

Speech by H. E. Mr. Hiroshi AZUMA,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Portugal,
on the occasion of 2nd Portugal-Japan Business Session

on 28th April 2016, CCIP, Lisbon

His Excellency Dr. Manuel Caldeira Cabral, Minister of Economy,
Dr. Miguel Frasquilho, Chairman of AICEP,
Dr. Freitas Ferraz, Ex-Ambassador of Portugal to Japan,
Dr. Fernando Pinto Bessa, President, Câmara de Comércio e Indústria Luso-Japonesa,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to attend the 2nd Portugal-Japan Business Session. I would like to extend my cordial appreciation to Dr. Bessa, President of the Câmara de Comércio e Indústria Luso-Japonesa, who took an initiative for this Business Session. I would also like to extend my gratitude to H.E. Dr. Manuel Caldeira Cabral, Dr. Miguel Frasquilho, Dr. Freitas Ferraz and all attendants who share this important moment.

As you may know, it was Portuguese who got Japan first from Europe. In 1543, about 470 years ago, three Portuguese arrived in the small island named Tanegashima. Since then European culture and civilization such as firearms, “Espingarda”, had been introduced to Japan. There are many Portuguese words adopted in Japanese such as Pão (Bread), Botão (Button), Carta (Letter) etc. And we feel so close to Portugal as we normally learn about Portugal at elementary and junior high schools.

In this friendly relationship between Japan and Portugal, which has continued for more than 470 years, the Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Sinzo Abe, made the very first official visit to Portugal as an incumbent Japanese Prime Minister in May 2014, and the then Prime Minister of Republic of Portugal, H.E. Dr. Passos Coelho, made his visit to Japan last March. Thanks to mutual visits of our leaders, the bilateral relations of our countries is reaching a “new dimension” in the political, economic, cultural and all the other fields.

In the context of enhancing the bilateral relations, the promotion of trade and investment between our countries was strongly emphasized in the Joint Communiqué, which was published during the visit of Prime Minister Abe in May 2014.

Here in Portugal, a new government under the Prime Minister of Republic of Portugal, H.E. Dr. Antonio Costa, was established last November and H.E. Dr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa assumed the presidency last March. I would like to continue to cooperate with the new Government on the promotion of trade and investment.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The digital technology field which is the subject of this Business Session makes a significant contribution to the economic growth of both countries and the realization of our prosperous life. The Government of Japan produced “Declaration to be the World’s Most Advanced IT Nation”. In this declaration, the government positioned IT as a pillar of its future-strategy and an engine of economic growth. We are working positively to establish and promote the IT infrastructure, and the progress is being made in its foundation.

On the other hand, many Japanese enterprises related to digital technology have expanded its business to Portugal. As for recent topics, EPSON inaugurated their showroom “EPSON Experience” in Oeiras last November, and Fujitsu will establish the second call centre in Braga next month. They are expected to contribute to the local economy through the job creation. Besides, Kagome (HIT) and NEC have been developing leading-edge technologies for cultivation of tomatoes using Big Data, and the increase of yields and exports of tomato products are expected.

In July 2014, Japan was granted the observer status of CPLP at the CPLP-Summit which was held at Dili, East Timor. Now we can say that Japan and Portugal can share a platform which will expand our business in growing CPLP countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia. We should take into account that digital technology provide an opportunity of cooperation between Japan and Portugal for CPLP countries.

I expect that the Business Session will contribute further for the promotion of

trade and investment between our two countries. Our Embassy is going to cooperate closely with related authorities including Câmara de Comércio e Indústria Luso-Japonesa.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Câmara de Comércio e Indústria Luso-Japonesa staff and all of you to make this Business Session possible.

Thank you very much. Muito Obrigado.