

Remarks of HE Ambassador Jota Yamamoto in the reception to celebrate the HME birthday

Excellencies, Honorables and Distinguished Guests,

Despite this windy wintry weather and harsh slush condition, I am able to have your very kind attendance. Thank you very much indeed for joining us today.

This year 2017 has been a remarkable year for many people and diplomats in Finland, and how to celebrate Suomi 100 has been our main agenda. Despite some irony of the recent edition of Helsingin Sanomat, it seems that we have somehow managed the necessary celebrations with heartfelt congratulations.

Cherry blossom tree is one example of celebration gifts from Japan. We have already planted some of those in Roihuvuori park, and we will soon plant another saplings near the Parliament. Cherry blossom tree is, in my country, the very icon to remind us of the birth, reproduction, eternity and happiness of life.

Another example is for His Majesty the Emperor of Japan to have conferred upon 4 persons this year, the Order of the Rising Sun, the decoration to commend their constant and long-standing dedication for friendship between the two countries.

My Prime Minister's visit to Helsinki in July surely added further colors to celebration and partnership between the two countries.

Distinguished Guests,

The life is sometimes tricky, and the fate is sometimes mischievous. Even in this celebrated year, and even in this most stable country, we have sometimes witnessed a tragedy. In Turku, a number of innocent people fell a victim to impermissible action, and in Raseborg, a very unfortunate accident deprived young soldiers of their life. We share the sorrow of the bereft families and friends, and would like to extend the sincere condolences to them.

Excellencies, Honorables and Distinguished Guests,

On December 23, in one month time from today, His Majesty the Emperor of Japan will become 84 years old. His Majesty is very active, and visiting many places nowadays, visiting very small remote islands on one day, and on another day visiting damaged areas suffering from natural disasters. His Majesty keeps close eyes upon people to encourage people.

In 2019, His Majesty will be to abdicate and retire from the throne. I believe, however, that the wishes of His Majesty the Emperor, and of Her Majesty the Empress, will remain unchanged: the wishes for happiness to embrace people, the wishes for peace to embrace nations.

I would like to thank you all for your very kind heartwarming attendance today, which made me possible to celebrate His Majesty's birthday together with you. May happiness embrace us. Kippis, cheers, kampai, and paljon kiitoksia, thank you very much, domo arigatou.