

CULCON XXIII

The 23rd Plenary Session of the US-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON*) was held on June 12-13, 2008 in Tokyo, Japan. In attendance were the Japanese and U.S. panels led on the Japanese side by Mr. Minoru Makihara (Senior Corporate Advisor and Former Chairman, Mitsubishi Corporation) and on the US side by Mr. Thierry Porte (President and CEO of Shinsei Bank, Limited) and the two Secretariats (The Japan Foundation and The Japan-US Friendship Commission). The Japanese and US Committee members adopted by consensus the CULCON Report “Re-defining the Japan-US Relationship (Executive Summary and Recommendations),” and presented it to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

Since its inception, CULCON has contributed to the further strengthening of the Japan-US alliance through promoting cultural, educational and intellectual exchanges between the two countries. It is also the case that there have been substantial changes in the global circumstances/ environment and that Japan and the United States are called upon today to address, in concert with the international community, such global challenges as climate change, the gap between the rich and the poor, food and natural disasters. In light of all this, CULCON decided to take a fresh look at the future of exchanges between Japan and the United States and the role of CULCON in that context. To this end, policy recommendations are made in the following areas:

1. Strengthening networks/dialogue between the public intellectuals of the two countries
2. Strengthening the capacity of Japanese to present Japan’s point of view in international venues
3. Stimulating the interest of Americans, especially the young, in Japan, including through expanding Japanese language education
4. Recognizing the importance of arts and cultural exchange, and to further mobilize the networks of curators and others directly involved
5. Calling for greater support from the governments and private sectors of the two countries, including contribution by businesses as an integral part of their CSR missions

The Report can be accessed from the URL below

1. Executive Summary and Recommendations
http://www.jpf.go.jp/culcon/conference/23e_report.html
2. General Policy Recommendations
http://www.jpf.go.jp/culcon/conference/23e_policy.html

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* CULCON was established in June 1961, based on the agreement between Prime Minister Ikeda and President Kennedy. Since its first meeting in Tokyo, in January 1962, biennial meetings of the panels comprising representatives of the government, business, academia, media and other circles of each country have been held alternately in Tokyo and Washington D.C. to discuss issues related to cultural and educational exchanges between the two countries and to make recommendations as appropriate.