

Mr MABUNI Kenyu, Governor of the World Shitoryu Karate-do Federation,
Tokyo Olympic women's karate-do kata silver medalist, Ms SHIMIZU Kiyou,
Mr Johnny Ling, Founder and Chief instructor of SSKANZ, Shitokai Shitoryu
Karate Association New Zealand,
Representatives of martial arts organizations,
Martial artists,
Honorable Carlos Cheung, Member of Parliament for Mt Roskill,
Distinguished Consuls General and Honorary Consuls, and
President of the Japanese Society of Auckland, Ms KURODA Naomi,

Good morning, everyone.

I am pleased to attend this karate demonstration featuring two distinguished female Olympians and the top male kata team, who have just returned from the 2025 Oceania Championships in New Caledonia. I would like to express my deepest respect to all the karate-kas, instructors and their families.

Apparently, there are 135 million karate enthusiasts around the world, which exceeds the Japanese population. Also here in Auckland, it is great to see so many people practicing Karatedo on a daily basis.

As you know, we live in an era of rapid technological advancement. Artificial intelligence is now capable of so many functions that we traditionally used to do. While these developments bring great convenience, they also prompt us to reflect on the importance of human effort and growth.

Karatedo is not just about learning techniques. It is a journey of developing the mind, technique and body (心技体). No matter how advanced technology becomes, walking this path (道) requires daily dedication, discipline and a desire to better oneself.

Karatedo also teaches us the value of human connection. Through training and competition, we learn to respect our opponents, support our peers, and appreciate the guidance of our sensei. These relationships and experiences shape us in ways that foster our friendship and invincible peace in mind, too. As the Consulate-General, we will support the ongoing efforts to promote and spread karatedo in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Thank you very much.

Consul General of Japan in Auckland
MATSUI Shinji