

The 33rd Meeting of the Canada-Japan Joint Economic Committee

On January 29, 2024, Canada hosted the 33rd meeting of the Canada-Japan Joint Economic Committee (JEC). The JEC meeting was co-chaired by Rob Stewart, Deputy Minister of International Trade at Global Affairs Canada, and ONO Keiichi, Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs. Canada's Ambassador to Japan and Special Envoy for the Indo-Pacific, Ian McKay, and Japan's Ambassador to Canada, YAMANOUCHI Kanji, also participated in the meeting.

The co-chairs underscored the ongoing and high-level ministerial engagement and recent commitments to expanding bilateral cooperation, including through the 2023 Team Canada Trade Mission to Japan, in addition to the two recently signed Memoranda of Cooperation on Battery Supply Chains and on Industrial Science and Technology. Acknowledging these important milestones in further strengthening the Canada-Japan bilateral relationship, both co-chairs concurred in leveraging the MOCs to achieve further tangible outcomes.

In view of global peace and security challenges, the co-chairs reaffirmed that both countries will continue to work together to counter the unintended consequences such as supply chain and energy disruptions. Recognizing the importance of a free and open Indo-Pacific, the co-chairs concurred in the continued advancement of the Japan-Canada Action Plan for contributing to a free and open Indo-Pacific region, announced by our respective Foreign Ministers in October 2022.

The co-chairs further recognized the important contribution of the Canada-Japan trade and investment relationship to both countries' economies and to their economic security. In this regard, the co-chairs acknowledged the significant role of bilateral commercial ties to energy, critical minerals, and food security and concurred that there is considerable potential to expand trade and investment in these areas.

Sharing best practices of the successful G7 Japanese Presidency in 2023, the co-chairs reaffirmed to working closely together in the G7 as Canada looks towards assuming the G7 Presidency in 2025.

The co-chairs recognized the importance of enhanced collaboration in building a free and fair economic order. Japan welcomed Canada's role as the 2024 Commission Chair of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and emphasized the importance of Canada and Japan's continued close collaboration with their CPTPP partners to uphold the Agreement's high standards through the handling of the accession process and the General Review, and encouraging its implementation and utilization by all.

The co-chairs also discussed the importance of upholding the rules-based trading system and discussed each country's respective priorities and strategies in the lead up to the Thirteenth WTO Ministerial Conference (MC13) which will take place from February 26 to 29 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The co-chairs also resolved to work towards achieving tangible outcomes on WTO reform, including through the Ottawa Group.

In May of this year, Japan will chair the Meeting of the Council at Ministerial Level (MCM) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The co-chairs concurred in cooperating at the OECD to expand the free and fair economic order that both Japan and Canada uphold. The co-chairs also acknowledged the significance of the OECD's greater engagement in the Indo-

Pacific region to further reinforce the rules-based order and concurred in the importance of further promoting rule-making in the digital field, especially generative AI.

The co-chairs welcomed the Japan-Canada Chambers Council (JCCC) Joint Statement issued on November 1, 2023, on the margins of the Team Canada Trade Mission to Tokyo, Japan, which highlights the importance of strengthening the bilateral relationship, ensuring continued bilateral cooperation on economic security, and expanding bilateral trade and investment.

The co-chairs welcomed progress related to the JEC's Priority Areas of Cooperation, as follows:

Energy

- Continued bilateral engagement through the Canada-Japan Energy Policy Dialogue;
- In view of an increasingly disruptive global context, a commitment to sustained engagement towards a stable and secure supply of energy;
- Continued progress on the LNG Canada project;
- Recognizing the need to achieve a net zero economy, supporting private sector engagement and interest in hydrogen and ammonia production, and nuclear energy;
- Commitment to prioritizing the development of a value-added battery supply chain in Canada and Japan, following the signature of the Battery Supply Chain MOC. Acknowledged the recent number of investments by Japanese firms into Canada's battery supply chain; and
- Working together to respond to and to help reduce vulnerabilities in the supply of critical minerals.

Infrastructure

- Canada's commitment to continued investments in domestic trade-enabling transportation infrastructure through the National Trade Corridors Fund;
- Leveraging the newly launched Canadian National Supply Chain Office to work with industry, governments, and partners to make Canada's supply chains more efficient, resilient, and reliable; and
- Sharing bilateral information on supply chains, as needed.

Science, Technology, and Innovation

- Canada's commitment, supported by funding under its Indo-Pacific Strategy, to strengthen its STI partnerships with Japan, in support of co-innovation projects and commercialization-oriented research and development;
- A commitment to ongoing dialogues in the areas such as quantum, AI, cleantech, semiconductors, and co-innovation, following the establishment of the Industrial R&D Policy Dialogue under the recently signed Industrial Science and Technology MOC; and
- Continuing to leverage existing platforms such as the Canada-Japan Joint Science and Technology Cooperation Committee (CJJC) meeting, and on-going coordination of the joint Action Plan.

Tourism and Youth Exchanges

- Continuing to work together to expand bilateral tourism exchanges; and
- Continuing to work together to increase awareness of Working Holiday Programs in both countries to help increase interest and participation, and to strengthen people-to-people ties.

Improving the Business Environment and Promoting Investment

- Continuing to work towards expanding bilateral investment partnerships, particularly in the areas of critical minerals and the battery supply chain, and hydrogen and ammonia; and
- Continuing to discuss ways to promote Japanese liquor exports to Canada.

Agriculture

- Continuing important dialogues, such as the Canada-Japan Agriculture Dialogue, as a forum to discuss trade and investment, cooperation in science and technology, and sustainability and food security policies;
- Where possible, working towards mitigating agricultural supply chain disruptions; and
- Bolstering existing capacity through the new Canadian Indo-Pacific Agriculture and Agri-Food Office located in Manila, Philippines, to help position Canada as an important partner and reliable supplier for the region, including Japan.