

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

on 9th May 2016, Lisbon

Dr. Miguel Botelho de Sousa, Board Member, The Portuguese Platform for Defence Industries (idD),

Dr. Tomoaki Sano, Senior Managing Director, The Nikkan Kogyo Shimbun,

Dr. Koichiro Nakajima, COO & Director, Nikkan Kogyo Global Business Support,
Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to attend the 1st Portugal-Japan Business Exchange Program after the Portuguese Platform for Defense Industries (idD) and the Nikkan Kogyo Shimbun Group (NKG) signed a protocol to promote business exchange between Portugal and Japan last November. I would like to extend my cordial appreciation to idD and NKG which took an initiative for this Program. I would also like to extend my gratitude to 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 relation 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 two 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,

Each company has its own criteria when they decide to start trade or foreign investment. Some companies may attach value on advanced technologies of their partners and governmental financial incentive for R&D. Others may emphasize market gains, transportation conveniences, and low-cost and high quality labors. In this sense, I think this program offers a really good opportunity for Japanese companies to find attractive Portuguese companies for their partner.

I understand this program is carefully prepared by idD and NKG to develop trade and investment in various sectors. I would like to expect a frank and constructive discussion that way lead us toward promotion of economic exchange between Japan and Portugal.

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. I hope that the cooperation between Japanese and Portuguese companies will be extended in CPLP countries.

I hope this program will further contribute for the promotion of trade and investment between our two countries. The Embassy is also willing to cooperate closely with relevant authorities.

Last but not least, I would like to thank idD, NKG and all of you to make this program possible.

Thank you very much. Muito Obrigado.