

**Remarks by H.E. Takashi Murata,
Ambassador of Japan to Finland,
“The 10th anniversary ceremony for the JSPS Alumni
Club in Finland” on 12 December**

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I sincerely congratulate on the opening of “the 10th anniversary ceremony for the JSPS Alumni Club in Finland (ACF)” today. I would also like to express my deep appreciation for the efforts to organize this event made by ACF, Hokkaido University Europe Office in Helsinki, JSPS Stockholm Office and the Academy of Finland.

This year marks the 10th anniversary for ACF, and also the milestone to celebrate the centenary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Japan and Finland.

I suppose the significance of the 100th anniversary of our diplomatic relations lies in not only looking back the past bilateral relationships cherished in various fields, but also reconfirming the roles we, the present generation, have taken

over. That is, to develop the wisdom and personal connections inherited from our ancestors, and successfully hand them over to the next generation.

The centenary significance becomes all the more important when our two countries address not only the common issues such as decreasing birthrate and aging population, and depopulated local areas, but also global ones like climate change, immigrants, and sustainable development. This is because the succession of both our countries' wisdom and personal connections accumulated for a long time plays an instrumental role in tackling these evolving challenges with the times.

As a matter of course, this power of succession that our bilateral solid relationship of trust brings forth has not been developed by efforts at government-level only. In fact, activities at the grassroots-level represented by ACF have been proving great supports.

Since its foundation in 2009, ACF has greatly contributed to promoting the academic exchanges of both countries' researchers

and joint researches by holding all sorts of academic seminars, participating in JSPS BRIDGE Fellowship Program. I learned that this Program gives the researchers who came back to Finland after studying in Japan based on the JSPS International Exchange Program the opportunities to revisit and study again in Japan. Through these activities, the wisdom and the experience of both countries' researchers have been succeeded from generation to generation, while a wide range of their human networks have also been developed.

I sincerely hope ACF will develop even more and our bilateral academic exchanges will be further promoted. I pray the wisdom, the experience and personal connections accumulated by our ancestors will grow further, and thereby our two countries will overcome common challenges by utilizing these valuable assets to enjoy our long-lasting development toward the new era.