

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER OF SINGAPORE LEE HSIEN LOONG ON THE OCCASION OF THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN JAPAN AND SINGAPORE

26 April 2016

Dear Prime Minister Abe

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Singapore, I convey my warmest congratulations to you and your Government as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Singapore and Japan.

Over these 50 years, our bilateral relations have grown enormously. Today, Singapore and Japan enjoy excellent and multi-faceted ties, underpinned by shared strategic perspectives. We cooperate closely in many areas – trade and investment, third-country training programmes, healthcare, cultural exchanges, among others. Our economic relationship is particularly significant. Japanese companies have been investing in Singapore since the 1960s and played a key role in Singapore's development. In 2002, the Japan-Singapore Economic Partnership Agreement (JSEPA) entered into force, marking a key milestone in our bilateral relations. Our officials are currently reviewing the JSEPA to make sure it keeps up with the times. Singapore and Japan now rank among each other's top investment destinations. We are also parties to the Trans Pacific Partnership and the

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, two agreements that will further liberalise Asia-Pacific trade and foster regional economic integration.

People-to-people ties between our two countries are also strengthening, with increased connectivity and more exchanges between our peoples. Last year Singapore welcomed 800,000 visitors from Japan, and more than 300,000 Singaporeans visited Japan.

2016 also marks the fifth anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake of 11 March 2011. Through funding several local recovery projects like the Rikuzentakata City Multipurpose Hall, Singapore has contributed in a modest way to the rejuvenation of the Tohoku region. These projects symbolise the strong ties of friendship between our two countries and peoples.

We also work closely with Japan to advance common interests in various global and regional fora, including ASEAN, the East Asia Summit and APEC. Japan plays a key role in the peace and prosperity in the Asia Pacific region and as an important partner in the US-Japan Security Alliance, and Singapore hopes that it will continue to play this role actively, to the benefit of itself and the region.

I look forward to working closely with you and your Government as we embark on the next 50 years of close friendship between Singapore and

Japan. I wish you good health and success, and I look forward to visiting Japan this September to commemorate this important milestone year.

Yours sincerely

LEE HSIEN LOONG

His Excellency Shinzo Abe
Prime Minister
Japan