



**U.S.-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON)  
CULCON XXVIII  
June 5, 2018  
JOINT STATEMENT**

**Preface**

When CULCON was established in 1961, the U.S.-Japan alliance was under challenge, both within Japan and in the United States. In a time of geopolitical flux, CULCON was designed to help Americans and Japanese learn about each other and build partnerships outside of government that would sustain our strategic cooperation. Today all indicators are that the relationship is strong, but the need for CULCON remains as important as ever.

The United States and Japan today cooperate in a multitude of ways. Our cultural and educational exchanges have broadened significantly, and American interest in Japan has only deepened. Since 2011, the number of Americans visiting Japan for tourism or business has doubled. Our scientific and technological cooperation now extends to all frontiers of science, and today Japanese and Americans together are working side by side in cutting-edge scientific research across many fields, including space, life sciences and renewable sources of energy. Our businesses collaborate—and compete—across the globe, but also invest in each other's economies, creating jobs and contributing to our nations' economic prosperity.

Today, Japanese and Americans of all generations not only know each other and their respective cultures well, but a vast majority in both countries supports the expanding U.S.-Japan partnership. But this mutual understanding did not happen

overnight, nor did it happen without the support of many public and private leaders who have advocated for closer relations.

It is with such broad background issues that the United States-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON), comprised of representatives from the government, business, academia and other sectors of Japan and the United States, convened for CULCON XXVIII in Washington, DC on June 4-5, 2018.

The 28<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session was co-chaired by the Honorable Ryozi Kato, Former Ambassador of Japan to the United States and Mr. Harry A. Hill, Director and Member of the Board, Oak Lawn Marketing, Inc. The Panels received congratulatory messages from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Donald Trump, delivered by Japanese Ambassador to the United States Shinsuke Sugiyama and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Marie Royce, respectively.

Since its establishment in 1961, CULCON has been uniquely tasked with identifying obstacles, exploring and recommending new initiatives and new fields of cultural and educational activities, and informing and engaging communities in Japan and the United States. The Panels acknowledged the vital role people-to-people exchanges play in strengthening all aspects of the bilateral relationship from security and trade to culture and education; and reaffirmed exchanges are

one of the key pillars of the U.S.-Japan partnership.

### **Summary of Discussions**

The 28<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session focused broadly on innovative pathways to engage Japanese and Americans in a global context. More specifically, the discussion concentrated on four ongoing issues: U.S.-Japan student mobility; Japanese-language education in the United States; arts exchange; and nurturing the next generation of U.S.-Japan leaders. The Panels commended the efforts by the Japanese and United States governments, private sector and civil society organizations, which have been instrumental in supporting and advancing CULCON's past recommendations.

CULCON identified development of the next generation as the most important and critical issue for the coming years and created a task force to address it. Many key figures who have been the foundation of U.S.-Japan expertise and have contributed to building and maintaining a robust U.S.-Japan relationship are retiring; therefore, fostering the next generation of leaders, specialists and scholars who will be interested or well-versed in U.S.-Japan relations is an urgent and critical issue CULCON is addressing.

After careful review of the reports presented by the task force and each of the committees, the Panels made the following recommendations.

#### **A. Educational Exchange**

Student exchanges have been vital in building the strong U.S.-Japan Alliance and partnership that exists today. They also help Japan and the United States address global challenges as partners with shared values. However, the level of student mobility between the two countries in recent years has given rise to unease about the development of a next generation of stewards of the relationship.

In 2016, CULCON established the Educational Review Committee (ERC) to undertake the periodic review of the implementation of the Education Task Force (ETF) recommendations, which were issued in 2013 and set out the ambitious goal:

#### **Double the Number of U.S. and Japanese Students Studying in Each Other's Country by 2020.**

CULCON expressed its appreciation for the governments, academic institutions, and the private sector of both countries that have taken tangible steps in addressing the ETF's recommendations in substantive ways. For example, the Japanese government has launched a number of programs to provide scholarships for students and to improve the English language education at primary and secondary schools; and U.S. stakeholders have expanded current efforts and initiated a range of new efforts to encourage U.S. students to study in Japan. The impact of their individual and collective actions has already shown positive results and continues to have great potential to significantly increase student mobility in both directions.

