



Dear Friends,

January 2012

I am delighted to have the opportunity to inform you of a historic celebration this year, the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and New Zealand.

In Japan the 60th anniversary is a special occasion as it represents one complete cycle of the Japanese calendar, with 12 zodiac signs each appearing in five different phases or stems. According to conventional Japanese beliefs, the end of a period of 60 years is thought to mark the completion of a life cycle and the start of another from the following year.

The 60th anniversary is a time to reflect on the wide-ranging developments since the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries in 1952, and to look forward to advancing further our friendly and constructive ties in the next 60 years.

Japan and New Zealand share many commonalities in societal governance, including the fundamental values of democracy, respect for basic human rights, the rule of law, and the market-oriented economies. Additionally, our two countries cooperate successfully in promoting developmental initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region and in addressing global concerns and challenges.

Moreover, our mutual and collaborative undertakings in dealing with the disasters affecting our respective countries last year have had attested the strength and firmness of our distinct relationship.

At the Embassy's end-of-year reception in 2011 to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, I was privileged to be able to present an official logo to celebrate this significant anniversary. The logo combines a silver fern, representing New Zealand, with a hand-folded paper crane, representing Japan. The crane is believed to be the symbol of longevity and prosperity in Japan.

In this year the Embassy is planning to host various events across the country, in association with other Japanese and New Zealand organizations, to celebrate this remarkable milestone in our relationship. I look forward to seeing you there.

Hideto MITAMURA
Ambassador of Japan