



KENSINGTON PALACE

Thursday 13th September, 2018

**A speech by The Duke of Cambridge at the Opening of Japan House London**

Minna sama. Konichi-wa.

Thank you Deputy Prime Minister, Ambassador and the Japan House team for your warm welcome.

First of all, a word of condolence if I may for the series of deadly disasters which have beset Japan this summer. In recent weeks you have seen nature at its cruellest and on behalf of my family I wanted you to know that our thoughts and prayers are with all those who have been affected.

It is my great pleasure to be here today to help celebrate the Grand Opening of Japan House London – a home for Japanese creativity and innovation, right here on my doorstep in Kensington.

I was deeply honoured three years ago to visit Japan, where I had the chance to experience the wonderful blend of ancient and modern, which so characterises your amazing country.

I found on my visit, something that has been reinforced today. That the U.K. and Japan have a great deal in common – our links with one another – from culture to trade and security – go back centuries. Indeed, this year marks 160 years since we established formal diplomatic relations between our two countries. And standing here now I am delighted to see those relations continue to flourish.

As countries, we share many fundamental values - such as respect for democracy and the rule of law - and we continue to cooperate closely to tackle important global issues, such as the illegal wildlife trade – an issue very close to my heart.

I am delighted that the U.K. is introducing a domestic ban on ivory, and I welcome Japan's recent legislative reform to tighten controls around your own domestic ivory market. I hope you might, in time, help other neighbours in Asia to tackle the illegal trade in wildlife products by sharing your experience and expertise.

I am confident that the U.K. and Japan can build on the successes of past collaboration to combat this abhorrent, international crime. And I am pleased that our

two countries will be working closely together on this issue in the lead up to the Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference here in London next month.

As I am sure you all know, Japan itself will be truly in the global spotlight over the next few years with two major events – the Rugby World Cup in 2019 followed by the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics in 2020. Here in London we know just how exciting those occasions are for the country lucky enough to host them.

And to coincide with these events, the UK-Japan Season of Culture is also due to kick off next year – an opportunity to further enhance a spirit of friendship between the creative industries in our countries.

This amazing building - Japan House London – is intended to be the bridge across which the best in ideas and creativity between the U.K. and Japan will flow. Here, we can build new and lasting relationships in culture, education and business and forge a better understanding of your wonderful country.

On that note, it gives me enormous pleasure to declare Japan House London officially open.