

# Cross-Party Group on Japan

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at 9am (Virtual meeting)

Minute

Present

MSPs

Dean Lockhart MSP (Convener)  
Fiona Hyslop MSP  
Alexander Stewart MSP

Invited guests

Professor Yasuko Kameyama, National Institute for Environmental Studies, Japan  
Professor Tsuyoshi Fujita, University of Tokyo  
Professor Ian Gow, OBE, Chairman Japan Society of Scotland

Non-MSP Group Members

Consul General Tadashi Fujiwara  
Consul Takeshi Sasaki  
Ros Wardley Smith  
Takashi Taji  
Neil Kermode  
Michael Graham  
Steve Kerr  
Scott Johnstone  
Reiko Inder  
Peter Adam  
Jonathan McGilp  
Victoria Hayes  
Lesley-Anne Campbell

Apologies

Professor David Reay  
Ruta Noreika

## 1. Welcome and opening remarks

Dean Lockhart MSP (DL) opened the meeting and welcomed attendees to this special meeting of the Cross Party Group in conjunction with the Japanese Consulate in Scotland.

DL outlined the main agenda item for the meeting to discuss cooperation between Japan and Scotland on Climate Change.

DL thanked Consul General Fujiwara and his team for their support in setting up the meeting and welcomed the invited speakers, Professor Ian Gow (IG), as well as Professor Tsuyoshi Fujita (TF) and Professor Yasuko Kameyama (YK) who joined the meeting from Japan.

DL invited IG to speak to the Group.

## 2. Observations from Professor Ian Gow OBE, Chairman Japan Society of Scotland

IG provided a background to cooperation between Japan and the UK, with a particular focus between Japan and Scotland.

IG highlighted the agreements on trade, defence and R&D made just before and during the Covid period, all of which marked significant changes in Japan, particularly under the Abe administration.

IG concluded his remarks by noting the significant investment being made by Japan through the University Endowment Fund to build research strength through universities in conjunction with Government laboratories and research institutes. Also building upon educational links between Japan and Scotland through, for example, the Scottish Government's Saltire Fund, created to fund collaboration in Asia, including Japan.

DL thanked IG for his contribution and introduces Fiona Hyslop MSP to the Group. DL invited Professor Fujita to speak.

## 3. Presentation from Professor Tsuyoshi Fujita, University of Tokyo

TF presented on research challenges in developing green growth in Japanese cities and regions under climate change.

TF begins by noting the Abe administration identified SDG's future cities in 2018 following the East Japan Great Earthquake in 2011, after which cities were chosen that could recover from disaster by the innovation of green powers i.e. solar power

and wind turbines. The Japanese Government has provided substantial financial support to these cities as good examples of decarbonisation practices.

TF outlined that there are many areas which could benefit from Japanese collaboration with Scotland on research, including smart networking. TF discussed moving towards smart urban and industrial energy management. TF noted collaboration underway with counterparts in California and China to develop general models which would be applicable to cities around the globe which in turn would feed into the SDG's policy key indicators.

TF discussed another area for collaboration in stakeholder participation through smart technologies thereby allowing academics to research cities themselves as living laboratories. The data collected from Japanese cities may be used to demonstrate ways of tackling climate change, decarbonisation and sustainable development towards action oriented research collaborations. TF reiterated that researchers keen to extend cooperation and thanked attendees for listening to his presentation.

DL thanked TF for the insight into policy developments in Japan and noted it is clear there is a number of common challenges, for example regarding decarbonisation of energy supply and the use of technology. Focus for the future should be on joint working between universities in Scotland and Japan, strengthening existing ties between universities can only help going forward.

DL introduced YK to the meeting.

#### **4. Presentation from Professor Yasuko Kameyama, National Institute for Environmental Studies, Japan**

YK presented an overview on the latest developments of climate change policy in Japan.

YK outlined in 2015, before the adoption of the Paris Agreement, Japan set its nationally determined contributions for emissions reduction target for the year 2030 to be -26% from the base year of 2013, this was later revised in 2021 to -46% following former Prime Minister Suga's commitment that Japan would aim to be carbon neutral by 2050.

YK explained that while Japan has been lagging behind other countries in their net zero targets, the private sector welcomes the Japanese Government's net zero pledge in order to remain competitive with industries internationally. Although Japan is now starting to rapidly catch up, to build renewable energy sources, i.e. offshore windfarms, nuclear power is still maintained despite being unpopular with citizens. The Japanese Government also wants to maintain coal power plants by introducing Carbon Capture Storage or Carbon Capture and Utilisation Storage rather than phasing out coal.

YK highlighted that Japanese car companies remain reluctant to move away from engine cars, instead are looking towards advancement in biofuels. The Government has also encountered resistance from building companies to revisions of housing regulations to improve insulation.

YK noted that Japan has utilised ITMO's (internationally traded mitigation outcomes) under article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

YK comments on link between climate change impacts and defence strategies as IG made reference to, such as droughts and hurricanes are increasing the risks of conflicts.

YK thanked attendees for listening to her presentation.

DL thanked YK for highlighting the challenges which we share across Scotland, the UK and Japan and noted that working together will benefit all of us.

