

Remarks
Presented by NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth
On the occasion of the 2023 ITOCHU Corporate Year-End Function
Tuesday December 12, 2023

Mr Norman Matsuzawa, GM Perth, ITOCHU Minerals & Energy of Australia,

Mr Brandon Craig, Asset President Western Australia Iron Ore, BHP,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to start by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting here, the Watjack people of Noongar Nation and pay my respect to elders past, present and emerging.

Thank you for inviting us to the year-end function of ITOCHU Australia.

It has been over one year now after I arrived here and welcomed Prime Minister Kishida to Perth. Since then, a series of positive developments unfolded between Japan and Western Australia, including the resumption of ANA Perth Narita direct flight after three and a half years of suspension due to the pandemic. The direct flight has already brought Japan closer to WA, as we are witnessing a number of delegations from Japan pouring into Perth.

Premier and Deputy Premier became the first passengers of the direct flight to visit Japan and Japan WA relationship was strengthened through the two visits of WA Premiers within one year, first by former-Premier Mark McGowan in January and by Premier Roger Cook at the end of October.

After the visit of Premier Cook to Japan, the Premier made a visionary pronouncement at the WA Energy Transition Summit on 17th November, of the commitment by the state government in contributing to energy transition of Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia, and inviting investment to develop energy transition industry and decarbonization solutions in WA. The Premier continues and made an announcement today of streamlining environment approval system, after a sharp review in October.

Last month, there was also the milestone 60th Australia Japan Business Co-operation Committee Joint Conference held in Melbourne, which attracted the largest ever attendance of over 700 business delegates including Mr Mike Henry, CEO of BHP, and Matsuzawa san among others.

The conference reminded us that Japan-Australia partnership was a rare success of the world. Just 12 years after the World War II, forward thinking politicians from Western Australia such as Sir Charles Court and businesspeople joined forces with Japan, looking

for ways and means to unlock the potential of our two countries, signing a commerce agreement in 1957. Both countries mutually understood their respective needs at the time, and Japan became a founding partner of the iron ore industry and later the LNG industry, all centered in Western Australia. The partnership led to the remarkable economic development of both Japan and Australia and contributed to the world economy in a massive scale. It is a rare success model of partnership even in the global history.

For a long time, Japan has continued to be within the top three in terms of investment and trade with Australia, and today, 53 % of Japan's imported iron ore, 35% of its LNG, 15% of its wheat are from Western Australia.

Japan and Australia share principles of peace, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, and most notably chaired the G7 and Quad meetings respectively earlier this year.

And this relationship based on mutual trust is strongly supported by robust people-to-people bonds that were built over the years. The human bonds are the most important asset between Japan and WA.

In supporting exchange, we are glad to note the establishment of the Japan Center in Curtin University in the New Year, as well as the Japan Education and Culture Center of WA at the former Hyogo Center early next year. Furthermore, the Perth Japan Festival, which attracted 16,000 people in March this year, will have their milestone 10th Japan Festival on 23rd of March next year, again at Supreme Court Gardens on an even bigger scale. Japan and Western Australia host the Asia Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum in Perth, the biggest Space Agency meeting in the region in November.

Full of excitement awaits in 2024. Thank you to you all sincerely for playing your role in strengthening Japan-WA relations this year.

Lastly, I wish to congratulate ITOCHU for announcing today a strategic capital business alliance with UON Pty Ltd, an Australian decarbonization energy solution-provider to seek advanced off grid low carbon energy projects.

I wish you all Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2024.

End