The key benefit of participating in the Young Leaders Forum was the connection with others. Through animated discussions, whether during the day or in the evenings, we learnt more about the cultures and way of thinking in each other’s countries and thus established close, sibling-like relationships in a short time. I believe the relationships established will last a lifetime, including the network with alumni of previous years. I am extremely grateful for having received the valuable opportunity to participate in such an event.«

KITAHARA Taro, Participant 2018
ITOCHU Corporation

Participants
In the past, participants have included prospective leaders from Airbus Japan K.K., The Asahi Shimbun Company, Asia-Pacific Committee of German Business (APA), Bank of Japan (BOJ), Berlin Social Science Center (WZB), Daido Life Insurance Company, Daimler AG, Dentsu Inc., Deutsche Bank AG, Ernst & Young GmbH, German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), German Federal Foreign Office (AA), German Red Cross (GRC) e.V., Hitachi Ltd., HORIBA, Ltd., The Japan Foundation, Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), Jiji Press, Merck KGaA, Mitsubishi Research Institute, MITSUI & Co., Ltd., Munich Security Conference (MSC), Panasonic Corporation, RIKEN, Siemens AG, Süddeutsche Zeitung, TÜV Rheinland InterTraffic GmbH, DIE ZEIT and various other institutions, companies and top universities.

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In 2006, the Japanese-German Center Berlin (JDZB) established an annual German-Japanese Young Leaders Forum in cooperation with the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

Program Goals
The Young Leaders Forum is a future-oriented program that intends to inspire prospective leaders from Germany and Japan to address politically and socially relevant issues and viewpoints. It offers a forum for intense discussions, thereby seeking to promote and deepen mutual understanding. In the long run, the program aims at developing and strengthening long-lasting personal networks between Germany and Japan.

Structure
The annual program is held alternately in Germany and Japan. The summer school comprises intensive workshops with eminent experts as well as practitioners, on-site visits to relevant institutions and companies as well as a cultural program.

Target Group
The program addresses young prospective leaders from various professions (eight Germans and eight Japanese). These should be recommended by key persons from private companies or public institutions in the fields of business, politics, administration, the media, or the academic world. The participants should be between 25 and 35 years old and speak English fluently.

Funding
The program is organized by the JDZB. In 2019, it is funded by B. Metzler seel. Sohn & Co., NÜRNBERGER Insurance Group, the Yamaoka Memorial Foundation, Yanmar Co., Ltd., and Yuasa M&B Co., Ltd. Basic expenditure during the Young Leaders Forum will be covered (travel costs, accommodation, meals, transport, etc.).

The Japanese-German Center Berlin (JDZB) is a non-profit foundation and was established in 1985 to promote and deepen Japanese-German and international cooperation in the fields of science and culture. It is supported by the German Federal Foreign Office, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Land Berlin.

Alumni Association
In 2011 previous participants of the program established an alumni association to create and maintain a sustainable network and to actively contribute to the future programs. The commitment of the alumni underlines the sustainability of the program.

We believe this program is very valuable because it offers participants, i.e., young leaders from Japan and Germany, the opportunity to learn together, exchange views and establish relationships based on mutual trust. In view of the various crises and many instabilities in recent years, the continued strengthening of the friendly relations between Japan and Germany, which share basic values, is of great importance not only for both countries, but also for the respective regions and the world as a whole. I would encourage the participants from both countries to take advantage of the experience gained here to participate even more in the future development of Japanese-German relations.

YAGI Takeshi, Ambassador of Japan to the Federal Republic of Germany

Dr. Hans Carl von Werthern, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Japan

»I benefitted immensely from the expertise of the excellent speakers, as well as from the debates with the other participants from Japan and Germany. The program allowed me to expand my professional network with extremely interesting people from a wide range of backgrounds – I highly recommend it!«

Dr. Anna KLABUNDE, Participant 2018
Federal Ministry of Finance (BMF)