

Remarks by H. E. Mr. HAYASHI Hajime.
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,
for the Manchester Tokyo 2020 Event
on 12 October, 2021

Mayor Burnham, Olympians and Paralympians, and all of you,
Good evening!

It is certainly a great pleasure to be in Manchester with you today on this wonderful occasion. May I start by expressing my gratitude to Mr Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, and Ms Jo Ahmed, Honorary Consul of Japan, for inviting me here and to Deloitte UK, Halle Orchestra, and Yutaka for making this truly delightful event possible.

This summer, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games were held in Japan. While the entire project to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games faced great challenges in the circumstances created by the pandemic, I am pleased to note that the Games took place in a largely safe and secure manner.

Many of us observed that the power of sport had brought the world together in Tokyo through the athletes' skill, speed, strength and, particularly, their wholehearted endeavour. It was especially exciting to see the members of both the Japanese and UK teams giving their all and winning many medals.

In this regard, I would like to highlight the great achievements of the athletes from this area. Indeed, I understand that the North West was the region from which the greatest number of medals were won in England, making up 47 medals all together. What a tremendous feat!

It had been hoped that Tokyo 2020 would not only provide excitement but also trigger social change. In fact, one of the key concepts of Tokyo 2020 was 'Unity in Diversity'. It seems that the wide exposure given to Para sports at Tokyo 2020 has greatly helped create an atmosphere of inclusiveness. Inheriting the legacy started at Stoke Mandeville in the UK,

the Tokyo Paralympic Games surely provided significant encouragement for efforts in Japan and around the world to embrace diversity even further.

During the Games, the Embassy of Japan received many, indeed many, supporting and encouraging comments and communications from all over the UK. I would sincerely like to express my deep appreciation for the enthusiastic way in which people in the UK embraced the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

In order to commemorate what was achieved and to strengthen the ties between Japan and the UK, with the support of the British Olympic Association and the British Paralympic Association, we have just started a YouTube video series called 'Tokyo 2020: Looking Back'. It is a compilation of short videos from those who were involved in or watched Tokyo 2020, reflecting their memories of the Games. I would greatly appreciate it if you could see this for yourselves by visiting our Embassy's website or even participate by offering us your mementoes of Tokyo 2020.

Once again, I very much appreciate this opportunity to thank you as a representative of Japan. It is my earnest hope that what was achieved at Tokyo 2020 can help propel the ties between our peoples to even greater heights.

Thank you indeed!