

## Opening remarks at welcome reception hosted by Osaka-Sakai on October 28

### 1 . Introduction

- Good evening, everyone. I am Nishimura Yasutoshi, the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan. I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Yoshimura Hirofumi, Governor of Osaka Prefecture and Mr. Nagafuji Hideki, Mayor of Sakai City for holding this reception party.

### 2 . The reasons for holding G7 Trade Minister's Meeting in Osaka-Sakai

- From ancient times, Osaka Bay flourished as the center of Japan. It was the gateway to foreign trade for a long

time and was the political center of Japan at the same time. The presence of many ancient tombs comparable to the pyramids, such as the Tomb of Nintoku Emperor that we visited earlier, is proof of this.

- Actually, I have deep ties to this area. My hometown, Awaji Island, is located in Osaka Bay, and we can see the Island from this city. Awaji was a pioneer in the production of ironware in Japan and provided high quality ingredients to the Imperial Court.
- Around the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when Europe was in the Renaissance, Japan was in the midst of a civil war. Even in this era of armed forces, Sakai was a rare

example of a city that achieved peace and prosperity as a self-governing city of merchants. Christian missionaries who visited Sakai at that time said, “Sakai is the safest city in Japan. The people of Sakai talk and cross paths without concerning themselves with the distinction between friends and enemies and treat each other with affection and courtesy.”

- Osaka-Sakai is still the center of commerce and the birthplace of something new and is flourishing as a city of innovation. There are many important bases for innovation, including the location responsible for the development of iPS cells. Sakai also contains bases for green

innovation, such as storage batteries.

- Furthermore, we will host the Osaka, Kansai, Japan EXPO 2025 here in 2 years. At the expo, we will present cutting edge technologies and innovations, for example, advanced air mobilities, clean technologies such as hydrogen, robots and androids.
- It is my great pleasure to welcome the Ministers and to hold the G7 Meeting here in Osaka-Sakai which was a historic gateway for foreign trade, flourishing in this open-minded atmosphere.

### 3 . Concluding remarks

- In this event, we received a petty knife as a souvenir from Osaka, Sakai. In Sakai, tobacco was imported from Portugal in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and they started producing “tobacco knives” used for cutting tobacco leaves. Since then, the production of knives has expanded and now they produce most cooking knives for Master chefs in Sakai. In this regard, Sakai’s knives are symbol of Japan’s industrial development through foreign trade.
- I think they were quite thoughtful in choosing a small knife to ensure our safety in case our discussion heats up. Finally, I would like to conclude my

remarks with the sincere hope that we have passionate discussions today and tomorrow.