



4th August, 2022

The Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation to be awarded to Mrs Hiromi Morris, Emeritus President of Global Cities New Zealand

The Embassy of Japan is truly pleased to announce that Mrs Hiromi Morris, Emeritus President of Global Cities New Zealand, has been confirmed as one of the recipients of the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation 2022, in honour of her long-standing dedication to the promotion of mutual understanding between Japan and New Zealand.

Mrs Hiromi Morris has devoted herself to fostering sister city relationships between Japan and New Zealand for nearly three decades. In 1994, she joined, the Wellington Sakai Association (WSA), a community organisation actively encouraging Wellington's sister city relationship with Sakai City in Osaka, as a founding member. After assuming the WSA's presidency in 2004, she was pivotal in many exchange activities, including an artists' joint exhibition, a live students' speech contest using online technology, school rugby exchanges, and marathon runner exchanges. She also contributed, to the promotion of traditional Japanese culture and martial arts, including Ikebana (flower arrangement), Tea Ceremony, Shakuhachi (Japanese bamboo flute), Kyudo (Japanese archery), and Judo.

In 2008, Mrs Hiromi Morris became a board member of Sister Cities New Zealand (SCNZ), now operating as Global Cities New Zealand (GCNZ). She served as President of GCNZ from 2012 until 2022, the first Japanese and longest-serving President in the GCNZ's history. During her tenure, she supported the successful upkeep and progress of Japan and New Zealand sister city relationships in various ways, including facilitating the signing of the sister city agreement between Palmerston North and Mihara City in Hiroshima in March 2019. Thanks to her support, Japan and New Zealand currently enjoy a total of 44 sister city connections; the largest number New Zealand has with any other country.

Even after retiring as President in May 2022, Mrs Morris has continued to engage in supporting sister city relationships in the capacity of Emeritus President of GCNZ. She is currently coordinating the GCNZ Forum to be held in November 2022 in Wellington. She is also reinvigorating youth engagement in sister city relationships by closely coordinating with the young members of GCNZ. Grounded by her own people-to-people exchange experience during her younger days, she believes in the power and skill of these inspiring young people — our future leaders — to be the driving force for boosting sister city relationships.

This year, Japan and New Zealand are celebrating together the milestone of our close diplomatic ties formed 70 years ago. The Embassy shares the delight of Mrs Morris's

commendation coinciding with this auspicious year. Our bilateral relationship is bolstered by the deep connection of our peoples and sister city relationships. These human connections have encouraged Japan to hold New Zealand close to its heart.

Mrs Morris's work is a credit to the genuine friendship and mutual bond between our peoples. Her experience and expertise in connecting people to people is of great value and her passion and efforts towards sister city community groups have been and will continue to be a cornerstone of our flourishing sister city relationships. The Embassy of Japan is deeply indebted to her lifetime commitment and achievements, and looks forward to her steady support for more years to come.

