

JOINT STATEMENT
U.S.-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON)
CULCON XXVI
November 17-18, 2014

“To ensure the future strength of the U.S.-Japan relationship, the two governments share the goal, established by the U.S.-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON), of doubling two-way student exchange by the year 2020.”

President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe endorse in the Annex of the U.S.-Japan Joint Statement: Leaders Statement on U.S.-Japan Bilateral Exchanges, April 25, 2014

The 26th United States-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON), comprised of representatives from the Japanese and U.S. governments and from business, academe and other sectors of public life, convened in Washington, D.C. on November 17-18, 2014.

CULCON XXVI was co-chaired by Mr. Harry Hill, President and CEO, Oak Lawn Marketing, Inc. and Mr. Minoru Makihara, Senior Corporate Advisor, Mitsubishi Corporation. The Panels received congratulatory messages from President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, read by U.S. Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy and Japanese Ambassador to the U.S. Kenichiro Sasae.

Since its establishment in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy and Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda, CULCON has served for more than half a century to

elevate and strengthen the vital cultural and educational foundations of the U.S.-Japan relationship, and to strengthen connections between U.S. and Japan leadership in those fields.

Over the past 70 years, since the end of World War II, U.S.-Japan relations have undergone a remarkable transformation, and the issues between the two nations continue to change. Reacting to changing circumstances, CULCON has continued to address current issues, offering recommendations as well as new ideas and perspectives to both governments and other stakeholders. At its inception, CULCON was concerned about an occasional lack of mutual understanding among its citizens and scholars, despite high approval ratings by both our citizens of U.S.-Japan relations. Media coverage between the two countries was also an important topic during the first decades. As study abroad has become more popular, a wide range of issues

surrounding student exchanges has become a dominant topic.

In recent years, as the challenges the U.S. and Japan face become more global, our cooperation in the international arena increases in significance. Our relationship has developed into a global partnership, and CULCON must be constantly updated to continue to play a valuable role.

In spite of these changes, it is the close ties and shared values between the people of the United States and the people of Japan that continue to constitute the foundation of the global partnership. A broad range of people-to-people exchanges between Japan and the United States, on which CULCON has focused throughout its history, has been a key pillar of our alliance, and is an irreplaceable investment in the future of our partnership.

CULCON convened during International Education Week, a timely occasion to highlight the importance of study abroad between Japan and the United States.

Summary of Discussions

In response to the recommendations from the 25th CULCON meeting in Tokyo, during the past two years CULCON has focused its efforts on educational and art exchanges. The discussions of this plenary session focused on these two issues as well as new topics.

a. Education Task Force

In 2012, CULCON convened a binational Education Task Force (ETF) under the leadership of former Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and former U.S. Secretary Norman Mineta, to examine trends in bilateral student exchanges and to make recommendations to leaders in both nations. It set an ambitious goal to double the number of U.S. and Japanese students studying in each other's country by 2020 and in June, 2013, ETF Report and Recommendations were presented to Prime Minister Abe and Under Secretary of State Sonenshine. Since then,

CULCON has disseminated the Report broadly to stakeholders and engaged them in implementing the recommendations.

The Panels especially welcomed the initiatives taken by President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during their summit meeting on April 24, 2014, for sharing CULCON's goal and for pledging support to further promote and expand bilateral exchanges and dialogues.

As is outlined in the CULCON Education Task Force Annual Report 2013-2014, since the ETF Report's release, Japanese and U.S. public and private sector stakeholders have taken concrete steps to address specific recommendations. On the Japanese side, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) has made a tremendous investment in strengthening English language education, expanding youth exchange, engaging alumni, globalizing Japanese universities, and encouraging the private sector in Japan to accommodate and promote study abroad through the TOBITATE! Young Ambassador Program.

The private sector, led by Keidanren, Keizai Doyukai and the American Chamber of Commerce (ACCJ), has also responded by supporting the government's efforts with actions and also revising their own policies.

