We launched the Ariake Project to transform Fast Retailing into a digital consumer retail company, and we are now ready to accelerate that revolution. The Ariake Project is creating a new, dynamic supply chain across planning, production, distribution, and retail by reimagining all existing ideas and concepts. It is transforming the way we work, gather information globally, and team up with people worldwide to create new products.

The opening of UNIQLO’s first Swedish store in Stockholm in August 2018 was an exciting milestone. At the opening ceremony, I was struck by Sweden’s wonderful culture and its people’s relaxed but refined approach to life. I felt UNIQLO’s LifeWear concept resonated with the Swedish affinity for simple, practical lifestyles. As the cradle of Western clothing culture, Europe is an important market for us, and we plan to build UNIQLO’s presence there by actively opening large-format stores in prime urban locations.

I believe the Asian region—which includes Greater China (Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan), South Korea, Southeast Asia, and India, and is the driver of global economic growth—is crucial for future UNIQLO and GU expansion. Rapidly-developing Asia Pacific economies harbor great business opportunities for Fast Retailing as a whole. We will continue to deliver indispensable everyday clothing that offers new value to our customers.

Fast Retailing achieved another record business performance in FY2018, but we are not solely focused on growth. Our quest to create a new digital consumer retail industry and become the world’s No.1 brand also incorporates a focused commitment to a sustainable society. As a producer of 1.3 billion items of clothing each year, we have a strong responsibility to lead the sustainable development of global society through our core clothing business. We proactively address issues relating to factory working environments, human rights, and environmental protection. We strongly promote our All-Product Recycling Initiative, the advancement of women in the workplace, the employment of people with disabilities, and the support of refugees worldwide. We remain determined to make the world a better place through clothes.

January 2019