

Remark at the Presentation of Tokyo Paralympic Team

Yasuhiro Kawaguchi

Ambassador of Japan

9 August 2021

Your Excellency, Mr President and Mrs Levite, President of the Latvian Paralympic Committee, Ms Dadzīte, members of Latvian Paralympic Teams, Ministers, distinguished guests:

I am very honoured to be here.

Yesterday Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games concluded. I was delighted to see Latvian athletes were highly active in various events in Japan.

Tokyo 2020 are holding during the severe ordeal of the spread of COVID-19 with numerous difficulties. However, we manage to host it with strong supports all around the world.

On 24 August, the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics Games will begin. Japan has been preparing to make Tokyo 2020 games an opportunity to promote sports activities that contribute to SDGs, raise awareness of Unity in Diversity and nurture a cohesive society.

Unfortunately, the event will take place under various restrictions from entering Japan.

When the Great East Japan earthquake occurred ten years ago, Latvian people warmly extended their hands. It is a pity that we cannot show the athletes and Latvian people well the beautiful Japan that has started to move towards recovery.

Even in these challenging times, we will do our utmost to support the athletes who are looking forward and continuing their efforts so that you can devote yourselves to the competition at ease.

Instead of focusing on “what you cannot do”, make ingenuity from the perspective of "how you can do it" Such a Paralympic spirit is especially significant in the current situation. I am confident that the appearance of the athletes who are pushing the envelope or limit will shake the hearts of people in Latvia, Japan and all around the world and will give the Courage and Determination to move forward in these challenging times.

This year is the centenary of friendship between Japan and Latvia. Today, I have prepared a badge that commemorates this year. I would appreciate it if the Latvian Paralympic team going to Japan could wear this badge when visiting Japan.

Finally, I wish the best of luck to all Latvian athletes participating Paralympic Games. Thank you very much.