

24th Japan-Spain Forum
Final report by the Co-Chairs

1 Overview of the Forum

The 24th Japan-Spain Forum was held on October 23, 2024 in Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture. The Japanese side was represented by Mr. FUKAZAWA Yoichi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the Spanish side was represented by Mr. Diego MARTÍNEZ BELÍO, State Secretary for Foreign and Global Affairs.

The theme of this forum was "Seeking a vision of global cooperation between Japan and Spain," and panel discussions were held in three sessions of "Initiatives for International Peace and Stability," "Business Cooperation between Japan and Spain in the Global Market," and "Exchange in Culture, Art, and Architecture," encouraging a free and lively exchange of opinions.

We hope that the discussions at this forum will advance relations between the two Governments as well as cooperation among various stakeholders, including those at this forum, and strengthen bilateral relations in both the public and private sectors, which lead to concrete outcomes.

2 Japan-Spain relations

As Co-Chairs, we would like to present the following outlook for the relationship between our two countries, based on the recent developments in Japan-Spain relations and the discussions at the forum.

[Initiatives for international peace and stability]

As Russia's aggression against Ukraine still continues and the situation in the Middle East is becoming more unstable, we discussed how to ensure peace and stability in the international community and create an environment for economic prosperity. We concurred that the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific security environments are now completely inseparable, and it is important for the international community to unite in continuing supports to Ukraine and sanctions against Russia, to condemn Russia's procurement of North Korean's ballistic missiles and their use against Ukraine, and to work together to respond to unilateral attempts to change the status quo. Furthermore, we shared serious concerns about unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the East and South China Seas.

In addition, amid deepening divisions and conflicts within the international community, and in order to respond to threats and challenges of various types and intensity, such as piracy, terrorism, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and natural disasters, we shared the recognition that it is necessary to address various challenges in cooperation with developing and emerging countries in the so-called "Global South," and to deepen dialogue between Japan and Spain on this point.

We also concurred that in resolving these issues, the changes in global

governance that have come about as a result of the shift in the balance of power are a very important factor to consider. Furthermore, we shared the view that as existing multilateral frameworks face difficulties, it is becoming increasingly important for allies and like-minded countries such as Japan and Spain to work together.

[Business cooperation between Japan and Spain in the global market]

We discussed a wide range of topics, including the current situation in both countries and the world, and how to expand into the global market in two fields, the green sector and the infrastructure sector, where collaboration in the global market is expected between Japanese and Spanish companies.

In the green sector, we shared the view that companies from both countries are entering the markets and leveraging their respective advantages to drive growth in both countries' economies. We also understood that, while we must advance decarbonization, we are currently facing a difficult situation in terms of expanding the introduction of renewable energy from the perspectives of economic security and inflation. On the other hand, there was also a suggestion that it is necessary to utilize the know-how and knowledge possessed by companies and to improve the level of financial systems, and it was confirmed that there is potential for further cooperation between companies from the two countries in the future.

In the infrastructure sector, we discussed the themes of improving productivity and working conditions, which are cited as challenges facing both countries, and shared the challenges faced by management as well as the current situation in which services to resolve these challenges are emerging. The discussion suggested the possibility of new problem-solving collaboration between companies from both countries at the field level in regions with high demand for infrastructure, including the Global South, and we look forward to seeing further developments in this area.

[Exchange in culture, art, and architecture]

Both Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture, where this forum was held, and Spain are places with active cultural, artistic, and architectural endeavors. In Kagawa Prefecture, the site of the Forum, there are many contemporary artworks scattered in the islands of the Seto Inland Sea, as well as numerous buildings designed by famous architects, including the Kagawa Prefectural Office Building in Takamatsu City (designed by Tange Kenzo) and Chichu Art Museum in Naoshima Town (designed by Ando Tadao). In the center of Takamatsu City, there is Ritsurin Park, which is designated as a special scenic site by the government and has received the highest rating of three stars in the Michelin Green Guide Japon, and Takamatsu City is working to revitalize the region by utilizing such cultural heritage and contemporary art. The Sagrada Familia, the Alhambra or the Guggenheim Museum in Spain, just to name a few examples, are very popular among Japanese people.

At this forum, we discussed regional revitalization and inbound tourism promotion using art and architecture, and shared good practices on cases where art

is used to promote regional tourism, cases where art and science are combined to address the marine environment, and cases where culture is used to develop human resources. We also shared a common recognition of the importance of further promoting bilateral cooperation through art and architecture.

3 Conclusion

This forum provided an opportunity for an exchange of views on a wide range of fields between Japan and Spain, and served as an opportunity to further deepen the cooperative relationship based on the "Strategic Partnership" that Japan and Spain announced in 2018.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the Governments and relevant organizations of both countries for their cooperation and support in hosting this forum.

October 23, 2024

Chairperson from Japan
SATO Yoshio

Chairperson from Spain
Ángeles DELGADO