

**Remarks by H.E Ambassador SUZUKI Kazuhiro at the ceremony to mark the United Nations
International Day of Peace, Canberra Nara Peace Park
Saturday, 21st September 2024**

Before I begin my remarks, I'd also like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Mr Andrew Barr, ACT Chief Minister,
Mr Damián Cardona-Onses, Director of the UN Information Centre,
Ms Alicia Payne, Federal Member of Canberra,
Members of the Rotary Club of Canberra Burley Griffin,
Ambassadors and High commissioners
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to attend this ceremony to mark the United Nations International Day of Peace for the second year in a row, and to join both the citizens of Canberra and elsewhere in coming together as one in the cause of peace.

In the world at present, however, events are taking place that are at odds with the ideal of peace, thus making its realisation far more difficult.

Respect for cultural diversity and deepening mutual understanding through various forms of social interaction at the local level are the first step in building a society free from conflict and division.

Australia is a thriving multicultural society, making it an ideal environment for building peace and unity together.

Our venue today encompasses the Peace Bell, a replica of the first such bell which was donated to the United Nations by Japanese people in 1954.

The deep resonating tone of this bell is a call to all people from all nations to practice tolerance, understanding, and to offer hope that peace will prevail.

It is a call that has become even more urgent, given events over the past year.

It is a call underlining just how important it is to practice respect and mutual understanding.

The Canberra Nara Peace Park that we are gathered in here today was built as a result of the sister-city relationship between Canberra and Nara.

At the annual Candle Festival which will be happening here on the 26th of October, many Canberrans are able to experience Japanese culture, and in doing so raise their understanding of and affinity for Japan.

The Peace Bell in this park is the second one we have here in Australia. The other is in Cowra and this year marks the 80th anniversary of the Cowra Breakout.

In August, I joined many visitors from Japan in visiting Cowra and offered up my prayers along with Prime Minister Albanese and NSW Governor Beazley in memory of those lost.

The great relationship that Japan and Australia enjoy today stands as living proof of how exchanges lead to mutual understanding and which in turn leads to peace.

I am convinced that the reconciliation achieved between us provides a standard for both the region and the world.

This month, and on the initiative of Japan, the only country in the world to have suffered an attack using nuclear weapons, Prime Minister KISHIDA will host a gathering to launch the 'Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty - Friends' group.

This Friends' group plans to call for political attention from countries across the globe in order to realise a 'world free from nuclear weapons', and Foreign Minister Wong has kindly agreed to attend.

So Japan, in cooperation with Australia, continues in its efforts to make a peaceful international community a reality.

To build a society in which all people are afforded both peace and stability demands tolerance and understanding from each and every one of us.

So as Ambassador of Japan, I join hands with all of you gathered here today as we strive to cultivate a culture of peace.

Thank you.

[Ends]