

**Remarks by Ambassador Takashi Murata
at the MUJI Flagship Store Pre-Opening Celebration
on 7 November 2019**

Distinguished guests,
ladies and gentlemen.

I am highly delighted and honored to join you in celebrating one fantastic example of the great relationship that Japan and Finland enjoy today – the opening of this MUJI Flagship store.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude, respect and admiration to all of those concerned represented by MUJI executives present here and Mayor Vapaavuori for their dedication and hard work in bringing MUJI to Finland.

Back in 2017, Chairman Kanai gave a keynote speech at Habitare, a large-scale design fair, and expressed his ambition to open the world's most beautiful MUJI store in Helsinki as he was impressed by a lot of commonalities between Japan and Finland such as a simple design represented by Alvar Aalto by whom he was deeply

impressed. I also heard at first he had hoped to open the new store in the woods.

Though not in the woods, today we can see his long-cherished dream come true. So many recent media coverages on this matter and people gathering here today well illustrate how many Finnish people have been waiting for this new store to open.

Today's ceremony is also very significant in light of the 100th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Finland this year. The cornerstone of the friendly relations between both countries over the past hundred years lies in human-to-human connections that have been cherished in various fields based on the commonalities of our two countries.

The opening of new MUJI store today not only reflects rapidly growing bilateral business relations but also symbolizes the commonalities of our two countries as a taste for a design which is simple, functional and harmonious with nature is shared by both countries and it is also the philosophy of MUJI.

I am confident that Finnish people can easily find out what the affinities between both countries are like when they visit this brand-new store and hope this new store will bring our human relations even closer by giving momentum to new business opportunities by many other Japanese companies.

I conclude my remarks by wishing for this new MUJI store to be loved by many people and prosper as a symbol of friendly relations between Japan and Finland.

Thank you. Kiitos paljon.

(End)