

# KIZUNA

Summer  
2021

Linking Japan and the World



JAPANGOV  
THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN



Welcome to KIZUNA, the official magazine of the Government of Japan.

This bold work of calligraphy is 絆 (*kizuna*) written in Japanese. *Kizuna* means the enduring bonds between people—close relationships forged through mutual trust and support.

Originally describing the rope used to tether domestic animals such as horses and dogs, the meaning of *kizuna* has evolved over the years. A passage in *The Tale of the Heike*, compiled in the 13th century, uses the term to refer to the bonds of love between a father and his children. More recently, *kizuna* has gone beyond bonds tying together family and close acquaintances; it is now used in a broader sense of human ties and connections. Of particular note is the *kizuna* born among people during natural calamities, which fosters feelings of solidarity and serves as the underlying strength to overcome hardships.

Similarly, the *kizuna* cultivated among the countries of the world has the power to deepen cooperation for a better future. By reporting on a wide variety of topics concerning Japan, we hope that this magazine will provide opportunities for Japan and the rest of the world to connect and build strong *kizuna*.



**KANAZAWA SHOKO**  
*Calligraphy Artist*

Born in Tokyo in 1985, she started learning calligraphy from her mother when she was five years old. One of the notable young calligraphers of today, her solo exhibitions have been held throughout the world, in cities such as New York, Singapore, and Prague. She was selected as one of the official poster artists for Tokyo 2020.

# CONTENTS

## TOKYO 2020 & BEYOND

- 04 Keep Your Eyes on the Other Side of Tokyo 2020
  - 06 Tokyo 2020: A Beacon of Hope
  - 08 New Hope for South Sudan Through Sports
  - 10 A Twenty-Year *Kizuna*:  
Fortifying Japan and Croatia's Friendship
- 

## PORTRAITS OF JAPAN

- 12 Japanese Traditions Cool Summer  
Pleasantly with Colors

## POLICY & DIPLOMACY

- 14 My Vision for the Japan-U.S. Alliance

## POLICY & DIPLOMACY

- 16 Advancing Japan's Status as a  
Global Financial Hub

## REGIONAL STRENGTH

- 18 Farm and Fishery Producers in Tohoku  
Winning Back Consumers' Trust

## LIFE & CULTURE

- 20 Broadcasting the Unknown Japan to the World

## SUSTAINABILITY

- 22 Transforming Food Systems  
for a Sustainable Planet and People

## SUSTAINABILITY

- 24 Shedding Light on Social Responsibility  
in Supply Chains

## REGIONAL STRENGTH

- 26 The Distinguished Island Producing the  
"World's Beloved Yellowtail"

## SUSTAINABILITY

- 28 A Small Town Asks "Why?":  
Toward a Zero-Waste World

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- 30 ICT in Schools Equips Students with Life Skills  
for Digital Era

## LIFE & CULTURE

- 32 Bringing Japanese Technologies to the World  
Through Cross Border Open Innovation

## KIZUNA

Summer 2021

### COVER

The Olympic Stadium, the main venue for Tokyo 2020, was designed by world-renowned architect KUMA Kengo under the concept of "Stadium in Forest." Built using plentiful wood from across the country, the stadium exists in harmony with the surrounding greenery in the midst of metropolitan Tokyo.



# KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE OTHER SIDE OF TOKYO 2020

*The Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 are finally approaching, set to open on July 23. With sustainability as an important theme of the Games, there is growing attention surrounding the various initiatives being put into practice under the concept of “Be better, together – for the planet and the people.”*

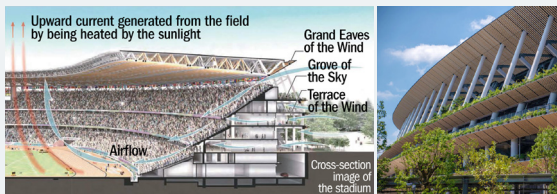


The Olympic symbol has been installed at the summit of Mt. Takao, a popular tourist spot in Tokyo. Visible in the distance is a well-known symbol of Japan: Mt. Fuji.

After a one-year delay, Tokyo 2020 is finally about to begin; all the eyes of the world will soon focus on the largest sports festival on the globe. In addition to the highest level of performance by elite athletes, it will also highlight a variety of themes that present key values by bringing together cutting-edge technology, traditional wisdom, and diverse people. Following a theme of sustainability, the Games are packed with ideas and technologies for the future of society.

The Olympic Stadium will be the main venue, hosting the opening and closing ceremonies as well as the athletic competitions. It is a “Stadium in Forest,” located in a lush, green environment that takes full advantage of the benefits of nature to produce a pleasant setting. Particularly noteworthy is a structural innovation that allows both athletes and spectators to stay comfortable, even in the hot summer. The Grand Eaves of the Wind and the Terrace of the Wind are designed to facilitate the flow of seasonal winds into the stadium. The incoming breeze can carry away the arena’s heat and humidity over the field and toward the exterior, riding on the

updraft created by the sunbathed ground. That makes for an ecological stadium obviating the need for installing air-conditioning equipment in the stands.



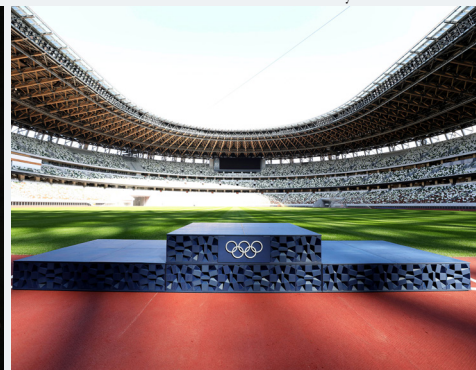
The National Stadium was built to host the Olympic Games. The construction of the large, eye-catching eaves of the stadium features the extensive use of wood, emphasizing the Japanese approach of establishing symbiosis with nature. (Design Works and Construction Works of Taisei Corporation, Azusa Sekkei Co., Ltd. and Kengo Kuma and Associates JV/Courtesy of JSC)

The medals that the athletes will vie for also represent the sustainability concept of Tokyo 2020. All the approximately 5,000 medals prepared for the Games have been produced from metal extracted from unwanted mobile phones, small household appliances, and other devices collected from across Japan. Discarded electronics form a reservoir of resources known as an “urban mine,” because of the many valuable metals such as gold, silver, and copper, as well as precious minor metals, contained within them. With massive civic participation, the project gathered 32 kg of gold, 3,500 kg of silver, and 2,200 kg of copper to make the medals. This initiative continues today as a new project with a partnership between the government and companies to encourage the collection and recycling of small household appliances.

Furthermore, no less than 24.5 tons of used plastic was collected from the public to construct the

The Village Plaza, which serves as the gateway to the Olympic and Paralympic Village, is another deliverable created with the help of people from all across Japan. Though many Games in the past have used tents that were taken down afterwards, the structures of the Village Plaza are constructed from reusable materials. The temporary facility, built with the wooden architecture so distinctive of Japan, was also designed to provide a place of rest and relaxation for the athletes. Sixty-three municipalities across the archipelago, which stretches from north to south, provided a broad assortment of unique local woods that were assembled like a puzzle. The design resembles the checkered pattern of the Tokyo 2020 logos representing “Unity in Diversity.”

After the Games, the wood will be returned to each municipality, where it will be reused for such public amenities as benches and gazebos for parks and bookshelves in schools. The recycled objects are expected to promote the appeal of wood as the Games’ legacy. Wood naturally captures CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere, storing it as carbon long after being processed. Increasingly used as a steel and concrete substitute, it will help to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> levels in the atmosphere.



©Tokyo 2020

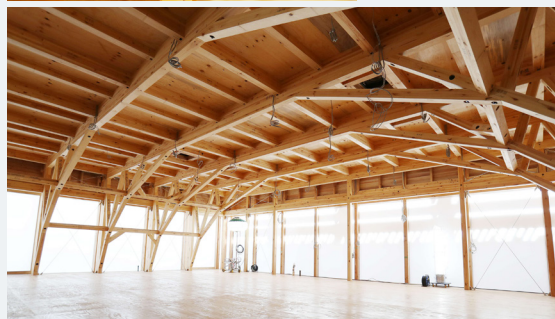
The medals (left) and the podium prepared for the Games of the XXXII Olympiad. The fact that these remarkable symbols of Tokyo 2020 are made from recycled materials will likely linger in people’s memories as a significant legacy of the Games.

podiums. These will be the first medals and podiums in Olympic history to be made from recycled materials that were collected with public participation.

Innovative efforts to create a sustainable society will be found throughout the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020. They present an excellent opportunity for people in Japan and around the world to become instilled with the mindset of sustainability. The huge summer events that will lead society to a more innovative future are almost here. ●



The aroma and warmth of wood fills the air around the Village Plaza at the Olympic and Paralympic Village. This wood collected from across Japan will greet the athletes before and after their competitions. The Village Plaza is one of the facilities that symbolizes the sustainability concept of the Games.



# TOKYO 2020 A BEACON OF HOPE

*With thorough COVID measures in place, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Torch Relay kicked off on March 25.*

With the whole world watching, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Torch Relay was launched on March 25. Starting from the three prefectures in the Tohoku region that are rebuilding a decade since the catastrophic Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011, the torch relay passes by some of Japan's most spectacular sights over a 121-day period, until it reaches its final destination at Tokyo's Japan National Stadium in July.

Conceived by one of the top Japanese designers, YOSHIOKA Tokujin, and forged by the hands of five technologically gifted companies, the beautiful and resilient torch has been shaped to resemble the crest of the traditional Japanese cherry blossom. Its body is partly made from recycled aluminum originally used to build temporary housing in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake. It encapsulates a sincere desire to see the region rebuild and epitomizes a hope for peace.

In charge of manufacturing the torch's body was UACJ Extrusion

Corporation, a world leader in aluminum processing technology. The company was able to take advantage of an aluminum extrusion technique used in the manufacture of Japan's bullet train to overcome the difficulties of molding the metal into a delicate cherry-blossom shape. At just 1.2 kg, the result was a lightweight, seamless, and incredibly graceful form.

Meanwhile, Shinfuji Burner Co., Ltd. was in charge of the



A beautiful cherry-blossom shape appears when the torch is viewed from directly above.

The Olympic "Sakura Gold" (left) and Paralympic "Sakura Pink" torches. The Paralympic torch relay will be held over 13 days, from August 12 to 24.



