

Remarks by H.E. Mr. HAYASHI Hajime,
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,
at the “Business and Investment Opportunities through Expo 2025,
Osaka, Kansai, Japan” event
on 16th April 2024

Excellencies, My Lords,
Distinguished Guests,

I am truly delighted to have you all this evening here at the Embassy of Japan. Taking this opportunity, I would like to extend my appreciation to the Institute of Directors for co-hosting this event.

Today we gather to mark the one-year countdown to Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan. Reflecting on history, many of you know that the first Great Exhibition took place in London, just a stone's throw from here, in Hyde Park in 1851. The first Expo showcased the achievements of the Industrial Revolution, with its symbol the Crystal Palace in place. And, more importantly, what has evolved from the technologies and products introduced there is still evident today. Examples include the precursor to the fax machine and the first voting machine, both of which have been vital to our communications later on and the functioning of our democracy even today.

The significance of these exhibitions has continued unabated, a trend that will persist into the Expo 2025. This time, our aim is to transform Osaka into a “Testing Ground for Future Society” aligning with this Expo's theme “Designing Future Society for Our Lives”. The centerpiece of the Expo will be the wooden “Grand Roof” designed to represent unity in diversity and will symbolise the Expo's commitment to life and sustainability.

Additionally, flying car transport services will introduce a new dimension of mobility. Moreover, a living heart model made from iPS cells, a groundbreaking advancement for future medical practice developed by a

Nobel Prize laureate Professor Shinya Yamanaka, will be showcased. The Expo 2025 will be an innovative display of all of the science, technology and culture that Japan will offer to the future society.

The International pavilions will also play a crucial role in fostering a more diversified future society. In this regard, I would like to congratulate the British Government and the UK Expo team on the recent launch of the UK pavilion. It will offer people a new experience from the UK as a glimpse into what the future may hold. As the bilateral partnership between Japan and the UK has become stronger and more dynamic, particularly with the Hiroshima Accord signed last year by Prime Ministers Fumio Kishida and Rishi Sunak, and the accession of the UK to the CPTPP, we are hopeful that more people from the UK, including political, business and academic leaders, will visit Osaka next year. The Expo 2025 provides a perfect platform to create new business, cultural, and scientific links between Japan and the UK. Through such events, we not only showcase how far we have come as a partnership, but also find new avenues for further development and fresh collaboration.

Even today, it is known in Japan that Osaka used to be called “Manchester of the East” due to its once flourished textile industries in the early 20th century. Although both Osaka and Manchester drastically changed their respective industrial and business backgrounds, regional ties between them have been significantly strengthened in recent years, particularly with the signing of a landmark MoU last December, which is accelerating their cooperation in such areas as the Expo, Net Zero, university partnerships, economic exchanges, and cultural collaborations. I hope that the Expo 2025 will also serve as an outstanding opportunity to further enhance business and investment between Japan and the UK, extending beyond major cities such as Osaka and Manchester, and reaching into the regional areas as well.

Today we are joined by numerous Japanese businesses that are investing in the UK, and with many British businesses eager to expand into Japan.

Especially, I would like to extend special thanks to two companies, ES Global and Vertical Aerospace, that have graciously supported this evening's reception by showcasing their innovative projects. ES Global, the firm behind the sustainably designed UK pavilion, has been conducting successful projects in Japan for the past 20 years. And we are also joined by Vertical Aerospace, the company that will be demonstrating its flying vehicles at the Expo and has also been collaborating with Japanese businesses. I hope that you all have a chance to look at their booths today to learn more about their works.

As the past couple of years have been hugely successful for the strengthening of the partnership between Japan and the UK, I hope that the Expo 2025 next year will catalyse further collaboration and investment in key sectors such as science and technology as well as cybersecurity. With the UK being the founder of the Great Exhibition and thus the country which introduced the concept to the whole world, I hope that the Expo next year will be the time to further build upon the legacy and foundation that the UK has established. I am confident that the Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan will undoubtedly be a huge success and I am looking forward to seeing what the future holds for our wider society as we innovate to create a more sustainable, flourishing, and empowered future.

Thank you very much.