

Japan New Zealand Business Council 46th Annual Conference

Joint Statement

The Japan and New Zealand Committees of the Japan New Zealand Business Council (JNZBC) met for their 46th Annual Joint Conference over two days on 18 and 19 September 2019 in Kashiwa, Chiba Prefecture, with more than 140 participants. Kashiwa, as the city for their pre-Rugby World Cup camp of All Blacks, made it a logical choice as venue for the Business Council meeting.

Under the theme for the conference of “Japan and New Zealand: Pathways to Progress” discussion of the Maori economy and tourism, and linkages through rugby, underlined the importance of cultural and sports exchanges in building the social infrastructure underpinning trade and economic linkages between New Zealand and Japan.

Discussion on the outlook for international trade underlined the key importance of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the negotiations underway on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in providing a firm foundation to continue to build inclusive and sustainable growth in the region.

With trade growth slowing amidst the trade tensions between the United States and China, it was important for all economies to promote open market and plurilateral cooperation.

The current landscape and outlook for infrastructure in New Zealand was a major topic of discussion with investment required in transport and urban infrastructure to keep pace with population growth, and various needs, including the transition to a low emissions economy.

There have been some excellent partnerships with Japanese companies bringing innovative ideas

from best international practice coupled with the physical capability to deliver world class infrastructure in New Zealand. Learnings from the development of Kashiwa-no-ha as a smart city; community-based development of biomass generation for revitalized forestry; and the scope that exists for high value timber manufacturing to produce bio-plastics and other bio-based manufactured products were all subjects of close interest for further partnership between Japanese and New Zealand entities.

Discussion on sustainable development and renewable energy focused on Japan's vision to lead the world in transitioning to a hydrogen society with hydrogen used for multi-applications in transport, electricity, heat generation and energy storage meeting supply security considerations and reducing greenhouse gases.

The conference also discussed new business development using geothermal energy and other renewable natural resources such as wood to combat, climate change and contribute to sustainable societies. It highlighted the direction of policy by both governments in promoting the role that green hydrogen can play in Japan and New Zealand in creating new jobs, converting heavy transport away from fossil fuels, enhancing electricity supply security and importantly also generating significant new commercial opportunities.

Last year, Japan and New Zealand signed a world-first memorandum to encourage collaboration on hydrogen initiatives. In this connection, the conference welcomed the partnership between Obayashi Corporation and Tuaropaki Trust to construct a pilot hydrogen production facility using geothermal electricity.

In the area of food, the conference underlined the excellent agricultural production systems in New Zealand meeting demand for safe, high quality food in Japan. It noted also that the previous pattern

of trade was changing rapidly with New Zealand companies now positioning themselves to develop and market high quality, environmentally sustainable functional foods, functional ingredients and supplements promoted for their health benefits.

Long term commitment to the market and partnership are key elements of the modern relationship between New Zealand entities and Japanese counterparts to advance farming as a business. The Conference highlighted also the growing links between Japanese and New Zealand universities, research institutes and private companies – key to exchange of scientific research and other information to meet the needs of modern society, including the elderly, children and elite athletes.

The discussion on innovation and start-ups was an opportunity to consider some of the practical implications of the introduction of new advanced technology on many aspects of everyday life, including health care, education, agri-tech, banking and leisure time activities. In welcoming the advantages of technology to address societal problems, the Conference focused also on the need to ensure matching changes in cyber security, competition and privacy policy to ensure the benefits of the flow of data.

Both Committees agreed to encourage further partnerships on infrastructure and investment; sustainable development, renewable energy and forestry; agriculture -functional foods; and innovation and start-ups.

Additionally, the Conference welcomed an initiative by the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry to mount a high level mission to New Zealand for the first time early in 2020 to explore new opportunities for partnership with New Zealand.

Both Committees resolved to engage with their respective Governments on specific steps to advance the relationship in the above priority areas, especially deepening integration within CPTPP, its expansion to new members, and supporting efforts to successfully conclude RCEP, with a view to achieving concrete progress by the time of the 2020 Annual Joint Conference in New Zealand.

Kashiwa city

19 September 2019



Ian Kennedy

Japan New Zealand Business Council

New Zealand Chair



Akira Ichikawa

Japan New Zealand Business Council

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