

Message from Prime Minister TAKAICHI Sanae

On the Occasion of the 31st Plenary Session of the Japan-U.S. Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON)

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations on the occasion of the 31st Plenary Session of the Japan-U.S. Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange, which is being held today in Okinawa.

Bound together by our robust partnership, the Japan-U.S. Alliance is both the foundation of peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and the core element of Japan's foreign policy. As the United States celebrates the 250th anniversary of its founding, President Trump and I have agreed that we should make this year one that marks a new chapter in the history of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. We will further deepen our broad-ranging cooperation, and we will not limit ourselves to strengthening our efforts on economic and security issues. We will also promote meaningful cultural and educational exchanges and advance mutual understanding between our respective countries.

Culture and education together form the bedrock that supports relationships between nations. Because we respect one another's cultures and have learned about each other's history and traditions, Japan and the United States share deep, heartfelt connections that make us more than just allies. For more than 60 years, CULCON has operated as a venue for the candid exchange of opinions between experts from the public, private, and academic sectors. It has resulted in numerous valuable proposals on cultural, educational, and intellectual exchanges between Japan and the United States.

Holding this CULCON Plenary Session in Okinawa, which takes pride in its distinctive, rich culture and long history, and plays an indispensable role in the bilateral relationship, makes this event even more symbolic of the further strengthening of the bonds between our two countries. I expect today's meetings to include lively discussions on the important role played by subnational diplomacy and regional exchanges in the Japan-U.S. partnership as well as the measures needed to improve information access in the digital age. Through your discussions today, Japan and the United States will together seek out a framework for exchange that suits this new chapter. I sincerely hope that your deliberations will lay the foundation for an even stronger relationship that looks to the future.

With CULCON continuing to fulfill its critical role, I am confident that the cultural and educational exchanges between our two countries will reach even greater heights. I send you my heartfelt wishes for a productive conference and success in your future endeavors.

February 19, 2026

Prime Minister of Japan, TAKAICHI Sanae