The relay started in Fukushima Prefecture. Along the route, local residents, who had taken precautionary measures against infection, applauded instead of cheering. HASHIMOTO Seiko, president of the organization committee, said at the ceremony, “We pray that the flame that embarks today will send out a ray of light into the darkness, reaching the national stadium as a big light filled with the hopes not just of Japan, but of everyone the world over.”



combustion mechanism. Given the significant climatic variation across the Japanese archipelago from north to south, and with the relay lasting for so long—almost four months—keeping the flame alight is no mean feat. That said, after repeated tests on the color of the flame and seeing how well it burns in wind and rain, the company managed to produce a flame strong enough to withstand wind speeds of up to 17 m/s (61 km/h) and rainfall of up to 50 mm/h, and which can

also maintain its height despite fluctuations in temperature.

In addition to adhering to COVID-19 guidelines, organizers of the event have developed thorough measures to keep everyone involved—torchbearers, spectators, staff, and the general public—safe against infection during the torch relay. People are asked to take every precaution, including avoiding the “Three Cs” of closed spaces, crowded places, and close-contact settings, as well as sanitizing properly and looking

after their health. The torch relay will also be live streamed so that people can enjoy the event from afar. Moreover, organizers have been given the flexibility to alter schedules according to the prevailing COVID-19 infection situation in regions along the relay route.

All these determined efforts have been made to bring the world together as one through sports. As a symbol of hope, the torch lights our way toward the Tokyo 2020 Games. ●

## THE FLAME OF RECOVERY

In March 2020, after the kindling of the Olympic flame in Greece, the beacon of hope made its way to Miyagi, Iwate, and Fukushima prefectures, the areas hardest hit by the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011. Dubbed the Flame of Recovery, the Olympic flame made its journey around the region, shining its light as a symbol of hope to the people who have worked so hard to rebuild their local communities. This year as well, the journey started again from Fukushima Prefecture—this time as the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Torch Relay—to deliver hope to everywhere in the world.

For Japan, the Tokyo 2020 Games is an event of huge importance, having been nicknamed the Recovery and Reconstruction Games. It will serve as a chance for the country to show its gratitude to those around the world who gave tremendous support following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. At the heart of the Games is a strong determination to make great strides forward, and to show the people of the world the success of the efforts taken to rebuild the areas devastated by disaster.



Left: The Olympic flame on display in the Ishinomaki Minamihama Tsunami Recovery Memorial Park in Miyagi Prefecture gives hope to the local people in their rebuilding efforts. Center: Transporting the flame along the coastline of Iwate Prefecture is the Sanriku Railway, a lifeline for local residents now completely restored after eight years. Right: The Aquamarine Park in Fukushima Prefecture lost over 90% of its fish and animals in the tsunami. “We hope the Flame of Recovery will arrive safely at the Olympic Cauldron,” say local residents.

©Tokyo 2020 (left and center photos)

# NEW HOPE FOR SOUTH SUDAN THROUGH SPORTS

*Even after its independence in 2011, long-lasting ethnic conflicts still persist in South Sudan. National Unity Day, a sports festival for “Peace and Social Cohesion” that began in 2016 with the support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, has been broadening the mindset of the country’s young generations toward bridging the differences in ethnic backgrounds.*



While the Olympic and Paralympic Games provide a stage upon which the world’s top athletes can compete at the highest level, they are also an opportunity to bring cohesion and hope to countries through sports. South Sudan provides a good example. After conflict that lasted more than half a century, the country won independence from Sudan in 2011. But there have been repeated domestic ethnic conflicts since then, and even now there are over 3.8 million refugees inside and outside the country. Despite such circumstances, four athletes from South Sudan will be heading to the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020. The athletes found it difficult to train in

their own country, but they discovered a way around that impasse thanks to support from the Japanese city of Maebashi, Gunma Prefecture, which organized a long-term pre-Olympics camp for them beginning in November 2019. Guem Abraham Majok Matet, who will compete in the men’s 1,500 meters, says, “For South Sudan, which has long suffered from a civil war, the opportunity to appear in the festival of peace [represented by the Olympics] has great significance. I want to give the kind of performance [at the Games] that will encourage people in my home country.”

The future Olympians and other athletes from South Sudan had lacked the opportunity to train and

NUD draws athletes from across South Sudan to compete in a variety of events including athletics, volleyball, and wheelchair basketball. (Photo taken at NUD 2020)





compete domestically amid their country's instability, but eventually they got the chance through the annual National Unity Day (NUD) sports festival, launched in the capital city, Juba, in 2016 with the assistance of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Athletes aged 19 or younger gather from around the country to compete in athletics, football, volleyball, and other sports, with the tournament providing a springboard for outstanding talents to advance to international competitions, and then on to the Olympic and Paralympic Games. As the only official sports tournament in the country, NUD gives the young South Sudanese athletes the chance to win glory in their chosen fields, and attracts more than 60,000 spectators.

Another major goal of NUD is to promote peace and social cohesion through sports. JICA fully supported the South Sudanese government at the time of the tournament's founding, with the aim of providing an opportunity for young people—who will lead the country in the future—to get to know each other and overcome the barriers of ethnicity. The wide-ranging support included funding and arranging preliminary events across the country and constructing competition grounds. Since then, JICA has continued to support and work together with the government and international organizations to develop NUD further by formulating various creative projects, one example of which is the peacebuilding workshop during the tournament, where athletes from different ethnic groups can interact with each



Left: During NUD, a tug of war event takes place where athletes from different states form teams. The tournament staff, including KANAMORI Daisuke from the JICA South Sudan Office, have a team, too.

Right: There is also a workshop to learn about peace, at which the athletes express their own pro-peace messages.

other by learning together. In addition, the NUD participants are also able to deepen their exchange during the tournament just by living together. As KANAMORI Daisuke of the JICA South Sudan Office says, “We assign dorm rooms so that athletes of different ethnic backgrounds share rooms together. By eating and sleeping in the same place, they get to know each other, becoming friends and staying in touch through social media after the tournament.” In a 2019 questionnaire, over 95% of athletes responded that they had become friends with a participant from another part of the country.

After the tournament, the athletes serve as peace ambassadors throughout the country by sharing their experiences at NUD with their local communities. The way they do so varies, from organizing sports events for children of different ethnic backgrounds to talking about their NUD experiences on the radio. Still, the athletes have something in common. “Many of them try to form deeper friendships in communities and teams, with an awareness that they are serving as role models,” Kanamori says.

In addition to being an Olympian, Guem Abraham Majok Matet is an ambitious yet kindhearted peace ambassador. He says, “I think that NUD contributes to peace in South Sudan in a way that is hard to describe in words. By letting us directly interact with others in the country with different backgrounds, the tournament has enabled us athletes to let go of the various preconceptions that we might have had and has helped us learn to understand each other.” At the Olympics and Paralympics as well, his aim is to turn the Games into an opportunity for greater cohesion that bridges ethnic divides. “I want to put smiles on the faces of many people in South Sudan. I want to do that not just through my running but by actively engaging in any activity that leads to peace. My hope is that by doing so I will bring smiles to my fellow South Sudanese.” ●



Four South Sudanese athletes representing their country have been training at a long-term pre-tournament camp ahead of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020. Guem Abraham (middle), who will compete in the men's 1,500 meters, joined a middle-distance race in Tokyo in April, in which he placed second, recording a personal best.

Photos courtesy of JICA

# A TWENTY-YEAR KIZUNA: FORTIFYING JAPAN AND CROATIA'S FRIENDSHIP



*The city of Tokamachi, Niigata Prefecture has cultivated a close relationship with Croatia through enthusiastic exchange since the 2002 FIFA World Cup. Sven Bjelan, a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) on Japan's cultural exchange program, JET, is actively striving to further deepen that friendship at the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.*

The seeds of the friendship were first sown during the FIFA World Cup cohosted in 2002 by Japan and South Korea. For their pre-tournament camp, the Croatian national team visited Tokamachi, a regional city in Niigata Prefecture. The local government and residents gave the team an enthusiastic and heartfelt welcome during their two-week stay, in which team members happily participated in a soccer workshop for children and other supporting events. On the day of

the team's departure, thousands of citizens lined the streets to bid farewell to the players, as they were reluctant to see the beloved athletes leave. Team captain Davor Šuker said, "No other town has ever made such an effort to truly get to know Croatia. It was a wonderful camp."

Since then, Tokamachi has actively engaged in exchanges to cultivate its 20-year close relationship with Croatia. Sven Bjelan, a Croatia-born CIR in the JET Programme, said, "Anyone

visiting from Croatia is surprised at how welcoming Tokamachi is to them." Even beyond 2002, large crowds of Tokamachi locals have continued to join live public screenings of Croatia's big matches in the FIFA World Cup. The field where the 2002 camp was held has subsequently become fondly known as Croatia Pitch. Now it hosts the Croatia Cup Soccer Festival, a local soccer competition, as well as a camp for the U-17 Croatian team during their regular visits to Japan for

## SVEN BJELAN

Born in the Croatian capital of Zagreb, Bjelan developed an interest in Japan after joining a calligraphy seminar when he was 21. He studied Japanology at the University of Zagreb and came to Japan to study on two separate occasions, in Tokyo and Osaka. When searching for work in Japan after his return to Croatia in 2016, he learned that the JET Programme was recruiting Croatians for a CIR position in Tokamachi, Niigata Prefecture. His bridge-building activities began in 2017.



Croatia Pitch (background), where a pre-tournament camp was held before the 2002 FIFA World Cup, is a symbol of the international exchanges that Bjelan works on.



Top: Bjelan served as an interpreter at a 2017 meeting between SUZUKI Daichi, a gold medalist at the Seoul Olympic Games and the then head of the Japan Sports Agency, and the then State Secretary of the Central State Office for Sports, Janica Kostelić. Bottom: Bjelan also teaches at a cooking class for Tokamachi residents.

the International Youth Soccer in Niigata tournaments. The city's Croatia-related projects extend beyond sports, including Croatian cooking classes and film screenings, among others.

