

Remarks by Mr Sumio Kusaka, Ambassador of Japan
Cooperation between Australia and Japan as Global Partners Symposium
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Thank you for inviting me to speak today. Today's symposium could not have been better timed. As the situation in the Indo-Pacific becomes increasingly uncertain, it is crucial for our two countries, Japan and Australia, who share common strategies and values, to strengthen our cooperation. The fact that Prime Minister Turnbull chose Japan as the destination of his first international visit of the year is testimony to this idea.

And just last year, Japan and Australia celebrated an important landmark in the history of our cooperation; the 60th anniversary since the signing of the Japan-Australia Commerce Agreement in 1957. I am pleased that the Embassy of Japan and the ANU Japan Institute could come together like this to organise today's symposium.

This year's symposium could not have been possible without the Japan Institute's extensive knowledge and broad network. I want to thank the ANU Japan Institute and its staff, with special mention to Distinguished Professor Jenny Corbett for your efforts in turning this symposium into a reality.

1. The objective of the symposium

Last year, we saw the rise of anti-globalism and protectionism in the international community and challenges towards the rule of law and the existing international order. Japan and Australia, two of the leading economic powers in the region, share fundamental values as well as common strategic interests built on a free and open Indo-Pacific and we have the potential for greater cooperation.

At this year's symposium, we will analyse the current challenges faced by our two nations. We will also discuss regional and international challenges and areas that Japan and Australia could work on as 'Special Strategic Partners' and the ideal regional framework needed to deal with these challenges.

- (1) Development
- (2) The establishment of peace and stability
- (3) Energy
- (4) The framework for regional cooperation

In addition to these current challenges, I expect that the experts here from Japan and Australia, as well as the US, India and Indonesia, will take into account past examples where Japan and Australia have demonstrated initiative in bilateral cooperation, such as the establishment of APEC (in 1989) and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (in 2010).

2. Indo-Pacific

Let me take this opportunity to list a few recent movements of note in terms of cooperation between Japan and Australia that provide the background for today's discussion.

The first is 'the Indo-Pacific'. The concept of 'the Indo-Pacific' proposed by Australia has now been adopted by Japan as well as the US, and is beginning to occupy an important position in portraying the current state of international politics. In the joint press statement issued after the summit, both Prime Minister Abe and Prime Minister Turnbull reaffirmed their shared vision for the Indo-Pacific region.

Under Prime Minister Abe's leadership, Japan is promoting its 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy', the concept of which closely matches, as Maude and Brian said, that expressed in Australia's 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper. The three pillars of the strategy are:

- (1) The promotion and establishment of universal values such as the rule of law, freedom of navigation and market economies
- (2) The pursuit of economic prosperity by improving connectivity
- (3) Commitment to peace and stability by supporting maritime law enforcement capacity building and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief cooperation.

Our two leaders also reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation and coordinating their efforts through bilateral, trilateral and minilateral partnerships with like-minded nations in order to realise their vision for the Indo-Pacific region.

I hope that today's discussion will provide constructive and meaningful political input for Japan and Australia to further cooperation in this region.

3. TPP11

The second point I would like to mention is the TPP11. After the summit meeting in January, our two leaders emphasised the strategic importance of a free and open trade system based on rules for global stability and prosperity. They also shared their determination to closely cooperate to sign and bring the TPP into effect as fast as we can. Interestingly, it was during the stroll along Sydney's South Head on the morning of January 14, 2017 that Prime Minister Abe and Prime Minister Turnbull discussed taking a lead on the TPP11, so it was the joint making of Japan and Australia from the very beginning.

Japan and Australia both actively led the process to 'keep the dying TPP alive' after the US announced that it was dropping out of the TPP. However, our history of promoting free trade dates back further than this. In the 90's, our countries pursued a new form of free and open economic order in the Asia Pacific and led the establishment of APEC. Cooperation between Japan and Australia towards the promotion of the TPP is just an extension of this history.

With the international community under threat from protectionism, the TPP is an important step in creating free and fair new rules adapted to the 21st century. It is also a proactive, impactful message aimed at the US and China, amongst other countries in the region. The TPP, together with the RCEP currently under negotiation which includes both China and India, the two most populous countries

in the world, and all 10 ASEAN nations, provides an important cornerstone for creating an extensive free trade zone. For that reason, it not only holds economic significance, it also holds important strategic meaning.

Obviously, the region is also already home to other forms of regional framework besides the TPP such as APEC and EAS. With just moments before the TPP is signed in March, the fact that we are now coming together at this symposium to consider the region's existing and future framework and explore how Japan and Australia can cooperate to facilitate the further promotion of free trade feels very timely.

Going back to Japan's new 'Indo-Pacific Strategy' that I mentioned earlier, the strategy is a comparatively new concept and provides us with endless points to discuss today and in the future. How does our vision relate to APEC or the soon-to-be TPP11? What role will ASEAN countries, which form the core of Asia-Pacific cooperation, play within the Indo-Pacific Strategy and the TPP framework? What will happen to the relationship between ASEAN countries and members of the recently re-established Quadrilateral Dialogue between the US, Japan, Australia and India? Will it simply be a multi-layered relationship, or will there be some kind of restructuring being envisaged in the future? There is no lack of questions to be considered.

4. Pacific Islands

My third and final point here is regarding the Pacific Islands where Australia has traditionally played an overwhelmingly leading role. For the Pacific Islands to be peaceful and prosperous, it is important that they are part of the free and open Indo-Pacific concept in my view. In May this year, Prime Minister Abe will host the eighth triennial Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM) in the disaster-affected region of Iwaki in Japan's north-east.

With PALM just around the corner, we would like to gain insight into the kind of cooperation Japan and Australia should pursue, as well as discuss the possibility of bringing our accomplishments in the Pacific to the global stage. So, with this in mind, I would like for us to debate the situation of the Pacific Islands in the context of the Indo-Pacific in today's discussion.

5. Conclusion

I have no doubt today's symposium will be a defining one, where experts from countries of the region including Japan and Australia can discuss how our two countries should cooperate in the international community.

There are still fields besides the ones to be discussed here today where researchers and government officials from Japan and Australia can cooperate and I hope that this year's symposium will allow us to discover these new areas for cooperation.

I also hope that this year's symposium will help to further strengthen the 'Special Strategic Partnership' shared by Japan and Australia based on common values and strategic interests, as well as deepen the cooperation between Japan and Australia, and that our two countries can further contribute to the region's peace, stability and prosperity.

Thank you.