The ERC recommends continuation of these efforts as well as development of new innovative programs to encourage further student mobility. Challenges include: (1) competition from other countries for study abroad destination; 2) lack of financial resources used for student mobility (at both government and university levels); and 3) lack of understanding of the importance of the U.S.-Japan relationship in some U.S. universities.

In spite of these challenges, the ERC is encouraged by progress to date. Some of the new programs and policies being implemented on both sides can take up to several years to show significant results. The ERC is enthusiastic about the progress it is already seeing toward the doubling goal and it is optimistic about its ability to achieve the goals by 2020.

The ERC will continue to monitor and refine both progress and challenges in reaching for the goal of doubling the number of students studying in each other's country with the understanding that this is creating a next generation that will continue to nurture and expand the U.S.-Japan relationship.

## **B. Japanese-Language Education**

Foreign language education develops learners' overall communication abilities and increases their flexibility in responding to a diverse range of societies and cultures. The need for such education will continue to increase, particularly in our modern-day society, in which people, goods and services, money and information flow faster and in more complex ways than ever before.

For these reasons, continuing to support Japanese-language education in the United States will help to promote mutual understanding and strengthen trust between the United States and Japan, and also lead to the development of human resources who will take active roles in international society in the future.

In 2015, CULCON established the Japanese Language Education Committee (JLEC) to analyze the status of, and make recommendations on revitalization, expansion and promotion of Japanese-language education in the United States.

Based on its analysis, JLEC issued a Report and presented it to CULCON XXVIII. JLEC proposed fifteen specific recommendations in four main areas: 1) training and support of Japanese-language teachers; 2) improving and enhancing Japanese-language educational materials; 3) developing Japanese-language education infrastructure; and 4) understanding the needs of the local communities.

In the Survey Report on Japanese-Language Education Abroad 2015, the number of learners is increasing in the United States, but a decrease was seen in the number of teachers. Therefore, the CULCON Panels recognized

the potential for alumni of the JET Programme to acquire the necessary skills and credentials to become new Japanese-language teachers in order to respond to the current developing needs of Japanese-language learners. The CULCON Panels also recognized that expanding the numbers of Japanese-language teachers or assistant teachers from Japan is equally crucial.

Incentivizing those who study Japanese with activities such as the Japan Bowl should be encouraged. Summer immersion language programs should also be encouraged.

The CULCON Panels thanked JLEC for its impressive efforts in identifying the needs of and proposing solutions for this important issue. The Panels encouraged stakeholders, especially American Association of Teachers of Japanese (AATJ) and the Japan Foundation, who play vital roles in supporting Japanese-language education in the United States, to act on and work collaboratively further to achieve the objectives set out in the JLEC report.

The Panels agreed to continue to monitor Japanese-language education in the United States as part of the ERC, and to add an additional Japanese-language expert from each side.

## **C. Arts Exchange**

At CULCON XXIV (2010), CULCON established the Arts Dialogue Committee (ADC) to examine obstacles to artistic exchange between Japan and the United States and explore new areas of cooperation among artists. The ADC has made both tangible contributions to the field as well as served a unique convening role. It has allowed representatives from U.S. and Japanese private and public institutions to share information more effectively and efficiently, to air differing points of view on arts promotion, to encourage access and collaboration through U.S. and Japanese arts exchanges, and to reach greater understanding on important issues such as the critical need

for support for a new generation of Japanese art specialists in the United States.

