



20<sup>th</sup> February, 2023

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### **The Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation Ceremony for Mrs Hiromi Morris, Emeritus President of Global Cities New Zealand**

On February 16, 2023, the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation Ceremony was held at the Ambassador's residence for Mrs Hiromi Morris, Emeritus President of Global Cities New Zealand. It was a memorable event where many people who have supported her for many years gathered, and shared their memories and experiences with Hiromi-san in sister city relationships, showing their respect and gratitude for her long-standing dedication.

Hiromi-san has devoted herself to fostering sister city relationships between Japan and New Zealand for nearly thirty years. She joined the Wellington Sakai Association (WSA) as a founding member in 1994, and assumed the WSA's presidency in 2004. During her time as President, she was pivotal in many exchanges between Wellington and Sakai, including in art, rugby and marathon, as well as in the promotion of Japanese culture (Ikebana, Tea Ceremony, and Shakuhachi) and martial arts (Kyudo and Judo).

She served as President of Sister Cities New Zealand (SCNZ) now operating as Global Cities New Zealand (GCNZ) from 2012 until 2022, the first Japanese and longest-serving President in GCNZ's history. During her tenure, she supported the successful advancement of Japan and New Zealand sister city relationships now totalling 44, and also facilitated the signing of the sister city agreement between Palmerston North and Mihara City in Hiroshima in March 2019.

Hiromi-san's work is a credit to the genuine friendship and mutual bond between our peoples. Her capability and achievements in connecting people-to-people are of great value, and have been and will continue to be a cornerstone of our flourishing sister city relationships as well as our bilateral relationship between Japan and New Zealand.

In fact, her achievements are not limited to the Japan-New Zealand relationship. During her time as President and ever since, she has encouraged New Zealand's sister city relationships with many other countries. Last year, she received one of the Absolutely Positively Wellingtonian Awards for her commitment to the Wellington community in recognition of promoting Wellington's 10 sister city relationships.

She also successfully relaunched the Youth Subcommittee of GCNZ at the GCNZ Forum which she coordinated and was held at New Zealand Parliament in November last year in order to invigorate youth engagement in sister city relationships. 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.

We express our heartfelt congratulations on both of her awards and look forward to her steady support and contribution for the people-to-people ties and sister city relationships between Japan and New Zealand, as well as between New Zealand and various other countries of the world.



*Photos courtesy of Neil Price*