail from Miyazaki, and oysters from Hiroshima, as well as several kinds of Japanese sake. I am proud to announce that the traditional sake-making was added to the list of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage last December. I hope you enjoy exquisite Japanese food and sake.

In the entrance hall we have a table for the promotion of tourism to Japan with the participation of the Japan National Tourism Organization and All Nippon Airways as well as Japanese tea produced by Ito-en.

Now, let me propose a toast to the long lives and good health of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan as well as Their Majesties the King and Queen of Denmark, and to friendship between Japan and the Kingdom of Denmark. Skål! Cheers!

Thank you.