

Ambassador's Message (Vol.18 / June 3, 2016)

"G7 Ise-Shima Summit and the visit to Hiroshima by President Obama"

Dear friend,

I hope this finds you well.

Japan hosted the G7 Ise-Shima Summit from 26–27 May. The summit brought together the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union, and provided a valuable forum for addressing major global economic and political challenges. An outreach meeting was also held during the summit, which was attended by the heads of state and government of non-G7 countries, and chairpersons of international organisations. On 27 May following the conclusion of the Summit, US President Barack Obama visited Hiroshima together with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as the first sitting US President. A description of some of the key outcomes of the summit is provided below, together with an overview of the visit to Hiroshima by Prime Minister Abe and President Obama.

Economic issues

World economy: The G7 Leader's Declaration describes global growth as "moderate and below potential" and acknowledges that "risks of weak growth persist." Within this context, the leaders reiterated their commitment to using all policy tools—fiscal, monetary and structural—to strengthen global demand and address supply constraints, while continuing efforts to put debt on a sustainable path. The leaders also concurred on the importance of strengthening efforts in a cooperative manner to

implement fiscal strategies and expressed their commitment to leading by example in advancing structural reforms.

Trade: The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to keeping markets open and fighting all forms of protectionism. In addition to expressing their commitment to strengthening the multilateral trading system and promoting WTO negotiations, they also welcomed trade liberalisation efforts being made through regional trade agreements, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

Infrastructure: Leaders endorsed the “G7 Ise-Shima Principles for promoting Quality Infrastructure Investment”. The principles seek to promote quality infrastructure investment that will assist in “bridging the existing global demand-supply gap of infrastructure investment” in a manner that will foster strong, sustainable and balanced growth, while also enhancing resilience and contributing to global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Health: Leaders committed to taking concrete steps to advance global health as elaborated in the “G7 Ise-Shima Vision for Global Health”, highlighting that health is the foundation of economic prosperity and security. They also determined to promote Universal Health Care (UHC) and take leadership on issues relating to public health emergencies and antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Women: The leaders stated their commitment to fostering a society where all women and girls are empowered and actively engage in sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth. They also pledged to empower women through education and training and promote the active engagement of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Leaders also endorsed the “G7 Guiding Principles for Building the Capacity of Women and Girls” as common guiding principles for their actions.

Climate change: The leaders emphasised their commitment to taking necessary steps to securing ratification, acceptance or approval of the Paris Agreement and called on all parties to the agreement to strive for a goal of entry into force in 2016. The leaders also affirmed their willingness to take the lead in this area through early, transparent and robust implementation of their nationally determined contributions.

Energy: The leaders recognised the important role that the energy system has to play in the implementation of the Paris Agreement and expressed their determination to accelerate their work towards transitioning to an energy system that enables a decarbonisation of the global economy. Furthermore, they committed to playing a leading role in facilitating energy-related investment, particularly in connection with quality energy infrastructure and upstream development.

The leaders also reaffirmed their aims of enhancing financial transparency, combating tax evasion, and tackling corruption, and committed to supporting an open, secure and reliable cyberspace that promotes economic growth and prosperity.

Foreign policy issues

Countering terrorism and violent extremism: The leaders adopted the “G7 Action Plan on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism”. In addition to emphasising the necessity for the full implementation of relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions, the action plan includes concrete measures such as bolstering information sharing among relevant authorities, strengthening border security, countering terrorist financing and enhancing capacity building.

Maritime security: During the summit, Prime Minister Abe emphasised the importance of the “three principles for maritime security”—making and clarifying maritime claims based on international law, refraining from unilateral actions which

would increase tensions and not using force or coercion in trying to drive claims, and seeking to settle disputes by peaceful means—and the G7 leaders reaffirmed their support in this regard. In the Leaders Declaration, the leaders also expressed the importance of states seeking to settle disputes by peaceful means, including through juridical procedures including arbitration. Moreover, the leaders shared concerns about the situation in the East and South China Seas and endorsed the G7 Foreign Ministers' Statement on Maritime Security issued in April.

Non-proliferation and disarmament: The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons. They endorsed the G7 Foreign Minister's Hiroshima Declaration on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation and the Statement of the G7 Non-Proliferation Directors Group on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament issued at the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in April.

The leaders also discussed various issues such as the migration and refugee crisis, the Middle East, North Korea and Ukraine/Russia.

Visit to Hiroshima by Prime Minister Abe and President Obama

On 27 May, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe travelled to Hiroshima with US President Barack Obama to visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. President Obama visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and gave children paper cranes he had made. The two leaders then laid wreaths at the Cenotaph for Atomic Bomb Victims and delivered their remarks. President Obama spoke with survivors of the bombing and then visited the Atomic Bomb Dome.

During the visit President Obama stated that “among those nations like my own that hold nuclear stockpiles, we must have the courage to escape the logic of fear, and

pursue a world without them”. President Obama also declared “that is the future we can choose – a future in which Hiroshima and Nagasaki are known not as the dawn of atomic warfare, but as the start of our own moral awakening”.

Prime Minister Abe said “we are determined to realise a world free of nuclear weapons. No matter how long and how difficult the road will be, it is the responsibility of us who live in the present to continue to make efforts.”

President Obama’s visit to Hiroshima carries very deep significance. Despite widespread views that the prospects of nuclear disarmament are becoming increasingly dim, I strongly hope, the powerful messages delivered to the world on this occasion—by the leader of the only country to have used a nuclear weapon and the leader of the only country to have suffered a nuclear attack—hold the potential to mark a turning point in the struggle towards disarmament. It is my great hope that countries that possess nuclear weapons will work together with those who do not to take further practical and meaningful steps towards “a world free of nuclear weapons”.

In closing, I would like to thank all those who contributed to making both the G7 Summit and the visit to Hiroshima historic successes.

Yours sincerely,

/S/

Sumio Kusaka

Ambassador of Japan to Australia

Further information on the G7 Summit and its outcomes is available here:

<http://www.japan.go.jp/g7/summit/index.html>

Images taken from visit to Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park are available here:

http://japan.kantei.go.jp/97_abe/actions/201605/hiroshima.html