

---

**2019 Japan-Texas Leadership Symposium to Explore Bilateral Relations  
in Economic Development, Military Cooperation, Education and Culture**

**WASHINGTON, DC (March 19, 2019)** – Sister Cities International announces the 2019 Japan-Texas Leadership Symposium to be held on Wednesday, March 27<sup>th</sup> at the Henry B. González Convention Center in San Antonio, Texas. This first-of-its-kind symposium will attract over 200 distinguished participants, including national officials, citizen diplomats, mayors and elected officials, business executives, cultural performers, and more.

Mrs. Karen Pence, Second Lady of the United States, and Honorary Vice Chairwoman of Sister Cities International, will deliver the Luncheon Keynote Address on Citizen Diplomacy. “The United States values the sister city partnerships with Japan,” said Mrs. Pence. “I am looking forward to speaking at the Japan-Texas Leadership Symposium and shining a light on the strong economic, cultural, and educational ties between the United States and Japan.”

Global leaders will engage the audience with new approaches in citizen diplomacy efforts with examples of best practices and successful exchanges, and to stimulate dialogue that will highlight and encourage the benefits of a strong U.S.-Japan relationship. Sessions will examine opportunities in emerging industries, the importance of culture in forging bi-lateral relations, women’s leadership and next generation entrepreneurship, military cooperation, and more. The symposium will conclude with a reception and a cultural program organized by Musical Bridges Around the World.

The symposium will enhance the friendship and collaboration between Japan and the United States, while shedding light on innovative ways to work together to build strong, lasting relationships. The program will be the inaugural event of a two year-long series of leadership fora between the municipal leaders and community citizen diplomats of the two countries during 2019 and 2020. This will lead to the first ever All Japan-US Sister Cities Summit in October 2020, following the Tokyo Olympics.

“The Japan-Texas Leadership Symposium will not only provide a stage to celebrate citizen diplomacy, it will also explore how Japan and the U.S. can work together to tackle our most pressing issues at the national and subnational level,” said Ron Nirenberg, Chairman of Sister Cities International and Mayor of the City of San Antonio. “Our deep-rooted relationship with Japan is vital to our city. San Antonio is home to approximately 40 Japanese companies and our decades-long Sister City relationship with Kumamoto, as well as our ties to the Mie and Aichi Prefectures, have spurred countless educational, economic and cultural exchanges for the betterment of both communities.”

“This moment gathered force from the hundreds of inspired ideas that 441 Japan-U.S. Sister Cities of record have generated over the past six decades and it beckons us to renew, redefine and refocus our community to community relationships to address the challenges of tomorrow,” said Roger-Mark De Souza, President and CEO of Sister Cities International. “The symposium also will shed light on the 162 sustaining linkages of these relationships as we celebrate the 63<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Sister Cities International Citizen Diplomacy Network.”

The Japan-Texas symposium is a program of Sister Cities International in partnership with the Koyamada International Foundation hosted by the City of San Antonio and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Sister Cities International thanks the following for their event sponsorship: AMD; Port San Antonio; Brooks; Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Texas LLC; VUTEX, Inc. and Cole Chemical.

To learn more about the 2019 Japan-Texas Leadership Symposium, please see [here](#) and to register, please click [here](#). To apply for media credentials, please contact Carlos Valenzuela, City of San Antonio's Government and Public Affairs Office, at [Carlos.Valenzuela@sanantonio.gov](mailto:Carlos.Valenzuela@sanantonio.gov).

# # #

### **About Sister Cities International**

Founded as a Presidential Initiative by Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, Sister Cities International serves as the national membership organization for over 500 individual sister cities, counties, and states across the United States with relationships in over 2,000 communities in 140 countries on six continents. The sister city network unites tens of thousands of citizen diplomats and volunteers who work tirelessly to promote the organizations' mission of creating world peace and understanding through economic development, youth and education, arts and culture, and humanitarian assistance.

Facebook: [SisterCitiesInternational](#); Twitter: [@SisterCitiesInt](#); Instagram: [@SisterCitiesInt](#); Website: [www.sistercities.org](http://www.sistercities.org)