

Japan-Korea Strategic Dialogue

The Tokyo-Seoul Forum

The Institute for International Policy Studies (IIPS), Korea's Seoul Forum for International Affairs (SFIA), and the Korea-Japan Cooperation Committee jointly staged the second gathering of the Tokyo-Seoul Forum for strategic dialogue between Japan and Korea. The event took place on November 25 and 26, 2011 and was held at the Lotte Hotel in Seoul, South Korea. With the presence of various uncertainties in the Northeast Asian region, such as the instability of North Korea and the rise of China, cooperation between Japan and South Korea is becoming even more crucial to the region's stability. Since 2010, IIPS has been staging this annual forum in order to promote strategic dialogue between Japan and South Korea, with the venue alternating between the two nations.

A public symposium on the topic of "Korea-Japan Cooperation after the Great East Japan Earthquake" was held on the afternoon of November 25 and attracted an audience of approximately 150. At the start of the symposium, Mr. Lee Hong-Koo, Chairman of the SFIA, and Mr. Nam Duk-woo, President of the Korea-Japan Cooperation Committee, made remarks in which they underscored the need for cooperation between Japan and South Korea. The keynote address was then delivered by Former Prime Minister Taro Aso, who stated, "It is extremely important that, as fellow democracies with shared basic values, Japan and South Korea cooperate to serve as a 'stabilizing force' in Asia and establish a forward-looking relationship." The panelists for the public symposium were: Mr. Akio Mimura, Chairman of Nippon Steel; Professor Masao Okonogi of Kyushu University; Mr. Cho Suk-Rae, Chairman of the Hyosung Group; and Professor Park Cheol-Hee of Seoul National University, and there was discussion of topics such as the prospects for an economic partnership agreement between Japan and South Korea, the possibility of creating a Japan-Korea leaders group, and the future for cooperation between the two nations.

On November 26, a closed session was held, which was attended by approximately 30 representatives of government, business, and academia from both Japan and South Korea. The topics at this session were "Crisscrossing Alliance and Northeast Asian Regional Strategies," "Korea and Japan from an Angle of Regional Economic Cooperation," and "Energy Cooperation and Environmental Issues." The first session featured presentations by Professor Kim Sung-han of Korea University, Professor Chung Jae-ho of Seoul National University, and Professor Shinichi Kitaoka of The University of Tokyo, and saw discussion of topics such as the effect on East Asia of the rise of China and the best ways for Japan, the USA, and South Korea to cooperate. The second session featured presentations by Mr. Ryu Jin, Chairman of the Poongsan Group; Professor Bark Taeho of Seoul National University; and Mr. Takao Kitabata, former Vice Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry. The topics discussed in this session included the development of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the ideal nature of an economic partnership agreement between Japan and South Korea, as well as the direction of cooperation between Japan and South Korea in the economic sphere. The third session featured presentations by Mr. Motohisa Furukawa, Japan's Minister for National Policy, and Dr. Kim Myung-Ja, Former South Korean Minister of Environment, and saw discussion of how Japan and South Korea can best cooperate on green innovation.

The forum was covered by news outlets that included the Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper, Nippon Television Network, and Korea Central Daily News.