



For Immediate Release

**ACCJ applauds progress made under the
U.S. – Japan Economic Partnership for Growth and calls for an
enhanced bilateral mechanism**

January 13, 2009 – The American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) applauds the governments of the United States and Japan for progress made under the “U.S.-Japan Economic Partnership for Growth” (EPG) since its establishment in 2001. On January 9, the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) released a report highlighting many key accomplishments achieved under the EPG and identifying some of the important work still remaining.

The EPG has been an effective mechanism for addressing, on a bilateral basis, macroeconomic issues and structural and regulatory reform, among other key areas. Said ACCJ President Thomas Whitson, “the EPG has been instrumental in creating opportunities for U.S. and Japanese companies and workers in the Japanese market and is a major contributor to mutually beneficial U.S.-Japan economic relations. The ACCJ is grateful to both governments for investing substantial time and resources into this vital endeavor.” The ACCJ will continue to work with the U.S. Government to monitor reform in Japan and work to ensure a level playing field for U.S. companies.

For more than 25 years, the United States and Japan have engaged in continuous dialogue on key economic issues under various bilateral initiatives. Before the EPG, talks were held under the “Enhanced Initiative on Deregulation and Competition Policy,” the “United States-Japan Framework for a New Economic Partnership,” the “Structural Impediments Initiative” (SII), the “Market-Oriented Sector-Selective” (MOSS) talks, and others. Much has been accomplished through these efforts.

With both nations facing tremendous challenges in the coming years – including aging populations and the emergence of new competitors – it is imperative that the United States and Japan leverage their close economic relationship to strengthen their competitiveness in the vital Asia-Pacific region and globally. Maintaining a robust bilateral mechanism to address macroeconomic policies,

regulatory reform, and other business environment issues is essential for doing so.

Accordingly, the ACCJ urges the governments of the United States and Japan to explore ways to further strengthen and enhance their mechanism for bilateral economic dialogue. Much progress has been made under the EPG, but the challenges ahead – and the opportunities presented by a growing Asia-Pacific region – must be met with a robust and flexible framework for dialogue on key bilateral, regional, and global economic issues.

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About ACCJ

The American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) was established in 1948 by representatives of 40 American companies and has grown into one of the most influential business organizations in Japan. Consisting mainly of executives from American companies, currently the ACCJ has members representing 1,400 companies with offices in Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka. Working closely with the governments of the United States and Japan, business organizations, and others, the ACCJ promotes activities that help achieve its mission of further developing commerce between the United States and Japan, promoting the interests of U.S. companies and members, and improving the international business environment in Japan. Over 60 committees representing various industries play the ACCJ's central role in making policy recommendations through advocacy tools such as the Business White Paper and holding over 500 events and seminars annually on public policy and economic trends. The ACCJ is also committed to promoting charitable events and other CSR activities.

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