Since its inception, the ADC's strategic and holistic set of goals has resulted in tangible contributions to the field in four areas:

1. Cultivating the next generation of Japanese art professionals, a two-pronged strategy that requires providing opportunities for networking and collaboration, such as the JAWS program, and establishing a career pathway;
2. Fostering collaboration among U.S.-Japan arts professionals, such as curatorial exchange;
3. Enhancing resources, such as creation of the new web-based INJArt (International Network for Japanese Art); and
4. Expanding public outreach, such as creation of a new campaign, Arts Japan 2020, to broaden impact and public awareness of Japan-related arts activity.

The CULCON Panels reiterated that the 2020 Olympics and Paralympic Games in Tokyo and the 25th General Conference of ICOM (International Council of Museums) in Kyoto in 2019 provide important opportunities for the arts community to engage a new generation of Japanese culture enthusiasts in the U.S.-Japan dialogue. To this end, CULCON reiterated its recommendation that the ADC continue to meet over the next two years with a focus on concrete results in specific areas and programs. It should continue to explore ways for the important work of the ADC to continue after 2020 with various stakeholders, including the private sector.

#### **D. Nurturing the Next Generation**

In 2016, CULCON convened the binational Next Generation Task Force to consider ways of supporting the professional development of younger Japanese and Americans in order to work collaboratively with their counterparts to solve the shared challenges of the future as

well as to sustain and grow the U.S.-Japan partnership. The Japan Task Force members and U.S. Task Force members have met together and separately, in Japan and the United States. Throughout their deliberations, the Task Force recognized there are areas of shared vision for the future, as well as issues unique to the specific needs and circumstances of each country.

The Task Force agrees the U.S.-Japan partnership has benefitted greatly from the work of numerous well-established exchange organizations. From these, the Task Force seeks to identify best practices and to support established networks that have demonstrated effective strategies for generating future leaders. Beyond sustaining existing exchange opportunities, the Task Force believes there is a need to build new and innovative networks to capture the evolution in professional pathways as the U.S.-Japan partnership constantly evolves.

The Task Force also recognizes the importance of creating a new platform through which future generations can collaborate either virtually or physically. Social media and other types of communications technologies offer an opportunity for many around the globe to communicate and share knowledge. Broadening the dialog between professionals would encourage and enable them to go beyond the bilateral relationship to both learn from and inform counterparts around the globe.

All of these efforts to support the next generation require the financial support of public and private institutions that benefit from and support the U.S.-Japan partnership, and the Task Force agreed it will be important to continue to identify new sources of funding by creating linkages between industry and education, and building public-private partnerships.

The Task Force has identified tangible recommendations in three categories:

1. Cultivate the study of Japan in the United States and cultivate the study of the United States in Japan;
2. Explore emerging areas of U.S.-Japan collaboration; and
3. Energize networks and build institutions and platforms for collaboration.

The Task Force hopes to provide a menu of opportunity for those individuals and institutions that can help younger professionals sustain their interest and their careers through U.S.-Japan collaboration. The Task Force supports the creation of a center to utilize the expertise of emerging scholars. The Task Force will issue a final report in Fall 2018. The Task Force will continue its dialog until the next Plenary Session to explore ways to implement its recommendations.

#### **E. Plans for the Future**

The Panels noted that increases in tourism in Japan and the upcoming 2020 Olympics and Paralympics underscore the importance and relevance of CULCON's efforts to promote cultural, educational, and people-to-people exchanges, as well as to improve English language proficiency in Japan.

The Conference agreed to re-convene in 2020 in Japan.

**For more information on U.S. CULCON, please see <http://culcon.jusfc.gov> or contact Pamela Fields, (202) 653-9800, or [culcon@jusfc.gov](mailto:culcon@jusfc.gov). For more information about Japan CULCON, please see [www.jpfc.go.jp/culcon](http://www.jpfc.go.jp/culcon) or contact [Nanako\\_Munakata@jpfc.go.jp](mailto:Nanako_Munakata@jpfc.go.jp)**