Greetings from the Organising Ministries

Today, in the presence of Their Imperial Highnesses Crown Prince Naruhito and Crown Princess Masako, we commemorate the 30th anniversary of the JET Programme. As a representative of the organisations hosting this event, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to all gathered here.

The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme, or the JET Programme, invites young people from around the world to Japan. Initiated in 1987 with the cooperation of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Education, as they were known at the time, and the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR), the programme is run by local governments in Japan.

As shared by Chairman Okamoto, the JET Programme has grown to become one of the largest exchange programmes in the world, with around 65,000 people participating in the programme so far.

This success is the result of the great support offered by local government organisations and by all others involved, as well as the efforts of current and former participants around the world.

JET Programme participants serve as Assistant Language Teachers, Coordinators for International Relations, or Sports Exchange Advisors.

The Assistant Language Teachers, who make up 90 percent of participants, take part as native speakers in foreign language classes for Japanese children and students. At the same time, they provide valuable opportunities for Japanese youth to come into contact with ways of thinking and cultures different from their own.

Coordinators for International Relations not only foster internationalisation at the local level, but they also provide us Japanese with an opportunity to rediscover the value of ‘Japanese spirit’ through their acquired knowledge of Japan.

Sports Exchange Advisors assist in the promotion of sporting activities throughout Japan. As we draw
closer to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, we expect they will serve to increase interest in sports.

JET Programme alumni, upon returning to their home countries, play the role of cultural ambassadors, as friends of Japan.

Many JET alumni continue to contribute greatly to globalisation within Japanese corporations, utilising not only their skills in English or other foreign languages, but also their outstanding Japanese language proficiency and ability to adapt to the Japanese workplace.

I feel that these successes are the fruits of heart-to-heart interactions over the years throughout Japan.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications strives to contribute to the continued development of the JET Programme and keep it relevant by respecting the views of the local communities and cooperating with the related organisations. I ask for the continued support and cooperation of all those involved for the further growth of the JET Programme.

In closing, I would like to wish for the good health and success of everyone here.

Thank you very much.