

**Speech by Ambassador Yasuhisa Kawamura**  
**“THE FREE AND OPEN INDO-PACIFIC: Charting a Common Approach”**  
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It is my great pleasure to join you at this important conference. I would like to first congratulate and express my sincere appreciation to the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada for the excellent organization and arrangement. I would also like to express my appreciation for the generous support from Global Affairs Canada, the Department of National Defence, Toyota, Hitachi, Fujitsu, CAE, and the Mitsui Co. Canada.

So, what is the Free and Open Indo-Pacific, or FOIP? I don't think there is a singular definition, nor do we need one. For us, FOIP is primarily the name of the geostrategic vision of Prime Minister ABE Shinzo. When he visited Ottawa last April, he shared this vision with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and the two leaders agreed to advance it through a range of initiatives.

In my understanding, FOIP is a common aspiration. It is the horizon towards which we sail together to find opportunities for prosperity and reinforce rules-based order in this uncertain age. Indeed, the world is getting more and more unpredictable. In my nearly 40 years as a diplomat, I have never experienced such a high pace of change in international situations as we have witnessed in recent years and it is further accelerating.

In light of this increasingly challenging international environment, it is no coincidence that like-minded countries like Japan, India, Australia, ASEAN, France and the United States have launched a strategy, vision, or outlook on the geostrategic concept on the Indo-Pacific. The opportunities and challenges faced in the Pacific region and the Indian Ocean region require us to regard the two regions as one big strategic domain, the Indo-Pacific.

In the words of Prime Minister ABE, the Indo-Pacific is where “the confluence of the Pacific and Indian Oceans and of Asia and Africa” should take place. The Indo-Pacific hosts the half of world's population, and the dynamism created by combining the two continents and two oceans is the key for the prosperity of the world. But at the same time, the Indo-Pacific is where the balance of power is increasingly complex, with a number of emerging powers on the rise. The region is facing great uncertainty and challenges such as rising unilateralism and protectionism, threats of nuclear proliferation and terrorism, climate change, aging populations, as well as attempts to change the status quo by force.

This is why the common aspiration for FOIP is essential. Like-minded countries must work together to promote and establish fundamental values such as freedom, openness, and the rule of law as foundations for peace and stability in the region. We must improve inter- and intra- region connectivity, enhance free trade, and assist the capacity-building of smaller nations, in order to achieve shared prosperity, free from force or coercion. We need to develop a free and open Indo-Pacific region as international public goods.

Since the launch of Japan's FOIP vision in August 2016, Japan has worked with many partners and implemented a number of projects. Particularly noteworthy are our projects to enhance connectivity through

Quality Infrastructure. It extends from the East-West and Southern Economic Corridors in the South East Asia, high speed railway project connecting Mumbai and Ahmedabad in India, development of the Mombassa port and the surrounding corridor in Kenya, to what we call soft connectivity projects, such as the Automated Cargo Clearance System in Myanmar and the provision of heavy machinery for infrastructure maintenance in Micronesia. Japan has also conducted a variety of initiatives for maritime capacity-building, disaster risk reduction, marine resource protection, health, human resource development, and legal system development, among others.

Canada is one of the major players in the Indo-Pacific. Canadians tend to call themselves a middle-power, but this is a huge country with abundant resources and advanced technology. Canada is respected as a country of principle, for its endeavors to uphold diversity, and for its active contribution to achieving a free, peaceful and rules-based world.

In recent years, we have witnessed greater presence and commitment from Canada in the Indo-Pacific region. Canada started the periodic deployment of its naval and aerial assets in the region, participated in the multinational surveillance initiative to counter North Korea's maritime sanctions evasion, and conducted joint exercise with Japan's SDF in the South China Sea. Canada is an indispensable member of the CPTPP which established high-standard for trade and investment. The potential of its clean energy resources being exported to Asia has long been appreciated and we are already on the cusp of realizing the potential.

However, the Indo-Pacific needs more Canada. We will welcome more actions and speeches to demonstrate Canada's continuous commitment to the region. We look forward to more collaboration to realize the FOIP vision, for example in the areas of maritime security and safety, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, energy security, or capacity-building assistance. Given the strength and priorities of Canada's foreign policy, we can also seek collaborations in protecting women in conflicts or legal system developments in the Indo-Pacific nations.

Canada, Japan and other Indo-Pacific partners share values and strategic interest in advancing the FOIP. Canada will greatly benefit from this joint endeavor and from the rules-based order based on FOIP as the international common goods.

This conference has been convened at the right time and in the right place, the symbolic Pan Pacific Hotel in Canada's gateway city to the Indo-Pacific. The key objective of the conference is to "chart a common approach" to achieving a free and open Indo-Pacific. I look forward to learning from the discussions by renowned experts from all quarters of the region, and am particularly excited to hear such informed opinions about the potential areas of collaboration between Canada, Japan, and other like-minded countries.

Thank you for your attention.