Speech by Ambassador Kaoru ISHIKAWA
JSPS Alumni Association in Egypt Inauguration Ceremony
At the Library Center, Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University
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H.E. Dr. Ahmed Khairy, First Under-Secretary for Cultural Affairs and Missions of Higher Education and State for Scientific Research,

Professor Dr. Ali Nigm, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University,

Professor Dr. Hany El-Shemy, Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University, President of JSPS Alumni Association in Egypt

Dr. Naoki MURATA, Executive Director, JSPS

Professor Sadao SAKAI, Director, JSPS Cairo Research Station, Professor Emeritus, Ryukoku University

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good evening.

It is my honour and pleasure to speak, as a representative of Japan, at this Inauguration Ceremony for JSPS Alumni Association in Egypt.
I am very pleased to offer my sincere congratulations on this occasion. I was told that this association was formally authorized as NGO last June, and that all the members have Doctor's degree and work in major Universities, research institutes as Professor or assistant professor.

It gives me a great joy to address such a prestigious group of academia, especially because you are the incarnation of the intellectual bridge between Japan and Egypt.

(Japan-Egypt relations today)
Japanese Government and Egyptian Government have decided the Japan-Egypt Science and Technology Year 2008 and we held the Inauguration Ceremony in Grand Hall of Cairo University on March 8th. It is an honor for us that Egypt named Japan as the partner for this science and technology year.

The Science and Technology Year is an eloquent living proof that Japan and Egypt believe in the decisive importance of human resources development. Japan today enjoys cutting-edge technology and Egypt has always enjoyed rich human resources and long history of civilization and culture. Both countries slipped down from the prestigious top ranking civilizations during the late 18th century industrial revolution, but are both today making remarkable come-back. If Japan and Egypt join hands to face the actual high wave of globalization, then we will be able to find a good point of balance between ancient civilizations and the modernization. But, here, I must be honest. Out success depends on our challenge whether we can enrich our human resources to work together for a more balanced world and better future.

In fact, nation building has its base in human resources development. Spreading knowledge of science and technology to all generations, to the young and less young, to men and women, and promoting their interests in science and technology is a foundation of nation building.

Japan-Egypt relations started when a Delegation sent by Tokugawa - Shogunate to Europe visited Egypt in 1862. The Delegation included Yukichi Fukuzawa, one of the most famous Japanese intellectuals and the one who later founded Keio University. Now his portrait is printed on our 10,000 yen bill. Also in 1864, Ikeda-Mission visited Egypt and took a photograph in front of Sphinx. This photograph is famous as the title "Sphinx and Samurai". They came to Cairo on train. Yes we know that Egypt has the world second oldest train, and that fact gave a strong impact to the visiting Japanese samurais. In the mid 19th Century, Japan was looking at the rapid modernization of Egypt as a good option to follow.

(How to revive our scientific gene)
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Science and technology was not built in a day. Historically speaking, Egypt is a cradle of many science and technology. May be you have the world oldest gene in your blood to become scientists. Compared to you, our scientific gene is short. Yet we also had had scientific basis centuries ago. For example, 450 years ago, Nobunaga Oda, a warlord of the Warring State Period, made the world-first steel armoured vessels. The important point in this context is, whether we both can reactivate our genuine gene so that we can overcome 21st century's challenges.

Japan today is somehow praised by the others that we are leading the world in cutting-edge technologies. Thank you for the compliment. It may be true that there are so many examples to be mentioned now that I would mention just few modern examples: photographs such as "the earth-rise", which were taken by the high vision cameras of "Kaguya", the lunar orbiter which was launched last year, stunned and attracted the attention of many ordinary people in the world. The carbon fibers developed by Japanese companies are light and strong, and are now indispensable for aircrafts of Boeing and Airbus. The Japanese Mitsubishi Corporation for Heavy Industry also is currently in the process of developing a small sized passengers plane made in Japan. It is called MRJ (Mitsubishi Regional Jet) in which many advanced technologies such as carbon fibers, are used and will be the most fuel efficient plane.

But, I must say that these technologies were not made in one day inspiration. They are the results of every day's sweat of many persons who have been studying and working hard. I must also mention that the reason why I cited two examples from aero and space industry is, they are the results of a choice where to concentrate your knowledge and human resources. Japanese rocket technology has not been well known internationally, but that was where many of the best students went to realize their dream. It was so, because airplane production in Japan was totally banned by the winners after the defeat of World War II and it was too late for Japan to restart airplane industry in mid 1950s. So we went directly to rocket industry. Later, when Japanese ordinary people working in private companies successfully

introduced new technology such as carbon fiber, we could make a come back in the airplane sector. These examples tell us that wise priority setting is important to apply high technology to daily life and to industrial production.

(Do not repeat our mistake)
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Having mentioned all these glorious facts, I must tell you about the negative side of the coin. After the end of the Second World War, reconstruction of the economy was the supreme objective of the State in Japan, and we successfully realized that target. However rapid urbanization and industrialization caused serious pollution problems in late 1950s and 1960s. Serious environmental pollution occurred, affecting human health. Particularly serious problems include the four big pollution diseases of Japan, in which many lives were lost and many others suffered from irremediable or unrecoverable health and physical damages. Fishermen eating fish in which mercury was accumulated died after losing reason. Many suffered from asthma caused by petro-chemical factories. And it was only after the promulgation of a dozen of laws pushed by people's consciousness that industry, factory, cars are equipped with preventive devices. If we had implemented these preventive measures, the cost would have been about 4% of what actually cost to repair and to regain blue sky and clean water. Needless to say, life is priceless.

It is my sincere hope that Egypt does not repeat our mistake and introduce necessary preventive measures, devices and equipment, so that Egyptian people would enjoy only the positive side of the coin of the development of science and technology

I believe that the members of JSPS Alumni Association all know about what I have mentioned today. I would like to ask you all, whom I regard as a precious bridge between Japan and Egypt, that you will carry the torch of human resources development with scientific mind.

I thank you very much for your kind attention.