With Tokamachi serving as a host town for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, Bjelan hopes to further fortify the ties that the city has created with Croatia, and has been quite busy with preparations to make that happen. When he first started working as a CIR, his knowledge of the city and experience regarding exchanges with Croatia were limited; nevertheless, he took on his new role with vigor. Now his various

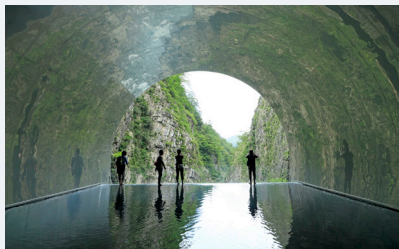
duties cover everything from project proposals to exchanges with and interpretation for Croatian visitors. The work has often been hard, however, one sight that has remained in his mind is that of local children interacting with top athletes from his country in 2019, during test events for a pre-Olympics camp for judo, karate, and taekwondo. Bjelan said, "Although it is not yet certain whether they will be able to interact directly during the Olympics, I hope that the children will be inspired by the Croatian athletes and that they gain an interest in their sports."

Tokamachi is a city surrounded by beautiful nature. The snowfall is heavy in winter, while the summer is pleasantly cool and dry. Those are some of the many similarities to Croatia, especially regarding the country's inland areas. Bjelan said, "A rich food culture of such staples as soba noodles and sake has taken root



At a pre-Olympics test event held in 2019 to prepare for Tokyo 2020, Tokamachi children interacted directly with Croatian Olympians competing in judo, karate, and taekwondo.

in the region, and the lifestyle is more relaxed than in urban areas. Through these qualities one can feel the real charm of Tokamachi." Even though his tenure as a CIR will end someday, Bjelan is willing to provide support for exchange projects whenever needed. One of his future goals is to invite Tokamachi children to events in Croatia such as sports camps, and to create opportunities for hands-on interaction with his country's people and culture. He would also like to help Japanese companies to start business in Croatia. Even after the Olympics, his bridge-building activities are sure to expand further. ●



Left: Kiyotsu Gorge, one of "the three great gorges of Japan" and home to a tunnel that allows visitors a close-up view of the precipitous, majestic cliffs, attracts many tourists. Right: Some of the major draws to Tokamachi include its rich traditional culinary culture, such as *begisoba*, a buckwheat noodle dish served on a wooden square plate called a *begi*.

ABOUT THE JAPAN  
EXCHANGE AND TEACHING  
(JET) PROGRAMME



The JET Programme began in 1987 with the goal of promoting grassroots international exchange between Japan and other nations, and is now one of the world's largest international exchange programs. In 2019, the JET Programme welcomed 5,761 participants, and there are currently more than 70,000 alumni from 75 countries living in all parts of the world.

The JET Programme official website >> <http://jetprogramme.org/en/>

# JAPANESE TRADITIONS

# COOL

# SUMMER

## PLEASANTLY WITH COLORS

*From time immemorial,  
Japanese people have devised inventive  
and ingenious ways of making life pleasant  
during the hot, humid summers.  
Today, that ancestral wisdom continues  
to create refreshing summer moments  
and soothing scenes.*

## 花火

— Hanabi —

Spectacular fireworks (*hanabi*) brighten up evening skies, a seasonal tradition that brings flowery colors to the Japanese summer. Tokyo is known as the home of Japan's oldest fireworks maker, with over 360 years of history, and hosts many prominent events. With pyrotechnics ranging from traditional fireworks to modern ones utilizing the latest know-how, the intricate designs of master artisans burst into magnificent rings of breathtaking beauty.



## 打ち水

— Uchimizu —

The “heat of vaporization” effect, in which water absorbs heat energy from the atmosphere as it evaporates, has recently drawn attention as a way to lower air temperature. The custom of sprinkling water (*uchimizu*) on streets, which has been passed down by Japanese households from ancient times, is a form of inherited wisdom that also takes advantage of that effect. The tradition has been enthusiastically embraced as a method to cope with modern urban heat, with attempts to bring coolness to entire cities being carried out nationwide.



## 風鈴

— Furin —

Gentle jingling in the wind—refreshing tones that appear during the summer months. Wind chimes! The wind sails of small bells (*furin*) dangling from the eaves and window frames of houses respond to the slightest breeze by ringing out their peal. Transparent glass wind chimes cool even the eyes, adding another dimension to the refreshing effect felt in our ears.

# MY VISION FOR THE JAPAN-U.S. ALLIANCE

SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER SUGA AT THE CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (CSIS)

AN EXCERPT

APRIL 16, 2021

Video link: <https://www.csis.org/events/my-vision-japan-us-alliance>

On April 16, Prime Minister SUGA Yoshihide held a Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting with President Joe Biden of the United States of America. Prime Minister Suga was the first foreign leader to visit the U.S. during President Biden's presidency; it was their first face-to-face meeting. The two leaders shared the view on strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance at the summit meeting. They also confirmed that Japan and the United States will strengthen their unity and cooperation while partnering with like-minded countries toward the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific."

On the same day, Prime Minister Suga gave a speech on the basic strategies of Japan's foreign policy at the CSIS. A transcript excerpt (as interpreted) from the CSIS's video is as follows.

\* \* \* \* \*

## The Indo-Pacific reality

Turning our eyes to the Indo-Pacific where Japan lies, we find a reality where change in the power balance accompanying the rise of China and unilateralism that has become prevailing in the course of responding to the pandemic has led to increased uncertainties. At the same time, the regional security environment has become more severe.

Last month, North Korea again went ahead with the launch of ballistic missiles. We must persistently seek the CVID (Complete, Verifiable, Irreversible, Denuclearization) of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges possessed by North

Korea.

Through close partnership with the United States and trilateral collaboration between Japan, the U.S., and the ROK (the Republic of Korea), we will proceed toward full implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions aiming for the denuclearization of North Korea.

In solving the issue of North Korea, it is China who holds the key. That very country is rapidly gaining influence in recent years, politically, economically, and on the military front, while continuing unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the East and South China Seas.



I have no intention whatsoever to concede in matters related to sovereignty or fundamental values, such as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Japan's basic policy on pending issues caused by China is to firmly assert what should be asserted and strongly request China to take specific action.

At the same time, we must work to establish a stable and constructive relationship with China and keep in close partnership with the United States and other like-minded nations. That is my basic philosophy.

### The bonds of the Japan-U.S. Alliance

The strengthening of the Japan-U.S. Alliance is needed more than ever in the Indo-Pacific of which Japan is also a part. Our Alliance has never been as rock-solid as today, thanks to efforts made over the years by both sides.

Elevating the Japan-U.S. Alliance to new heights is an important part of my responsibility in steering Japan's foreign policy.

I look forward to making progress in Japan-U.S. cooperation in such areas as COVID-19 countermeasures, green growth, innovation, and science and technology, as well as in harnessing economic security.

### Shaping a post-COVID world order

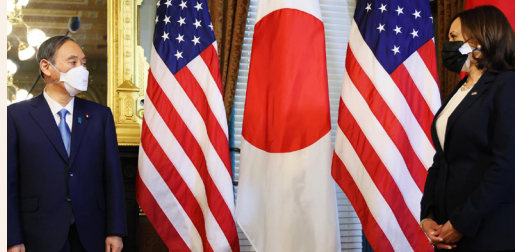
In terms of the diplomatic strategies of Japan, we promote a strong Japan-U.S. Alliance, but extremely emphasize multilateral approaches at the same time. Through multilateral coordination and collaboration to solve the challenges that the international community is faced with, we will strive to realize such a united world.

As Japan promotes such multilateral approaches, what we always have in mind is not force or coercion but our firm belief that a rules-based free and open order. This is what brings peace and prosperity to the region and the world.

By now, this vision of our country has garnered wide support by the U.S., Australia, India, ASEAN, and Europe, and by the international community.

Japan will proactively implement concrete projects such as maritime-security-related law-enforcement capacity building or provision of support for quality infrastructure, including ports and harbors or power supply networks.

The expansion of a free and fair economic zone that



Top: Prime Minister Suga received a courtesy call from Vice President Kamala Harris before the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting.

Bottom: At the summit meeting, Prime Minister Suga and President Biden discussed a wide range of topics including regional situations, climate change, and economic cooperation.

Japan promotes is also part of such efforts. Japan has concluded the Japan-EU EPA, Japan-U.K. EPA, and RCEP, and has consistently served as a flag bearer of free trade.

By the accumulation of these concrete actions, I am determined to strategically promote a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Lastly, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, authoritarianism might be more successful than democracy. This kind of thinking is rising recently, and therefore I wish to mention the importance of democracy.

A democratic society is where each and every person can exert their maximum potential, and where freedom and ingenuity and creativity, as well as diversity and fundamental human rights, are respected.

In order to ensure that freedom, fundamental human rights, and the rule of law are protected in all countries and regions, Japan is determined to continue to proactively contribute to international discussions and endeavors.

The top priority of my administration is the serious human rights issue of abduction. We will do our utmost to realize the return of all abductees as soon as possible.

It is my sincere wish that Japan and the U.S., that believe in the resiliency of democracy, will exert strong leadership, and together with like-minded countries I wish to create a future full of hope.

Thank you very much. ●

# ADVANCING JAPAN'S STATUS AS A GLOBAL FINANCIAL HUB

*A cross-ministerial effort for reform is underway to boost the attractiveness of the country's financial and capital markets. Here, an expert well-versed in the Japanese market speaks about her expectations toward Japan.*



Japan's financial and capital markets are now in the global limelight. That newfound centrality can be attributed to the Suga administration's cross-ministerial policy package, launched in order to create

an international financial center—a goal raised in the government's Action Plan of the Growth Strategy announced last year. Japan has the strengths to stand out as a financial center, including political stability, legal systems, public security, and a favorable living environment. In addition, its sizeable domestic economy, with a GDP of JPY 560 trillion (about USD 5.15 trillion), and financial assets held by households worth more than JPY 1,900 trillion (about USD 17.5 trillion), also strengthens Japan's appeal within the



Alicia Ogawa previously lived and worked in Japan for 15 years. "Japan was a wonderful place to live in. It's safe, beautiful, and the transportation is amazing."





