

PRESS RELEASE
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Thought-leaders of the Asia-Pacific identify key trends shaping the region

Vancouver, BC – June 4, 2013 – Will slower economic growth continue in Asia over the next few years? How will this affect regional and global economy? What will be the impact of rapid urbanization in the Asia-Pacific economies, particularly to the expanding middle class populations? How will different tracks under development in pursuit of free trade shape regional economic relations and how will they affect the ways in which businesses do business? These are some of the key questions that were addressed at the opening day of the 21st General Meeting of PECC or *Canada-Asia 2013*, which attracted over 500 leading industry and policy experts from Asia, Oceania, North and South Americas to discuss Asia's future and Canada's strategy for engagement. PECC delegates from 23 economies and invited experts also discussed the importance of continued investment in green industries, innovative and creative industries, as well as services and energy trade sectors that would help to boost the region's path to growth. The conference is taking place at the Waterfront Fairmont Hotel in Vancouver, BC from June 4th to 5th, 2013.

Policy-makers and economic experts gathered for the conference voiced their hopes amidst concerns for the region's future. Asia is expected to grow by 5.7 percent in 2013 according to the latest IMF forecast. The region looks to have weathered the Euro zone crisis relatively well in the last year, its economies are showing lower unemployment rates, and the region's stronger domestic demands seem to be boosting economic recovery. However, there are still some risks on the horizon that could negatively affect the region's growth including a visible slowdown in China, stimulus in Japan, as well as rapid capital inflows which need to be dealt with caution. Concerns over financial imbalances and potential currency wars are ongoing behind the generally positive outlook in regards to the short to mid-term growth of Asian economies.

In recognition of the enormous infrastructure needs and growth potential of Asia, there is a growing need for financial market development and integration in the region. More efficient financial markets in Asia could be a transformative factor in the next phase of Asian growth and in the global financial services industry.

“While the massive inflow of capital to the region is a welcome news in view of infrastructure deficit in many of the emerging economies of Asia, there is dire need to consolidate the financial market and regulate the global financial services industry,” according to Dr. Masahiro Kawai, Dean of the Asian Development Bank Institute. If not managed well with appropriate policy measures, the rapid capital buildup in the region could lead to a financial crisis furthering the income gap among the region's economies in different phases of development as well as within them. “In order to avert potentially negative impact from overheating capital inflows, it is important to mobilize a combination of appropriate macroeconomic, macroprudential and structural policies in Asia,” stressed Dr. Kawai. “The importance of continuing structural reforms, strengthening fiscal consolidation, and taking various steps towards ensuring that growth become more inclusive, cannot be over-emphasized,” said PECC co-chair, Mr. Jusuf Wanandi.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and the Pacific Alliance are three regional trade negotiations that have the potential to reshape economic relations in the Asia-Pacific. The TPP, which is entering its 17th round of negotiations, consists of 12 economies which are all members of the APEC. The RCEP, which held its first round of negotiations in early May 2013, has a membership of 16 economies, also members of the East Asia Summit (EAS). The Pacific Alliance is an emerging trade bloc between Latin American and Asian economies. As regional trade negotiations proliferate, questions arise as to how these different tracks are contributing to regional aspirations for free and open markets. “While there are questions about whether these different regional initiatives are competing with each other or complementary to each other, our main focus should be on how we can each maximize benefits from these different tracks, facilitate business operations across borders and provide regulatory reforms that allow trade with one another easier, faster and more profitable,” said Ambassador Don Campbell, Co-Chair of PECC.

About the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council

The Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) is a non-profit international organization committed to the promotion of cooperation and dialogue in the Asia Pacific. Founded in 1980, PECC is a tripartite network of 26 member committees comprising individuals and institutions dedicated to this shared mission. Of the 26 member committees, 23 represent the economies of Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Hong Kong (China), Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, New Zealand, the Pacific Islands Forum, Peru, the Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, the United States of America, and Vietnam. The PECC also has one associate member, France (Pacific Territories), and two institutional members, the Pacific Trade and Development Conference and the Pacific Basin Economic Council. As the only non-governmental official observer of APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), PECC provides independent business and research input for the regional policy-making process. www.pecc.org

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Featured speakers at the conference include:

- Dean Connor, CEO and President, Sun Life Financial (Canada)
- Peter Chalk, Senior Policy Analyst, RAND Corporation (United States)
- Rae Kwon Chung, Director, Environment and Development Division, UNESCAP (Thailand)
- John Denton, Partner and CEO, Corrs Chambers Westgarth (Australia)
- David Emerson, Senior Advisor, CAI Private Equity (Canada)
- Tom Jenkins, Executive Chairman and Chief Strategy Officer, Open Text Corporation (Canada)
- Masahiro Kawai, Dean, Asian Development Bank Institute (Japan)
- Kamal Kishore, Program Advisor, UNDP Disaster Reduction and Recovery Team (United States)
- Kevin Lynch, Vice-Chair, BMO Financial Group (Canada)
- Randolph Mank, VP Asia, Blackberry (Singapore)
- Sam Pitroda, Advisor to the Prime Minister of India on Public Information Infrastructure & Innovations (India)
- Atsushi Sunami, Advisor, Industrial Competitiveness Council of Japan (Japan)
- Jusuf Wanandi, International Co-Chair, Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (Indonesia)
- Zhang Yunling, Director, Institute of Asia Pacific Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (China)

Detailed program agenda and speakers' profiles are available at: www.canadaasia2013.ca