

Statement by Ambassador Ishikawa Hiroshi at The JETRO Singapore 70<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary Business Forum

02 July 2026

Ms. Gan Siow Huang, Minister of State for Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Industry,  
Mr. Lee Chuan Teck, Chairman of Enterprise Singapore,  
Mr. Susumu Kataoka, President of JETRO,  
Mr. Junji Kurokawa, Managing Director of JETRO Singapore,  
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

A very good morning to you all. First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations to JETRO Singapore on your 70th anniversary. I would also like to extend my deepest gratitude to Mr. Kataoka, Mr. Kurokawa, and everyone involved for their tireless efforts in organizing this milestone event.

(As Minister Gan highlighted earlier,) this year marks "SJ60," a momentous milestone celebrating the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Singapore and Japan. What is truly remarkable, however, is that JETRO Singapore was established a full decade before our official diplomatic ties were forged, and well before the founding of Singapore as an independent nation. Looking back at the immediate post-war era, it was undoubtedly a challenging period when sentiments toward Japan were rooted in deep distrust and resentment.

Yet, under the visionary leadership of the late Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore proactively sought to attract Japanese manufacturers for its economic growth and prosperity. In response to this call, numerous Japanese companies expanded into Singapore, growing and thriving hand in hand with the nation.

Today, there are more than 5,000 Japanese companies operating in Singapore - a reality that could not have been achieved without the pivotal role of JETRO Singapore. I would like to pay my highest tribute to JETRO Singapore for their long-standing dedication in supporting Japanese businesses, as well as their close collaboration with agencies such as Enterprise Singapore and EDB, which has contributed significantly to Singapore's economic development over the decades.

Two generations ago, Singapore was chosen as a manufacturing base for Japanese companies. Today, it has increasingly solidified its presence as a "trusted regional hub" - a dynamic hub that drives growth, innovation, and talent development with unmatched speed and agility. JETRO's mission has expanded beyond merely helping Japanese companies enter the local market; it now focuses heavily on fostering open innovation, promoting co-creation between both countries, and supporting the startup ecosystem, targeting ASEAN-wide market and beyond. This strategic shift was clearly reaffirmed in the joint statement issued earlier in March this year, when our bilateral relations were officially elevated to a "Strategic Partnership." Furthermore, as explicitly stated in this milestone document, I am absolutely delighted that Enterprise Singapore and JETRO, who drive these practical initiatives on the ground, will be renewing their MOC right after this session.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Singapore and Japan this year, I am reminded once again of SJ60 slogan: Co-imagine, Co-create, and Co-evolve. Under today's increasingly unpredictable geopolitical conditions, this spirit represents our shared firm conviction that our bilateral partnership certainly has huge potential to ensure an open, prosperous, inclusive and resilient future for not only our two countries but also for the rest of the world. The main players in this endeavor are undoubtedly the distinguished guests gathered here today, and I am confident that Singapore is the premier location to facilitate this.

To conclude, please allow me to once again extend my warmest congratulations to JETRO Singapore, and to wish for continued success of all the guests gathered here today. Thank you very much.