The U.S. government has broadened the activities of EducationUSA in Japan and made the visa process more transparent. The Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) has launched a new Study Abroad Unit and is encouraging U.S. universities to internationalize and strengthen their ties with partners in Japan. The U.S. Embassy in Tokyo has declared the implementation of ETF recommendations part of its core mission and has launched a campaign to cultivate institutional partnerships between U.S. and Japanese universities.

Noting the importance of creating exchanges relevant to today's youth, the Panels welcomed the announcement by President Obama and Prime Minister Abe of the intent to create a signature new, internship-based exchange opportunity for U.S. and Japanese youth.

The Panels applauded all those specific efforts on both sides including KAKEHASHI Project, Top Global University Project, Go Global Japan, Global 30, Re-inventing Japan Project, TeamUp, Tomodachi and the U.S.-Japan Bridging Foundation, among others.

The Panels stressed the importance of grassroots activities, early exposure to each other's culture, language education and regional studies for encouraging youth to study abroad. High school and short term exchanges, as well as language studies, are also significant ways of creating a pipeline of citizens interested in each other's country, while also encouraging medium- to long-term exchange as the way to effectively engage students and other citizens in the deeper bonds that form the bedrock of the U.S.-Japan relationship. In this respect, the Panels appreciated the efforts and initiatives taken by both governments, including Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as other public and private institutions such as the Japan Foundation.

The CULCON Panels also agreed the work of the ETF was completed with the release and wide dissemination of its Report and Recommendations, and agreed to establish the 2020 Educational Exchange Review Committee, comprised of CULCON members, among others. The mission of the Committee will be to collect and analyze data¹ and other sources of evaluation to offer new ideas and monitor progress towards the ETF goal.

¹ Data collected in cooperation with organizations such as IIE and JASSO.

The Review Committee will submit a report of its findings to the biennial CULCON plenary sessions.

b. Arts Exchange

The Arts Dialogue Committee reported on its work since CULCON XXV, including several successes that have resulted from its efforts: the revitalization of the International Workshop on Japanese Art History for Graduate Students (JAWS); a public forum on the future of the museum; and a newly established curatorial exchange.

The ADC reported it is making significant progress on several issues, including the development of the next generation of U.S.-Japan curators, finding solutions to challenges of international arts exchange and sharing resources and information.

Based on the discussion, the Panels agreed to continue to focus their resources on the Arts Dialogue Committee in order to implement activities such as: a public symposium in Spring 2015, the development of internships in U.S. and Japanese museums and a bilingual website to advance communication and collaboration around Japanese researchers and U.S. institutions. The Panels directed the Committee to identify a way of continuing its work without depending fully on CULCON resources.

c. New Topics

The Panels discussed the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games from a broad perspective. They acknowledged that the occasion of the Olympics provides an opportunity to showcase educational and cultural exchange aspects of the U.S.-Japan relationship.

The Panels agreed to continue to encourage development of a next generation of stewards of the U.S.-Japan relationship, including strengthening alumni activities of such programs as JET and Fulbright.

CULCON encouraged government, academia, non-profit institutions and private business to embrace and promote Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). On-going collaboration in this critical movement strengthens U.S.-Japan ties in a variety of key areas and supports our mutual efforts to foster economic growth, social development, and environmental stewardship.

CULCON discussed challenges faced by educators in the United States in accessing the richness and range of instructional resources available for teaching and conducting research about Japan, including popular culture. CULCON acknowledged the need to increase affordable digital access, and encouraged stakeholders to improve the current situation.

In addition, the Panels agreed to work, collectively and individually, to ensure the

recommendations included in this joint statement are duly implemented.

The twenty-sixth CULCON marked the first plenary session of the new U.S. chair, Harry Hill, and the last plenary session for the outgoing Japan chair, Minoru Makihara. The Panels expressed deep appreciation and gratitude for Mr. Makihara's strong leadership and his staunch commitment to the U.S.-Japan relationship over the last seven years.

The Conference agreed to re-convene in 2016 in Japan.

For more information on U.S. CULCON, please see <http://culcon.jusfc.gov> or contact Pamela Fields, (202) 653-9800, or culcon@jusfc.gov. For more information about Japan CULCON, please see www.jpf.go.jp/culcon or contact Naoko_Sakurai@jpf.go.jp