Foreign firms interested in entering Japan are already using the services of the recently launched Financial Market Entry Office, which communicates with foreign asset management companies and helps them with the regulatory process. (ASO Taro, Minister of State for Financial Services, on the left, and AKAZAWA Ryosei, State Minister for Financial Services, on the right)

### Policy package through cross-ministerial collaboration

<b>Tax policy</b>	✓ Revision/clarification of corporate, inheritance, and income tax
<b>Regulatory policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ One-stop English service for application and registration for newly entering overseas asset managers</li> <li>✓ Introduction of simplified market entry procedures for overseas asset managers</li> </ul>
<b>Residence status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Special immigration measure for newly entering asset managers as a temporary visitor to commence business without returning to their home country</li> <li>✓ Relax employment requirements for domestic helpers and increase convenience for working spouses for Highly-Skilled Professionals</li> </ul>
<b>Company setup and livelihood support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ One stop company setup support for free</li> <li>✓ Livelihood support such as international school hunting, medical matters, and housing</li> </ul>
<b>Information sharing</b>	✓ Collectively share related policy measures information through a dedicated website and contact points of diplomatic missions

asset management business.

Alicia Ogawa, director of the Project on Japanese Corporate Governance and Stewardship at Columbia Business School, who worked at a Japanese financial institution for 15 years, and is an expert on the Japanese economy and Asia's financial markets, says, "Japan has been saddled with issues such as language barriers—particularly in terms of offering administrative services in the English language—as well as high tax rates and a shortage of workers with professional skills. Many past initiatives have attempted to tackle these issues, but I believe that the earnest efforts Japan is currently making are different. We can see that Japan is now seriously committed to becoming an international financial center. Expectations toward Japan's financial and capital markets are also growing among foreign investors."

The government is actively working to resolve the issues that she mentions through its cross-ministerial policy package. Initiatives are underway to remove regulatory and taxation-related bottlenecks in order to make it easier for foreign businesses and professionals already engaging in asset management business abroad to do the same kind of business in Japan. Other initiatives include improvements in the residence-visa application process and the provision of comprehensive support for those wishing to set up companies and ease into life in Japan. Ogawa especially commends the Financial Market Entry Office, which was launched in January 2021. This office serves as a single point of contact for newly entering asset management firms that require English communication with

respect to pre-application consultation, registration, and supervision. In March, a dedicated website was launched that provides information on business setup, related policy, and daily life support for foreign financial businesspeople considering entering Japan or establishing a life there (<https://www.fsa.go.jp/internationalfinancialcenter/en/>).

According to Ogawa, "There has been a major change regarding better dialogue between investors and companies on account of broad acceptance of the corporate governance code compiled by the Financial Services Agency and the Tokyo Stock Exchange. Interest in Japan as an investment destination is growing significantly; that is due to expectations surrounding the growth of the Japanese economy and innovations, as well as to the rise of young and ambitious talent."

She also proposes ways in which the country can aim even higher. "Japan needs to make further advancements in digitalization—an area that the Suga administration is stepping up efforts to promote. And, above all, it is essential to raise public sentiment for society as a whole to welcome foreign asset management companies and financial talent. To that end, disseminating information both within and outside Japan is an important endeavor for related ministries and agencies."

Initiatives to realize an international financial center have just begun. Japan will actively implement each measure designed to boost Japan's economy and strengthen its presence in the global financial market. ●

# FARM AND FISHERY PRODUCERS IN TOHOKU WINNING BACK CONSUMERS' TRUST

*The agricultural and fishing industry of the Tohoku region was devastated by the giant earthquake of March 2011, but joining forces post-disaster, a robust network of producers is successfully promoting the appeal and safety of the region's food to consumers in Japan and abroad.*

Tohoku—the northeastern part of Honshu, Japan's largest island—is a region abundantly blessed by nature and has long been a stronghold of the agricultural and fishing industries. Farmlands and fisheries were devastated by the Great East Japan Earthquake and subsequent tsunami of 2011, and the hardship was prolonged by reputational damage caused by nuclear incidents at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station (NPS). But the region has gradually recovered, with agricultural production already surpassing pre-disaster levels in the prefectures of Miyagi and Iwate.

TAKAHASHI Daiju has devoted himself to the revitalization of the Tohoku food industry throughout the intervening years since the earthquake. “Science can tell us if something *is* safe or not, but only humans can relay a *sense* of safety,” he says. “Scientific guarantees of

safety are essential, but guarantees won't get consumers to actually eat the food. It was only after producers tirelessly spread the word about how delicious Tohoku products are, and how much care goes into their creation, that we were able to win back consumers' trust. These producers are no longer victims of disaster. They are true heroes in the way they faced down the situation with such great determination.”

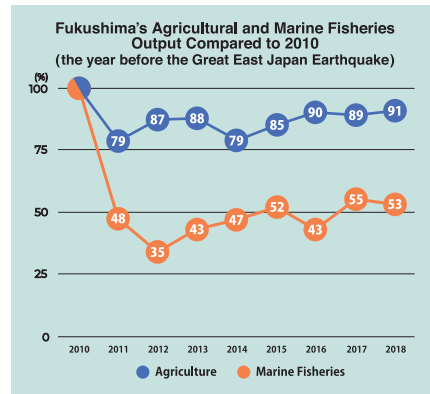
In June 2011, three months after the earthquake, Takahashi took part in the founding of “Eat, and Energize the East”—a group of like-minded individuals determined to save the food industry of eastern Japan, and became bureau chief. He resigned from his job at a major consulting firm later the same year. The group established a platform to link food producers of the region with retailers all over Japan, and in the first five years, succeeded in generating sales amounting to JPY



Fisherman's League, which was formed in 2016, is a group of fishing-industry leaders who came up with the inspired idea to create fishery brands that would be popular around the world. Heroes like these are helping to win back trust of consumers.



Left: Fishermen unloading mackerel at a fishing port in Ofunato, Iwate Prefecture  
 Right: Takahashi carefully considered the naming and product design for “Ça va?”—canned mackerel from Iwate that became a hit item.



As hesitancy still remains over consuming Fukushima's agricultural and fishery products, the recovery of the region is some distance away.

15 billion (USD 136 million). Takahashi also focused on the creation of regional brands. “Ça va?”—a pun on the word *saba* (Japanese for mackerel)—is one such example: canned mackerel with a stylish package design. “Ça va?” became a hit product and more than 10 million cans have been produced to date.

But Takahashi thinks the greatest success of the past decade lies in the emergence of numerous “heroes” of farm and fishery production. This is the culmination of the group’s strategy to put more focus on the development of expertise. “Eat, and Energize the East” has been organizing training sessions on a regular basis since 2013, in order to improve the business skills of food producers. Enthusiastic participants of the sessions began to link up with each other across the different segments of the food production value chain, such as fishing, seafood processing, and wholesale marketing. Producers also started to connect directly with consumers, and to convey their enthusiasm and personal stories effectively enough to generate a nationwide surge in devotees of Tohoku food products.

Unfortunately, there is still some hesitancy about buying products from Fukushima, which suffered the brunt of the nuclear plant accident, and it may take time for this wariness to dissipate. Moreover, a basic policy was announced in April 2021 to discharge ALPS-treated water—purified of all radioactive content to below the regulatory standard, except for tritium—from the Fukushima Daiichi NPS into the sea, following a preparation period of two years. The water will be diluted to keep the concentration of tritium under one-fortieth of the national regulatory standard applied to

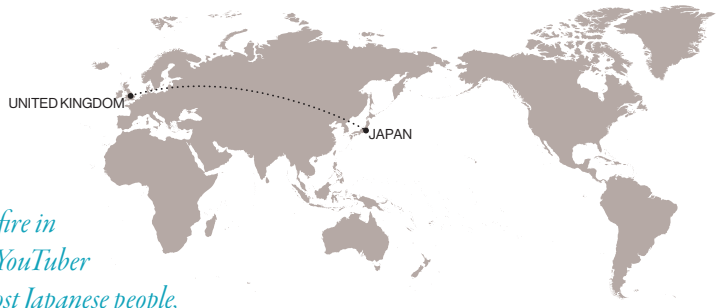
the country’s nuclear power plants. Although all due precautions for safety will be taken, the discharge may again damage the region’s image. “But we think this can be overcome,” says Takahashi. He reiterates, “After all, while passing on information about safety is necessary, I believe that people play a critical role in imparting a *sense of safety*.” In March, Takahashi and colleagues invited French chefs based in Tokyo to Fukushima for a tour of production venues. They responded favorably to the tour and showed particular interest in *sagohachi*, a pickling sauce made with fermented rice. Some of them even devised new recipes for dishes and sweets making use of fermented marinade made with *koji*, rice and salt.

In April, Takahashi moved to Namie-town, Fukushima Prefecture situated in close proximity to the Fukushima Daiichi NPS; the town office is about 8 km from the power station. The entire town had to evacuate after the nuclear accident, and although people are now allowed to live in part of the town, only one-tenth of the former residents have actually returned. This may sound like grounds for pessimism, but Takahashi says he has some interesting ideas for the town as it renews itself from point zero. “Fukushima still has many culinary treasures that can be proudly shared with the rest of the world. I hope to bring them into the spotlight and build up a new food industry,” he says. “The future opens its doors only to those who approach it positively,” he adds. Today, and in the years to come, Fukushima’s food producers and their supporters will direct their positive energy toward bringing the culinary delights of the prefecture to the rest of the world. ●

“Eat, and Energize the East” is making efforts to open up markets overseas. Here, prospective business partners are offered a taste of Tohoku at an event in Paris. (Photo from 2019)



# BROADCASTING THE UNKNOWN JAPAN TO THE WORLD



*Ordinary scenes and culture in Japan have kindled a fire in the creative spirit of an Englishman, Chris Broad. A YouTuber who arguably knows the country more deeply than most Japanese people, Broad regularly broadcasts videos of his real-life experiences.*

The YouTube channel “Abroad in Japan” is operated by Chris Broad. After moving to Japan in 2012 as a high school English teacher, he fell in love with the beautiful scenery and peaceful lifestyle of Sakata City, in rural Yamagata Prefecture. Having long dreamed of becoming a filmmaker, Broad began regularly posting YouTube videos from this land. “At the time, not many foreigners were introducing videos on Japan, so it was a great chance for me.” Sharing what it feels like to be “A-Broad” in Japan, his channel quickly gained subscribers—now numbering 2.1 million—jumping to the top spot of channels introducing the country.

The setting for most of his

#### CHRIS BROAD

Originally from the United Kingdom, Broad has lived in Japan since first arriving in 2012 as a high school English teacher on the JET Programme. He has produced more than 200 videos introducing the attractions of Japan. His YouTube channel “Abroad in Japan” boasts 2.1 million registered subscribers, with 267 million views as of March 2021.

