

Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Sonoura Opening Remarks for “Japan Week”

I am very honored to be here with all of you on this special evening. The first thing I would like to mention, is that our bilateral relations will deepen not only through the actions of governments and politicians, rather, those relations depend on the Israeli and Japanese citizens gathered here this evening.

Just as we have enjoyed a beautiful music performance, this “Jerusalem Japan Week” provides you an opportunity to realize a variety of aspects of Japanese culture. From the traditional, the tea ceremony, flower arrangement and calligraphy, to more modern examples of music, cuisine, movies, anime and sports, you are able to enjoy experiencing the diversity of Japanese culture with all your senses. I sincerely hope that those who are familiar with Japan, as well as those who are learning of our country will take advantage of this week to make new discoveries regarding Japan.

Recently, the Israeli cosmetic shops Sabon and Laline have become very popular in all major Japanese cities from northern Hokkaido to southern Kyushu. Max Brenner, the well-known chocolatier opened new

shops in Tokyo last year, and gained enthusiastic Japanese customers in a very short time.

Japan is also making efforts of its own. I hope that Japan and Japanese products will entice you throughout this “Jerusalem Japan Week.”

I believe we can begin, here, to build a stronger sense of closeness through this Japan Week, for in the future, in 2020, the Tokyo Olympics, and Paralympic Games will be held. We do hope to welcome you again and again to our country.

I, as a member of the Japanese government, will make efforts so that Japan and Israel become countries that can be considered as close neighbors. One priority is to introduce working holiday visas as soon as possible. This will enable young people to visit each other’s country while being granted the permission to work.

The Japanese culture is based on “WA”, which means the spirit of generosity, harmony and peace. I strongly hope that this Japanese concept spreads in the Middle East and contributes to regional peace. I would like to conclude by wishing all of you the best possible experiences with Japanese culture during this week. Thank you for your kind attention.

Toda raba. (ヘブライ語で「ありがとう」の意)

(end)