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Interview

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What are the place and the role of Japan and the Japan CCI inside CACCI?

First of all I would like to point out that JCCI is one of the founding members of CACCI, which was established in 1966.

Since CACCI's inception, JCCI has played an important role in leading the Confederation by undertaking its Chairmanship and Vice-Chairmanship for many years intermittently.

In addition to its annual membership fee, the JCCI has also provided financial support to CACCI through its annual special contribution.

We have also held a training course on Chamber Management for chamber staffs from developing countries with the cooperation of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Association for Overseas Technical Scholarship (AOTS) since 1971. The course aims to introduce JCCI's experiences in chamber management and various programs for CCIs in CACCI member countries so that they can get necessary information and know-how on implementing CCI activities. A total of 246 chamber officials have participated in these training courses so far. I am very glad to know that the Chinese International Economic Cooperation Association from Taiwan, jointly with CACCI, launched a similar program in 2007.

JCCI also proposed to CACCI to organize a structure for fostering young entrepreneurs that resulted in the founding of the Young Entrepreneurs Group Asia-Pacific, which is one of the most active groups in CACCI.

I am also very glad to see that JCCI's active participation, including of its young entrepreneur members, in CACCI gatherings such as Council meetings and Conferences account for almost half of foreign participants today. This is a proof that JCCI sees how important CACCI is and that it is enjoying its participation in CACCI activities.

What are the relationships (trade and economics) existing between Japan and the GCC Countries?

Japan and GCC countries are important trade partners to each other. Japan is importing mainly crude oil and natural gas from GCC countries, and exporting various commodities and infrastructures. GCC countries are the main source for Japan's import of energy resources, accounting for about 70%. However, I regret to say that the scope of our trade has been limited. I hope our trade relationship should be

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diversified through promotion activities and the exchange of information on trade and investment opportunities existing in our respective countries.

The Japan CCI's role is without any doubt to develop the private sector. However, we imagine that Japan's private sector is different and more powerful than other CACCI members. Could you describe the state of the Japanese private sector?

Of course, the JCCI's primary role is to develop the private sector. However, it cannot be done without coordination and cooperation with the public sector including central and local governments.

The JCCI as well as local CCIs in Japan have taken an active part as catalyst or coordinator between private sector and public sector, especially in the field of promoting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

SMEs in Japan take a major part of the Japanese economy, accounting for 99.7% of the number of businesses and 70% of total employment. I believe that one of the reasons for the strong Japanese economy is its strong SME sector. Another factor behind the sound Japanese economy is its strong manufacturing which has a long history of accumulation of technologies.

The quality of Japanese goods and Japanese infrastructure and construction projects are highly evaluated in the global market today.

This is because of the high level of engineering skills and technologies used by Japanese companies, ranging from basic science to applied technology and from low-tech to high-tech. The development of these technologies and human resources has been mainly done by the private sector in Japan. Hence, despite a severe business

environment characterized by a strong Yen and high labor cost, Japanese manufacturing industries have increased their competitiveness in the world market by improving their efficiency and productivity and developing high technology and competitive products.

What are your expectations following the signing of the MOU between the FGCCC and CACCI? Which sectors are you keen to attract GCC investors to?

I believe the FGCCC and CACCI member countries can have a complementary relation. FGCCC countries have

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huge energy and financial resources. On the other hand CACCI countries have rich human resources, technologies and large markets. As regards the attractive areas for GCC investors in Japan, I believe these would include research and development on advanced technology such as bio-technology, environment, nanotechnology, medical technology, and alternative energy technology (including solar, bio diesel, tidal and biomass generation), among others.

As for the developing countries which have broad stretch of land and abundant water resources, I believe investing in agriculture sector would be promising.