

*<Provisional Translation>*

**CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN  
SHINZO ABE ON THE OCCASION OF THE 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN JAPAN AND  
SINGAPORE**

26 April 2016

Dear Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and the people of the Republic of Singapore,

On behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, I would like to share our wholehearted pleasure with Your Excellency and the people of the Republic of Singapore on this occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Singapore.

Exactly 50 years ago today, on 26 April 1966, Japan and Singapore established diplomatic relations. I am very pleased that, since then, for half a century, friendly and cooperative ties between our two nations have flourished and matured from strength to strength. When we talk about today's good and close relationship between Japan and Singapore as well as Asia's development, we should not forget about the contributions of former Prime Minister of Singapore, His Excellency Mr Lee Kuan Yew, who is the Founding Father of Singapore and one of the greatest leaders of modern times that Asia has ever produced. Over a long period of time, His Excellency Mr Lee Kuan Yew, who passed away in March last year, made outstanding contributions to the advancement of the bilateral relations between Japan and Singapore. Hence, I am very pleased that the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Paulownia Flowers is bestowed upon him in recognition of this contribution.

After Singapore gained independence in 1965, Japan became the first country to invest in Singapore. In that sense, it is a great honour that Japan has contributed to Singapore's development, including through trade and investments, as well as Official Development Assistance (ODA). The deepening of economic relationship between the two nations marked a milestone with the

establishment of the “Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Singapore for a New-Age Economic Partnership” in 2002, leading up to today’s close relationship between our two nations. On the TPP agreements, as trade-oriented nations, we hope to take the lead in discussions so as to bring about its early entry into force. Our political and security cooperation and cultural and intellectual exchanges have also been steadily advanced. As important partners sharing fundamental values, Japan and Singapore have been working closely together not only on bilateral issues, but also on addressing regional and global challenges.

Yet, we should not stop at these achievements. Japan and Singapore have much in common. Both our countries have achieved miraculous economic growth in such a short period of time. In addition to our excellent human resources and high-quality infrastructure, we also share universal values including freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Tapping more into these assets, I strongly believe that we can elevate our bilateral relations to a higher level.

In this regard, I welcome the ongoing visit of His Excellency Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore to Japan to mark this commemorative day. As I have been in close communication with Your Excellency, including through the past five Summit Meetings, I look forward to celebrating this milestone year together with you in Japan this September. I am confident that a series of high-level visits throughout this commemorative year will be a good start for our bilateral relations in the next half-century.

Lastly, I sincerely hope that this commemorative year will bring about even greater advancements in our bilateral relations and further consolidate our friendship.

Yours sincerely,

Shinzo Abe  
Prime Minister of Japan