

# Speech of the Prime Minister

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Delivered at CeBIT Welcome Night in Hannover, Germany, March 19, 2017

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Full text: [http://japan.kantei.go.jp/97\\_abe/statement/201703/1221682\\_11573.html](http://japan.kantei.go.jp/97_abe/statement/201703/1221682_11573.html)

It all dates back to May last year. Chancellor Angela Merkel and I were meeting, and at one point she asked me, “Why don’t you make Japan a partner country at the CeBIT\* next year? And you must also come.” Angela, I am indeed here. Japan is indeed a partner country. And also, Japanese companies are here, in a massive number, which is 118, a jump of more than tenfold from the previous year.

Today, soon after this event, a landmark document will be unveiled.

We choose to call it the “Hannover Declaration.” I would like to share with you my thoughts on the foundation that the declaration is based on.

Firstly, we are now in need of a new definition for machines. Machines equipped with AI or machines that are essentially robots

no longer perform only narrow, singular functions. Think of concerns we face as humans, like health. Think also of challenges at a global scale, like the supply of energy. The machines of tomorrow will be tasked with the mission of solving that multitude of challenges. The manufacturing industry will also change. It will become a “solution” industry.

None of those problems are solvable by a single machine, by a single company, even if it is technologically advanced, or even by single countries alone.

That leads us to the second point: we must cherish connectedness, above all else.

How can we connect machines with each other? A system to another system, and to a system of systems—how can they be made to relate to each other? What of the interplay between machines and humans for an extended lifetime? And indeed of the interface between and among groups of people, like countries and companies?

What kinds of connectedness will we build among each of these? We are in an age in which governments, businesses, and academe will rack their brains in competition with each other over how that connectedness should be designed. This is an age in which cooperation and collaboration will create added value and stimulate growth.

Third, and the final point I wish to emphasize about the declaration, is the importance of education and of technology standards.

In an age in which we must solve complex problems by regarding them as systems—an age in which all things and all people are interconnected—we will need new systems of modeling language and common technology standards.

I would like for Japan and Germany to contemplate these together. Together, let us develop common curricula and common standards.

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There are only three things that are important for the future of Germany, Europe, and Japan. Number one is innovation. Number two: innovation. And number three: innovation.



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\* CeBIT is a trade fair held in Hannover, Germany, featuring applications of cutting-edge technology, including IoT, big data, artificial intelligence (AI), and robots. It is the largest such event in the world. At the March 2017 CeBIT, Japan participated for the first time as the official Partner Country.

Recall if you will that it was Germany and Japan that were the first instances in the history of humankind to prove that it is possible to achieve remarkable growth despite limited land mass and meager natural resources. We grew by turning disadvantages to our own favor, and it was innovation that made it possible.

It will be innovation too that will unquestionably resolve the issues we face in the future. For that reason, Japan has no fear of AI. “Machines will snatch away jobs”—such worries are not known to Japan. Japan aims to be the very first to prove that growth is possible through innovation even when a population declines.

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Japan and Germany share some factors in common. In both Germany and Japan, it is in small companies where many of those taking on innovation can be found. Accordingly, every time Chancellor Merkel and I meet, we discuss how to foster exchanges among German and Japanese mid-sized companies and small- and medium-sized enterprises.

In February, representatives of cutting-edge German SMEs visited Japan. People watched in amazement as a robot known as “Franka” moved deftly to build a new Franka—that is, to replicate itself.

I am fully confident that true gems among the Japanese mid-sized companies and SMEs attending this year’s CeBIT will also broaden that sphere of astonishment in just the same way.

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Germany and Japan share one more factor in common. We have both come this far precisely because we reaped the benefits of trade and investment.

It is said that IoT, the Internet of things, will connect everything. What that is describing, in other words, is the explosive force to expand by multiples, hidden within the network. The same can be said of national economies. To emphasize it once more, it is through connectedness that economies will grow.

Japan, having grown through reaping in abundance the benefits of free trade and investment, wants to be the champion upholding open systems, alongside Germany. That is my fervent wish. Of course, to do so, it will be necessary to have rules that are fair and can stand up to democratic appraisal. We must not create conditions by which wealth becomes concentrated among only some people or through which those who pay scant attention to the law come out ahead.

That is precisely why Japan and Germany, and moreover Japan and Europe, as those who value freedom and human rights and respect democratic rules, must act in cooperation. And that is why we must conclude an economic partnership agreement between Japan and the EU at an early time, in order to express this prominently. I appeal for that wholeheartedly.

Chancellor Merkel, shall we not move forward together, in order to maintain and reinforce the free, open, and rules-based system that has propelled us to where we are today?

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A major turning point in the history of humankind has arrived. In prehistoric days, we ventured into the forest to hunt. If that is the first chapter of human history, then the second is when we succeeded in securing a stable number of food calories in the form of rice and wheat.

The curtain rose on chapter three as waves of industrialization arrived in what we call modern times; chapter four saw telecommunications and computers fuse, opening a new door.

We are now witnessing the opening of the fifth chapter, when we are able to find solutions to problems we had been unable to solve. This age in which all things are connected and all technologies fuse is the advent of “Society 5.0.”

Let us, Germany and Japan, together write the story of Society 5.0 from the very first page.

Chancellor Merkel, we will maintain a world that is open and respects rules, and is free and fair. And we will make it resilient. Given that, shall we not motivate young people to hasten over to the wide plains of innovation, to their hearts’ content?

The fifth chapter of humankind will surely be a world with a bright and rosy future ahead. Let us walk on, forward and then further still, believing in our strengths.