At one of Japan's three most scenic spots, Matsushima in Miyagi Prefecture. “It’s because of scenery like this that I live in Tohoku.”





Top: A guided tour of Tsurugajo Castle in Fukushima Prefecture, wearing *yukata*.  
 Upper Right: Broad traveled across the Shimanami Kaido, which links small islands in the Seto Inland Sea, by bicycle.  
 Right: Broad enjoying *yakitori*, his favorite Japanese food, at a morning market in Aomori Prefecture.



videos is not Tokyo, Kyoto, or other major cities, but those places that can be best described as “provincial.” Beginning with the rice-paddy landscape of Sakata City, where he first lived, he then moved on to the vast northern island of Hokkaido Prefecture, which can appear as if an entirely different world each season. He has also introduced Aomori Prefecture, home to Japan’s biggest morning market and boasting deep local colors, as well as Miyagi Prefecture, where he now resides in the city of Sendai. Taking a trip by bicycle, he has also presented the Shimanami Kaido route that runs through the islands of the azure Seto Inland Sea in western Japan. All in all, Broad has filmed across the country, especially focusing on the Tohoku region of northeastern

Japan. Introducing local attractions through features such as scenery, people, and food, with a style that ranges anywhere from sober documentaries to comedies filled with British sarcasm, Broad’s videos abound in variety. True to his aspiration to become a filmmaker, his reputation for accomplished video techniques improves year by year. His viewers especially appreciate the way that he introduces genuine aspects of Japan not featured in guidebooks, from a unique, admiring point of view.

Particularly garnering praise are Broad’s documentaries on the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011, including Fukushima Prefecture, which suffered greatly from a nuclear reactor accident, as well

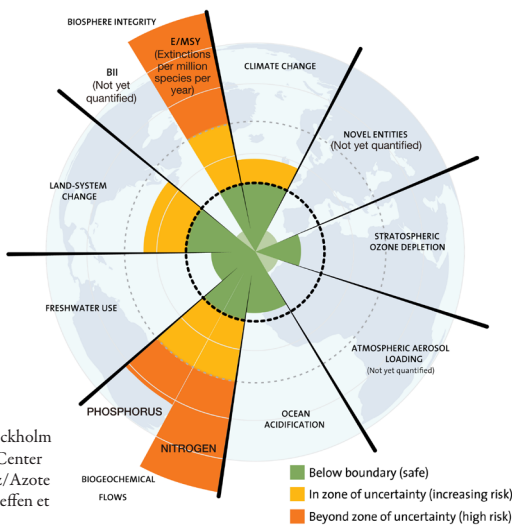
as the tsunami-ravaged Miyagi coastline. The videos that he made on location, capturing both the heartbreaking sorrow of the disaster victims and the hopeful steps being taken towards recovery, have resonated profoundly with his viewers. “Although there are lots of misconceptions about Fukushima, I found almost everywhere in the prefecture to be safe, with people energetically rebuilding their lives. When I reviewed the footage I took in Miyagi, I was struck by the powerful, unbreakable bonds that people have formed with their hometowns. Even having suffered tremendous losses, they all love their hometowns, and strive to build their future there. I wanted to tell the real stories of the cheerfulness of the people in the disaster-affected areas, their forward-looking attitude, and the way they have encouraged each other.”

There is more to Japan than just Tokyo. Shedding light on the stories of people living in other corners of the country is what Broad is all about. An unknown Japan, witnessed through the medium of YouTube and presented through Broad’s powerful communication skills, is now attracting new interest from viewers worldwide. ●



From a documentary showing the disaster-affected areas. Broad visited a flower grower (left) in Fukushima Prefecture, who is reviving the soil to make flowers bloom again. In Miyagi Prefecture, he rode a fishing boat at dawn (center) and visited a guesthouse owner (right) who reopened her business despite losing her family. Conducting direct, in-depth interviews, Broad conveys people’s true feelings, thus drawing viewers from all over the world.

While economic development has made the lives of human beings more convenient, the pressure that human activity places upon the Earth is at a tipping point. According to research on “planetary boundaries,” published in 2009, human beings have crossed four of the nine boundaries within which humanity can develop and thrive. These four boundaries are climate change, biosphere integrity, land system change, and nitrogen and phosphorus flow. Agriculture, forestry, and other land uses (AFOLU) account for 24% of greenhouse gas emissions, and are a major factor in the loss of biodiversity, consequently having a severe impact on the Earth’s environment. As these emissions



could result in destructive change, the immediate reform of food systems across the world is vital to the future of the planet.

To join the effort, in May Japan developed a national strategy to transform its food systems and enhance both sustainability and productivity potential: the Measures for Achievement of Decarbonization and Resilience with Innovation (MeaDRI). In addition to a goal of zero carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel combustion in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries by 2050, the strategy calls for concrete actions, including promoting the input of materials and energy with lower environmental impact and the establishment of waste-free processing and distribution systems. To achieve these goals, Japan has drawn up a technological development roadmap and is supporting dissemination of innovative technologies. The government is also endeavoring to involve both producers and consumers in these processes.

Japan’s initiative will provide a leading model for new sustainable food systems in areas affected by the Asian monsoon climate, which have different weather conditions and food production infrastructure from those in most Western nations. Countries in the Asian monsoon region, including Japan, share warm and humid climates, and have common farming characteristics; their food production is based mainly on rice and many of their farms are small operations. This particular characteristic will allow Japan’s innovations for sustainable farming to have

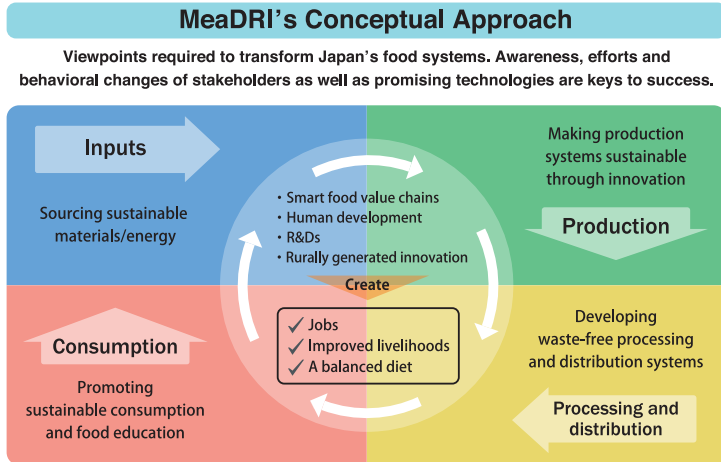
# TRANSFORMING FOOD SYSTEMS FOR A SUSTAINABLE PLANET AND PEOPLE

*As the global environment faces multiple crises, caused by climate change and the loss of biodiversity, Japan has worked out a strategy to rebuild food systems for a sustainable future.*





Professor ISHII Naoko said, “The extent of the crisis caused by food systems is not widely recognized in Japan, but we will be proactively involved in global rulemaking through our Sustainable Food Systems Strategy.”



applications elsewhere in Asia as well. Indeed, Japan is developing technological advancements to boost productivity on its limited amount of arable land, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions from rice paddies and analyzing soil with artificial intelligence. Organic farming, such as automated weed control, will be another groundbreaking innovation.

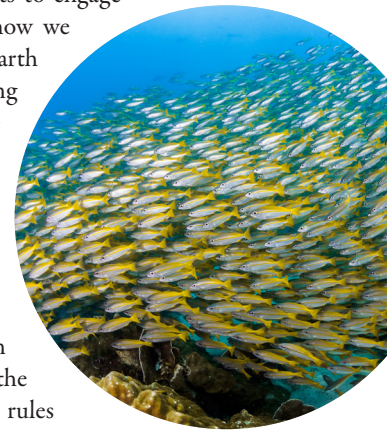
The United Nations Food Systems Summit will be held in September to discuss the global issue of sustainable food systems. One summit attendee will be Professor ISHII Naoko of the Center for Global Commons, former CEO of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which supports environmental sustainability efforts made by developing countries. Elaborating on Japan's role, she said, “Japan imports 60% of its food, and is deeply connected to global supply chains. Rather than only looking within our borders, we also need to look at global supply chains and must make efforts to visualize and quantify the environmental and social impacts including child labor, that we have thus far largely been unable to see. Quantification will show us where and how much our food system has an

environmental repercussion, guiding us toward a solution. By visualizing

this impact, consumers can make their own choices on what to eat in their daily lives, becoming an integral part of the solution themselves.” She added, “Through an active contribution to global rulemaking processes, Japan can help build truly sustainable food systems worldwide.”

The Food Systems Summit will provide a venue for the world to share visions about the future. Professor Ishii concluded, “It is often said that the food system is broken now. At this summit, participants must look beyond their own interests to engage in substantial discussions on how we can protect the future of the Earth and all its people from falling into a crisis by transforming the current system.”

According to United Nations estimates, the world's population will reach around 10 billion by the year 2050. Through the Sustainable Food Systems Strategy, Japan is determined to lead in the formulation of international rules that will allow our planet to support each of those 10 billion people.



By putting into practice innovations that reduce the environmental impact of agriculture, Japan will create a leading model for sustainable food systems in the Asian monsoon region.



# SHEDDING LIGHT ON SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN SUPPLY CHAINS

*In building a sustainable food system, all the various processes are essential, from input and production to processing, distribution, and consumption. Responding to the adverse impacts on environmental integrity and human rights of specific stages in the supply chain, Japan has been stepping up its sustainable procurement.*

There is a wide range of issues that needs to be addressed globally regarding the agriculture, forestry, fishery, and food industries, including climate change and the resultant increase in large-scale disasters. The United Nations Food Systems Summit will be held in September 2021 for the purpose of rebuilding sustainable food systems on a global scale, from food production through to consumption. In Japan, labor shortages due to the country's declining, aging of the workforce have been a growing concern. Responding to these issues, on May 12 of this year, Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries unveiled its strategy

for Sustainable Food Systems, called "Strategy MeaDRI". It aims to increase the organic farming area to 25% of arable land (1 million ha), reduce risk-weighted chemical pesticide use by 50% and chemical fertilizer use by 30%, and reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors to zero by 2050. Among several other sustainability targets, the strategy also aims to ensure that food companies source imported raw materials from sustainable backgrounds by 2030. Achieving this target would support responsible production in their supply chains.

