



Joint Statement
21 September 2016

The Japan-U.S. Southeast Association and the Southeast U.S./Japan Association held their 39th Annual Joint Meeting at Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, Japan, September 20 to 22, 2016, with the theme of “Initiative for a Sustainable Future – Through Continuous Innovation.” Japan Chairman, Mr. Tadashi Okamura, Honorary Adviser, Toshiba Corporation, and SEUS Chairman, Mr. John Turner, Senior Executive Vice President and Head of Corporate Banking Group, Regions Financial Corporation, presided over the meeting which attracted approximately 250 delegates.

The SEUS delegations were led by senior government officials from each jurisdiction including: Greg Canfield, Secretary of Commerce, State of Alabama, this year’s co-host state; Ken Detzner, Secretary of State, State of Florida; David Werner, Chief Operating Officer, Office of the Governor, State of Georgia; Glenn McCullough, Jr., Executive Director, Mississippi Development Authority, State of Mississippi; Christopher Chung, Chief Executive Officer, Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, State of North Carolina; Minor Mickel Shaw, President, Micco, LLC, State of South Carolina; and Randy Boyd, Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, state of Tennessee.

VIPs attending the conference included Mr. Kentaro Sonoura, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan; Mr. Andrew Wylegala, Minister-Counselor for Commercial Affairs, Embassy of the United States of America in Japan; the Honorable Takashi Shinozuka, Consul General of Japan in Atlanta; the Honorable Masami Kinefuchi, Consul General of Japan in Nashville; and the Honorable Ken Okaniwa, Consul General of Japan in Miami.

In the opening remarks, Co-Chairmen John Turner and Tadashi Okamura recognized the importance of US-Japan leadership in innovation. They highlighted the strong ties and mutual trust between the U.S. and Japan and urged the two countries to play a leading role in innovation in bringing the world together to meet pressing global challenges. Following the opening remarks, each of the SEUS delegation leaders provided state-specific information and answered questions in a town-hall format.

Panel Session I, “Energy, Environment and Innovation”, featured a discussion on US and Japan’s policies to accelerate environmental innovation, and business sector responses to combatting climate change. Panelists included Mr. Hiroya Masuda, Professor, Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Tokyo; Professor Jayant S. Kapat, Sc.D. , Director, Center for Advanced Turbomachinery & Energy Research (CATER), University of Central Florida; Mr. James Bolte, President, Toyota Motor Manufacturing of Alabama, Inc; and Mr. Akira Sudo, Senior Fellow, Toshiba Corporation. The panel was moderated by Mr. Jun Arima, Professor, Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Tokyo.

“Trade and Investment” was the theme of Panel Session II. Attendees heard presentations on economic benefits and business opportunities of TPP and other mega trade agreements. Panelists included Mr. Toru Nishihama, Chief Economist, The Dai-ichi Life Research Institute; Mr. Tetsuhide Mikamo, Director, Marubeni Research Institute; Mr. Andrew Wylegala, Minister-Counselor for Commercial Affairs, Embassy of the United States of America in Japan; and Mr. Mark Williams, President, Strategic Development Group. Mr. Hiroyuki Ishige, Chairman and CEO, Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), served as moderator.

Throughout the program, views and opinions were exchanged and understanding of the conference issues was deepened. Participants were able to see long-time friends and make new ones. The significance of the partnership was reconfirmed. The value of working together in harmony was recognized and a commitment to the joint effort to help achieve sustainable growth of the U.S. and Japan as well as of the world was affirmed.

The meeting was adjourned with an announcement that the 40th Annual Joint Meeting will be held in Greenville, South Carolina from October 22-24, 2017, under the new leadership of Ms. Minor Mickel Shaw, President of Micco LLC, South Carolina, and Mr. Teruo Asada, Chairman, Marubeni Corporation.