



# News Release

For Immediate Release  
September 7, 2018

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## Georgia's Workforce Development Programs Complement Japanese Business Needs

*Educators, policymakers, and business leaders discuss role government and private sector can work together to recruit and train the best workers*

**Atlanta, GA– Atlanta, GA** – On September 6, 2018, officials from the U.S. State Department and Japan's Consulate-General's office in Atlanta, joined university and technical school faculty and Georgia business leaders to discuss the important role the state plays in educating and training workers. The discussion was held during the *Investing in Georgia's Workforce: A U.S.-Japan Dialogue* conference at Georgia Tech, co-sponsored by Sasakawa USA, the Consulate-General of Japan in Atlanta, the U.S. Department of State, and the Georgia Institute of Technology Center for International Business Education and Research.

Since Georgia is home to hundreds of Japan-based companies with over 26,000 employees in 440 facilities across the state, educating and training high qualified workers is critical to success. Technical colleges play a significant part in the development of highly skilled, design and technology applicants for companies from all industry sectors. Japanese companies operating in Georgia in manufacturing, programming, and other hi-tech sectors require a pool of qualified candidates to hire for key positions. Georgia's government, in close coordination with private sector firms, works to provide the best candidates for the private sector to choose from.

**Mr. Phil Sutton**, VP and Chief Administrative Officer for Kubota Manufacturing of America Corporation, commented that there was, "strong support from the state of Georgia on our manpower issues. Georgia was committed to the overall hiring process which enabled Kubota to make a \$220 million investment over the years in the state. Kubota is part of the fabric of the communities we work and live in and we are dedicated to the development of our team members. We don't consider ourselves a 'Japanese company' or an 'American company.' We are Kubota." **Dr. Ray Perren**, president of Lanier Technical College, discussed the strong presence of Japanese companies in Georgia and how their focus on continuous improvement works well to create a strong pool of qualified workers. **Mr. Mike Phillips**, senior director for Global Talent Acquisition at InComm, a financial tech firm, stated, "the development and management of talent acquisition is mission critical at InComm. Also, we consider diversity to be of paramount importance in our hiring the best workers with design and technology capabilities."

Leaders from the U.S. and Japanese governments spoke to the audience about the importance of a continued relationship between their governments. Consul-General **Mr. Takahashi Shinozuka**, from the Consulate General of Japan in Atlanta discussed the longstanding presence Japanese companies have had in Georgia since the early 1970's and mutual commitment government and private sector maintain for economic prosperity in the state. **Ms. Julie Chung**, the Director of the Office of Japanese Affairs in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, provided insights on the U.S. and Japan alliance and the importance of workplace development in Georgia.

Key facts about Georgia and Japan working together over the years:

- Over decades of working together, Georgia and Japan have a strong track record
- More than 500 Japanese-affiliated companies operate in Georgia, employing over 30,000 Georgians.

- Georgia's exports to Japan totaled \$1.36 billion in 2017.
- Georgia's total trade with Japan is \$6.3 billion.
- Japan is Georgia's 6th largest export market.
- Over the past ten years, Georgia's two-way trade with Japan has grown by more than 24%.
- Georgia has 10 Sister City agreements with Japan.
- Eleven colleges and universities in Georgia carry Japan studies programs.

The discussion was one in a series of events organized by Sasakawa USA for its The Alliance Working in America (TAWA) series. TAWA focuses on how the U.S.-Japan alliance and partnerships can better work together to secure U.S. security interests, including economic security, at both regional and national levels. Previous TAWA installments took place in Oregon and Texas.

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### **About Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA**

[Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA](#) is an independent American non-profit, non-partisan institution devoted to research, analysis, and better understanding of the U.S.-Japan relationship. Through research and education programs, Sasakawa USA facilitates people-to-people exchange and dialogue between American and Japanese policymakers, influential citizens, and the broader public.