One Japanese company that already employs sustainable

procurement as a key strategy within its international operations is Fuji Oil Holdings Inc., a provider of food materials including palm oil and cacao. Palm oil is derived from the fruit of oil palm trees grown in tropical countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia. It is used in various daily products, from processed foods to detergents and cosmetics. However, with oil palm plantations affecting the deforestation of tropical rainforests, there has long been concern about the industry's impact on the environment. In recent years, issues surrounding human rights have also emerged, with stories of forced labor and child labor.

"We have made efforts to consider sustainability at all stages of the supply chain based on the Fuji Oil Group management philosophy "Work for people," explains Chief ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) Officer (C"ESG"O), KADOTA Takashi. In 2004, Fuji Oil became a member of the international organization, the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). The company has



Above: Palm oil, produced from the fruit of oil palm trees, can be efficiently produced and is in increasing demand because of its good production yield and the many commodities for which it can be used.

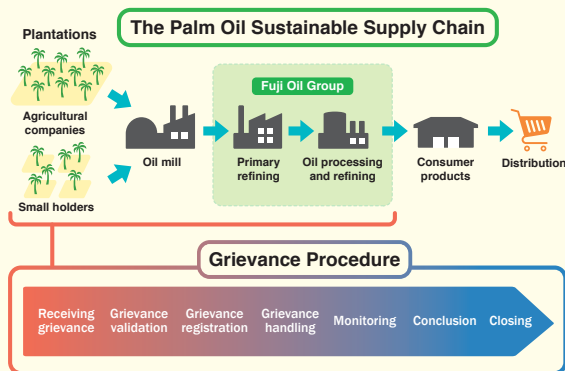


Right: An oil palm plantation in Malaysia.



## Fuji Oil's Sustainable Procurement

- Setting target of traceability of oil palm plantations (100% by 2030)
- Handling of RSPO-certified oil
- Establishing grievance mechanism (No Deforestation, No Peat, No Exploitation)



improved its sustainability by procuring products from suppliers complying with the environmental and social criteria developed by the RSPO.

In 2016, the company established the Responsible Palm Oil Sourcing Policy, setting out its commitment to NDPE—No Deforestation, No Peat, No Exploitation. They particularly focus on a commitment to human rights issues. In 2018, Fuji Oil then created a grievance mechanism that enables complaints to be lodged concerning any human rights or environmental issues in the supply chain. A mechanism has thus been put in place to encourage poorly performing suppliers to improve their actions, ultimately leading to the suspension of dealings with those suppliers who fail to improve.

According to Kadota, 228 cases were confirmed by March 2021, with 90% of those suppliers now making improvements. “When it comes to the complex palm oil supply chain, with its plantations, mills, and refiners, the adverse human rights impacts are less likely to be visible than the environmental impacts. It is vital to see what is going on in order to make improvements; however, since we do not own palm plantations ourselves, we are working closely with NGOs that have a strong influence on the ground, and are guiding them in the creation of safe and fair working conditions that comply with human rights standards” Fuji Oil is also seeking further development with its goal to achieve 100% traceability of its oil palm plantations by 2030.



“We are facing up to our responsibilities, working to strengthen sustainable procurement for cacao and soybeans as well. In the future, we hope to achieve sustainable procurement, including that of shea nuts too,” says KADOTA Takashi, the C“ESG”O at Fuji Oil.

Another factor crucial to sustainable procurement is making the consumer more ethically aware. Fuji Oil has poured much energy into consumer education, supporting projects that encourage middle and high school students to consider ways to create a sustainable society. Through Fuji Oil’s class visits, students are made aware of the problems surrounding palm oil producers, and are taught about the importance of ethical consumption, and of choosing environmentally friendly and human-friendly products.

Handing down sustainable agriculture, forestry, fishery, and food industries to the younger generation protects the global environment, while safeguarding stable food supplies. Not only is Japan’s strategy for Sustainable Food Systems providing a step along the way for the country’s agriculture, forestry, fishery, and food industries to achieve their aims, but it is also actively engaged in building an international framework. ●

Fuji Oil works with multiple stakeholders in Indonesia, such as local governments, NGOs, and plantations, supporting activities that teach the skills necessary to protect the environment from the side effects of ignorant farming practices. Such activities include teaching small-scale farmers the way to use chemical fertilizers and are linked not only to the lessening of environmental impacts but also to the improvement of productivity.



# THE DISTINGUISHED ISLAND PRODUCING THE “WORLD’S BELOVED YELLOWTAIL”



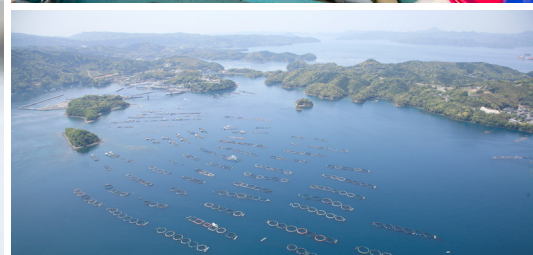
*Cultivating Japanese yellowtail to meet the needs of the global market, residents of a vibrant island off the coast of Kyusbu have turned fisheries into a growth industry.*

Surrounded by plentiful seas, Japan features a variety of high-quality, local seafood found in each of its regions. While overseas demand for marine products from the country has increased in recent years—driven by the world’s growing appetite for Japanese food—domestic consumption has been shrinking owing to changes in the food culture. Its fishery industry is also faced with an aging workforce and a shortage of successors. Amid those circumstances, Prime Minister Suga’s administration has pledged more support to boost total annual exports for agricultural, forestry, and fisheries products and foods roughly five-fold to 5 trillion yen (45 billion dollars) by the year 2030. Through such strong initiatives, the government aims to give fresh

vigor to these primary sectors and turn them into growth industries, leading to the revitalization of local economies.

Nagashima Town in western Kagoshima Prefecture, is one region that has already made great strides. Kagoshima is a major production area for Japanese yellowtail, an endemic fish species in surrounding waters of the country. The fish is known as *hamachi* in Japanese, and as *buri* when mature. The town has only 10,000 or fewer residents, yet produces more than 2 million of the fish each year, the biggest output of *buri* in the whole of Japan. In 2001, it launched the BURI-OH (literally, “king of *buri*”) brand, and now is responsible for one tenth (over 1000 tons) of the country’s annual export of Japanese

Nagashima Town, encompassing a series of fishing grounds stretching across several island bays, is famed for the production system that it developed for exporting fish year-round. The younger generation is actively participating as well: according to a 2018 survey, some 42% of individual owners who own family-run fisheries have successors, a much higher rate than the national average of 17%.



yellowtail, boasting sales to as many as 31 countries and territories, mainly in the United States and Europe.

A union of about 120 independent fish farmers, the Azuma-Cho Fisheries Cooperative Association, which handles everything from quality control to shipping, began exports of *huri* to the United States in 1982. To meet the high food-safety standards required for overseas markets, the association became the first fish farming organization in Japan to acquire Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points (HACCP) certification, the internationally recognized risk-based system for managing food safety, back in 1998. In order to give the BURI-OH brand its distinctive fleshiness and flavor no matter who has farmed it, the association developed a rigorous production control system to record daily data on fish growth, together with an original, standardized fish feed. It was also essential to design a “market-oriented” approach in order to build a strong brand. Considered a high-end ingredient served in sushi restaurants, *huri* is enjoyed for its high fat content and full flesh in Western countries. To enable such succulence, fish for overseas market are farmed differently from those for the domestic market: they are raised for a longer time period, and raw fish is added to their feed.

In Japan, in the face of dwindling sales, small, family-run fishing businesses are increasingly finding it difficult to maintain their operations and to compete with larger companies, but Nagashima Town has successfully overcome such hardships, maintaining independent and family-based operations. This success was possible due to their collective and long-term efforts to develop and improve quality-control techniques and a market-oriented approach, enabling export products that are lucrative on the foreign market. Much of that achievement owes to the leading role played by the Azuma-Cho Fisheries Cooperative Association. However, another important factor in the town’s success is the trust placed in the cooperative, which always puts its farmers and their financial and operational stability first, along with the can-do attitude of the people of Nagashima Town, who are eager to take on the unknown.



Since its launch, the BURI-OH brand has been enjoyed in Japanese restaurants overseas, mainly as sushi and sashimi.



While Nagashima Town is blessed by all the optimal conditions for farming fish—warm seawaters and abundant tidal streams—it is also blighted often by damage from red tides caused by algal bloom. When a total of 2.7 million fish succumbed to large red tides in 2009 and 2010, “everyone here thought it was the end of fish farming,” said NAKAZONO Yasuhiko, head of the association’s sales division. But that was followed by a series of innovative measures. Not only did they nurture fish to be shipped out before the summer red tides came, they also successfully created new and productive fishing grounds in waters further offshore, where such problems occur less frequently. Those efforts and the positive results helped to alleviate anxiety among local young people about pursuing careers in the fishing industry, thus paving the way for a new generation of confident successors to Nagashima Town’s fish farms. “We will continue to take on new challenges so that the new generation of farmers can pass on their trade to the next,” says Nakazono.

The approach taken by Nagashima Town, which cherishes the symbiosis between the local environment and its people, while sufficiently addressing industry’s structural problems and carving out a path of economic growth, may be just the model needed to generate greater prosperity in Japan’s local regions. ●



A farmer nourishes the fish with original, standardized feed. Rigorous production control is carried out in each fish pen with data taken daily on everything from the amount of feed and dosage to the size of the fish.

