

49th Kansai Economic and Management Summit Declaration (tentative translation)

Kansai Association of Corporate Executives
Kansai Economic Federation

At the 49th Kansai Economic and Management Summit, participants held intensive discussions under the main theme “Proposal from Kansai—toward Prosperity with Other Asian Countries” to seek ways to navigate through these unprecedented times coping with the ongoing global paradigm shift, rapid population decline and other issues. Based on the discussions, we hereby declare as follows:

1. Harmonious economic relations with Asian countries are indispensable to new growth in Japan, particularly in the Kansai region, given its close historical and economic ties with the rest of Asia. Kansai shall lead the way to prosperity by providing solutions to the challenges faced by Asia, such as how economic growth can be achieved while protecting the environment. In that respect, Kansai will improve its regional capabilities in terms of industry, human resources, culture, administration and other aspects.
2. To enhance Kansai’s regional capabilities, it is necessary to implement regional development strategies through close collaboration between the public and private sectors under the leadership of the Kansai Regional Union recently established by seven Prefectures. To that end, we will promote the transfer of authority and financial resources from central to local governments, and enhance the functions of the Union by encouraging potential local municipalities to join the Union and expanding the scope of its activities. By putting into practice the principle of “making decisions locally on local affairs” and producing results, Kansai will lead the nation to a path toward a “regional sovereign” state.
3. As a region open to Asian countries, Kansai aims to become a hub for flows of goods, people and knowledge. To this end, we will strengthen the international competitiveness of Kansai International Airport and Hanshin Port and will create comprehensive transportation and physical distribution network infrastructure, for example, by constructing a continuous expressway network. As for the Linear Chuo Shinkansen (bullet train) project, we will act to make proposals to the parties concerned to open the new line for services simultaneously between Tokyo and Osaka. In “Umekita,” a project to redevelop the area immediately to the north of JR Osaka Station and Kansai Science City, we will create knowledge-building bases that will contribute to sound development of the whole of Asia. In addition, by realizing a regional-collaboration-based comprehensive special zone, we will also offer an environment for region-led innovation creation.

4. By contributing to the continuous growth of growing Asian countries, Kansai shall become an engine for Japan's sustainable economic growth. We, as "Team Kansai," composed of companies and local governments, will be formed to provide our advanced environmental and infrastructural technologies and know-how in order to accelerate business expansion abroad. As for inbound flows, we will enhance the attractiveness of this region to promote wider-area tourism and encourage foreign investment. In anticipation of the paradigm shift that will take place in 20 to 30 years' time, we will continue to create industries in which Kansai will lead the world, focusing on areas with international competitive advantage, such as environment, energy and medical care. As a region experienced in removing bottlenecks to sustainable growth, Kansai aims to become a solution provider relied upon not only by Asian countries, but also by the world.
5. Under the spirit of independence and self-sufficiency, corporations shall continue to grow, adapting themselves to changes in the business environment. They shall develop new business models into which not only their technical capabilities but also security, safety and cultural values are incorporated, and shall offer products and services tailored to local market needs. To successfully enter new markets, particularly in Asia and other foreign countries, companies need to recruit personnel who can adapt global management strategies to their respective foreign markets. To secure highly-skilled human resources, including students from overseas, government, industry and academia shall work together to improve living environments, clarify career paths and take other measures to facilitate the recruitment of talented foreign workers. As for Japanese personnel, it is important to reverse the trend of looking inwards to make them more interested in overseas work by providing them with opportunities to go abroad and promoting international exchanges.
6. The Japanese government shall achieve political stability and shall promptly settle key issues related to the strength of the nation in order to contribute to the peace and prosperity of the global community and create a society in which all citizens can live in peace and security. To protect the people and the national interest, the central government should pursue firm foreign and trade policies and should immediately build a firm security framework centered on the Japan-U.S. alliance. It is another urgent task for the government to promote the Trans-Pacific Partnership and other economic cooperation arrangements with foreign countries to ensure that Japan will not be shut out of any international framework that will be crucial for its economic growth. Japan should "open up the country" at the same time fostering an agricultural industry that is highly productive and competitive. Since national finances have effectively collapsed, the government should waste no time in implementing drastic reforms of national administration systems, including social security and the taxation system. We will make further efforts to appeal to the government to resolve these urgent tasks.