

**Remarks by Ambassador Murata  
at the Japan - Finland Gateway for Open Innovation Meetup  
on 20 November 2019**

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak. I am delighted to see so many of you taking time to join us. I would also like to thank JETRO for organizing this great event and our partners, Business Finland and Finland-Japan Chamber of Commerce for working together.

First, allow me to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations for the Finnish National Football team's historic victory last Friday and getting qualification for the European Championship 2020. I am excited to see further successes in the next summer. Congratulations!

As you may know, this year marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Finland. Along with the memorial timing of our bilateral relations, we have seen many encouraging developments for Finland-Japan business recently.

Just a couple of weeks ago, the Europe's largest MUJI flagship store newly opened in Kamppi with great excitement among both Finnish media and consumers. The enthusiastic warm welcome of the new Muji store in Finland shows our two countries share values on simple design and sustainability.

Back in February, Business Finland and JETRO signed an agreement to promote further international business collaboration. And not to mention, of course, the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement also entered into force in February.

I would like to emphasize these solid developments have been advanced by the exceptionally good flight connections between Finland and Japan with over 40 direct flights per week during summer. These connections are also the crucial gateways to markets in Asia and Europe.

In addition to these favorable business conditions, today we have also strong supports. We can enjoy the practical advice from the Nordic Ninja, a new venture capital fund established by JBIC IG Partners and BaltCap January this year. We can also see locally unique business opportunities from representatives from Japanese local governments : Kanagawa, Mie

and Fukuoka prefectures as well as the cities Yokohama, Osaka and Kobe. These cities and Helsinki are closely connected with each other by our direct flights.

I sincerely hope that through this event, more and more Japanese and Finnish companies will find business partners, widen and strengthen their business connections as we head into the new century of Japan-Finland relations.

Thank you.