

Very good morning, Distinguished guests, Ladies & Gentlemen,
It's my great pleasure to express my congratulations to Japan National Travel Organization, JNTO, on successful opening of the today's Japan Tourism Roadshow.

The aim of today's event is, of course, to promote the inbound tourism to Japan. For this, I'm very glad to see the inbound tourism from the UAE has been growing more than steadily since I was posted in Dubai 2 year ago. Last year, the number of Emirati tourists who traveled to Japan recorded the historical highest, 7,800 travellers, which increased at 10% in annual basis. This year, even in the first half of the year, the number of tourists hits 4,900, which means we can expect another 10% increase compared with the previous year.

In addition, the number of GCC tourists to Japan has increased at 5% annually last year, and more than 10% this year. Quite healthy booming has continued in the tourism from this region. One of the reason related to this remarkable tourism expansion would be Visa relaxation by which Japanese government decided 2 years ago.

In the meantime, the biggest background why the UAE and GCC tourism have developed in the last 2 years might be how the JNTO enhances its tourism promotion targeting to this region. Actually, today's inbound promotion program is the 2nd time of this kind in this year, following Japan Tourism Seminar, co-organised by JNTO and the Consulate-General, last February. I think many of you remember having enjoyed the Japanese dinner reception held at the Consul-General residence.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Historically, all over the world, there are lot of sayings related to travels. In Arabic proverbs, “people who live a longer life possess many knowledge, but people who experience travels get much more.” As Japan is unique and special, an experience in Japan makes every traveler deepens their knowledge much more. For example, foods cultures are superb as the Japanese cuisine is the UNESCO’s intangible world cultural heritage. And, there are distinctive four seasons which showcase the beauties of world heritages based on intricate geographical scenery with stunning mountain, river, lake and ocean.

I also refer an old muslim saying: “A man who does not travel does never know the value of human.” For the people in this region, Japan is not yet a major travel destination. However, as an old muslim emphasises, a travel to Japan promises a unique experience to know what human value is, because of Japan’s rich traditions accumulated more than thousands years.

Japan also has a famous old saying with regard to travels; “No travel is failed as far as having good accompanies.” For the today’s event, I may say, “No tourism business is failed as far as having good partners.”

So, I strongly hope today is a productive opportunity to make fruitful networks of good partners. This is a milestone to the successful business of visit Japan.

Thank you very much.