



[NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE,
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<< NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE >>

I offer my hearty wishes for all of your
happiness in the new year.

The economies of Osaka and Kansai had
continued to be strong, including the inbound
market, but the spread of the new coronavirus infection changed
everything. The momentum of the infection is showing no signs

of weakening and we have started 2021 with the coronavirus crisis still ongoing. However, the expansion of the infection is sure to come to an end at some point in the future. Based on our experiences during the coronavirus crisis, we must become able to exhibit anti-fragile strength, to rebound from a crisis and turn it into an opportunity, and to go on to create a society that is resistant to natural disasters and infectious diseases. At each major turning point in its history, Osaka has overcome difficulties and opened up a new era. I believe that this coronavirus crisis is also a trial that we can overcome.

The coronavirus crisis has dramatically changed the way we live and do business. This includes things such as the introduction of web conferencing systems and the expansion of teleworking, the holding of business negotiations and educational classes online, and tele-medicine. Social changes that we thought were still a way



into the future have become a reality. After coronavirus, we should not simply restore our society to its original state. We need to rebuild it to be better, so that we can be resilient against future threats. I want us to make this year one when the Osaka and Kansai economies regain their strength, to be ready to go back on the offensive.

To that end, what is required above anything else is to create an environment in which companies can continue their business in ease. Over the last year, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry responded to more than 20,000 business consultations on cash flow and other issues. We also worked for the recovery of demand in the region by creating various opportunities for business, including online business events. It is precisely in such tough times for company management that we must increase our presence and become "the reliable and indispensable Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry." This year, we will again continue to implement precise activities aimed at improving productivity and strengthening management capabilities, the promotion of digitization and business succession support for the SMEs and small-scale businesses that support our regional economy.

At the same time, I want us to make steady progress in preparations to ensure that Osaka will continue to evolve and show significant growth in the post-coronavirus era. In particular, we believe that there will be an acceleration of the efforts to realize "Designing Future Society for Our Lives," which is the goal of the 2025 World Expo Osaka, Kansai. This is because many people have experienced the necessity for that through their real-life experiences in the coronavirus crisis. In addition to medical care, the sectors related to "Our Lives" are expanding to a wide range of areas such as health maintenance and promotion, disease prevention, sports, and even food. We will be providing support for companies taking on the challenge of creating new business in sectors such as this in the wellness industry.

In addition, there has been a growing need for non-contact, non-face-to-face, and congestion avoidance business, so we will work for the commercial use of new digital technologies such as AI, IoT, XR (the fusion of real and virtual worlds), and MaaS (Mobility as a Service), by promoting open innovation where a variety of

companies from large enterprises to SMEs and startups are participating. We will also focus on expanding the fields for demonstrations, which are essential for the commercialization of new technologies. In cooperation with Osaka Prefecture, Osaka City, and the Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition, we will start supporting demonstrations on Yumeshima, the site of the World Exposition. Through cooperation between companies from different industries, we will also fully open a demonstration laboratory for the digital infrastructure of a future society in which humans and robots coexist. Through these efforts, we hope to further accelerate the trend toward thinking "if you want to demonstrate something, go to Osaka," and to help make a "test site for future society" into a reality.

In the area of urban development as a smart city/super city and startup ecosystem hub city, etc., we will work closely with the national government, Osaka Prefecture, Osaka City and related organizations to enhance Osaka's attractiveness as an international city. With Osaka as an innovation hub in Asia that is a driving force for Japan's growth, we will aim to attract diverse human resources and companies from both Japan and overseas, and to help them to develop and grow so that we create a virtuous circle of prosperity in Asia and the world. I want the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry to take the socioeconomic changes that have occurred over the past year due to the coronavirus as an opportunity, and to take on new challenges for a dream-filled future for Osaka.

We look forward to all for your continued support and cooperation this year.



O-BIC as one-stop service center for creating a foothold in Osaka

<http://o-bic.net/>

Osaka Business & Investment Center (O-BIC), established in 2001, is operated through the joint efforts of the Osaka Prefectural Government, Osaka City Government, and Osaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

As your one-stop service center for business investing, O-BIC provides a comprehensive yet detailed support system. International companies, foreign government offices and economic organizations as well as foreign-capitalized companies located in Japan are welcome to use the center to obtain accurate information and essential advice for creating a foothold in Osaka. For further information, please contact: o-bic@osaka.cci.or.jp



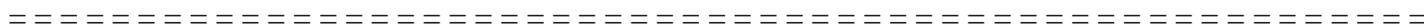
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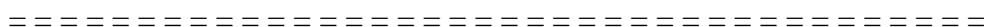
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