Excellencies, Honorables and Distinguished Guests,

I would like to thank you all to join this occasion to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. His Majesty will be 85 on the upcoming 23rd of December.

On April 30th next year, His Majesty the Emperor will abdicate, and on May 1st, His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince will be enthroned. Today is the last occasion for me to honor the birthday of the current Emperor. Your kind attendance is all the more appreciated.

Looking back to His era of nearly 30 years, His Majesty gave us the message last year. I quote: “during these years, I have spent my days together with the people of Japan, sharing much of the joys as well as the sorrows that have happened in our country. I have considered that the first and foremost duty of the Emperor is to pray for peace and happiness of all the people. At the same time, I also believe that in some cases it is essential to stand by the people, listen to their voices, and be close to them in their thoughts.” Unquote.

In 2011, a big earthquake affected many places in Japan, Tohoku area in particular. This year, a series of natural disasters affected many other places as well, Nishi-Nihon, Kansai & Hokkaido in particular. Each time, Their Majesties the Emperor & Empress visited such places to see the people, listen to the people, and stand by the people. Their Majesties are always with the people.

These areas have recovered swiftly by now with the solidarity among people and thanks to enormous support extended by Finland and many other nations. As you see from roll-ups in the next room & downstairs, now Tohoku is safe, food and sake from Tohoku is safe.

The same applies to other areas. Nishi-Nihon is safe, Kansai is safe, Hokkaido is safe, and they are now able to accommodate active tourism & business activities. The strength & courtesy of Japan will be waiting for your visit to Japan.

Distinguished Guests,

It is my privilege to propose toast on this last occasion to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty the current Emperor. Long remembering His Majesty’s always heartwarming eyes upon people, wishing for the success of many projects in the upcoming next year of Japani-Suomi 100, as today is also the national day of Albania, thus exchanging mutual congratulations, praying for your health & happiness, congratulating Legend Tommi Mäkinen and his Toyota team for winning the World Rally Championship this year, and appreciating your most precious attendance, let us toast. Kampai.