

Closing remarks@ Investment Promotion Seminar, 1 May London

I would like to thank all of you for your participation in today's seminar. Through messages from Prime Minister Abe, our Vice-Minister, and 4 heads of local governments, I am sure it is clear to everyone here that Japan is changing into a more open country to attract foreign direct investment. I also appreciate Ambassador David Warren and Mr. Steve Crane for your insightful remarks.

Many global companies operating in Japan have long praised Japan for its well-developed infrastructure, social safety and advanced technology. Last week, we set up a ministerial council for the promotion of inward FDI. This council functions as the headquarter for promoting regulatory and systems reform to further improve the investment environment in Japan as well as "invest Japan activities" by JETRO and Japanese embassies overseas.

As you heard today, local governments across Japan are very eager for foreign companies to expand business to their regions, even compete with each other. Beginning with this seminar, we will help you in setting up business there in cooperation with these local governments.

Also, Japan has many vigorous small and medium-sized enterprises not only in Tokyo but also in the regions. They are developing high value-added products and promoting them all over the world. Some of them are developing their business through tie-ups with overseas companies. Given these circumstances, we have a business matching program linking these small and medium-sized enterprises with companies from abroad.

Mutual understanding is important when making the decision of whether to invest. Next we have a networking reception. I believe it will provide you with fruitful opportunities to communicate with local government leaders in Japan and to discover what you can expect in their hometowns. And to ensure smooth communication, we have also prepared some Japanese sake. Please relax and enjoy a little bit of Japanese hospitality, or what we call "omotenashi".

Finally, I would like to mention that JETRO is now strengthening its support for non-Japanese companies looking to do business with Japan. In particular, JETRO London, headed by Mr. Arima, is active to invite you to the Japanese market. "Talk to JETRO first". Feel free to contact JETRO London with any questions and make full use its support services.

When you go home today, I hope you leave excited about the prospects that Japan has to offer. "Invest in Japan!" Thank you so much indeed.