

Remarks by H.E. Mr. HAYASHI Hajime,  
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,  
for the Japanese British Lawyers Networking Reception 2022

(16<sup>th</sup> November 2022)

My Lords, My Ladies and Distinguished Guests,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Embassy of Japan for the fourth Japanese British Lawyers Networking Reception, co-hosted by the Embassy of Japan and the British Japanese Law Association, after an almost three-year break due to the pandemic.

This evening I am delighted that the most prominent legal professionals from various fields of law are with us, including the most senior justices from the UK's courts.

Cooperation between British and Japanese lawyers has a long history. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the Meiji Era in Japan, some pioneering Japanese lawyers were educated at the Inns of Courts and qualified as barristers in this country. They brought back their knowledge from the UK to allow the rule of law and democracy to take root in Japanese society. To this day, numerous Japanese judges, prosecutors and private lawyers have come to the UK, and learnt about the UK legal system, and deepened understanding of the legal culture. Japan has also received many visits from British judges and lawyers. Such longstanding cultivation and development of exchanges and mutual understanding between Japanese

and British lawyers has led not only to today's wonderful opportunity but also has made our two countries champions of the rule of law and exemplary democracies in the world.

This evening, I need to share with you the view that the world is currently witnessing extreme threats to the rule of law and democracy. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is an intolerable attempt to break fundamental international law and the peaceful international order with unjustifiable force. Authoritarians are making vicious attempts to change the world through illegal and inhumane means. As two of the leading states of democracy, Japan and the UK are collaborating hand in hand in upholding and respecting our fundamental values, such as freedom, human rights and dignity, based on the legal foundation. Now is the time that the power of law and the power of lawyers can, and should, contribute to defending the rule of law and fundamental values from such attacks.

Interactions and cooperation between lawyers from different fields and backgrounds can help to address this difficult situation. In order to further such collaboration, mutual understanding and trust in the laws and cultures of lawyers working in different countries, sectors and levels is essential.

Taking today's opportunity, I would like to introduce to you a great step forward regarding the Japan-UK legal relationship. This spring, the Japanese Government bestowed a Decoration of Order, the Order of

Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star, upon Lady Arden, former Supreme Court Justice, for her longstanding endeavours to develop and strengthen judicial relationships between Japan and the UK. Congratulations, Lady Arden! We celebrated her magnificent achievement in September, and confirmed further collaboration in the judicial field between our two countries. In honour of this, I would like to request Lady Arden to provide a remark later today.

I also would like to commend the distinguished guests here today for your continuous efforts and support towards developing and strengthening the partnership in the legal field between Japan and the UK. My embassy highly regards the development of strong ties across various fields of laws between us, and will continue our endeavours in collaboration with you.

Finally, I should like to pay tribute to Professor Chizu Nakajima and Mr. Scott Hopkins for their continued dedication and initiative. The BJLA has tirelessly facilitated the exchange of knowledge and experience between the legal professionals of our two countries for over 20 years.

Before closing, I wish that you enjoy today's opportunity to revive established connections and create new networks among legal professionals.

Thank you very much.