

39th Joint Meeting of the Japan New Zealand Business Council Chairmen's Summary

The 39th Joint Meeting of the Japan New Zealand Business Council, held 6 – 8 November in Auckland with 146 participants, 83 from New Zealand and 63 from Japan, represents the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between both countries. The opening ceremony included greetings by the Chairmen of both committees, followed by the congratulatory message from Ambassador Sinclair and Mr Fujiwara, Charge D'Affairs and interim of Japanese Embassy.

The keynote address was delivered by Mr Tim Williams, Founder of Value Click and Value Commerce, and a Board Member of the ICEHOUSE. The theme of his address was "Entrepreneurial Success in Japan". Mr Williams spoke about his 17 years experiences in Japan as a founder of Internet-related services providers, which established from scratch and to become a success story in Japan, and subsequently listed on the Japan Stock Exchange.

In the first plenary session, Mr Tony Alexander of the Bank of New Zealand and Mr Daisuke Hiratsuka of JETRO spoke on the theme of "Economic Overviews and Prospects".

Mr Alexander gave an overview of the New Zealand economy, highlighting several growth related influences. He forecasts GDP growth of 2% - 3% p.a., lower unemployment, inflationary pressures, and a relatively high dollar.

Mr Hiratsuka reported that Japanese firms expand overseas rapidly due to supply chain globalization and Asian market potential. He pointed out that Japan's engagement in the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) is indispensable to improve the Japanese economy along with the growth in Asian countries.

The topic of the second plenary session was "Progress/Successes in Our Relationship".

Mr Stephen Jacobi of the New Zealand International Business Forum in his presentation "TPP and the case for Japan", spoke about the significance of TPP, and the New Zealand perspective of how this framework may provide for greater Japan/New Zealand trade relations. Mr Atsushi Katsuki of Asahi Group Holdings Australia introduced their involvement in New Zealand through investment, with more than half of their investment to Oceania in the last year. He explained their business strategy to expand overseas investment under the current Japanese circumstances of a decrease in population and beer consumption, in line with their business portfolio enhancement in Oceania.

Following the Industry tour to Buckley Systems in the morning, Mr Mike Lightfoot spoke about their company's position as the global leader in the manufacture and supply of precision electromagnets. The application of their products in silicon chips, flat panel TVs, and the future application of proton therapy in medical devices, provided examples of their leadership role in the high-tech sector.

Mr Nobuo Kikutake of Daiken New Zealand reported on his one-and-half year experience to turn around their business here through solid efforts such as quality control, raising factory utilization rates, new operation facilities investment, and changes in strategic target markets. He mentioned some operational risk factors in New Zealand, but that cooperation amongst both countries staff will adjust these risks.

The topic of the third plenary session was "Food/Agriculture/Forestry". Speeches were delivered by five speakers:

Mr Hemi Rolleston of Te Awanui Huka Pak spoke of the importance of cultural relationships in business, and the positive influence their business has on the local Maori Community in Tauranga. Their business is a major exporter of kiwifruit to Japan, in partnership with Zespri.

Mr Hideaki Fukutake of efu Investment spoke about the potential of the drinking water market due to the growing world population and the huge demand for clean water. He introduced his water business which exports abundant NZ clean water to foreign countries including Japan by using bulk containers which retain the water quality.

Mr Doug Ducker highlighted the 40th anniversary of the Oji Paper and Pan Pac Forest relationship. Pan Pac continues to invest, with a new \$50 million Pulp mill development, and a \$20million effluent plant in 2012.

Mr Shaun Jacka of Piako and Mr Yuta Iguchi of Iguchi Holdings jointly explained the development of their new “Gourmet Yoghurt” market inside New Zealand as well as overseas including Japan. They emphasized the importance of their marketing strategy in Japan.

In the fourth plenary session based on the theme of “Environment/Tourism/Manufacturing”, Mr Greg Cross of PowerbyProxi spoke about their position as a World Leader in the industrial application of wireless power solutions, such as replacing conventional wiring in automobiles with wireless solutions. Their Consumer Electronics innovations include In Device Wireless Battery re-charging, such as Integrated Smartphone & tablet wireless re-charging.

Mr Tim Harvey of Essentially Group spoke about the opportunity for sport and sport-related events as vehicles for the corporate sector. He highlighted an example of the first ever Japanese rugby, Fumiaki Tanaka, who will play in the Highlanders Super 15 Rugby team next season.

Mr Nick Mudge of Tourism New Zealand spoke about the positive growth in Japanese travellers to New Zealand this summer. In addition to the traditional ‘active senior market’, Tourism New Zealand is developing the ‘fun seeking friends’ market aimed at young professional people. ‘The Hobbit’ is also expected to influence the rebound of the Japanese travel market to New Zealand.

Mr. Ishida explained the trends in outbound travel from Japan. He also touched on the outlook of tourism to New Zealand, with local-culture oriented content, and more eco-tourism experiences, under development.

The theme of the fifth plenary session was “Investment & Opportunities”.

Ms Migiwa Ozawa of Film Construction spoke about the advantage of New Zealand as a film location, due its opposite seasons, diverse locations, the great reputation of crews, and the melting pot of talent that exists here. .

Mr James Hay, representing the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, spoke about the redevelopment plans for Christchurch’s infrastructure, and the opportunity to create a vibrant new city centre.

Mr Moriyasu Kawamura of Toranomon Jitsugyo Kaikan introduced some investment cases by Japanese companies in JANZEC to New Zealand, and touched on their interest and the outlook for business opportunities here.

In the final presentation, the Prime Minister, Rt Hon John Key emphasised the importance of the Japan/New Zealand relationship, and the opportunity to grow in the areas of trade, investment, and tourism in the future.

During this conference, we discussed various important themes relating to New Zealand and Japan in depth. Finally, we wish to thank the Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Speakers, and all the participants in this conference for your contribution, and congratulate you all on making this conference a wonderful success.