# A SMALL TOWN ASKS “WHY?”: TOWARD A ZERO-WASTE WORLD

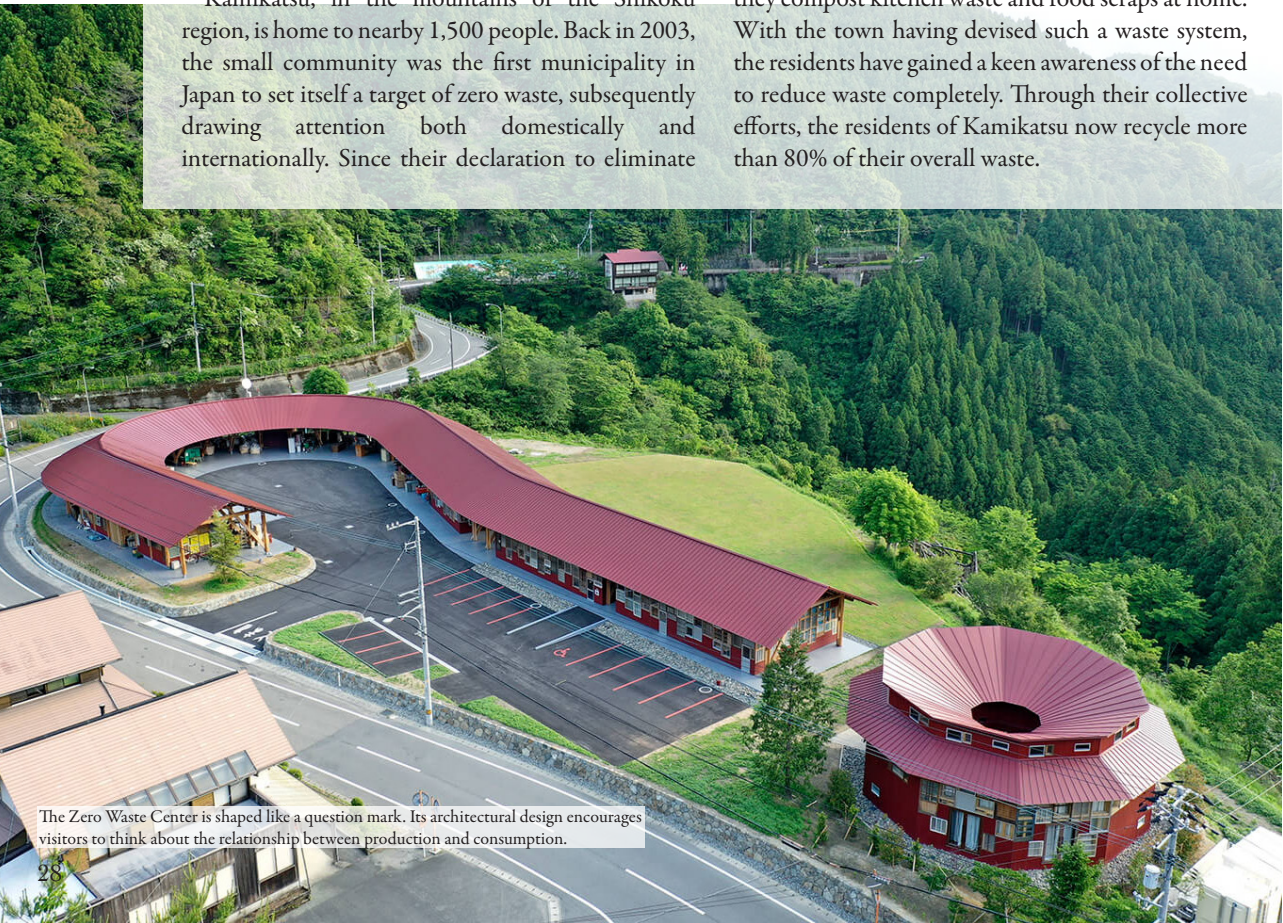


*In 2020, a waste-recycling facility complex with hotel was opened in Kamikatsu Town, Tokushima Prefecture, a community that has been working for years on progressive solutions to reduce waste. What is the significance of this? And what future is this town aiming for?*

Looking down from above, an intriguing pair of buildings appears in the shape of a question mark. The complex, opened last year in the town of Kamikatsu in Tokushima Prefecture, is the one-of-a-kind Zero Waste Center, comprising a garbage collection facility, a learning center and public hall, a collaborative laboratory, and a hotel.

Kamikatsu, in the mountains of the Shikoku region, is home to nearly 1,500 people. Back in 2003, the small community was the first municipality in Japan to set itself a target of zero waste, subsequently drawing attention both domestically and internationally. Since their declaration to eliminate

landfill and incinerated waste by 2020, the residents have worked together to fulfill the principles of the “3Rs” of reduce, reuse, and recycle. As the town does not operate its trash collection service, the residents take their garbage themselves to the town’s single waste-collection center, where they then separate it into more than 45 different categories. Meanwhile, they compost kitchen waste and food scraps at home. With the town having devised such a waste system, the residents have gained a keen awareness of the need to reduce waste completely. Through their collective efforts, the residents of Kamikatsu now recycle more than 80% of their overall waste.



The Zero Waste Center is shaped like a question mark. Its architectural design encourages visitors to think about the relationship between production and consumption.



Kamikatsu residents separate their own trash into over 45 different categories. In doing so, they can envision just what can be reused and how, thus becoming aware of the bigger picture after things have been thrown away.

However, some categories of the waste, such as diapers and disposable heat packs, are exceedingly difficult and expensive to recycle. Disposing of the final 20% is a big problem indeed—something that the Zero Waste Center was conceived precisely to address. By broadly promoting the town’s zero-waste initiative and effecting changes in people’s mindsets, its aim is to enlighten society about the need for zero waste. Not only does the Zero Waste Center offer people from Kamikatsu and elsewhere a venue to come together, but it also confronts them with the problem of waste by giving visitors and hotel guests the first-hand experience of sorting trash.

In charge of the Center is OTSUKA Momona, who describes the significance of the facility and its unusual shape, saying “Why do we buy things? Why do we throw them away? Why do we make things? Why do we sell them? This place gives us the opportunity to think about the many different ‘why’ questions stemming from waste.” On their arrival at the hotel within the complex, guests are first briefed about the Center. Overwhelmed by the detail of trash separation and aware that anything they might buy would contribute to the problem, some guests even reported choosing to refrain from making any purchases during their stay.

Besides welcoming hotel guests and other visitors,



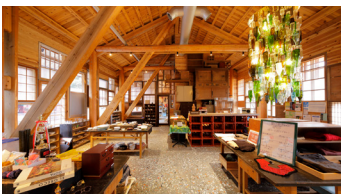
OTSUKA Momona decided to move to Kamikatsu Town, having been attracted by the town’s initiatives. “It would be great if this town of ours could lay the foundations to create a world of zero waste and achieve a circular economy.”

the Center is expected to become a leading place for research on zero waste. Working in tandem with businesses and universities to conduct research and development on 100% recyclable products, it will take important steps toward solving the problem of how to deal with the last 20% of the waste.

The Japanese government has pledged to reduce carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050. By displaying such firm intent to tackle environmental issues, it has made people nationwide more aware of the need to achieve a sustainable society. Of course, a big part of achieving that goal is overcoming the problem of waste. As Otsuka explains, “It is not just the 3Rs that are paramount to achieving zero waste: we must also consider the fourth R, which stands for ‘responsibility.’ Businesses need to produce and manufacture with the idea of disposal in mind, and consumers need to choose products that can be recycled and reused as resources in the end. That is the key to society’s future.” In its new zero-waste declaration announced in 2020, Kamikatsu Town has also placed considerable importance on environmental education for the next generation. Taking on those challenges, the small town continues to lead the way toward Japan’s future circular economy. ●



Top: The hotel is named “WHY.” Especially impressive is how the windows have been built with 700 discarded fittings—collected from residents’ old sliding doors, etc.—that have been pieced together like a puzzle.



Bottom: The shop inside the Center lets people exchange unwanted items for free. Residents bring in their reusable tableware, clothes, accessories, and other items, which anyone can then take home.

# ICT IN SCHOOLS

## EQUIPS STUDENTS WITH LIFE SKILLS FOR DIGITAL ERA

*In order to foster children's competencies for living in the digitally centered future, elementary and junior high schools in Japan are providing every student with a computing device, letting them effectively make headway in ICT-based learning.*

A tablet computer rests on each child's desk. The pupils' impressions about an assigned text—which each of them has entered in their tablets—are projected on a screen simultaneously. The children are then divided into groups in which they hold discussions and compile the notes from their individual tablets into a single sheet. This is a scene from a Japanese class at an elementary school in Shibuya City, Tokyo.

With the aim of fostering in children the ability to use information, and to also provide education that is optimized individually for each child by utilizing information and communication technology (ICT), the Japanese government initiated the Global and

Innovation Gateway for All (GIGA) School Program. Under the plan, which started in fiscal year 2019 and originally was intended to last through March 2024, work was progressed steadily to equip elementary and junior high schools with computer devices and a high-speed communications network. But then COVID-19 hit, disrupting learning in some regions when schools were closed last spring, so the government made the decision to accelerate the plan, moving it up by three years. As a result, from this April, nearly all schools in Japan will start providing a learning environment in which every student has an ICT device.

In 2017, before the GIGA School Program was launched, Shibuya City, in central Tokyo, was



loaning tablets to all of the 8,700 students attending its elementary and junior high schools, effectively creating a learning environment that lets them study anytime and anywhere, either at school or home. “It’s now normal for classrooms to have tablets,” says SAKAMOTO Takayoshi, chief of the educational guidance division of the Shibuya Board of Education. “Tablets are put to good use in all kinds of classes. In art classes, students use them to make their own animations. In gym classes, they record videos of their mat-exercise movements using red dots to indicate the places where they need to improve their form.”

As the use of tablets in classrooms was only partially realized immediately after one-to-one computing was first introduced, initiatives were required to build a system that would enable more comprehensive ICT-based education. These included assigning ICT support staff and conducting programming classes in cooperation with IT companies. Such developments have also made it easier to connect with learning resources outside of school. Given the ongoing difficulty in organizing field trips due to the COVID-19 situation, digital tools have been used to maintain children’s learning by connecting them directly to outside experts through online conferencing.

Teachers can also benefit from the new educational environment. Using digital teaching materials can reduce the amount of time spent preparing for classes, and introducing cloud-based school management systems can lead to higher efficiency in grading and other administrative work. According to Sakamoto, “ICT alleviates some of the burden that keeps teachers so busy, letting them spend more time with the children and focus more on providing instruction tailored to their individual learning needs.”

Next on the agenda is how to utilize the data



While programming classes have been compulsory in elementary schools since 2020, Shibuya City has been offering such classes since even before they became compulsory, inspiring great interest among the children.



