

RUBAN Mariia

Keynote speeches “Cooperation of Japan and Russia in new realities”

Good afternoon dear colleagues from Japan and good morning dear participants from Russia.

I am Mariia Ruban, 4th-year student of the Sakhalin State University, where I specialize in the education of foreign languages (Japanese and English).

Before we get started, I would like to thank MIREA, Russian Technological University, as a Coordinating Bureau of Russian – Japanese youth exchanges with the support of the Russian Ministry of Education and Science as well as The Japanese-Russian Youth Exchange Center with the support of Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for organizing this forum.

The history of the Russian-Japanese Youth Exchange can be traced to twenty years ago when the program was launched in 1999.

I suppose that this year our online exchange format of the forum establishes a new story. However, despite all the changes, it is particularly important to focus on the initial ideas of the Agreement between the Governments of our countries and continue further international cooperation between Russian and Japanese Youth.

It gives me great pleasure to open the Russian-Japanese Youth Forum and focus on Cooperation under New Circumstances.

The first item on the agenda that I would like to draw attention to is the general explanation of the term ‘exchange program’ that usually means an arrangement in which people from all over the world visit each other's country. It is a unique opportunity to discuss important topics, explore cultural heritage and traditions. Besides, it is also the possibility for young people to develop their communication and some sport or creativity skills, broaden their horizon, experience other cultures, etc.

It seems that after almost all countries’ borders were closed, further development of international relationships appears to be difficult.

To tell the truth, I also used to think in such a way, when my education exchange program in Japan was cancelled this spring. It is still complicated to arrange international educational programs as it was traditionally, but it does not mean that all international relations and cooperation will be mislaid.

We know that ‘youth exchange’ is not just about going to another country. A real added value of the intercultural exchange is people that take part in the program itself and these people are changing constantly. It is a unique opportunity to grow and widen your knowledge of a specific area of interest. Therefore, ‘youth exchange’ is about people and its communication that is simply the act of transferring information from one place and person or a group to another.

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Fortunately, we live in the 21st century, so the competence associated with the use of new technologies is already something for granted among young people. Our modern computer technologies allow us to have a conversation with anyone from all over the world. Different chats and zoom meetings have managed to bring people closer to each other. Just imagine, last year it took me 3 hours to get from my region to Tokyo to participate in Russian-Japanese Youth Forum in Matsumoto, colleagues from Moscow had even longer flight. This year it takes me 5 minutes to turn on the computer and start participating in the program.

Analyzing my participation in different online and offline forums, as well as my experience of learning the Japanese language both on the exchange program and by using computer technology during my stay at home, I discovered new ideas and opportunities for online interaction, which might be also used in the working sections of the forum.

For example, one of the proposals for the contribution of youth in relations development between towns and cities is to create a virtual platform for supporting a dialogue between young people of Japan and Russia. Youth will get a chance to join this platform and take part in their area of interest or just communicate with other young people with similar ideas or even making collaborative projects.

Students of middle or high school can make a virtual performance, where songs and poems will be related to the culture of both countries. It is also possible to arrange some sort of online tours. Undoubtedly, there are so many videos on the Internet about Russia and Japan, but it would be very valuable and lively if these live broadcasts were done not by professional journalists or actors, but by youth. It would be very interesting if those online tours are made about some small towns, which would never be shown in a professional TV show. To be honest, such live broadcasts usually conducted about metropolitan areas. Therefore, residents of small twin-cities know next to nothing about each other's life.

As for the section Russian-Japanese cooperation in the sports sphere, it is also possible to organize some kind of 'online demonstration performances'. For example, children and students, who are keen on karate or judo, can digitally present their skills and abilities. Young coaches can also have a seminar to exchange views and experience in teaching a particular sport.

However, time is limited I have mentioned only a small part of the areas of cooperation between our two counties at the youth level. Youth is like a perpetual motion machine of the future. Moreover, young people are like agents of social changes, economic development and technological innovation. I am confident that youth cooperation aims to improve the further solution of global political affairs and issues.

I am convinced every effort should be made to support the development of online interaction during these modern terms. Currently, the borders of human resource are becoming

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more expanded. We are discovering creative solutions with the implementation of modern technologies, which Japan is so progressive in. Therefore, we are ready to get new knowledge from our closest neighbors and share our own experience.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the primary responsibility for the development of Russian-Japanese youth exchanges rests squarely on our shoulders. I hope that all together we will gain new perspectives, form effective partnerships and develop innovative solutions to the many challenges we are facing. I wish all the participants a very productive dialogue, as well as creative ideas for the implementation of further international cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.