

Remarks by H.E. Mr Hiroshi Suzuki,  
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,  
on the occasion of the presentation of the  
Ambassador's Commendation  
to Mr Motoki Hirai,  
on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2026

Thank you very much for coming to the Japanese Embassy for this evening's special occasion. It is my great pleasure to present the Ambassador's Commendation to Mr Motoki Hirai.

In 1994, Mr Hirai was appointed as an artistic emissary for Japanese culture by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japan Foundation. Since then, he has performed extensively around the world.

Most recently, he visited Viet Nam last year and performed in four different locations.

Through his music, he has made a remarkable contribution to promoting Japanese culture and fostering friendship between Japan and many countries round the world.

In recent years, he has been actively engaged in new Japan–UK initiatives centered on music, culture and education, further strengthening Japan-UK relationship

This year marks the 15th year from the Great East Japan Earthquake.

What is very special about Mr Hirai is that his birthday happens to fall on 11<sup>th</sup> March. Therefore, he has felt a profound sense of mission to assist in Tohoku's reconstruction. In order to raise funds, he has held more than 50 charity concerts across Europe, the United States and Japan, dedicating the proceeds to support the affected people over many years.

He has also continued to visit schools in the disaster-hit areas, holding performances and offering warm encouragement to the students in the affected communities.

While he has reached a milestone in his direct fundraising activities in recent years, his efforts to deliver hope through music continue to this day.

As a “Hirono Dream Ambassador” for the town of Hirono-cho in Fukushima, he remains deeply committed to supporting the people who are still suffering.

Thanks to Mr Hirai’s tireless work, awareness and support for the disaster-affected areas have been sustained not only in Japan, but also here in Europe.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for his invaluable contributions to promoting Japanese culture around the world and assisting the people in the disaster affected areas in Tohoku.

We will shortly have the pleasure of listening to a performance by Mr Hirai. As we do so, let us reflect on his inspiring achievements and renew our commitment to continuing our support for the reconstruction of the disaster affected areas in Tohoku.

Thank you very much.