

**Greeting by Minister Takahiro Nakamae**  
**Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations**  
**On the Occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the World Harmony Run**  
**12 April 2012**

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor to join you and a great pleasure to address the participants of this year's extraordinary global relay in celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the World Harmony Run. On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to extend my congratulations to the organizers and supporters for their many years of hard work for the promotion of international friendship and understanding. Furthermore, I am deeply honored to receive on behalf of the people of Japan the Torch Bearer's award, a symbol of this remarkable torch race around the world. This medal will serve as a memento for the Japanese people of the solidarity the international community expressed to them during the difficulties caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake which caused multiple disasters only one year ago.

Last May, an international team from the World Harmony Run visited Japan's hardest hit areas from the Great East Japan Earthquake, where their activities at elementary schools taught the young student survivors about the strength and courage they had within themselves. In Japanese, we use the word "*kizuna*" which means "bonds," and can also be used as a way to describe Sri Chinmoy's idea of "oneness."

The run itself is an embodiment of a certain enduring spirit. The world has witnessed the Great East Japan Earthquake survivors' resilience over the past year and I can see this same spirit alive in the participating runners. Now, a little over a year later, the people of the Tohoku region who are on their path to recovery will welcome the global relay runners this May across the Tohoku

Area over the course of five days.

Today at the United Nations Headquarters, the General Assembly is holding a thematic debate on Disaster Risk Reduction. Japan is wholeheartedly participating in this debate as we commemorate the anniversary of the earthquake both within and outside of the UN today. I hope that these events encourage the survivors of the devastated areas not only in Japan but also all over the world, and that they will see how the world continues to send their support and promises to all that is possible to prevent such disasters in the future.

Once again, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the organizers and participants of the 2012 Global Relay. Your support for the values and spirit which the United Nations strives to achieve, as well as for the people of Japan who believe in “*kizuna*” and “oneness,” is highly cherished by the international community and I encourage you all to continue running for world harmony.

Thank you.