

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It is our honor to be here at the prestigious campus of Moscow State University, today. Visiting the capital of one of the most notable countries in the world is a sheer excitement for us all.

The international society has dramatically changed compared to what it was in the last century. Globalization has made the world close connected that even domestic issues give tremendous influence to the outside world. We all face common problems and the only way to overcome them is to cooperate as one. The importance of multi-national cooperation is being greatly recognized.

In such acts as deterring terrorism and preventing the diffusion of nuclear weapons, Russia has been playing an important role in the world. With its remarkable economic growth of over 5% each year, Russia also has the potentiality in the field of business and economics.

As the venue for the G8 summit, Russia has shown its power as one of the leading countries in the world today. Offering the occasion for discussing current global affairs, I believe that Russia succeeded in hosting the summit for the first time. During the summit, timely issues such as nuclear matters regarding North Korea and Iran were featured. Russia is expected to play an important role in both of these vital issues. I believe that the initiative that Japan took in incorporating the North Korea issue into the official statement is worth high evaluation. Stabilization of energy resources was one of the other important topics of the Saint Petersburg Summit. A consensus was made that diversification of energy sources is indispensable. The necessity of promoting the use of clear energy, such as nuclear energy, was verified. There is no need to mention that strict regulation is needed to prevent the transformation into military use. Since Japan relies on the import for the sufficient supply of energy, we hail this trend of global energy security. Between Russia and the other 7 countries, there are differences in political systems and sense of value. Yet, I believe that we would be able to conquer this challenge in order to accomplish the mission to cope with the global issues.

Now, let me take a quick review of the bi-lateral relationship between Japan and Russia. The year 2005 was celebrated as the 150th anniversary of our relationship. It was in 1854 that Admiral Puchatin called on the port of Shimoda. In the following year, the Tokugawa Shogunate concluded the Japan-Russia Treaty of Commerce, Navigation and Demilitation, which is known as the beginning of the diplomatic relationship between the two countries. Now that we have come to the dawn of the new age, it is essential to further promote mutual understanding that is suitable for the global economies of the 21st century.

In the recent years, Japan has been eager to develop our bilateral relationship into a more comprehensive one. In 2003, Japan-Russia Action Plan was adopted to advance cooperation in various fields. The territory issue, which is the major barriers between the two, must be settled in the near future. The conclusion of the Peace Treaty is our most immediate aim. As inferred in the Action Plan, I think that the interaction within non-political areas would also be needed to proceed the present situation.

It is important to make a reference to the fact that economic cooperation has dramatically progressed in the past few years. The mutual trade rate has increased by nearly 30%. Particularly, there is high potentiality for Japan-Russia cooperation in the realm of energy. For the stable supply of oil and gas, Japan relies on import from overseas. With the rise of oil prices and the unsettled conditions in the Middle East, the securement of diversified energy resources is indispensable. Taking in the fact that Russia is abundant of natural resources, we expect to reach the acquisition of the status as one of the best trade partners. Russia's main import from Japan is machinery. An increase of trade in the car industry can be observed. The number of members of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Moscow has nearly tripled in the last few years. To maintain economical development and to handle environmental problems in Russia, high technology is essential. It would be

beneficial if the technology that Japan owns would be offered to Russia. There is no need to say that invigorating trade would allow us to recognize mutual interdependence.

Yet, there is still room for improvement. Widening trade items is something we should consider of. In order to do so we must rectify the trade environment. Legal indemnification is essential in promoting business chances. From this viewpoint, we would like to support Russia to join the WTO in the near future.

With nearly 50% of trade in East Asia as inter-regional, the countries have been putting much effort in integrating together as one community. Indeed, the first East Asia Summit was held in December 2005. Although we have found many difficulties in achieving this goal in such a diverse region, much progress have been made over the years. Welcoming some members from the sub regions, Japan has been taking a lead in opening the doors to make this community outward looking.

With its geographical factor, Russia is the intermediary between the East and the West. I believe that the role Russia plays in the international society, and especially in East Asia, is becoming considerably large. Russia is strengthening its relationship with not only the European countries but also with the Asians. This can be seen from the diplomatic policies that Russia has been proclaiming through the annual address.

Japan and Russia are neighboring countries sharing many interests. I believe that we should strengthen our, both bi-laterally and also in multi-lateral occasions.

It is a matter of fact that Russia is a powerful country that has a great influence in the world. Moreover, we locate close together. However, at least until I joined this forum, Russia seemed to be far away from us. Did any of you experience the same feeling as I did? This is probably because of the weak interchange between the people of the two countries.

In order to overcome this reality, there is no need to mention that governmental cooperation is necessary. Yet, at the same time, economical and cultural exchange is important. I have heard that today Japanese culture is popular in Russia. From literature to food, fashion and music, Japan seemed to have attained a part in a Russian life. This year, Russian Cultural Festival 2006 is held in Japan. This will be a great chance to introduce Russian culture into Japan. Interest among citizens of both countries shall be grown though these kinds of events. The interchange between the young leaders of both countries is indispensable to frame rapport.

I believe that one of the intentions to hold this Japan-Russia Students Forum is to accelerate mutual understanding. These efforts will be highly appreciated for a better future.

The student conference would give us a chance to realize the difference of the perspectives that we have. The 5 topics to discuss on are: Security issues in North East Asia, Environment & Energy, Japan-Russia Cooperation in the Framework of G8, Art and Cross-cultural Communication. In the realm of security, seeking for a peaceful solution to the territorial issue is our utmost challenge. Negotiations have been continued over the years, with various political statements made by the officials of both state. The conclusion of this dispute would not only advance our bi-lateral relations but also contribute to the peace and stability in North East Asia. Settling the unstable situation in the Korean peninsula is another issue where Japan-Russia cooperation is needed and also has shown great outcomes. In the economic field, solving environmental problems as well as encouraging trade and investment is vital. Siberian region, east of the Ural Mountains, account for 3/4 of the land of Russia. This region is abundant of natural resources. However, the development is still incomplete. Japan is eager to cooperate in undertaking these projects. I am sure that many of the workshops would discuss on the possibility of economical cooperation and what we need to do in order to promote it. As the two countries have not concluded the peace treaty yet, much of our partnership has been cultivated through multi-lateral framework. The G8 summit is one of the many frameworks in which we have shown great cooperation. The United Nations, ASEAN Regional Forum(ARF) and

the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation(APEC) are some other examples of Japan-Russia cooperation in the international society. In areas such as anti-terrorism and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, we have been able to bring significant outcomes. Further attempt would be appreciated in various fields. Beside from these political and economic factors which I have just mentioned above, historical and cultural aspects of the two countries' relationship would also be discussed. Taking a look back in history, we would find that there has been a deep connection for over long years. History teaches us many lessons that we can apply to the present situations. I truly hope that the student conference would allow us to build a future oriented relationship. Also, sharing the excitement of music and sports would surely be an intensive for concord.

On behalf of all the participants of this Japan-Russia Students Forum, I would like to express my warmest appreciation to the Government of Russia, Moscow city and the Moscow State University for offering us the opportunity to take part in this meaningful conference.

I am sure that the 5 days here in Russia would be massive. We would like to make the most out of this forum. I strongly hope that the friendship we build today would lead to a good governmental relationship between the two countries in the near future. As we endeavor to deepen mutual understanding, let us look forward to further success and prosperity.

Thank you.