

**Remarks by H.E Hajime Hayashi,
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,
at a Reception for
the Participants of the 2022 JET Programme
at Senate House, SOAS, London WC1
on Wednesday 3rd August 2022**

Dear new JET participants,

I feel excited to see so many enthusiastic faces here. It has been three years since we have had a face-to-face event like this, and it is wonderful to be able to meet and encourage every one of you who will be going to Japan.

Some of you may have already been to and known Japan, but for others it might be a journey into the unknown. As you engage with the society and culture and make progress in the Japanese language through various opportunities, you will eventually have wider and deeper understanding on Japan and the Japanese. It will be all up to you to say either that they are much like you or that they are inscrutable as sometimes portrayed. Perhaps many people gathered here, including myself, look forward to hearing from you when you finish your role as a JET participant.

You will also find that the experience you gain on this adventure will stand you in good stead in forging suitable careers after this programme. Indeed, the solid, mutually-beneficial economic ties our two countries have developed over the previous several decades may well be a source of employment opportunities. After all, there are slightly less than 1,000 Japanese companies based in the UK, having created more than 170,000 jobs so far.

Besides, there are more than 10,000 former JET participants just within the UK, and this JET network has continuously been expanding. When you come back to the UK, you can join this huge alumni community, which we call the “JET family”. Many ex-JETs have assumed important roles in various fields, including government, business, the mass media, academia and education. JETAA, the JET Alumni Association, helps members to maintain their links with Japan and organises a number of events every year.

Well, for every new participant, a long journey awaits you. Once you step on the plane, you will be on the other side of the world in just half a day. You will immediately plunge into a new and exciting venture for which many of your friends will envy you. I wish you every success and I will be eager to hear of your exploits in Japan – as well as your noble failures, if they happen – upon your return.

Good luck!