

**Opening remarks by the Ambassador of Italy, Gianluigi Benedetti,
on the occasion of the inauguration of PoliTo Japan Hub in Tokyo
Embassy of Italy, 29 September 2025**

Vice President of the Regione Piemonte, Elena CHIORINO, Mayor of Torino, Stefano LO RUSSO, Rector of Politecnico di Torino, Stefano Paolo CORGNATI, distinguished Guests, good evening and welcome to the Residence of the Italian Ambassador in Tokyo, a “house-museum” from the mid-1960s overlooking a beautiful and famous Japanese garden of the seventeenth-century.

Once owned by the Matsudaira feudal clan and later the private residence of Matsukata Masayoshi, an influential politician of the early Meiji period, this magnificent place is the site of the Italian Embassy since 1930 and ideally represents the union between our cultures and Nations. It is, therefore, a great honor to host here, this evening, the inauguration of the Japan Hub of Politecnico di Torino, one of Italy’s leading universities.

The Piemonte Region, Torino, and the Politecnico di Torino have all, and since long time, cultivated strong links with Japan, a country that, like Italy and Piemonte, stands at the forefront of research, innovation and industrial capabilities.

The bilateral relations between Italy and Japan are almost 160 years old and so is our bilateral cooperation in technical sectors. Silk producers and coral artisans arrived here before the first diplomat, and in the late XIX Century the Italian engraver Edoardo Chiossone came to Japan to transfer the technologies to print banknotes and stamps. Architects, technicians and artists followed.

With this historical background, our scientific and technological cooperation grew steadily, especially from the late Sixties, and it was finally formalised in 1988, with the signing of a bilateral agreement that laid the foundation for regular joint projects and research exchanges.

Since then, executive programs have supported thriving partnerships across a wide spectrum of fields: from robotics to materials science; from physics to life science; from space to energy, just to mention some of the areas of joint research.

Over the last twenty years, the scientific cooperation expanded steadily and today, hundreds of bilateral agreements connect Italian and Japanese universities, scientific institutions and research centers, creating a strong academic and scientific community.

This long-standing cooperation has been relaunched in the framework of the Strategic Partnership announced by our Prime Ministers in January 2023, and the following Action Plan, approved for the 2024-2027 period, has further promoted the relations in the academic and scientific sectors.

In this framework, Politecnico di Torino stands out.

The relationships that PoliTo has built with leading Japanese universities and the numerous joint scientific publications they have produced, led in 2022 to the creation of the PoliTo Japan Hub in Kyoto, the first stable presence of an Italian university in Japan. In 2024, a double degree program with the Kansai Medical University of Osaka followed up.

The opening of the Japan Hub in Tokyo is another milestone.

It will enhance the visibility and impact of PoliTo in Japan and strengthen the cooperation with the “Team Italia” - the Embassy and other Italian institutions, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Association of Italian Researchers - that is particularly active in the promotion of the scientific and technological cooperation.

Guided by the Action Plan objectives to enhance our bilateral technological and industrial cooperation in hi-tech sectors, we have concentrated our efforts in six priority areas: aerospace, semiconductors, smart mobility, life science and biotechnologies, green energy, and agritech.

Just to mention a few ongoing initiatives, last year our competent Ministries launched two big joint research projects, one on batteries and the second on gravitational waves, that, hopefully, will be followed by two other projects in the sector of robotics and biotechnologies. At the end of October, we will organize a workshop on innovative advanced therapies and soon afterwards, at the Nihobashi Space Week, we will host a dialogue on science and technology in the global space economy.

As I said, the PoliTo Japan Hub in Tokyo will fit perfectly in this picture and will greatly contribute to the promotion of the relations between Italy and Japan. On the one hand, it will provide a big boost to all our activities in the field of science and technology. On the other hand, it will play an active role as a strong and excellent partner for any Japanese institutions or companies that would be interested in hi-tech cooperation with Italy.

Let me conclude by extending to the Politecnico di Torino my congratulations for their long-term vision in Japan, by wishing them all the best in their endeavours, and by thanking all of you for your participation tonight. Happy networking!