Address by His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince of Japan

It is my pleasure to attend this splendid event commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the JET Programme being held today with the participation of so many guests from around the world.

The JET Programme has contributed to the enhancement of the quality of foreign language education in Japan, and to the promotion of internationalization at the community level. Over the years, it has been evolved into a large-scale exchange programme, drawing approximately 65,000 participants from 65 countries.

The remarkable growth of the JET Programme is truly a cause for celebration. It is the result of the dedicated efforts of many organizations and people concerned, including the prefectures, municipalities, and schools who have welcomed JET participants from abroad, as well as those overseas involved in the promotion of the programme and selection process.

Participants on the JET Programme have been playing an important role in internationalizing local communities as Assistant Language Teachers serving in elementary, junior, and senior high schools throughout Japan. They have also acted as Coordinators for International Relations, assisting with the international exchange projects of local government organizations, or as Sports Exchange Advisors providing sports guidance in local communities and schools.

The number of foreign tourists visiting Japan from overseas is on the rise. Moreover, in 2019, Japan will host the Rugby World Cup, followed in 2020 by the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. Therefore, the role of JET Programme participants in enhancing foreign language education for younger generations who shoulder our future and promoting internationalization in local communities is becoming even more significant.

For the JET participants themselves, the opportunity to live in various parts of Japan, to interact with
people in the communities and thus to learn about their customs and culture, will be of great value. In addition, the JET Programme alumni are active in their respective home countries. The JET Alumni Association, or JETAA, currently has 53 chapters in 16 countries. It brings me great delight that these former participants continue to serve as cultural bridges between Japan and their home countries by sharing Japanese culture as well as providing support for the JET Programme. It is my hope that the bond will be further deepened between JET Programme alumni who are more active around the world, and Japan.

As the JET Programme marks its 30th anniversary, my wish is that it should continue to grow, contributing more and more to the advancement of foreign language education in Japan and to international exchange at the community level.