



## *Embassy of Japan to New Zealand*

### **Reception for anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake**

**Media Release from the Embassy of Japan, Wellington, New Zealand  
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H.E. Mr Hideto Mitamura, Ambassador of Japan to New Zealand, hosted a reception to commemorate the first anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake on Wednesday, 21 March 2012. The reception was attended by dignitaries, members of the Urban Search and Rescue team (USAR) from New Zealand that went to Japan to assist with the rescue and recovery operations, and representatives of local Japanese associations, amongst others.

After offering a moment of silence, Ambassador Mitamura explained in his speech that the reception was organised "to pay tribute to the victims of the disaster, to once again express our heartfelt appreciation for all the support rendered to Japan at both a private and government level", and to update the people of New Zealand on Japan's recovery effort. He thanked the more than 50 members of the New Zealand USAR team especially for their hard work in Minami-sanriku, one of the most devastated areas.

Ambassador Mitamura emphasised that reconstruction was proceeding smoothly, and stated that "industrial output has returned to pre-quake levels in most of the affected areas." He also stressed that Japan is safe, and strongly encouraged people to visit for tourism, study and business.

Prime Minister The Right Honourable John Key expressed his sympathies to those affected on New Zealand's behalf and said New Zealand was pleased to stand shoulder to shoulder with Japan.

Prime Minister Key said that in the aftermath of the Christchurch earthquake Japan was one of the first countries to lend their support, and, therefore, when Japan put out its own call for help New Zealand was ready to return the favour.

Ambassador Mitamura also presented an award of recognition to the New Zealand USAR team, offering them his thanks for "the dedicated and selfless service" that they extended to his countrymen and women.



**Ambassador Mitamura with Prime Minister John Key at the reception.**

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