



## 23rd World Scout Jamboree Opens in Japan with Spectacular Ceremony

**29 July 2015, Kirara-hama, Yamaguchi, Japan:** After years of planning, preparation and anticipation, the 23rd World Scout Jamboree is finally unveiled in a blaze of colour and pageantry. It marks the beginning of an adventure of a lifetime for some 33 000 Scouts aged 14 to 17 years from about 140 countries and territories across the world.

The mood at the Arena in the 286-hectare newly-built tented city in Kirara-hama, Yamaguchi was simply incredible; jovial and upbeat as the young people begin to make friends, renew old friendships, laughing and celebrating.

The opening ceremony, held this evening, was graced by the Governor of Yamaguchi, Tsugumasa Muraoka, and declared open by the Camp Chief of the 23rd World Scout Jamboree, Dr. Takayasu Okushima. The 23<sup>rd</sup> World Scout Jamboree by the World Organization of the Scout Movement is being hosted by the Scout Association of Japan.

In his speech, Chairman of the World Scout Committee, João Armando Gonçalves, said: “Every four years, we, the Scouts of the world, come together to celebrate our diversity, our common values and our dreams. We make new friends, we have fun together, we explore new ideas and activities, and we realise that we are all neighbours in this common home which we call *World*.”

“In a Jamboree like this, we also discover that we need to work together to find solutions for the challenges that affect all of us. Challenges like poverty, climate change, conflicts, discrimination, lack of safety, lack of education, and many others.

“Yes, a World Scout Jamboree is also a place for us to be more aware of these challenges and it gives us an opportunity to explore how we can contribute to overcome them in our communities, and in the world; how we can create a better world, together!”

The theme “WA: a Spirit of Unity” and the three concepts, “Energy”, “Innovation”, and “Harmony” are embedded in the Jamboree programme, which consists of module activities and subcamp life. Through these activities, the young participants will have the opportunities to learn life skills, experience cultural diversity, foster unity and be active global citizens to create a better world.

When asked what unity means to them, 14-year-old Sparsh Khanchandani from Maharashtra, West India, said: “Friendship, joy, satisfaction, peace — the Jamboree will give us the opportunity to share with different people, to learn about different cultures.”

To Alex Chen Hung-Chun, 17, from Taiwan, unity means the end of conflicts. “The Jamboree is a good starting point for us to engage with one another — there are so many countries represented here, so many different cultures; if we start the conversation here, develop the friendship here, there will be peace and unity,” he said.

Matthew Kingwil, 15, from South Africa opined that “unity is about the integration of different cultures in the world, the union of people from different countries, the building of stronger relationships.” And he believes the Jamboree is the place; “we are here from different countries, different cultures but with the same purpose — to create a better world.”

“Now, it is in our hands to make this Jamboree like the world we dream about: a place of Peace, Respect, Collaboration, Diversity and Friendship,” said João Armando to the young people, who will be spending the next 12 days together.

The last time the World Scout Jamboree was held in Japan was 44 years ago in 1971 at Asagiri, Shizuoka at the foot of Mount Fuji. That was then the 13th World Scout Jamboree.

## **Ends**

### **Note to Editor:**

#### **About the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM)**

Scouting is one of the world’s leading educational youth movements, engaging millions of young people around the world to be active citizens to create positive changes in the communities they live in. Since 1907! Founded by Lord Baden-Powell, WOSM is a confederation of 161 National Scout Organizations in a network of over 40 million members, including some 7 million volunteers. As it has been doing for more than a century - creating a better world - it will continue to do so, and even better with the many Messengers of Peace across the globe.

For more on the 23rd World Scout Jamboree, visit [www.scout.org/wsj2015](http://www.scout.org/wsj2015) or follow us on [www.facebook.com/23wsj2015](http://www.facebook.com/23wsj2015) or Twitter @wsj2015.

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