

Speech by H.E. Ambassador Makoto Yamanaka
at the Reception to celebrate the Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan
on 9th December 2015

Excellencies,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you very much for coming to our national day reception to celebrate the 82nd birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. It is a great honor to have so many distinguished guests and friends with us on this auspicious occasion.

Poland and Japan continue to enjoy a productive bilateral ties this year. We are very proud of such growing ties of strategic partnership.

Japan's investments continue to flourish in Poland. Three hundred Japanese companies are now based in Poland and create forty thousand jobs. They thrive not only in automotive and electronics sectors but also in such new sectors as energy, environment, services, research and development. The Polish export to Japan increased by 56% in the last three years, while its import up 33%. The Japanese tourists to Poland are growing to a record high, more than 70 thousand forecasted this year.

This year also witnessed the active exchange of high-level visits between our two countries. President Komorowski visited Japan last February. The group of Sejm deputies was invited to Japan in April. This last October, Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado came to Poland. The Princess was graciously

received by President Duda and the First Lady. She enjoyed the visit to the International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw and to the Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology in Krakow. The visit was very heartwarming and reflected the close bilateral relations between Poland and Japan. Please, take a look at some photos displayed here in the entrance hall.

May I take this opportunity to mention two specific developments this year to further our bilateral ties. First, it is the Working Holiday Scheme. This scheme is to encourage young people of both countries to visit each other. Second, it is the long-awaited direct flight by the Polish Airlines, LOT, connecting Warsaw and Tokyo. This direct flight is ready for take-off next month and expected to further promote tourism, business and traffic between our two countries. For its flight promotion, the LOT cabin attendants are here this afternoon. But, don't worry; you don't have to fasten your seat belt!

In Poland, a new chapter has opened under President Duda and Prime Minister Szydło. In Japan, Prime Minister Abe has started the second stage of so-called "abonomics", building upon the achievements made over the last three years. It is tackling the demographic difficulties and sets a target of Japan's GDP up to 600 trillion yen (approx. 5 trillion dollars) in 2020. In this connection, the recent successful conclusion of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations is indeed good news. TPP will create the world largest free trade area and also provide a model for the FTA rule-making of the 21st century.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The international community is now faced with serious challenges: terrorism, refugees, climate change, and violations of international law. This is why we treasure all the more our strategic partnership with Poland as we share basic values such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It is the time for Poland, Japan and the other like-minded countries to strengthen their solidarity and collaboration. Poland will host next year the NATO Summit, and Japan will organize the G7 Summit meeting. The responsibility and cooperation between our two countries will be particularly important in the coming year and beyond.

Before I conclude, let me draw your attention to Sushi prepared today. Sushi rice was delivered from Akita, Japan for this occasion. Its quality and taste are guaranteed.

Once again thank you all for coming. Enjoy the rest of the afternoon!

Dziękuję bardzo.