Since 2017, all elementary and junior high schools in Tokyo’s Shibuya City have provided each one of their students with a computing device. Now, tablets constitute integral parts of the classroom. In gym classes, students make use of their tablets by taking videos of themselves jumping over the vaulting box, letting them watch and correct their form.

gained to further improve the quality of learning. By allowing teachers to grasp each individual student’s learning status from data logging, and thus to flexibly adapt their instructions, this ICT-based education will help realize a learning environment where no child is left behind. While some challenges still need to be addressed, such as further development of digital teaching materials, Sakamoto affirms, “Our goal is to foster competencies for living in all children to prepare them for the future, digital era.” Now the digitalization of learning environments at Japanese schools is set in motion. Going forward, ICT-based education will make further progress to raise children who are empowered to think and act on their own by leveraging the power of digital devices. ●

# BRINGING JAPANESE TECHNOLOGIES TO THE WORLD THROUGH CROSS BORDER OPEN INNOVATION

*An entrepreneur from Uzbekistan who found her lifework in Japan—to fully draw out the potential of advanced technologies lying unutilized—is doing her utmost to serve as a bridge between companies in Japan and the rest of the world.*



“Japan is home to many dormant technologies that have the potential to change people’s lives and the way the world works,” says Fariza Abidova, an entrepreneur from Uzbekistan. Regardless of how outstanding a technology is, ideas from a single company or industry are often insufficient to apply that technology to the creation of an innovative product or business model. “Open innovation” is a paradigm aiming to overcome that predicament and is garnering much attention in recent years. It goes beyond the boundaries of companies, industries, and even countries to gather and

develop expertise in the pursuit of problem-solving innovation. Many companies around the world now practice open innovation in order to address challenges not resolvable by one company alone.

After graduating from Kobe University, Abidova began to hold corporate training sessions for global human resources in Japan. It was during this time that she visited a client’s R&D facility where she was shocked to see that, due to the difficulties in

finding and building relationships with business partners from other countries and cultures, many cutting-edge technologies were lying unused. “It made me want to become a bridge between Japanese companies and those of the rest of the world. I can’t offer any technology-related assistance, but I can provide support to overcome cultural differences and facilitate communication.”

At Trusted Corporation—a company she co-founded in

## FARIZA ABIDOVA

Born in Uzbekistan, Abidova came to Japan in 2005 to study intercultural communication at Kobe University. After graduating, she founded a global human resource development company, and in 2016, she co-founded Trusted Corporation, which aims to create innovations by connecting companies around the world.







Left: Abidova when she was studying at Kobe University as a student on the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology scholarship (fourth from the left).



Right: Holding training sessions for global human resource development, with a focus on teaching practical communication skills based on specific scenarios.

2016—Abidova is advancing projects related to vehicles and logistics for smart cities, with a focus on activities that connect companies in Japan and Europe. Not only does she actively work to find the most befitting business partners—from among 5,000 European companies selected by her firm over a four-year period as promising potential partners—but she also preemptively analyzes problems that Japanese companies are likely to encounter in the course of carrying out a project. Abidova provides the support needed in fine detail, from clarifying visions and challenges to building good communications and relationships with the partner companies. Her background and work history make her the optimum candidate for that task; having built up her career and diverse personal networks through a fluency in seven languages, she

has the skills required to flexibly adapt to the different cultures and styles of communication found in other countries.

Her effortless agility to cross over national and cultural barriers was cultivated in the social climate of her home country, Uzbekistan, where more than 130 ethnic groups live. Growing up surrounded by different cultures and ways of thinking, she had naturally learned to understand and respect cultures different from her own. According to Abidova, during the course of conducting global business, a lack of understanding of the other party's culture and background has often prevented the proper communication of one's real intentions, leading to unexpected problems and distrust. She has always wanted to help bridge such gaps.

Uzbekistan flourished as a

crossroads for trade between the East and West on the Silk Road. It is renowned for the beauty of its World Heritage Sites such as the city of Samarkand, but also still faces many challenges, with some areas lacking a proper gas and water supply and other social



Many legacies of various cultures and religions can be found in Uzbekistan. Samarkand, Abidova's birthplace, is called "The Blue Capital" because of the vivid blue Islamic architecture that abounds there, including the Registan Mosque and madrasas (top), and the Shakh-i-Zinda compound (bottom), a complex of large tombs and temples. The city was registered as a World Heritage Site in 2001.

infrastructure. If life in the world can be made more comfortable and convenient through open innovation, Abidova believes that the living environment in Uzbekistan will also improve. That is how she hopes to contribute to her country through her life's work. "There are many problems that can be solved through the power of technology. Every day is an exciting one when I think that the work that I do could help change the world." It may not be long before Japan's dormant technologies are making their mark around the world in various fields. ●



The nationalities and fields of expertise of her colleagues at Trusted Corporation are diverse (top). Nearly half of the entire staff works outside of Japan, such as in Italy and Germany. Abidova says that it is her role to further draw out the strengths of talented people in various fields, be they clients or colleagues.

# KIZUNA

Summer 2021

*Published by*



**JAPAN GOV**  
THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN

*Edited by*

Public Relations Office, Cabinet Office  
and  
Office of Global Communications, Cabinet Secretariat  
1-6-1 Nagatacho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo  
100-8914, Japan

Available in electronic format.  
<https://www.japan.go.jp/kizuna/>

eBooks **amazon**kindle

We would be delighted to have your feedback.  
Please send us your comments.  
[https://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/forms/comment\\_ssl.html](https://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/forms/comment_ssl.html)

---

## Links to the websites of ministries

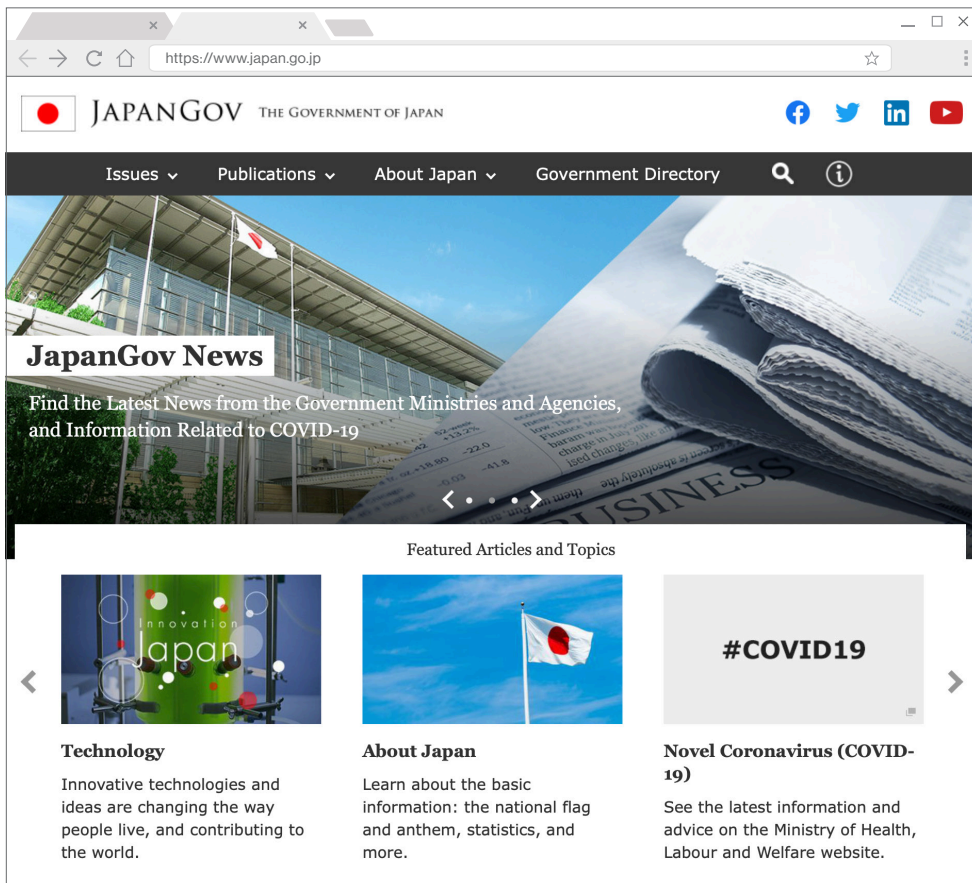
---

Cabinet Office	<a href="https://www.cao.go.jp/index-e.html">https://www.cao.go.jp/index-e.html</a>
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	<a href="https://www.maff.go.jp/e/">https://www.maff.go.jp/e/</a>
Ministry of Defense	<a href="https://www.mod.go.jp/e/">https://www.mod.go.jp/e/</a>
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry	<a href="https://www.meti.go.jp/english/">https://www.meti.go.jp/english/</a>
Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology	<a href="https://www.mext.go.jp/en/">https://www.mext.go.jp/en/</a>
Ministry of the Environment	<a href="https://www.env.go.jp/en/">https://www.env.go.jp/en/</a>
Ministry of Finance	<a href="https://www.mof.go.jp/english/index.htm">https://www.mof.go.jp/english/index.htm</a>
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<a href="https://www.mofa.go.jp">https://www.mofa.go.jp</a>
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare	<a href="https://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/">https://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/</a>
Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	<a href="https://www.soumu.go.jp/english/index.html">https://www.soumu.go.jp/english/index.html</a>
Ministry of Justice	<a href="http://www.moj.go.jp/EN/index.html">http://www.moj.go.jp/EN/index.html</a>
Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism	<a href="https://www.mlit.go.jp/en/">https://www.mlit.go.jp/en/</a>
Reconstruction Agency	<a href="https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/english/">https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/english/</a>
Nuclear Regulation Authority	<a href="https://www.nsr.go.jp/english/">https://www.nsr.go.jp/english/</a>

---

# JapanGov (<https://www.japan.go.jp>) is your digital gateway to Japan. Visit the website and find out more.

JapanGov, the official portal of the Government of Japan, provides a wealth of information regarding various issues that Japan is tackling, and also directs you to the sites of relevant ministries and agencies. It introduces important policies that the government is addressing, such as economic growth, innovative technology, and diversity, among others, with many videos and infographics.



You'll also find the official web magazine "KIZUNA"  
(<https://www.japan.go.jp/kizuna/>).

## Follow us to get the latest updates!





**Japan.** Sharing tomorrow.

# KIZUNA

<https://www.japan.go.jp/kizuna/>



**JAPAN GOV**  
THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN