

High Level Event

The role of Responsible Business Conduct in building resilience

Date: 21 January 2021

Venue: Virtual event (ZOOM with simultaneous translation)

Background

The COVID-19 crisis has exerted a substantial toll on economies and societies. The crisis is creating challenges for large and small businesses and the long-term livelihoods and wellbeing of millions of workers are under threat. International instruments on Responsible Business Conduct and International Labour Standards can help governments and business with ensuring that COVID 19 recovery measures build longer term resilience of supply chains, support future disaster and shock preparedness, and promote sustainable open trade and investment.

In parallel, the Trade and Sustainable Development chapter of the recently entered into force EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement calls on parties to recognise the importance of relevant internationally recognised principles and guidelines and in particular, recognises the OECD Guidelines for MNEs and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy.

Working towards the common objectives, shared by both the implementation of the provisions of the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement related to trade and investment favouring sustainable development and building resilience in the context of the COVID recovery, a number of efforts in the EU and Japan look to strengthen the integration of Corporate Social Responsibility/ Responsible Business Conduct into policy and business-led initiatives – including, for example, the recently launched Japanese National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP) and the recent commitment from the EU to develop mandatory due diligence legislation.

Objective

Recognising the synergies between the role of Corporate Social Responsibility/ Responsible Business Conduct instruments in building resilience in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and efforts to implement provisions of the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement related to trade and investment favouring sustainable development, this event will bring together a broad range of stakeholders to discuss practical actions with a view to contributing to driving both agendas forward.

Speakers will draw on efforts already underway, including the Japan NAP, and share opportunities to strengthen implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility/ Responsible Business Conduct aligned with OECD and ILO instruments and through concrete actions for the immediate and longer term.

This event is being held under the Responsible Supply Chains in Asia Programme (RSCA). Opportunities to take the outcomes of this event forward in the context of engagement in Japan under the RSCA Programme will be considered by the Programme partners.

The event will be facilitated **via zoom** with simultaneous translation and is targeted to Japanese government officials, representatives of the European Union, business community, workers, civil society and concerned stakeholders including key experts.

Tentative Agenda

TIME (JST) ¹	PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS	SPEAKERS
16:00	Opening remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mr. Hiroshi Tajima, Deputy Assistant Minister, Economic Affairs Bureau and Foreign Policy Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan – Ms. Ewa Synowiec, Director, Africa, Caribbean and Pacific, Asia (II), Trade and Sustainable Development, Green Deal, DG TRADE, European Commission
16:15	Setting the scene Global and regional trends (with focus on Asia and EU) in promoting CSR/RBC principles for trade facilitation and building resilience in the context of COVID-19 recovery measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ms. Chihoko Asada, Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, ILO – Mr. Masamichi Kono, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD
16:30	Roundtable discussion: Reflections from key stakeholders Key points to be addressed by speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main challenges and opportunities faced by businesses during the COVID-19 crisis in relation to the implementation of RBC/CSR measures – including impacts on workers, communities and the environment. • Role of CSR/RBC tools and instruments as well as dialogue with social partners in helping build resilience into supply chains, supporting preparedness in dealing with global shocks and on-going trade facilitation. • Practical actions that can be taken to support the strengthened integration of RBC/CSR in Japan and with a view to contributing to the implementation of the TSD Chapter of the EPA and supply chain due diligence. Followed by Q&A session.	Co-moderated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ms. Yumiko Murakami, Head, OECD Tokyo Centre – Mr. Shinichi Takasaki, Director, ILO Office for Japan Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mr. Naoto Ohmi, Executive Deputy President, Rengo – Mr. Akihiro Ichimura, Chair, Sub-Committee on International Labor on Labor Legislation Committee, Keidanren – Ms. Miwa Yamada, Director, Law and Institution Studies Group, Inter-disciplinary Studies Center, IDE-JETRO – Ms. Yukiko Furuya, Board Chair, CSO Network Japan – Ms. Yukako Kinoshita, CSR Committee Chair, Japan Business Council in Europe – Mr. Daisuke Takahashi, Attorney at Law (Japan), Partner, Shinwa Sohgo Law Offices Government Interveners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ms. Minako Kono, NCP, Deputy Director, OECD Division, MOFA – Mr. Mikito Tomiyama, Director, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Division, MOFA – Mr. Masakuni Hirashima, NCP, Deputy Assistant Minister for International Policy Planning, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare – Ms. Naomi Sugo, Deputy Director Environment and Economy Division, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of the Environment – Mr. Asano Yoshito, Deputy Director, Europe Division, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry – Ms. Madelaine Tuininga, Head of Unit, Multilateral Trade and Sustainable Development Policy, Green Deal, Conflict Minerals, DG TRADE, European Commission
17:50 18:00	Closing remarks	

Promoting responsible supply chains in Asia

The Responsible Supply Chains in Asia (RCSA) programme² is being implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) with funding from the European Union. The RCSA programme aims to promote respect for human rights, including labour rights, and responsible business standards in global supply chains. This programme is carried out in partnership with Japan (an OECD member) and five partner economies, namely China, Thailand, Viet Nam, Philippines, and Myanmar.

¹ 8-hour time difference between Brussels/Paris and Tokyo.

² <http://mneguidelines.oecd.org/globalpartnerships/responsible-supply-chains-asia>