

H.E. Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam,

H.E. Mr. Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Minister of Foreign Affairs

H.E. Mr. Vuong Dinh Hue, Secretary of Hanoi Party Committee,

H.E. Mr. Nguyen Chi Dung, Minister of Planning and Investment,

H.E. Mr. Nguyen Duc Chung, Chairman of Hanoi People's Committee,

Representatives from the Party, various ministries, research institutes, and business communities in Vietnam,

Esteemed colleagues of the diplomatic corps,

Ladies and gentlemen,

- On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express my deep gratitude to all those who contributed to organizing this conference, in particular, Hanoi City.

- I arrived at Hanoi City on the 12th of April to assume the duty as Ambassador of Japan to Vietnam, despite the strict immigration control which was still tightly maintained at that time. I very much appreciate the kind understanding and assistance extended to me by the government of Vietnam that has enabled me to start my diplomatic duty promptly.

- 10 years ago, I visited Vietnam for the first time as ambassador of Japan to ASEAN, and attended a number of ASEAN meetings chaired by Vietnam. It left to me a deep and respectful impression on Vietnam. Ever since, I have visited Vietnam many times with various capacities, including a visit as an entourage to Prime Minister Abe.

- During the past 10 years, Vietnam has achieved a lot of remarkable progress including rapid economic growth and higher diplomatic profiles like the membership of the UN Security Council and the ASEAN presidency of this year.

The comprehensive strategic partnership between Japan and Vietnam has also fast deepened and expanded during the past decade. Thus, it is a great honor for me to be appointed as Ambassador of Japan to Vietnam at this historic

junction.

- Hanoi city, the host town of today's conference, is a critical hub for the partnership between Japan and Vietnam, where about 8,000 Japanese people reside and over 750 companies are registered with the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

A large number of well-known Japanese companies are actively doing business here, including the recent opening of shops by AEON MALL and UNIQLO. Thus, Japan is the No.1 investor for the City.

I am sure that today's conference will further encourage Japanese companies to invest in Hanoi City.

- Currently, the world is facing a serious crisis caused by the spread of COVID-19 infection. However, in Vietnam, only about 350 cases of Covid-19 have been reported, and no one has died from it. This is really admirable.

According to the recent surveys, the Vietnamese economy is recovering from the damage of the pandemic much quicker than other economies of the region. On top of it, the current pandemic crisis is accelerating diversification of the regional

and global supply chain, and a lot of global investors, including Japanese firms, take keen interest in Vietnam as a destination of their post pandemic investment.

- In light of the above, it may be arguable that the current pandemic is a global disaster, yet it may rather give Vietnam a historic opportunity to enhance her economic profile in the global community. Japan, as the closest friend of Vietnam, encourages Vietnam to take this precious opportunity. In this context, I would like to present four points for Vietnam's even quicker recovery from the crisis and further economic development.

- First, in order to restore economic activities quickly, it is imperative to encourage essential personnel of foreign companies to come back to Vietnam as soon as possible. In this respect, I am happy to report to the conference the good progress between Japan and Vietnam, in particular, the arrival of about 440 Japanese business personnel at the Van Don airport this weekend. Japan is ready to further accelerate the entry by Japanese business personnel into Vietnam based on the measures that were announced last week by both countries.

- Second, a package of robust measures to stimulate the Vietnamese economy need be promptly introduced and implemented, by mobilizing public funding. Such package should be a Vietnamese version of the ‘New Deal Policy’. Accelerating the implementation of the existing infrastructure projects, like the Metro projects in Hanoi City and Ho Chi Minh City as well as the North-South High Way projects, will have the immediate effect for restoring the economy. Japan is ready to consider providing ODA assistance for this purpose.

- Third, it is essential to further enhance fair and transparent conditions for foreign direct investment into Vietnam, particularly by the export promotion industry. In this context, I celebrate the adoption of the PPP law in the latest session of the National Assembly, while hoping that the law will be implemented taking account of genuine concerns of the foreign investors. Fair and transparent investment conditions will certainly help Vietnam to raise her credit ratings from BB (double B) to the investment-grade BBB (triple B), and thereby will make it much easier for Vietnam to attract investments from around the world.

- Fourth, I would like to introduce to the conference the two major initiatives being taken by Japanese authorities. One is about 2.3 billion dollar package to facilitate the diversification of the regional and global supply chains by Japanese firms, which is introduced by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan. The other is the Covid-19 response financial package introduced by JBIC to help Japanese firms continue and strengthen high quality investments into Vietnam.

- In closing, I once again express my sincere thanks to the organizer of the conference, and emphasize my ardent hope that today's conference "Hanoi 2020 –Investment and Development Cooperation" will become a vital milestone for Vietnam to take the historic opportunity that is now appearing in her front.

Thank you very much