



**45th ANNUAL JOINT MEETING OF THE JAPAN-U.S. SOUTHEAST &
SOUTHEAST U.S./JAPAN ASSOCIATIONS**

OCTOBER 12-14, 2023

Joint Statement
October 13, 2023

The Japan-U.S. Southeast Association and the Southeast U.S./Japan Association held their 45th Annual Joint Meeting at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, Japan, October 12 to 14, 2023 with the theme of “Continued Success Through Partnership & Innovation for a Sustainable Future.” Japan Chairman Mr. Masaaki Tsuya, Immediate Past Chairman and CEO, and current External Advisor of Bridgestone Corporation, and SEUS Chairman Mr. Eric Silagy, retired Chairman, President and CEO of Florida Power & Light Company, presided over the meeting of approximately 300 delegates.

VIPs attending the conference included: His Excellency Rahm Emanuel, Ambassador of the United States to Japan; Masahiro Komura, Parliamentary Vice-Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan; Nobuhiro Yoshida, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade & Industry of Japan; the Honorable Kazuhiro Nakai, Consul General of Japan in Miami; the Honorable Yoichi Matsumoto, Consul General of Japan in Nashville; and the Honorable Mio Maeda, Consul General of Japan in Atlanta; Norihiko Ishiguro, Chairman, the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO); and Takuma Sato, two-time Indianapolis 500 Mile Race winner.

The SEUS delegations were led by senior government officials from each jurisdiction including: the Honorable Roy Cooper, Governor of the State of North Carolina; Mr. Cord Byrd, Secretary of State, State of Florida; Mr. Greg Canfield, Secretary of Commerce, State of Alabama; Mr. Pat Wilson, Commissioner, Department of Economic Development, State of Georgia; Ms. Laura Hipp, Deputy Executive Director, Mississippi Development Authority, State of Mississippi; Mr. Harry Lightsey, Secretary of Commerce, State of South Carolina; and Mr. Stuart McWhorter, Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, State of Tennessee.

In the opening remarks, Chairman Tsuya and Co-Chairman Silagy highlighted the importance of spearheading the promotions of free trade and investment, noting that, Continued Success through Partnership and Innovation for a Sustainable Future, is especially relevant in today’s global landscape. They stressed the challenges caused by on-going border conflicts, persistent economic volatility and uncertainty, and disruptions in commercial relationships such as those affecting supply chains. They concluded by expressing their confidence that this year’s meeting will reinforce the strong relationships that have proven mutually beneficial to the Southeast US States and Japan for many decades.

Following these opening remarks, Parliamentary Vice-Minister Komura and Parliamentary Vice-Minister Yoshida shared their perspectives on topics of interest to the audience in line with the theme of the meeting. After these presentations, each of the SEUS delegation leaders provided state-specific information, including an introductory video presentation from Co-host State Governor Ron DeSantis of Florida and responding remarks by Governor Roy Cooper of North

Carolina. Consul General Nakai also addressed the audience providing his perspective on the success of the associations and opportunities for the future.

Panel Session 1, “The US-Japan Economic Partnership Roadmap Emerges: Resiliency During a Time of Global Volatility,” examined emerging opportunities made possible under the current global landscape. The panelists were: Mr. Sean Suggs, President, Toyota Battery Manufacturing, North Carolina; Dr. Jun Suzuki, Senior Advisor/Immediate Past Chairperson, Teijin Limited; Ms. Masami Tyson, Partner, Womble Bond Dickinson; and Mr. Mark Williams, President, Strategic Development Group. The panel was moderated by Mr. Norihiko Ishiguro, Chairman, the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO).

Remarks highlighting the long-standing mutually beneficial relationship between the U.S. and Japan were shared by Ambassador Rahm Emanuel, and the luncheon featured a special presentation by Takuma Sato, the first Japanese driver to win the Indianapolis 500 Mile Race.

Panel Session 2, “Transitioning the Workforce to Support Emerging Technologies and Sustainability Initiatives,” was moderated by Mr. Andrew Wylegala, President, the National Association of Japan America Societies. The panelists were: Dr. Kimiko Murofushi, President, Professional University of Beauty & Wellness and Professor Emeritus / Former President of Ochanomizu University; Ms. Yukako Uchinaga, Chairperson and Representative, Director of Japan Women’s Innovative Network (J-WIN) and Member of the Board, NTT; Mr. Shuji Oda, President, AISIN North Carolina Corporation; Mr. TJ Villamil, Florida Deputy Secretary of Commerce / President of International Commerce, SelectFlorida, Inc.; Mr. Don Hobart, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and Dr. Tadayuki Hara, Associate Professor, Rosen College of Hospitality Management, University of Central Florida.

At the beginning of the Closing Ceremony, Consul General Matsumoto addressed the audience, followed by remarks from Consul General Maeda. They provided their perspectives on the relationship between the Southeast US State members and Japan and their optimism for the future of trade and investment among and between the parties.

Throughout the program, views and opinions were exchanged, and a deeper understanding of issues and opportunities of mutual interest was gained. Participants were able to see long-time friends and make new ones, and the significance of the partnership between the seven Southeast US States and Japan 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 by Governor Cooper that the 46th Annual Joint Meeting will be held in Charlotte, North Carolina October 27 – 29, 2024, with Mr. Sean Suggs, President of Toyota Battery Manufacturing North Carolina, as the incoming conference chairman, and Mr. Masaaki Tsuya continuing as conference co-chairman.

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