

PRIME MINISTER ABE ATTENDS ASEM 12 SUMMIT MEETING



The Prime Minister attending a photograph session

On October 18 and 19, 2018, Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, attended the 12th Asia-Europe Meeting Summit Meeting (ASEM 12) held in Brussels, Belgium.

This Summit Meeting was hosted by the European Union (EU) and chaired by Mr. Donald Tusk, President of the European Council. Discussions took place in a total of three sessions.

At the First Plenary Session, discussions were held on strengthening the World Trade Organization (WTO), enhancing the connectivity between Europe and Asia, sustainable growth, and other issues. At the Second Plenary Session, discussions were held on climate change, marine plastic pollution, women empowerment, and other issues.

At the working lunch-style Retreat Session, discussions were held on North Korea issues, maritime security, cyber security, terrorism, and international and political affairs, such as migration.

Prime Minister Abe attended every session. The Prime Minister made a speech as a lead speaker at the First Session and also made a contribution during the retreat.

At the First Session, Prime Minister Abe commented on the free trade system, quality infrastructure and the establishment of a sound material-cycle society.

(1) Regarding the free trade system, Prime Minister Abe stated that retaliation through trade-restrictive measures does not benefit any country, and that ASEM partners should engage in efforts to resolve excess capacity and remove market-distorting measures.

(2) Regarding quality infrastructure, Prime Minister Abe stated that strengthening connectivity is essential for the further development of Asia and Europe, and that quality infrastructure should thus become the international standard. The Prime Minister also noted that the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" advocated by Japan will contribute to strengthening Asia-Europe connectivity.

(3) Regarding the establishment of a sound material-cycle society, Prime Minister Abe stated that Japan will promote measures against climate change in a way that accelerates the virtuous cycle of environmental protection and economic growth. In addition, the Prime Minister stated that Japan will announce an initiative of effective measures for the entire world to address the issue of marine plastic litter.

At the Retreat Session, Prime Minister Abe made remarks regarding North Korea's situation and maritime security.

(1) Regarding situation on North Korea, Prime Minister Abe stated

that the international community needs to work in solidarity in fully implementing United Nations Security Council resolutions towards the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Prime Minister Abe reiterated Japan's determination to resolve the abduction issue at the earliest possible date.

(2) Regarding maritime security, Prime Minister Abe underscored that disputes should be settled peacefully in accordance with international law, without the use of force or coercion, and that unilateral changes in the status quo are unacceptable. Regarding the South China Sea, Prime Minister Abe expressed his expectations that the negotiations on a Code of Conduct (COC) will lead to a peaceful and open South China Sea.

(3) In addition to these two topics, at the Retreat Session, participants from various countries commented on urgent global and regional affairs, including Iran, the migration issue, counter-terrorism measures, and cyber security.

Lastly, President Tusk of the European Council compiled a Chair's Statement.



The opening ceremony of the ASEM Summit (pool photo)