

Speech by H.E. Hiroyasu Kobayashi of Ambassador of Japan for The 46th Joint Meeting of the Japan New Zealand Business Council

**Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Before my address, I wish to express my deepest sympathies to all those who have suffered as a result of Typhoon No. 15, which has caused significant damage in Chiba prefecture with power and water outages, and I extend my wishes for a speedy recovery.

I would like to extend my hearty congratulations for successfully holding the 46th Joint Meeting and express my appreciation and salute both the organisers and those who made efforts to convene this joint meeting.

Please accept my congratulations to Mr Ichikawa, President of Sumitomo Forestry Co., Ltd. for acceding to the Chairman of the Japan Committee of the Japan New Zealand Business Council. I am very pleased to have the 46th Joint Meeting at Kashiwa city where the pre camp of the All Blacks was located for the Rugby World Cup which will begin on the 20th of this month.

One of the biggest development in Japan New Zealand economic relations since the last joint meeting was the CPTPP (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership) which was ratified on 30th December 2018.

In the 6 months since then, exports of beef from New Zealand to Japan increased by 29% in volume and by 21% in value, dairy products by 13% in volume and by 16% in value, and kiwi fruit by 18% in volume and by 31% in value compared to the same period last year.

I would like to expand this agreement to further enhance the economic ties between Japan and New Zealand through promoting early ratification by other members as well as expanding it to other countries etc. It's also noteworthy that ongoing negotiation of RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) aims to conclude this year. I expect active discussion and dialogue to maximise every opportunity offered by these global agreements.

Since the last Joint meeting in November, Japan and New Zealand have continued to enjoy a desirable bilateral relationship, and we had visits of mutual dignitaries to each country. In January Mr Sonoura, Former Advisor to the Prime Minister (National Security) had a high level meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Peters in Auckland, and in Indonesia this March. Former Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Suzuki attended the 8th Memorial Ceremony for the Christchurch Earthquake, and offered his condolences to Her Worship Mayor of Christchurch, Hon. Lianne Dalziel and Hon Dr Megan Woods, Minister of Greater Christchurch Regeneration as the representative of the Government of Japan. Mayor Dalziel visited Japan this May and paid a courtesy call to Former Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Suzuki. Tomorrow Prime Minister Abe and Prime Minister Ardern are expected to have a Summit Meeting.

At the official level, the 40th New Zealand-Japan Foreign Ministry Consultations were held in Wellington this May, with a wide range of discussions such as the overall bilateral relationship, regional and international situation, counterterrorism including the aftermath of the Christchurch shooting, cyber security, disarmament, environment/climate change issues, and cooperation in international arena. The 26th Japan -New Zealand Joint Economic Consultations were held in Tokyo this August, and included a wide range of exchanges of opinions in regard to bilateral relations on the economy and trade, regional economic cooperation such as APEC, the multilateral economic partnership, and international issues on economy and trade, such as the WTO.

Through the visits of these bilateral dignitaries and consultations at official levels, the Government of Japan has continuously made efforts to enhance bilateral relations and contribute to improving and progressing the business environment.

The Embassy of Japan in Wellington hosted the Japan New Zealand Infrastructure Networking Meeting this July, with more than 100 participants from corporations and government from both countries. Chairman Mr Kennedy kindly delivered the closing remarks. I believe that in this area Japan may contribute to New Zealand's infrastructure issues, including housing, transport and earthquake countermeasures. As one of this Joint Meeting items, we plan to conduct an Industry Sight Tour Programme

around the 'Kashiwa-no-ha' Campus representing a predecessor model of a smart city which the Government of Japan commits to addressing. Possible Cooperation can be achieved through sharing know-how to explore new challenges; I extremely hope the bilateral partnership between Japan and New Zealand will actively develop.

Renewable energy, especially hydrogen energy has become a focus area in both countries, Japan and New Zealand. The 2nd Hydrogen Ministerial Meeting is to be held in Japan this month, and New Zealand announced a "Green Paper" which described its visions for a hydrogen plan for New Zealand. As described in the Green Paper, New Zealand recognises Japan as an important partner for co-operation with technical development, and as an export destination. I expect the partnership between Japan and New Zealand in hydrogen will be a significant cooperative area for us.

As well as, the Rugby World Cup now in its countdown stage, Japan will host the Olympic and Paralympic games in 2020, the World Masters Games Kansai in 2021 and the Osaka/Kansai World Exposition will be held in 2025. New Zealand will host the American's Cup and APEC in 2021. Recently the increased number of New Zealand tourists visiting Japan has seen the Japan National Tourism Organisation position New Zealand as a second priority market. Furthermore the Japan and Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry will dispatch an economic mission to New Zealand next February. I am convinced that the economic relationship between Japan and New Zealand will be further developed through these various opportunities.

In closing, I would like to wish a fruitful and successful conclusion to this joint meeting with many active discussions, productive proposals and opinions on the economy, business relations and a wide range of topics of our two countries. And I hope the accumulated achievements you have made through discussions and various exchanges will be further enriched in the future.

Thank you.

(This is a translation of the speech originally delivered by Ambassador Kobayashi in Japanese.)