

The 32nd Meeting of the Japan - Canada Joint Economic Committee

On December 22/23, 2022, Japan hosted the 32nd meeting of the Japan-Canada Joint Economic Committee (JEC) online.

The JEC meeting was co-chaired by ONO Keiichi, Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Mr. Rob Stewart, Deputy Minister of International Trade at Global Affairs Canada. Japan's Ambassador to Canada, YAMANOUCHI Kanji, and Canada's Ambassador to Japan, Ian McKay, as well as officials from the Japanese and Canadian governments also participated in the meeting.

The Japanese side welcomed the announcement of Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy, which demonstrates Canada's strong commitment to increasing its presence, engagement, and influence in the Indo-Pacific region. The Strategy is aligned with the "Japan-Canada Action Plan for contributing to a free and open Indo-Pacific region" that was jointly announced by HAYASHI Yoshimasa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, during her visit to Japan in October 2022. The co-chairs concurred that both Governments were committed to implementing the Action Plan and further advancing the JEC's Priority Areas of Cooperation (PACs).

The co-chairs emphasized that high-level exchanges play a vital role in expanding bilateral and regional economic cooperation. François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, for example, visited Japan three times in 2022, including to attend the state funeral of former Prime Minister ABE Shinzo. In addition, Mary Ng, Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, visited Japan to promote women in business, which catalyzed partnerships between women business leaders of both countries.

The co-chairs affirmed the desire to continue to work closely together in the G7 as Japan assumes the G7 Presidency in 2023, including continued unity of purpose and approach with respect to Russia's illegal and unjustifiable war of aggression in Ukraine and its global impacts.

The co-chairs welcomed the successful outcomes of the Twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12) and concurred to uphold and further strengthen the rules-based multilateral trading system. They committed to promptly and effectively implement the MC12 outcomes with a view to achieving meaningful progress by the Thirteenth WTO Ministerial Conference.

The co-chairs reaffirmed the economic and strategic significance of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and welcomed the success of the Agreement over the past three years to promote free trade, open and competitive markets, and economic integration in the Indo-Pacific and beyond, and the transformative effect it has had on bilateral and regional trade. They affirmed their intention to continue to work closely together to ensure its steady implementation and its expansion to economies that are committed to the Agreement's objectives, able to fully meet and adhere to its high standards, and have a demonstrated pattern of complying with their trade commitments. They noted that economic coercion and unjustifiably restrictive trade practices are contrary to the objectives and high standards of the Agreement.

The co-chairs welcomed the inaugural Japan-Canada Ministerial Dialogue on Climate and Environment on the margins of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), and the successful outcome of the Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity Part 2 (CBD COP15) from 7 to 19 December 2022, in Montreal.

The co-chairs also acknowledged the Joint-Statement issued by the Japan-Canada Chambers Council (JCCC) after its meeting with the theme of “Respected Friends in a Challenging World”, on September 19, 2022, in Toronto, where the JCCC emphasized the importance of Japan-Canada cooperation for the rules-based multilateral trading system. The JEC also discussed the priorities set out by the JCCC, in particular in the areas of supply chain resilience, energy, agri-food, and infrastructure investment.

The co-chairs welcomed the following progress related to the JEC’s Priority Areas of Cooperation:

Energy

- Recognizing the need for diverse and secure supplies of energy, in particular support for LNG investment to enhance energy security.
- Continuing promotion of public-private energy cooperation between Japan and Canada including private sector engagement and interest in ammonia and hydrogen production and nuclear energy.
- Revitalising bilateral engagement through the Canada-Japan Energy Policy Dialogue.
- Growing Japan’s private sector participation and interest in Canada’s critical minerals value chain, and the development of a value added battery supply chain in Canada.
- Working together to respond to regional demand and to help reduce vulnerabilities in the supply of critical minerals.

Infrastructure

- Canada’s commitment to ensuring the resiliency of supply chains through targeted actions, including by continuing to make significant investments in domestic trade-enabling transportation infrastructure through the National Trade Corridors Fund and the development of a National Supply Chain Strategy, which will support diversified and enhanced trade with Indo-Pacific economies.
- Canada’s commitment to support high-quality, sustainable infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific by expanding the capacity of FinDev Canada to operate in the region and seeking to amplify, leverage, and collaborate with the Canadian private and public sectors on infrastructure projects across the region.
- Recalling Japan’s participation in Canadian infrastructure projects, promoting further potential contributions by Japan’s private sector as well as the Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corporation (JOIN) to Canada’s efforts to improve its infrastructure.

Science, Technology and Innovation

- On-going coordination of the joint action plan following the Canada-Japan Joint Committee Meeting (CJJC) on Science and Technology cooperation in 2022.
- Japan's role as the Lead Chair of the Annual General Meeting of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) in November 2022 and Japan's commitment to promote the development and use of "responsible AI", with Canada's support and expertise as the first Chair of the GPAI.
- Enhanced collaboration in joint research for an aging society between the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) and the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST) as well as between the NRC and the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST).
- Canada's commitment, supported by new funding under its Indo-Pacific Strategy, to strengthen its Science, Technology and Innovation partnerships with Japan, in support of co-innovation projects and commercialization-oriented research and development.

Tourism and Youth Exchanges

- Promoting travel to Japan by the Japan National Tourism Organization's (JNTO) Toronto office at Canada's largest travel fair held in Montreal in late October, to respond to border mitigation measures related to COVID-19.
- Revitalizing bilateral youth exchanges under the Japan-Canada Working Holiday Arrangement, through Japan's Working Holiday Program and the International Experience Canada Program, to facilitate cultural exchange and strengthen people-to-people ties.
- Continuing to promote bilateral youth exchanges in order to fulfil their potential, and to invigorate industry-government-academia collaboration between Japan and Canada.

Improving the Business Environment and Promoting Investment

- Deepened mutual understanding for further investments in Canada.
- Active collaboration of venture companies in Japan and Canada with cutting-edge technologies, such as AI and quantum technology, and JETRO's support to promote expansion and collaboration of venture companies.
- Promotion of high-end Japanese food ingredients and alcoholic beverages at food trade shows and industry events in Canada.

Agriculture

- Recognizing Canada's extremely important role for Japan's food security, and continuous cooperation in the stable supply of food and fertiliser.

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