

**Remarks at exchanging diplomatic notes of the “Agreement  
between Japan and the Republic of Finland on Social Security”  
on 25.11.2021.**

Minister Ville Skinnari,  
Ambassador Pekka Orpana,  
Ms. Essi Rentola, Director of the Unit for Planning and  
International Social Security of the Ministry of Social Affairs and  
Health,  
All participants from Ministry of Social Affairs and Health,  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Finnish Centre for Pensions.

I am truly honored to be here on this memorial occasion of  
exchanging diplomatic notes of the “Agreement between Japan  
and the Republic of Finland on Social Security” for its entry into  
force.

Firstly, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation and  
sincere respects to all the members present here today and your  
teams for your long-time dedication since the first negotiation took  
place nine years ago, to make this landmark agreement achieved.

Secondly, I must show my deepest gratitude from bottom of  
my heart that I am able to exchange the notes with Minister Ville  
Skinnari, who is a true friend to me and Japan. Also, I would like  
to appreciate to the members of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs  
for coordinating this occasion as well as having virtual presence of  
Ambassador Orpana which is certainly my pleasure.

I believe that Japan and Finland could be business base  
camps for each other to serve as hubs in both Asia and Europe.  
Finland has kept attracting many Japanese companies as a  
forefront in the business of solving social issues such as global  
warming and aging society with its innovations.

This long-awaited agreement will reduce financial burden of  
social security for employers and employees in both countries,

therefore its entering into force has been eagerly hoped-for. I firmly believe that economic interaction would be revitalized thereby with this agreement, which will strengthen and enhance bilateral friendly ties after the pandemic.

The Embassy of Japan is considering to mark the next year as “Finnish-Japanese Friendship Year 2022” in light of the 230<sup>th</sup> anniversary of return-home of Daikokuya, Japanese shipwrecked sailor, with support by Finnish natural scientist Erik Laxman based on their friendship, and we are planning various activities to give a boost to interaction of two countries. Furthermore, in 2025, Japan is going to host Osaka Kansai Expo, and I wish to work on deepening bilateral relations under close cooperation with you.

In a world of uncertainty, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of the profound bilateral relations we have developed. I would like to conclude my remarks by wishing further expansion of our collaborative partnership together with you.

(end)