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**February 10, 2012**

*Japanese Ambassador Ichiro Fujisaki,  
U.S.-Japan Council President Irene Hirano  
Inouye and U.S. Ambassador John V. Roos.*

### **Newly Launched TOMODACHI Educational Programs Will Bring More Than 450 Japanese Students to the U.S.**

Washington, DC – U.S. and Japanese leaders gathered at a reception last night to commemorate the launch of educational exchange programs under the TOMODACHI Initiative and celebrate the upcoming Cherry Blossom Centennial Celebration.

The reception was held at the residence of the Japanese Ambassador to the United States, Ichiro Fujisaki. Fujisaki delivered remarks together with U.S. Ambassador to Japan, John V. Roos, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Kurt Campbell and U.S.-Japan Council President, Irene Hirano Inouye, among others.

“You cannot help but to go to the Tohoku region and be inspired by the people there,” said Ambassador Roos. “We have such momentum right now due to the incredible help of our initial sponsors, but we will be rolling out many more projects,” he continued. “It’s going to take a lot of work and commitment from the U.S. and Japan and the public and private sectors because we have big ambitions here to create the TOMODACHI Generation.”

The TOMODACHI Initiative (which means “friend” in Japanese) is a public-private partnership forged after the Great East Japan Earthquake that supports the next generation of Japanese and Americans, a “TOMODACHI Generation” of driven doers, thinkers and creators who are invested in the future of U.S.-Japan relations. A major component of TOMODACHI is enhancing existing educational exchange programs and fostering new ones that incorporate young people from the Tohoku region, the area hardest hit by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

At a sister launch event in Tokyo last week, the TOMODACHI Initiative announced that it will send over 450 students from the Tohoku region to the United States on exchange programs this summer. These opportunities are made possible by support from both American and Japanese companies, including General Electric, Coca-Cola and SoftBank.

Last night’s reception also contributed to the momentum building up to the Cherry Blossom Centennial Celebration happening this spring in Washington, DC. Both the National Cherry Blossom Festival and TOMODACHI exemplify the enduring friendship between the U.S. and Japan.

As a part the TOMODACHI program, the Yamakiya Taiko drumming group from the town of Kawamata in Fukushima prefecture will perform at the Sakura Matsuri Street Festival and National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade. Ambassador Roos recently visited the group in Fukushima to offer them encouragement before their trip to the U.S.

Another TOMODACHI Initiative coming to Washington is the art exhibit “2:46 and thereafter” at the Edison Place Gallery. The exhibit runs from February 16 to March 25 and showcases emerging Japanese artists’ responses to the Great East Japan Earthquake.

*TOMODACHI is a public-private partnership, led by the United States Government and the U.S.-Japan Council and supported by the Japanese Government, that supports Japan’s recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake and invests in the next generation of Japanese and Americans in ways that strengthen cultural and economic ties and deepen the friendship between the United States and Japan over the long-term. For more information visit [www.usjapantomodachi.org](http://www.usjapantomodachi.org).*