

The 30th Meeting of the Japan - Canada Joint Economic Committee

On December 2/3, 2020, Japan hosted the 30th meeting of the Japan-Canada Joint Economic Committee (JEC). The meeting was held online for the first time due to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The JEC was presided over by its two co-chairs, Mr. SUZUKI Hiroshi, Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Mr. John Hannaford, Deputy Minister of International Trade at Global Affairs Canada. Japan's Ambassador to Canada, Mr. KAWAMURA Yasuhisa, and Canada's Ambassador to Japan, Mr. Ian Burney, as well as officials from the Japanese and Canadian governments participated in the meeting.

The co-chairs committed to work together to further advance economic relations, collaborate to strengthen economic security, and deepen cooperation between Japan and Canada in efforts to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. They also committed to improving supply chain resilience as expressed in the G20 Riyadh Summit Leaders' Declaration and in view of the vulnerabilities that the pandemic exposed. The Committee also took note of and supported the Declaration's commendation of Japan's determination to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 next year as a symbol of humanity's resilience and global unity in overcoming COVID-19. They welcomed their governments' recent announcements setting out their shared commitment of reaching net-zero emissions, respectively, by 2050, and agreed that close collaboration would contribute to efforts to achieve these objectives.

The co-chairs acknowledged the importance of the strategic partnership between Japan and Canada and their shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific region based on the rule of law. In this regard, they welcomed Japan-Canada cooperation on energy, resource, and food security as well as the promotion of rules-based trade in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.

The Committee recognized the contributions of Japan and Canada to the vital work of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Noting APEC's support for a free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable trade and investment environment set out in the Putrajaya Vision 2040, the Committee welcomed the leadership role and collaborative efforts of Japan and Canada to advance the work of the Ottawa Group and other WTO reform initiatives. The co-chairs affirmed the two countries' commitment to continue to partner together in this critical area.

Acknowledging the opportunities that the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) has generated over the past two years in various sectors, the co-chairs affirmed their shared commitments to promote the benefits of the Agreement to their businesses and to continue to advocate for its implementation and expansion through ratification of remaining signatories and accession of new members. They also pledged to collaborate closely in 2021 when Japan assumes the role as Chair of the CPTPP Commission.

The Committee welcomed the Joint-Statement issued by the Japan-Canada Chambers Council (JCCC) after its virtual meeting on November 20, 2020, which emphasized the importance of Japan-Canada cooperation both bilaterally and in international forums. The

Committee took note of the priorities set out by the JCCC, in particular in the areas of: energy and critical minerals, innovation, CPTPP promotion, particularly among SMEs, and the fight against climate change.

The Committee also welcomed the development of terms of reference for the CWG, which will ensure regular dialogue between officials in respect of JEC-related issues.

The co-chairs endorsed the CWG's discussion on progress, future objectives, and outcomes in the Priority Areas of Cooperation (PACs). The CWG discussion featured the following points of discussion under the PACs:

Energy

- Recognition of efforts taken to establish an Action Plan under the Japan-Canada Energy Policy Dialogue that provides a framework for engagement on bilateral energy transition efforts, including: oil and gas, hydrogen, renewables, electricity infrastructure, atomic energy, carbon capture utilization and storage, energy efficiency, and critical minerals.
- Acknowledgement that by ensuring secure and sustainable energy supplies, including through the development of energy export infrastructure (e.g. LNG Canada, Ridley Island Propane Export Terminal (RIPET)), Canada will enhance its role as a provider of energy security to Japan and the Indo-Pacific region.
- Efforts to enhance cooperation on critical minerals in view of the strategic importance of these commodities and the challenges of ensuring stable supplies.

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure investment projects moving ahead despite the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Affirmation of the importance of the G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment for infrastructure projects in the Indo-Pacific region.

Science and Technology

- Recognition of the growing importance of innovation to bilateral commercial relations as reflected in numerous examples of successful innovation partnerships between Japanese and Canadian businesses.
- Highlighting a EUREKA GlobalStars call for projects involving Japan's New Energy and Industrial Technology and Development Organization (NEDO) and Canada's National Research Council (NRC), which establishes a basis for future cooperation.
- Successful partnerships with government and academic institutions, such as in the area of Earth Observation and satellite technologies.
- A desire to explore new approaches to support co-innovation among businesses and research organizations in both countries through increased collaboration pursuant to the MOU between Japan's National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST) and NRC.
- Support for the work of Japan-Canada Joint Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation.

Tourism and Youth Exchanges

- Efforts by the two countries to overcome impediments caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Recognition of: the crucial role played by the tourism industry in both countries' economies; the scale of the challenges posed to this industry by the COVID-19 pandemic; and the commitment made by G20 Tourism Ministers to promote the recovery of the travel and tourism sector.
- Appreciation of countries' respective steps to support their tourism sector's recovery and to encourage domestic tourism through virtual means, including social media and webinars.
- A shared commitment to work to revitalize the exchange of students in spite of and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Canada's proposal to modernize the working holiday (Japan-Canada Youth Mobility Arrangement) framework to promote youth mobility and exchange.

Improving the Business Environment and Promoting Investment

- Efforts made by both countries to encourage and support investment by the private sector despite the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Potential for follow up on concrete initiatives to promote trade, including the export of agricultural and energy products in view of their importance to food and energy security.
- The importance of bilateral trade in forest products to the Canadian forest sector and Japanese construction industry, which both countries support through the annual meetings of the Building Experts Committee/Japan Agricultural Standards Technical Committee.
- The benefits for businesses of the CPTPP and compliance with international trade rules.
- Recognition of the utility and benefits derived from the CPTPP temporary entry provisions, which have improved cross-border business operations and investment opportunities in both countries.
- An ongoing interest in addressing the threat of African Swine Fever to the swine and pork industries and continuing collaboration between Canadian and Japanese authorities on this matter.