

**Speech by H.E. Mr. HAYASHI Hajime,
Ambassador of Japan to the UK
at the at the launch of Ocean Census**

Distinguished Guests,

It is my great pleasure to say just few words this morning, as we celebrate the launch of the remarkable new initiative “Ocean Census”, jointly organized by the Nippon Foundation and the Nekton Foundation, which will shed new light on the world of marine ecosystems.

I would like to underline that Japan and the UK have strengthened our friendship throughout numerous collaborative projects, not only in terms of diplomatic relations and business connections, but also across a variety of fields including academia, art, culture and education. Some of these collaborations have been supported by top-class experts and stakeholders from both countries. They have contributed to the enhancement of knowledge, welfare and quality of life for people around the world, and have gone beyond the scope of bilateral relations.

In this regard, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Dr. SASAKAWA Yohei and the Nippon Foundation for his and its continuous commitment to social innovation through the efforts to support many projects.

As many of us are well aware, the current decade, the years of 2021 to 2030, is the United Nations’ “Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development”. I believe that both Japan and the UK, as the two maritime nations committed to the future of the oceans, should and can take the lead in this field.

Therefore, I am particularly delighted that the collaborative project “Ocean Census” by the Nippon Foundation and the Nekton Foundation has been launched as a landmark initiative contributing to a sustainable future for the world’s oceans. The project has set an ambitious target to discover more than 4,600 of new species of maritime animal and organisms in its first year, during which time the field survey will take place in various sea areas throughout the world. I expect this project will provide new knowledge and insights to science, and will help future generations in policy making, and scientific and industrial activities.

I am confident that the “Ocean Census” project will represent our shared commitment in the field of ocean science, and will significantly contribute to the sustainable development of the oceans in the years to come.

May I conclude my short remark by congratulating once again the Nippon Foundation, the Nekton Foundation and all of you gathering here this morning, on the launch of this wonderful project “Ocean Census”.

Thank you very much.