



**38th ANNUAL JOINT MEETING OF
THE JAPAN-U.S. SOUTHEAST &
THE SOUTHEAST U.S./JAPAN ASSOCIATIONS**

November 14-17, 2015

Sheraton Birmingham Hotel, Birmingham, Alabama

JOINT STATEMENT

The Japan-U.S. Southeast Association and the Southeast U.S./Japan Association held their 38th Annual Joint Meeting in Birmingham, Alabama on November 14 to 17, 2015, with the theme of "Initiative for a Sustainable Future – Through Continuous Innovation." The Chairmen presiding over the meeting were SEUS Chairman O. B. Grayson Hall, Jr., and the Japan Chairman, Tadashi Okamura. Approximately 100 Japanese and 300 American delegates participated this year for a total of 400 delegates.

The SEUS delegations were led by the Honorable Robert Bentley, Governor, State of Alabama, this year's host state; the Honorable Bill Haslam, Governor, State of Tennessee; the Honorable Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr., Chairman, President Pro Tempore, State of South Carolina; Glenn L. McCullough, Jr., Executive Director, Mississippi Development Authority; John E. Skvarla, III, Secretary of Commerce, State of North Carolina; Chris Riley, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor, State of Georgia; and Keith Norden, Chairman of the Florida Delegation, SEUS Japan Association.

His Excellency, Kenichiro Sasae, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the United States of America, served as a keynote speaker. Additional VIPs attending the conference included: the Honorable Kazuo Sunaga, Consul General of Japan from Atlanta, Georgia; the Honorable Masami Kinofuchi, Consul General of Japan from Nashville, Tennessee; the Honorable Ken Okaniwa, Consul General of Japan from Miami, Florida.

In the Opening Ceremony, held in the historic Alabama Theatre, Chairman Hall began the Joint Meeting by recognizing the benefits of this conference that strengthen our opportunities for success by sharing ideas and building on our strong relations. He quoted Steve Jobs as once saying, "Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower" and stated that the participants in this conference were a group of innovators – of leaders, influential builders of companies, individuals with influence, and champions of ideas.

Chairman Okamura noted in his opening remarks that innovation is the key for business to create values and build wealth. He touched upon two timely events that would make sufficient impacts on innovation. One is the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement, which will contribute tremendously to economic growth of the world. Second is the COP 21 conference on Climate Change, where global CO2 reduction framework will be decided. With these topics in mind, he expressed his expectations for panel discussions to shine a light on how to bring innovative minds while taking serious environmental and energy issues into account.

Presenting the opening keynote address was Dr. Condoleezza Rice, the 66th Secretary of State for the United States, and the second woman and first African American woman to hold the post. Dr. Rice addressed the foundation and growth of the worldwide free market system that developed after World

War II. She also discussed how, in the United States, we now need to leverage technology, education and environmental innovation to further development and strengthen our economy.

Following this keynote address, each of the SEUS delegation leaders provided state-specific information and answered questions that highlighted innovative activities that served to improve workforce development, investment incentives, and educational outreaches to information technologies.

At the Luncheon Program, we were privileged to hear a keynote address by His Excellency, Ambassador Kenichiro Sasae, whose remarks focused on Japan and the Southeast States: Our Friendship and Economic Ties. He stressed that the business relationships between Alabama and Japan go back many years that has resulted in many successful cases of investment as well as employment for citizens in the seven southeastern states. He believes that the Trans Pacific Partnership has the potential to result in a mutually beneficial increase of trade and investment.

Panel members in the first Executive Leadership Exchange session that afternoon, "Innovation Spurs Economic Growth" shared their views on how Japan and the Southeastern United States are striving to out-innovate our competitors and increase our world-leading productivity. Panel members included: moderator Yasushi Akahoshi, President, Japan External Trade Organization; Richard F. Moody, Senior Vice President, Chief Economist, Regions Financial Corporation; Gray Swoope, President & COO, VisionFirst Advisors; Soichiro Takashima, Mayor, Fukuoka City, Japan; and Thomas Masuguchi, Senior Vice President, Chief Strategy Officer and Deputy CFO, Yokohama Tire Corporation.

The second Executive Leadership Exchange session, "Protecting Your Profits in the New Energy/Environmental Era" provided insights into how both Japan and the Southeastern United States are developing innovative methods and encouraging greater cooperation between government and industry to sustain the environment. Panel members included: moderator Jeneen M. Horton, Environmental and Safety Manager, Toyota Motor Manufacturing of Alabama; Masakazu Murakami, D.V.M., Chief Specialist, Responsible Care, Energy & Climate Change, Sumitomo Chemical Company; Nick Sellers, Vice President, Regulatory and Corporate Affairs, Alabama Power Company; David M. Walsh, President and CEO, Mitsubishi Hitachi Power Systems; Sumiko Takeuchi, Deputy Project Leader, KEIDANREN, 21st Century Public Policy Institute.

Tuesday, November 17th, began with a Capstone Address by Martin Luther King, III, Global Human Rights Activist and the oldest son of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mrs. Coretta Scott King. Martin's dedication to creating and implementing strategic nonviolent action to rid the world of social, political, and economic injustice has propelled him to the forefront as one of the nation's most ardent advocates for the poor, the oppressed, and the disillusioned. His inspiring remarks touched on the need for understanding and continuous engagement among people with different backgrounds.

Throughout the program, participants exchanged views and opinions with our guest experts and delegates, and deepened our understanding on the issues of mutual interest, ranging from the economy, trade and investment, to innovations in energy and the environment. Both Associations reaffirmed their commitment to work together to further strengthen the ties between Japan and the Southeast U.S. states and to continue to achieving sustainable growth of the Japanese and U.S. economies as well as the entire global economy.

In the Closing Ceremony, it was announced that the 39th Annual Joint Meeting will be held in Tokyo, Japan, September 20 to 22, 2016.