



Southeast U.S./Japan &  
Japan - U.S. Southeast  
Associations

**42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Joint Meeting of the  
Southeast U.S./Japan Association and the Japan-U.S. Southeast Association**

**JOINT STATEMENT  
23 OCTOBER 2019**

The Southeast U.S./Japan Association and the Japan-U.S. Southeast Association held their 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Joint Meeting in Savannah, Georgia from October 20-23, 2019, with the theme of “Bridging Cultures. Celebrating Success.” SEUS Chairman Mr. Virgil Miller and Japan Chairman Mr. Teruo Asada presided over the meeting with more than 430 delegates representing the Southeast and Japan.

The SEUS delegations were led by the Honorable Brian P. Kemp, Governor, State of Georgia, this year’s host state; the Honorable Henry McMaster, Governor, State of South Carolina; Mr. Bob Rolfe, Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development; Mr. Greg Canfield, Secretary of Commerce, State of Alabama; Mr. Jamal A. Sowell, Secretary of Commerce, State of Florida; Mr. Glenn McCullough, Jr., Executive Director, State of Mississippi; and Mr. Anthony M. Copeland, Secretary of Commerce, State of North Carolina.

Other top officials in attendance included His Excellency Shinsuke J. Sugiyama, Ambassador of Japan to the United States; Mr. Kazuyuki Takeuchi, Consul General of Japan in Atlanta; Mr. Hiroyuki Kobayashi, Consul General of Japan in Nashville; Mr. Kenji Hirata, Consul General of Japan in Miami; Mr. Nobuhiko Sasaki, Chairman of the Japan External Trade Organization. Keynote addresses were given by The Honorable Sonny Perdue, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture; and Mr. John Murphy, Chief Financial Officer, The Coca-Cola Company.

During the Opening Ceremony, Chairman Miller opened the conference with remarks about the history and strength of the Alliance and enthusiasm for the next few conference days. Chairman Asada also addressed the group followed by Georgia Governor Brian Kemp. Governor Kemp welcomed the distinguished group, and reinforced that the state and the region’s partnerships with Japan are more relevant than ever, and his optimism that they will continue to evolve together. State Heads of Delegation gave remarks that highlighted their state’s relationship with Japan and the factors that keep their state and region globally competitive, such as logistics, innovation and workforce development and collaboration.

The first executive leadership roundtable focused on “Logistics and Supply Chain,” with speakers discussing assets like logistics infrastructure, public and private sector collaboration, and technological innovation that keep global supply chains moving efficiently. The session was moderated by Mr. Griffith Lynch, Executive Director of the Georgia Ports Authority and speakers included: Mr. Keigo Inao, Deputy Regional CEO for the Americas,

Senior Executive Vice President & COO, Marubeni America Corporation; Mr. Derrick Johnson, President, South Atlantic District, UPS; Ms. Jessica Cork, Vice President - Public Relations & Communications, YKK Corporation of America; and Mr. Michiya Uchida, Executive Officer, President, Kajima USA.

The luncheon program featured engaging remarks by John Murphy, Chief Financial Officer of The Coca-Cola Company, one of the world's most iconic brands. Coca-Cola is as much a logistics company as a beverage company, and Murphy shared insights on the company's experience in the Japanese market and the innovations that have helped it succeed around the globe.

Following the luncheon and keynote address, JETRO Chairman Mr. Nobuhiko Sasaki kicked off the afternoon program sharing insights on U.S.-Japan business relations and the long term partnership between the two, before the second executive leadership roundtable, "Successful Workforce Partnerships" began. The session was moderated by Mr. Richard Warner, CEO of Aware Force and longtime host of *Georgia's Business* on Georgia Public Broadcasting. Speakers included Mr. James L. Hawk, Senior Advisor, Toyo Tire Corporation; Mr. Sam Suttle, Vice President, North America Manufacturing and Repair Services, Mitsubishi Hitachi Power Systems Americas; Mr. Tetsuo Ogawa, Chief Operating Officer, North America Region, Executive Vice President, Toyota Motor North America, Inc.; and Mr. William Strang, President, Corporate Strategy and eCommerce, TOTO USA. Speakers discussed best practices for successful workforce partnerships with state governments, local communities, technical colleges and K-12 education, and their impact on the continued competitiveness of business in the Southeast United States.

Wednesday, October 24<sup>th</sup> featured a closing keynote address by The Honorable Sonny Perdue, United States Secretary of Agriculture and former Governor of Georgia from 2003-2011. Secretary Perdue addressed the opportunities created by the new bilateral U.S.-Japan trade agreement, specifically those related to agriculture, automotive and manufacturing. The audience then heard remarks from Mr. Hiroyuki Kobayashi, Consul General of Japan in Nashville and Mr. Kenji Hirata, Consul General of Japan in Miami. Chairman Asada and Chairman Miller closed the conference with brief remarks highlighting the importance of continued partnerships and the collaborative pursuit of innovation.

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Joint Meeting harkened back to the business roots of the conference, and looked ahead to future opportunities to strengthen the relationship between the Southeast United States and Japan. Throughout the program delegates from both sides reaffirmed their commitment to work in partnership to further strengthen and celebrate the longstanding relationship between the two countries. Delegates heard from industry experts and exchanged best practices on logistics innovation and successful workforce development and partnerships.

The Meeting adjourned with an announcement that the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Joint Meeting will be held in Tokyo, Japan October 8-10, 2020.