

Japan New Zealand Business Council 48th Annual Joint Conference

Joint Statement

November 22, 2022

The 48th Japan New Zealand Business Council Annual Joint Conference was held in Beppu, Japan, on 20-22 November 2022. With delegates meeting in-person for the first time in three years, the conference attracted strong participation from Japan and New Zealand, including a senior Maori business delegation for the first time. Altogether 130 participants attended. A distinguishing feature of the conference was the coherence and high quality substance of all the sessions. Following a highly informative opening panel discussion covering milestone developments in the history of the trade and economic nexus between New Zealand and Japan over 70 years of diplomatic relations, delegates addressed the theme of the conference - "New Zealand and Japan: Transforming Challenges into Strengths through Partnership" - under three broad headings: Development of the Business Environment; Sustainable Societies; and New Age Challenges. The key conclusions of the conference were as follows:

Discussion of the Business Environment

- Membership of APEC, CPTPP and RCEP by Japan and New Zealand is important in promoting open free trade and economic integration, especially in the current uncertainty about pandemic, climate change and conflict.
- The vaccine rollout in both countries has been an important step in addressing the impact on business of the Corona virus pandemic along with the use of zoom and other web-based technology in opening-up to one another again.
- Tourism is a priority sector for both countries in working to develop and implement sustainable, regenerative destination strategies designed to deliver high quality visitor experience, including highlighting indigenous cultures and reducing carbon emissions.

Sustainable Societies

- The impact of science and technology is expanding the boundaries of established business activity in both countries particularly in the production of safe, reliable, healthy foods. In forestry, the development and greater use of advanced and high-value wood and wood products in the construction of residential and commercial buildings and production of biofuels and pharmaceuticals is a driver for a prosperous, low-carbon future.
- The Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Japan Hydrogen Association and the New Zealand Hydrogen Council, provides the basis for innovative partnerships to transition away from reliance on fossil fuels and accelerate the deployment of hydrogen

innovation along with geothermal in assisting both countries to achieve their climate change objectives. The Southern Green Hydrogen project - a major initiative to create a world-class green hydrogen facility in the South Island of New Zealand - is expected to accelerate the development of a domestic hydrogen economy to decarbonise transport and other hard to abate industrial sectors, including aviation, shipping and agriculture.

- In a number of respects, partnership is important also in education and tourism to promote sustainability objectives. In addition to resources within the tourism sector itself, there are many important inter-connections to consider between tourism and other areas of business, sport, culture and health, including the linkages between tourism and business in advancing technology development and in building international human resources.

New Age Challenges

- In addition to exploring the opportunities of using space for business expansion, members endorsed the value of collaboration to find solutions to “real problems” of direct interest to business and society in the safe and sustainable use of space, in particular in addressing the problem of space debris.
- Discussion focused also on the use of quantum computers to improve business decision making in finding solutions to multiple multi-layered problems.

Notwithstanding the current situation of high uncertainty about the direction of the world economy, the relationship of trust built between the two JNZBC committees over almost 50 years has highlighted important new areas of business in which Japan and New Zealand can benefit by working together. Members expressed full confidence also that the relationship between both countries would be further strengthened by collaborating to mutual benefit in the above areas.

The Committees resolved to engage with their respective governments on specific steps to advance the relationship in the above priority areas by the time of the 49th Annual Joint Conference to be held in the week beginning 19 November 2023 in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Ian Kennedy

Japan New Zealand Business Council
New Zealand Chair

Akira Ichikawa

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