Speech by Mr. Swadeen Sinha Kshatria
Municipal Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai
18th October 2010

The Honorable Mayor of Yokohama, the Honorable Vice Mayor(s) of Yokohama, the Honorable Chairman of the City Council, the Deputy Chairman of the City Council, all the honorable members of the City Council of Yokohama, representatives from the sister cities of Manila, Vancouver, Odessa, dignitaries, ladies and gentlemen.   It is my true great honor and prestige for me to address in this historic house of the City Council of Yokohama.   My name is Swadeen Kshatria, and I'm the Municipal Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai.

The sister city relationship between Mumbai City and the City of Yokohama was established in the year 1965.   And it is my true immense satisfaction that we are celebrating the 45th anniversary of our relationship.

The City of Yokohama has rendered financial assistance for the development of our Veer Jijamata Bhosle Udyan, which is a famous botanical garden and a famous zoo in the City of Mumbai.   As a reciprocal gesture, Mumbai, in 1985, had presented two elephants for the Kanazawa Zoo in Yokohama and also in 1998 Mumbai City had presented two alligators which went to the Nogeyama Zoo of Yokohama.   In the year 2005 we had very heavy rains and floods in the City of Mumbai and a great amount of damage and devastation had taken place.   And the City of Yokohama had contributed financial assistance for providing relief to the citizens of Mumbai.

Although this is my first visit to the City of Yokohama and I have arrived yesterday, I am feeling absolutely at home in Yokohama by the wonderful reception, by the warm affection that has been shown to us by the honorable mayor and by the honorable chairperson and all the city councilors that I met yesterday.   I found the city to be very beautiful with the sea shore and with its clean, green environment.   I also found that a very large number of Indians are residing in Yokohama and carrying out business and trade activities.

I visited the international festival which is going on in Yokohama yesterday.   And I was very impressed to see stores which were selling Indian items, which were telling us about Mumbai and about Indian culture.   They were also celebrating the festival of Diwali yesterday in Yokohama, which is already important festival in Mumbai and for all over India.   It is called the festival of light, when we celebrate the victory of good over evil.   I also found that there is a beautiful Indian fountain built in Yokohama in the Yamashita Park.   I read on the Indian fountain that this was built in 1939 and the Indian fountain

is devoted to those who lost their lives in the earthquake of 1923.   I also found, in the international festival, the Yokohama High School of Commerce had displayed very rare photographs and I must admire, I must appreciate that they showed me the rare photographs of the visit of Swami Vivekananda, a great philosopher and a saint from India who had visited Yokohama in 1893.   They also showed rare photographs of the visit of our famous Rabindranath Tagore, a famous poet and a famous literateur.   So the City of Yokohama cherishes and preserves the historical relationships that we are being having with Mumbai and I can assure you that I will carry forward this great tradition of friendship between India and Yokohama.

Both the cities of Yokohama and Mumbai have similar characteristics.   The most important similarity is that both have grown as a harbor, a port city.   Recently Yokohama celebrated 150th year of the opening of the Port of Yokohama.   The Port of Mumbai has been the lifeline of our city for several centuries.   Both the cities have trade, industry and commerce as the most important activities.   Millions of citizens come to the cities in search of employment and in search of making a career.   Both the cities offer tremendous opportunities for young people who come to the city in search of employment. Both the cities are progressive and modern in their approach and believe in taking advantage of economic liberalization and globalization which is sweeping the world.

While Yokohama has a population of 3.65 million, Mumbai recorded a population of 12 million according to 2001 population census.   We have a census after every ten years and the next census figures will be published in 2011.   It is estimated that the population of Mumbai may be around 14 million now.   The rapid pace of urbanization close up challenges of how to provide adequate infrastructure for the growing population, particularly in the areas of affordable housing, more and more housing for the middle class is becoming difficult, public transport, adequate drinking water, health and educational facilities.   These challenges have to be addressed.   In the City of Mumbai, we have undertaken construction of several flyovers to ease public transport.   Recently, the Bandra to Worli sea link has been completed.   And when I look at your, I think it is called the Bay Bridge, it reminds me of the Bandra Worli sea link which has been completed recently.   Construction of metro rail and monorail project is in progress in Mumbai.   For providing affordable housing, several schemes are being implemented. We are also constructing a new dam called the Middle Vaitarna Dam for providing more and adequate drinking water to the citizens of Mumbai.

I'm of the opinion that the sister city relationship between Yokohama and Mumbai will be strengthened not only through exchange of cultural and social activities which are important, but also in terms of trade, industry and commerce.   We must promote all these activities.   Let us come together and face the challenges unitedly.   I would like to

make use of this opportunity on behalf of the citizens and the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai to convey our best wishes to the citizens of Yokohama. I wish to sincerely thank the Honorable Mayor of Yokohama for hosting this historic event and for inviting me to the City of Yokohama and for giving me an opportunity to address all the honorable city councilors. Thank you very much.