



**Joint Minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Committee on Trade and Sustainable Development under the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between the United Kingdom (UK) of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Japan**

***London and Tokyo (via videoconference), 9 December 2025***

**Host: UK**

Joint minutes of the third meeting of the Committee on Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) under the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Japan.

The third meeting took place on 9 December 2025 by video conference.

**1. Greeting and opening remarks**

The meeting opened with the UK reaffirming the strength of the UK-Japan partnership, grounded in shared values and a commitment to stability. The UK highlighted Japan's support for UK accession to CPTPP and the central role of CEPA in underpinning the Committee's work. The UK outlined its recently published Trade Strategy. This strategy, developed with input from over 200 stakeholders, sets out a practical plan for accountable trade and integrates labour and environmental objectives. It will evolve alongside global developments and complements the forthcoming Industrial Strategy, forming a cornerstone of the UK's Plan for Change to drive economic growth. The UK stressed that trade and sustainable development should be mutually reinforcing, with trade policy acting as a tool to mitigate environmental impacts and promote decent work.

Japan confirmed that there are many areas related to Labour and Environment on their side and expressed their eagerness to discuss these in detail. Japan also signalled a strong commitment to engage on these priorities during the session, reinforcing their readiness for constructive dialogue on these important issues.

**2. Approval of the agenda**

The agenda was reviewed and adopted without amendment, allowing the meeting to proceed to substantive discussions.

**3. Discussion on the operation of Domestic Advisory Groups (DAG)**

The UK provided an update on its TSD DAG, which was renewed and expanded in April 2025 and now comprises 15 member organisations representing business, academia, charities, and trade unions. The group meets monthly, with DBT engaging the full DAG, two to three times

a year and with the Chair monthly. The DAG also participates in Civil Society Forums and Joint Dialogues, most recently with Japan on 23 October 2025.

Japan acknowledged the UK's update and indicated its intention to strengthen dialogue with its own advisory structures, ensuring that civil society perspectives continue to inform policy development.

#### **4. Discussion on the Joint Dialogue with Civil Society (JDACS)**

The UK summarised outcomes of the JDACS held on 23 October 2025. On labour, discussions focused on ILO conventions, workers' rights, modern slavery and support for SMEs in meeting sustainability requirements. On environment, topics included sustainable fisheries, forestry and forest-risk commodities, greenhouse-gas reductions and cooperation in multilateral fora. The UK noted that these exchanges have shaped today's agenda and strengthened stakeholder engagement.

Japan welcomed the JDACS as a valuable platform for civil-society input and highlighted its role in guiding the Committee's discussions. Japan accepted that maintaining the sequence of having the JDACS followed by the Committee is beneficial and confirmed its intention to continue this approach for future meetings.

#### **5. Dedicated session on Trade and Environment**

The UK emphasised its commitment to environmental standards within trade agreements, and highlighted progress under the UK-Japan Industrial Strategy Partnership. The UK provided an update on the 2030 Clean Power Action Plan, where Clean Energy was also noted as a key area of cooperation – referencing CEPA Articles 16.5 and 16.12 on Sustainable Development and Cooperation. The UK reflected on the technical exchanges on offshore wind and emerging technologies that have taken place between the UK and Japan, and expressed its ambition for further collaboration in climate-friendly sectors. The UK also noted progress on the Circular Economy Action Plan, and highlighted the UK-Japan collaboration on Nature Risk Solutions: a commercial partnership, contributing towards biodiversity-related financial risk assessments. The UK also provided policy updates on the UK Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), and engagement through the UK CBAM International Group, which Japan has joined.

Japan responded with updates on its circular-economy strategy, which began in 1991 and is now accelerating due to resource constraints (national security concerns), environmental constraints, and its growth opportunity. Japan outlined collaboration across industry, government and academia referred to as Circular Partners, investing approximately ¥2 trillion to achieve GX by utilizing GX Economy Transition Bonds and conducting regulatory reforms promoting eco-design and resource reutilisation. Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) reported on timber due diligence legality under the Revised Clean Wood Act and sustainable food systems initiatives, while Japan's Ministry of Environment (MOE) detailed progress towards 30by30 through 'Kyosei Sites' certification. Japan welcomed UK questions on biodiversity and circular-economy disclosure and will respond in writing.

## **6. Dedicated session on Trade and Labour**

The UK provided an update on the Employment Rights Bill, first introduced in October 2024, with a specific focus on flexible working arrangements and family-friendly rights. The Bill sets out an ambitious agenda to ensure employment rights are fit for a modern economy, and working people feel more empowered. The UK also outlined specific benefits to the workforce through the UK–Japan Industrial Strategy Partnership, particularly in automotive and clean-energy sectors, and described measures to boost skills and investment in growth industries.

Japan reported progress on ILO conventions, noting that the Diet (national legislature of Japan) approved the ratification of C155 in the last session. Japan also set out their ongoing work towards ratification of C190 and C111 and implementation of C105 and C87. Japan also presented measures to support mental health and its integrated labour-market reform plan, which prioritises reskilling for GX/DX, job-based wages and mobility to growth sectors. Japan highlighted subsidies and training benefits under its employment insurance system and expressed interest in continued cooperation with the UK on labour standards and skills development.

## **7. Responsible Business Conduct (RBC)**

Both Parties concurred that the update on the Responsible Business Conduct review would be provided in writing following the meeting, with Japan invited to submit any additional questions for the UK to revert on.

## **8. Closing Remarks**

The Co-Chairs thanked participants for their constructive engagement and reaffirmed the shared ambition to advance sustainable trade and economic growth. Both sides decided to continue dialogue on clean energy, labour standards, and responsible business conduct, while maintaining flexibility to respond to global challenges.

## **Annex A**

### **Committee on Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) United Kingdom – Japan (9<sup>th</sup> December 2025, videoconference)**

1. Welcome and short opening remarks
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Discussion on the operation of Domestic Advisory Groups
4. Overview of topics raised at the Joint Dialogue with Civil Society (JDCS)
5. Dedicated session on Trade and Environment
6. Dedicated session on Trade and Labour
7. Responsible Business Conduct Review
8. Closing remarks and recap of actions