



Joint Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the Committee on Trade and Sustainable Development under the Agreement between the European Union and Japan for an Economic Partnership

Tokyo, 29-30 January 2020

The first meeting of the Committee on Trade and Sustainable Development (“TSD”) under the Agreement between the European Union (“EU”) and Japan for an Economic Partnership (“EPA”) took place on 29-30 January 2020 in Tokyo.

Japanese participants from MOFA, METI, MOE, MAFF and MHLW and EU participants from the Directorates-General TRADE, ENV and EMPL and from the EU Delegation to Japan had a fruitful exchange of views on matters related to Chapter 16 of the EPA (Trade and Sustainable Development).

The enclosed meeting agenda was adopted (cf. annex).

The Committee confirmed that it would work in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Joint Committee, which would apply *mutatis mutandis*.

The Committee confirmed that both sides would continue their work towards the adoption of the rules of procedure for the panel of experts and the establishment of a list of individuals who would be willing and able to serve as experts, as envisioned in paragraphs 2 and 4(d) of Article 16.18, through a written procedure.

Both sides confirmed that the Joint Dialogue with Civil Society would be operated based on the following understanding for the time being:

- The Joint Dialogue would be held back-to-back with the TSD Committee
- The host side of the TSD Committee would be in charge of organising the Joint Dialogue meeting in consultation with the other side.

- The host side would designate a facilitator.
- Both sides would promote balanced representation of relevant stakeholders, including independent organisations which are representative of economic, environmental and social interests, within participants from civil society organisations.
- The agenda of the Joint Dialogue would be prepared by the authorities of both sides. The authorities, in preparing the agenda, would involve the civil society organisations in an appropriate manner.
- The joint minutes of the Joint Dialogue would be drafted by the authorities of both sides after the Joint Dialogue and be made publicly available. The first draft of the joint minutes would be drafted by the host side.
- The Joint Dialogue would be conducted in English. The host side would provide simultaneous interpretation.

Both sides recognised that this would be the first Joint Dialogue with Civil Society and that they would exchange views on the lessons learned from it. The EU recalled the importance of these Dialogues allowing inclusive participation.

Both sides exchanged views on potential reinforced cooperation between Japan and the EU on promoting corporate social responsibility (CSR) and responsible business conduct (RBC), including working with third countries to promote uptake of CSR practices in line with the recognised international guidelines. The EU gave an update of the project on Responsible Supply Chains in Asia in which Japan participates.

Both sides discussed the overlapping elements of the CSR working group and the TSD committee, and would discuss future working arrangements among all related ministries including MOFA, METI, DG TRADE and DG GROW.

The EU shared its experience on how to promote involvement of civil society stakeholders, related to the implementation of the TSD Chapter and consultative mechanisms, particularly on the engagement with its domestic advisory groups, including the usefulness of offering dedicated discussions on TSD implementation to domestic advisory groups. Japan also shared how it was implementing the provisions on domestic advisory groups through its existing consultative mechanism. Both sides confirmed that opinions expressed by the domestic advisory groups regarding the implementation of

this Chapter would be duly received.

Both sides provided updates on their implementation of multilateral environmental agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on International trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Basel Convention and Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). They also confirmed to encourage further exchanges at technical level. Both sides informed each other of their respective policy developments on trade and environment-related matters. Japan elaborated on its program on circular economy and its follow-up efforts on the “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision” shared in the G20 Osaka Summit. The EU provided an overview of the European Green Deal with specific focus on the upcoming Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and the 2nd Circular Economy Action Plan. The EU also presented its Communication on stepping up EU action to protect and restore the world’s forests and indicated its interest to cooperate with Japan on promoting sustainable supply chains of agricultural products linked to deforestation. Both sides acknowledged that ongoing dialogues and cooperation are relevant in the TSD context. The EU informed of possible future activities that could be used to strengthen EPA’s implementation including two planned workshops on green public procurement and circular economy that would be organised under “Rethinking Plastics” project. Both sides confirmed to continue to exchange information regarding trade and environment in future TSD Committee meetings and other existing fora.

Both sides exchanged views on potential subjects for cooperation on addressing climate change. Japan emphasised its reduction of greenhouse gas by approximately 12 percent from FY 2013, and shared its further efforts on addressing climate change including the publication of its long-term strategy under the Paris Agreement, engagement in UNFCCC negotiations, further encouragement of innovation, the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures, ESG Finance and JCM projects. The EU explained its climate change policies, including the intention to upgrade its 2030 target, the 2050 decarbonisation target and the actions and initiatives outlined in the European Green Deal, the completion of the 2030 climate and energy legislative framework, and the Sustainable Finance Action Plan. The EU presented its proposal of holding a public event regarding trade and climate in 2020, and confirmed to provide shortly more detailed information in response to Japan’s preliminary remarks. Japan inquired about the EU’s internal discussions on carbon border adjustment mechanism. The EU

elaborated on its current state of play and expressed its readiness to keep Japan duly informed on relevant developments.

Both sides presented an update on ratification and implementation of ILO conventions. The EU informed about recent social policy developments in Europe, notably on the social fairness package, and also explained its relationship between the European Commission and the EU Member States in the process of ratification of ILO conventions. Japan reiterated its commitment to the activities of the ILO as a founding member of the international organisation and elaborated on its efforts to support vocational training and encourage youth employment in Asia and Africa. Japan further shared best practices and other information related to encouraging labour market participation of female and older workers. The EU noted its interest in Japan's ratification of the core ILO conventions, and Japan explained that while there are legal issues to be closely scrutinised it fully recognises the importance of the areas covered by those conventions. Japan also informed about the ongoing discussions among relevant ministries regarding the ratification of the ILO C105 and C111. In this respect, Japan recalled and the EU acknowledged the joint declaration of Japan's legislative body in 2019 on the occasion of the ILO Centenary that calls, amongst others, for continued efforts to ratify the remaining unratified core conventions. The EU suggested the possibility of future exchanges on cooperation on issues pertaining to trade and labour with third countries on topics related to decent work.

The EU presented its work on trade and gender, as well as the study on the EU market for sustainable products. Japan took note of the EU's presentations.



EU – JAPAN ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (EPA)

1ST MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 29-30 JANUARY 2020, TOKYO

AGENDA

- 1. OPENING AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
- 2. PROCEDURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ITEMS**
- 3. CROSS-CUTTING (LABOUR/ENVIRONMENT) MATTERS: PRIORITIES FOR COOPERATION**
 - Corporate Social Responsibility/Responsible Business Conduct (CSR/RBC)
 - Engagement with civil society
 - Other issues
- 4. DEDICATED SESSION ON TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING TRADE AND CLIMATE ACTION**
 - Update on implementation of MEAs (Environment)
 - Update on developments on trade and environment
 - Information on relevant ongoing cooperation activities
 - Update on implementation of MEAs (Climate Change)
 - Cooperation on trade and climate
 - EU-Japan EPA trade and climate event – tbc 2020
- 5. DEDICATED SESSION ON TRADE AND LABOUR**
 - Update on ratification and implementation of ILO conventions
 - Potential cooperative activities
- 6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**