

## **One Year to Go until the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo**

In one year, on July 24, 2020, the Games of the XXXII Olympiad including the Paralympic Games will open in Tokyo, Japan. When athletes from all over the world march into the grand opening ceremony at the newly renovated National Stadium, they will be welcomed by all Japanese people with their best hospitality. I particularly want to extend an early greeting and invitation to the many Florida athletes and their fans.

Japan has aimed to create a better future for the world by communicating the power of sports and the Olympic and Paralympic Movement to all generations, including the youth of the world, who will be responsible for our future.

For this reason, Japan has implemented and promoted Sport for Tomorrow, a program which has benefited more than 9.6 million people over 200 countries and regions. With Sport for Tomorrow, we will continue to make international contributions through sports programs.

For example, the International Sport Academy, a part of Sport for Tomorrow, is a global platform where students can learn about Olympic and Paralympic education; sport management; sport science and medicine; sport for development and peace; and teaching, coaching and physical education.

Tokyo hosted the first ever Olympic Games held in Asia in 1964 and the world experienced for the first time many of Japan's achievements - bullet trains, expansive highways and the cleanliness of a big city. The Olympic spirit also taught us that legacy is not just about buildings, not even about national projects. It is about global vision and investment in people.

With the support of people from all over the world, Japan has been able to gradually reconstruct the affected areas that were heavily damaged due to the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011. For that, I would like to express my deepest thanks and, with the Olympics, present to the world an image of Japan which is thriving even after such a catastrophe.

The U.S. and Japan are bound by an alliance and strong friendship. We hope visitors and spectators at the Tokyo 2020 Games also enjoy Japan's cultural attractions and technological achievements. To ensure that guests in Japan can experience all of what the country has to offer, we have created "Team Japan," an organization dedicated to ensuring that everyone will feel safe and comfortable while enjoying the games.

In one year, Japan will roll out the welcome mat to the world and I sincerely hope many people in Florida will have the opportunity to travel to the Games and see firsthand the strong bonds between our two countries.

Kenji Hirata  
Consul General of Japan for Florida