

36th Joint Meeting of the Japan New Zealand Business Council

Chairmen's Summary

The 36th Joint Meeting of the Japan New Zealand Business Council was held in Tokyo, on October 29(Thu.) 2009 with 101 participants, 48 from Japan and 53 from New Zealand. The opening ceremony received greetings by the chairmen of both committees, followed by the congratulatory message from Prime Minister Hatoyama, read by an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The keynote address was delivered by Hon. Murray McCully, Minister of Foreign Affairs, NZ government, on the theme of "New Zealand-Japan Business-Lifting our game". Minister McCully emphasized the importance of concluding an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA / FTA) between Japan and New Zealand in strengthening bilateral economic relations.

In the first plenary session, Mr. Nakatomi of JETRO and Mr. Alexander of the Bank of New Zealand spoke on the theme of "Economic Overviews and Prospects". To begin with, it was pointed out that while the Japanese economy shows some sign of hitting the bottom, the current state is still tough, not warranting prejudgment about where it may head moving forward. On the other hand, it was reported that the impact of the Global Financial Crisis on the New Zealand economy was moderate and there are positive signs for the future.

The topic of the second plenary session was "Cooperation in Our Business- Food / Agriculture, Forestry & Fishery". Mr. Kakizoe of Nippon Suisan Kaisha, Ltd, reported on the global links in the fishery industry. Mr. Carroll of the Avocado Exporters Committee and Mr. Trickett of the Avanza Group reported on the strategy regarding avocado exports to Japan. Mr. Nakadori of Meiji Seika Kaisha, explained the development and marketing of functional food products made from blackcurrants from New Zealand. Mr. Robinson of DIVA NZ Wine reported on the exports of NZ wine to Japan.

The topic of the third plenary session was "Cooperation in Our Business – Environment / Tourism". In the area of tourism, Mr. Tagawa of JTB Corporation and Mr. Hickton of Tourism New Zealand gave speeches. Reports were presented on ecotourism in Japan and New Zealand as well as promotion of environmentally friendly tourism utilizing the QUALMARK system in New Zealand. Both sides pointed out that bilateral cooperation utilizing their respective characteristics is important to expand the number of tourists. With respect to the environment, reports were presented by Mr. Mitsuyoshi of Sumitomo Forestry Co., Ltd. and Mr. Turner of Nelson Pine Industries Ltd. It was reported that the new government in Japan set the goal of reducing CO2 emissions by 25% by 2050 compared to 1990, while in New Zealand, unlike other nations, the major source of green house gas emissions is the dairy industry. Environmental measures implemented in each country were introduced, such as forestation and CO2 emission abatement in factories.

In the fourth plenary session, the theme discussed was "Progress of the Regional Economic Integration and Strengthening of the Bilateral Economic Relations". Speeches were delivered by four speakers: Mr. Yoshizaki of Sojitz Research Institute, Mr. O'Reilly of Business New Zealand, Mr. Ishimoto of ITOCHU New Zealand and Dr. Grant of Asia : NZ Foundation. On the future direction of regional integration, it was pointed out that the East Asia Community advocated by the new administration of Japan should be based on ASEAN + 6 countries, and

that TPP lead by New Zealand and APEC that will be chaired by Japan next year is also attracting attention as the potential approaches to achieving regional integration. The speakers from both countries stated that serious discussions on a Japan NZ EPA should be undertaken, for the conclusion of an EPA will not only be conducive to strengthening bilateral relations, but could also be a step forward towards regional integration in the future.

As part of the joint meeting's program, an Industry Tour is scheduled for tomorrow. Also the Japan New Zealand Partnership Forum will convene in Tokyo as well, with the visit to Japan by Prime Minister John Key of New Zealand. The rugby 'Bledisloe Cup' between New Zealand and Australia will be hosted here on the 31st. This series of events shall provide an excellent opportunity for both Japan and New Zealand to reaffirm the importance of and the trust that underpins our bilateral partnership.