Address by Mr. Keiji Ide,

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan

to the Republic of Croatia

at the Closing Ceremony of Japan-Croatian Joint Project

“Risk Identification and Land-Use Planning for Disaster Mitigation of Landslides and Flood in Croatia”

At the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Zagreb, Croatia

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Minister of Science, Education and Sports, Dr. Željko Jovanović

Dr. Nevenka Ožanić, Vice rector, the University of Rijeka, Manager of the Project on Croatian side

Dr. Hideaki Marui, Professor of the University of Niigata, Manager of the Project on the Japanese side

It is my great honor and pleasure to address to you to commemorate the successful ending of the Japan-Croatian Joint Project “Risk Identification and Land-Use Planning for Disaster Mitigation of Landslides and Flood in Croatia”.

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of those, who participated in, extended great support and cooperation to this Project. Namely, Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and Ministry of Finance as well as the University of Rijeka (Faculty of Civil Engineering), the University of Zagreb (Faculty of Mining, Geology and Petroleum Engineering and Faculty of Agriculture) and the University of Split (Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture). Also various institutions, such as Croatian Geological Survey, Office of Emergency Management of City of Zagreb, Croatian Waters, National Protection and Rescue Directorate, as well as cities of Zagreb, Rijeka, Split and Omiš gave great support for the project.

I would also like to express my thankfulness to my compatriots and Japanese Organizations, such as Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST), which sponsored this Project. Also professors of Niigata University (The Research Center for Natural Hazards and Disaster Recovery) and Kyoto University (Disaster Prevention Research Institute) actively participated in the project.

The International Consortium of Landslides (ICL) made great contribution to the Project.

This five-years-project was launched as one of the projects of the Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development (SATREP), and 5 million US dollars were allocated by the Japanese co-sponsors, JICA and JST in March 2009.

Both Japan and Croatia face natural disaster. Land landslides, slope failures, debris flows, rock falls and liquefaction triggered by earthquakes are our common problems. So it is our joint responsibility to prevent these disasters, by sharing our knowledge and technology and doing joint research.

During the past 5 years, fifteen professors and researchers from Japan visited Croatia for about 30 times. Also fifteen Croatian young researchers were invited to Japan. Some of them visited many times.

Four workshops were organized in Dubrovnik, Rijeka, Zagreb and Split, which researchers not only from Japan and Croatia, but also from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Italy, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia also participated in.

I am convinced that today’s closing event will give a good review of the project. Also I am glad that actual result of the project will be materialized as development of methodologies for risk assessment and hazard mapping and application of early warning systems for flash flood and debris flow.

In fact, in the area affected by landslides in Zagreb, Kostanjek, observation equipment provided from Japan was installed for disaster prevention. I am glad to attend, this coming Friday, the opening ceremony of the Landslide Observatory in Kostanjek. This observatory is a symbol and an actual result of the very successful bilateral scientific collaboration between Japan and Croatia.

Today we witness the successful ending of this 5-year joint project, but I am convinced that our cooperation should be followed-up and be further developed.

I wish to express once again my deepest gratitude to all organizations and individuals, who participated in this project and wish their great success in the future.

Thank you.