

**Speech by KAWAGUCHI Yasuhiro, Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Republic of Latvia
at the Latvian Paralympic Team Athletes Celebration**

10 September, 2021

Your Excellency Mr. President, Mrs. Levite, Ministers, President of the Latvian Paralympic Committee, Members of Latvian Paralympic Teams, distinguished guests:

I appreciate the opportunity to be here again.

Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games successfully concluded on 5 September. Tokyo is proud to become the first city that conducted the Summer Paralympic Games twice.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone here and every person who participated in the games from Latvia and who supported these challenging events. My special gratitude must go to Mrs Levite for visiting Japan for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic games.

In Paralympics games, Latvian athletes impressed many people in Japan and Latvia. All of you moved their hearts and gave them energy and courage.

In particular, the Latvian team, with Mr Aigars Apinis as the standard-bearer, received much attention during the opening ceremony. Ms Diana Dazite with powerful throws of both discus and javelin, and Mr Rihards Snikus with graceful equestrian fascinated many Japanese.

Please accept my sincere congratulations and my respects to you for winning the medal.

The world remains divided by Covid-19. Japan thought that the Olympic and Paralympic Games could contribute to rebuilding the people's bonds and connections and reunite the world with the power of sports.

The Tokyo 2020 Games aimed to provide the opportunity for diverse people with different characteristics to utilize their unique skills and abilities in cooperating while acknowledging, respecting and valuing differences in others.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the friendship between Japan and Latvia. I sincerely hope that Tokyo 2020 contributes to the development of the Paralympic movement in Latvia. That would be a momentous achievement for the centenary.

Thank you for this opportunity.