

Statement by Ambassador Ishikawa Hiroshi at  
the Send-off Session for World Tsunami Awareness Day  
High School Student Summit

23 September 2026

Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I am delighted to welcome all of you to the Send-off Session for the participants of the High School Students Summit on World Tsunami Awareness Day.

The designation of the 5th of November as World Tsunami Awareness Day was proposed by the Government of Japan at the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. The aim was to deepen our understanding of the threat of tsunamis, and to raise interest in countermeasures. The proposal was jointly submitted and unanimously adopted by 142 countries.

Since the following year, the High School Students Summit has been held as a forum for high school students from around the world to learn about the threat of tsunamis, share experiences and awareness, and discuss ways to strengthen resilience against natural disasters.

With this year marking the 15th anniversary since the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, I hope that this year's summit will provide another opportunity for the participants to share the facts and lessons learned, on which all of you can take your own action that will make Singapore and the world even more resilient against natural disaster.

I would also like to thank last year's Summit participants, those engaging in disaster prevention in the public and private sectors in Singapore and Japan, both in-person and virtually, including those from Tohoku region, for joining us today. We are particularly fortunate today to have an opportunity to hear online from Mr Murakami Kiyoshi, Chief Executive Officer of Rikuzentakata Agency, about his experiences and expertise related to reconstruction process and disaster prevention initiatives taking place in Rikuzentakata City, which is an area most severely

devastated by the tsunami.

Rikuzentakata, a venue for this year's summit, has a special story with Singapore. After the earthquake, the city was keen to have a community hall where its residents can get together, support one another and renew their determination to reconstruct their hometown. To answer this demand, Singapore Red Cross kindly provided financial support, donated by thousands of Singaporeans.

The city named the main hall of the new community centre "Singapore Hall" and installed a Merlion statue in front of the building, which have been symbolising its friendship with Singapore most remarkably.

I myself had an opportunity to visit Rikuzentakata three years ago, and you can see here, Mr. Murakami and I standing at the side of the Merlion Statue. Taking this opportunity, I would like to once again express my deepest appreciation to the goodwill of Singaporean citizens given to Rikuzentakata and Japan, which is embodied in this hall.

To conclude, I hope that today's session will provide valuable insights and inspiration for the participants of this year's Summit. I also wish them a meaningful and rewarding experiences in Iwate prefecture, as well as the opportunity to nurture strong connections with fellow youths from around the world.

Bon voyage, and thank you very much.