16.08.2017/Be

**Greeting remarks Consul General Ryuta Mizuuchi**

**On the occasion of the Opening of the Technology Centre of Komatsu Germany**

**Wednesday, September 20th 2017, 09.30 – 14.00 o’clock a.m.**

Dear Minister Pinkwart (Minister of Economy, Innovation, Digitalization and Energy),

Dear Mayor Geisel (Lord Mayor of Dusseldorf),

Dear Mr. Ohashi (CEO – Komatsu Ltd. Japan),

Dear Mr. Kitatani (President& Managing Director, Komatsu Germany GmbH),

Dear customers, partners and staff members from Komatsu,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentleman,

It is a great pleasure to be with you today and have the chance to speak in front of you, on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the Technology Center of Komatsu Germany here in Dusseldorf, Capital of the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia – and also ***“the”*** Capital of Japanese businesses in Europe. First and foremost I wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all those who have contributed to establishing this Technology Center, and have made today’s event possible.

100 years ago, in January 1917, a small start-up company was born in a small town near ***Kanazawa***, the ***provincial capital of Ishikawa-Prefecture*** in Central Japan. It was a company belonging to a ***copper mining plant*** and intended to produce machine tools for that plant. Since the Meiji period, there were a number of copper mines in that region. ***4 years later***, this machinery production company ***became independent*** of the mining plant and was established as today’s Komatsu, then called the ***Komatsu Iron & Steel MFG, Ltd***. Therefore, Komatsu has a long history of dealing with mining activities from its very beginning.

***Komatsu Germany – Mining Division in Dusseldorf*** has its origin that goes back even 10 years earlier than that of the mother company. It started with the Carlshütte in 1907 in Duisburg, which at that time put in place its ***first electric driven rope shovel***, historically important mining equipment. Against this background it is more than natural that Komatsu started a ***joint venture*** with its successor company ***Mannesmann-Demag*** in 1996 and took full control of it 3 years later. I even tend to wonder if this might have been a fate – guided by an invisible hand.

Almost 20 years have passed since then. Komatsu Germany’s business has been steadily developing, albeit subject naturally to the economic situation worldwide and particularly in Europe. Komatsu Germany’s technological assets have been also expanding, with the capabilities of its huge KG Mining Shovels becoming even larger. Thanks to its reliability, operability and safety, Komatsu is playing a leading role in the machine tool and mining machine branch on the global market. I have no doubt that the ***combination of German Gründlichkeit and Japanese perfection*** has been the key to the successful business model of Komatsu in this very competitive sector.

Last year, Komatsu Mining Germany based in Dusseldorf and Komatsu Hanomag based in Hannover were merged into Komatsu Germany with its headquarters here in Dusseldorf in order to enhance coordination between the two sites and strengthen Komatsu brand in total.

I am also very pleased to note that Dusseldorf and the Rhine Region are offering Komatsu a secure and comfortable operation base for its business, and that today’s opening of the new Technology Center on this site will provide the company with new instruments to deal with future challenges. On one hand, it will enable Komatsu to respond promptly to constantly changing demands of the world market through timely information gathering and flexible solution considerations. On the other hand, it will serve to connect the company more intensively with the local and regional community, and in particular, young and talented engineers in German universities and industry, which will then ensure the sustainable operation and development of the company.

This Technology Center concept will certainly fit into the current business circumstances in which digitalization and other challenges may affect the operations of globally acting enterprises. I very much hope that Komatsu will continue to grow on the basis of this new Technology Center, and contribute even more to the successful industrial cooperation between the Japanese and the Germans here in Dusseldorf. I am sure the successful conclusion of the Japan-EU FTA in the near future will, in this particular regard, benefit Komatsu with its global business model, as well as the local economy as a whole.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last but not least, let me take this opportunity to express another small wish. It is about the possible connection between the two important production sites of Komatsu, namely Dusseldorf and Kanazawa, by linking the two city administrations with each other. Kanazawa, like Dusseldorf, has historically been a political, economic and cultural center of the region and is just adjacent to the birthplace of Komatsu. It also possesses the potential of mutual exchanges. In addition to its Eastern partner prefecture of Chiba, Dusseldorf would then have another basis to promote itself in the Western part of Japan. I would be extremely happy if this could happen. I would also be very happy if our Komatsu-connection could help us toward this goal.

In concluding, let me once again congratulate whole-heartedly the management of Komatsu, its employees and partners from all over the world on today’s auspicious occasion. I wish you all, together with the City of Dusseldorf and the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia, all the best and lot of success in the future.

Thank you for your attention.