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Remarks by H.E. Mr Hiroshi Suzuki,
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,
at the Hanami Gathering in Regent's Park
on 10th April 2025

Mr Sano,
My Lord Mayor,
Distinguished Guests,

It is my great pleasure to attend this gathering here in Regent's Park, one of the first locations where the cherry trees from the Sakura Cherry Tree Project were planted in 2019.

The project was initiated by Mr Keisaku Sandy Sano, then-Chairman of the Japan Association in the UK, and launched together with Mr Takashi Tsukamoto, then-Chairman of the Japan-British Society, and myself, then-Prime Minister Abe's Private Secretary for Foreign Affairs. As one of the founding members, I am deeply moved to finally visit the place where the project started.

Since then, the project has made steady progress, with around 8,000 cherry trees now planted all over the UK, far surpassing the original goal of 1,000. Those trees are located in various places throughout the UK, delighting visitors each spring.

Now I look forward to achieving our new target to plant 10,000 trees during my term in London. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all of those who have contributed to planting such an impressive number of trees in the country.

I hope that, as a symbol of the deep and multifaceted friendship between Japan and the UK, the cherry trees planted here will be cared for with great tenderness and grow strong. I also trust that the bond between our two countries will continue to flourish likewise.

I will remain actively engaged in this project, dreaming of a future where the cherry trees bloom beautifully each spring across the UK, and where people from both Japan and the UK can enjoy Hanami together.

Thank you very much.