## 5. Questions for the panellists

Alexander Stewart MSP (AS) thanked the presenters for their presentations. AS acknowledges that in Scotland, discussions are taking place regarding the implementation of 20 minute neighbourhoods and options for local government creating space in cities and asked if there are any examples similar to this in Japan.

TF responded that it would be interesting to understand more about the Scottish innovative approach, like that of the 20 minute neighbourhoods. TF explains that Japans policy focus is more directed at technologies but experts need more policy learning from alternative approaches taken in other countries. YK notes that it would be a decision for the mayor, there have been some interesting developments locally where the mayor has taken leadership within cities.

Fiona Hyslop MSP (FH) comments that clearly energy security is imperative for all countries and that can be in climate security and country security. Looking at energy security from the Japanese perspective there are connections which can be made such as hydrogen and carbon capture utilisation and storage. Scotland incorporated the STG's into the National Performance Framework but there is a challenge in gathering data. Research in Scotland has developed a 'town and gown' approach i.e. cities and universities coming together, but we need to look at (particularly Edinburgh and Glasgow) action based research between countries but also within countries, connecting universities.

TF identifies that 100 universities in Japan, called the University Consortium for Decarbonisation, with the University of Tokyo being one of the leaders, the ministry of education obliges them to make local oriented research with local government. Universities are eager to do that but social implementation would still be limited in Japan, where local government may be reluctant and the ministry of education is

limited financially. A multi-layered approach has proven successful previously so may be a way forward in the future for cooperation.

IG noted twinning, not just Edinburgh and Glasgow, but also Dundee and Aberdeen Universities twinning with cities and then with regions providing a triple level alliance.

YK notes this important point that energy security is an important pillar in Japan because it imports most of its fossil fuel energy resource. Under the Abe administration energy security was interpreted to justify the import of coal as an inexpensive energy resource. There has now been a shift in position on how energy security is viewed.

DL asked if FH could comment on Mitsubishi electric air as a recent concrete investment in cooperation between Scotland and Japan for sustainable low carbon heat solutions. FH outlines her experience as External Affairs Secretary in the Scottish Government and held meetings with senior management of Mitsubishi in Tokyo. The R&D opportunities in West Lothian are considerable, Mitsubishi have made major investments, manufacturing heat pumps for the European market. Cooperation with the Scottish Government and investment has the potential to ramp up heat pump for housing but building regulations and insulation needs to come first. Potential for Scotland to be a demonstrator on district heating extensively using heat pumps manufactured in Scotland and exported to Europe is strong.

DL identifies this is a good example of real, practical investment and innovation in decarbonisation of heat.

Peter Adam (PA) asked about the Sovereign fund on green investments, particularly hydrogen projects, does Japan see this as a means of offsetting and where it is not possible to use renewables in certain aspects to use CCS as a way to offset for investment.

YK acknowledges Japan's Joint crediting mechanism and the Japanese Government Fund, like a sovereign fund, where Japanese technology is used in developing countries to reduce emissions in these countries. In Japan there has been much government investment into hydrogen related technologies so that Japan can take the leadership role, however it is more utilised in Japan rather than used to offset.

TF comments that there is some discussion amongst academics about using other forms of hydrogen i.e. ammonia or melted salt would be able to provide more energy than heat but more research and data is needed.

Michael Graham (MG) suggests an interesting area for collaboration may be around mobilising community efforts and strong parallel with the local housing strategy which was mobilised 20 years ago in Scotland and run through local authorities. MG raises the possibility of building upon pre-existing links between University of Stirling and Universities in Japan. Much work ongoing on standardisation for the circular economy, should standards be improved.

TF notes Japan have enacted the low energy housing mandate from 1990's but acknowledges that the current regulations will not provide a decarbonised future for communities. Research is underway with housing and construction companies with the University of Tokyo looking at carbon neutral districts and collaborating with Scottish researchers in this area would be very useful. MG noted that he would make enquiries with the University of Stirling and update DL.

YK points out that standardisation is an important consideration in decarbonisation, Japanese experts are very much involved in ISO related activities. YK notes the view that whether standardisation is effective depends upon which sector is being looked at, i.e. heating houses depends upon climate conditions, they will vary in colder parts of the world and differ from one place to another. On the other hand there will be areas where global common standardisation would be most effective, such as in regard to the use of plastics or recycling.

Scott Johnstone (SJ) explains industry collaborating in this area is important and provides an update from the Scottish Life Sciences Association on collaboration already underway and the importance of the Government buying into sustainable products for the NHS to allow us to continue to develop more sustainable products going forward.

DL notes the importance of collaboration and cooperation between Universities in Scotland and Japan which is a significant opportunity going forward, also colleges and innovation centres.

## 6. Concluding remarks

DL closed the meeting, thanking Professor Tsuyoshi Fujita, Professor Yasuko Kameyama and Ian Gow for their contributions. DL reflects that collaboration and building connections has been the aim of the CPG and the Group will continue to build upon this going forward. DL indicated members will be kept informed of the date for the next meeting of the CPG Japan in due course.