

His Excellency Dr. Hany Helal, Former Minister of Higher Education and State for Scientific Research

Her Excellency Ambassador Fayza Abounaga, Advisor to the President for National Security Affairs,

His Excellency Maj. Gen. Mohamed Amin, Advisor to the President for Financial Affairs,

His Excellency Dr. Reda Hegazy, Minister of Education and Technical Education,

Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Evening.

It is a great pleasure honour to host this ceremony to present the prestigious Decoration of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star, on behalf of the Government of Japan, to His Excellency Dr. Hany Helal.

This decoration, the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star is a high decoration bestowed by His Majesty, the Emperor of Japan, in recognition and deep appreciation of the outstanding achievement and continued contribution of His Excellency, Dr. Hany Helal to strengthening the friendly relations between Japan and Egypt through promoting educational cooperation and scientific research exchanges over many years.

I would like to thank all the guests who kindly share your precious time with us to celebrate his Decoration.

Since my arrival to Egypt about a year ago, I have witnessed many thick footprints of bilateral cooperation in a range of fields and heard the Egyptian people voice their welcoming support for expanding such cooperation. Educational cooperation is undoubtedly among the most successful bilateral cooperation.

This educational cooperation under the framework of “Egypt Japan Educational Partnership” was launched on the occasion of His Excellency President El-Sisi’s visit to Japan in 2016. This is based on the shared recognition of the two leaders that human capacity development is the crucial key for successful nation building. Since then, thanks to the unwavering support of His Excellency President

El Sisi, the close partnership in education has been developed in a comprehensive manner covering both basic and the higher education.

It is His Excellency Dr. Helal who has been tirelessly promoting this educational partnership since its launch in his capacity as Secretary General of the Steering Committee of Educational Partnership, using his expertise and extensive network to make educational cooperation a successful pillar of cooperation between Egypt and Japan.

Three hours of smooth drive from Cairo will take Your Excellencies to the Campus of Egypt Japan University of Science and Technology, or EJUST at Borg El Arab. Its stylish modern campus buildings designed by a Japanese architect with spacious rooms and the presence of Japanese faculty members as well as state of the art laboratory equipment provided by Japan will never fail to impress you. About 4,000 students from Egypt as well as from Africa and the Middle East study at EJUST. EJUST has been catapulted into among top ranking universities in Egypt and awarded as the top contributor to IP by the Prime Minister, thus contributing to both academic prowess and technological and industrial development of this country.

It is His Excellency Dr. Helal who has dedicatedly supported EJUST since its establishment, as a symbol of pioneering partnership, by firstly signing the agreement to establish EJSUT as then Minister of Higher Education and State for Scientific Research in 2009, together with HE Ambassador Fayza Abounaga, then Minister of International Cooperation. Furthermore, after his retirement from the Minister, HE Dr. Helal was elected as a member of Board of Trustees of EJUST in 2019 and has continued to contribute to this day to the innovative management of EJUST. I would like to take this opportunity to thank HE Minister Ashour for his continued support for EJUST. We will continue to support EJUST so that EJUST will grow as a Centre of Excellence for entire Africa.

In January this year, I had the distinct privilege of accompanying HE Minister Hegazy to visit Zahra School in Nasr City, one of the 51 Egyptian Japanese Schools established so far throughout the

country. There I was literally impressed by the students who clean their classrooms and discuss topics of common interest by choosing their daily leaders from among themselves. Out in the school grounds, we saw students joyfully practicing physical exercises in a group.

Egyptian Japanese School intends to introduce “Tokkatsu”, characteristic of Japanese style education, in the formative years of education. More than 11000 Egyptian students have been learning in EJS. During the visit to EJS, I heard the parents happily talk about the improvement of the social behaviour of their children and accompanying improvement of their academic scores. In the light of the success of the Egyptian Japanese Schools, the Egyptian Government has an ultimate objective of spreading “Tokkatsu” to public schools all over Egypt, including those in Haya Karima areas. HE Dr. Helal has been the central figure for promoting EJS as Secretary General of Steering Committee of Educational Partnership as well as by designing a system for instance to ensure quality of Tokkatsu teaching throughout the country in a sustainable manner.

HE Dr. Hany Helal’s achievement goes beyond the scope of education. The entire world was surprised at the announcement a couple days ago of a discovery of big void space within the Kufu pyramid. The presence of this empty space was ascertained by a team of Japanese scientists through cosmic ray Muons by using fiberscope. This project Scan Pyramid was in fact led by HE Dr. Helal and I am extremely happy to see Japanese scientists contribute to deciphering the mysteries of the ancient Egyptian civilization under the leadership of HE Dr. Helal. I pay my deep respect for his foresighted leadership.

In fact, among his many achievements for bilateral cooperation is the signing the Agreement between Japan and Egypt on Cooperation in Science and Technology in 2010, laying down foundations for ongoing numerous scientific cooperation between the two countries.

I may have spoken too long but this is because the list of HE Dr. Helal’s achievement is so long. Over the years, Dr. Helal has been contributing to a number of significant projects in education and science that bring benefits not only to the Egyptians and Japanese

but also to the people in the wider region of Africa and the Middle East. Educational cooperation is unique in the sense its benefits go beyond generations and beyond geographical boundaries.

We heartily thank HE Dr. Helal for his leadership and pragmatism and above all his disarming smiles. Whenever challenges arise, he has always been at the centre coordinating with the parties concerned to bring about a solution. The Conferment is an opportunity to highlight and honour his outstanding achievements and to express our deepest respect and gratitude for them. It is my sincerest wish that we will continue to work together for further success of Japan-Egypt cooperation.

I would like to conclude my remarks by wishing Dr. Hany Helal good health and success in his future endeavours and also happiness and prosperity for his family and for further development of Egypt-Japan friendship.

Thank you very much.