

**Remarks by Ambassador HAYASHI Hajime
for the JET Reunion Reception
on 3 March 2023**

It is wonderful to welcome all of you in person at our Embassy. It has been three years since we had a face-to-face reception like this.

Today we have with us some 30 ex-JET participants who have returned to the UK since the pandemic. Welcome back! We also have almost a hundred JET alumni who have already developed distinguished careers after taking part in the programme. Moreover, I am pleased to announce that we are joined tonight by some JET alumni from the US and Canada as well, who are now living in the UK. I would like to express my gratitude to those who have participated in the JET programme. It is a fact that we can find JET alumni working in various parts of the world. I believe the JET programme is indeed a big asset for Japan.

The purpose of tonight's gathering is twofold: to welcome back the recently-returned participants and to revitalise the JET network here in the UK.

First and foremost, I would like to thank all of JETs who have returned during the past three years for your great efforts in contributing to English language education and international exchanges in Japan. I can imagine how challenging it might have been to live in a totally different culture, especially under the difficult circumstances caused by the pandemic. That said, I am sure that your time in Japan must have helped you grow as individuals and find new opportunities in broader areas you had not imagined before.

Secondly, to the senior JET alumni, it is delightful for us to have you again at the Embassy today so long after you participated in the JET programme. I imagine that being here tonight has rekindled your memories – wonderful ones, I hope! – of the time you spent in Japan. I am excited to have this opportunity to hear about the various careers you have developed since coming back to the UK and I trust you will relate your stories to the new young alumni who have just come back.

I am also very pleased to welcome the guests from Japan-related companies and organisations. Clearly, JET participants, who played a hugely important role in bringing our two countries together, have benefited from the Japanese-style on-the-job training they received and developed highly marketable skills applicable to the business world. I am sure that young British JET alumni have a great deal to offer in a variety of sectors.

Futhermore, I would like to express my appreciation to the JETAA, the JET Alumni Association for its continued support. The JETAA is a vital platform for JET alumni to network with each other throughout the UK. It has five regional branches, and I would like to urge all alumni to join so that you can keep in touch with your JET colleagues through various activities and stay connected to Japan.

Thank you very much.