

Declaration of Cool Japan's Mission

Japan, a Country Providing Creative Solutions to the World's Challenges

More than 18 months have passed since I took office as the first minister in charge of the “Cool Japan” strategy.

Since the 1990s, such forms of Japan-based entertainment as Japanimation, manga and electronic games have been enjoyed in many countries, and tasty, healthy Japanese food has attracted more and more people even while we, the Japanese people, are losing confidence and energy, and becoming more introverted due to prolonged economic struggles. I position the Cool Japan strategy as a social movement for each of us to rediscover various aspects of Japan’s attractiveness and then disseminate it to the world. The government has been encouraging this movement through, for example, a high-profile campaign by the Prime Minister and support for positive private-sector activities such as finance through Cool Japan Fund Inc. Since assuming this ministerial position, I have visited the U.S. and many countries in Europe and Asia, and felt a very strong interest in Cool Japan among the local people.

It is also a fact, however, that advertising various different aspects of Japan’s appeal in an uncoordinated manner fails to focus on certain targets, and thus weakens the message. Therefore, the current situation is not satisfactory. The decision to hold the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics in Tokyo has been made, and there is momentum that supports the Cool Japan strategy. The Cool Japan Movement Promotion Council has been discussing how we should further strengthen the message so as not to miss this opportunity. We have invited a young, spirited designer, Eisuke Tachikawa, to serve as the concept director, and a variety of artists, athletes and creative professionals on the front line not only in Japan but also internationally, to participate as guests. With some members unheard of in conventional, conservative government and amid a loose atmosphere, we held active discussions and I also voiced my opinions while enjoying the opportunity.

Through our discussions we realized that what is expected from Cool Japan is not simply some economic effects achieved by introducing and promoting Japanese culture. Japan is well versed in facing and tackling challenges, and has already been addressing a number of difficulties, including a declining birthrate and an aging population, environmental and energy issues, and financial reconstruction that many countries are likely to face in the near future. Japan is a nation of innovation that since long ago has flexibly imported the products of foreign cultures and developed them as its original culture, amid its harsh environment of limited land and a lack of resources. Japan

should now take the initiative in solving difficult issues by using the originality and ingenuity characteristic of its people, and thus become a world leader. Japan's brand value as a nation will be raised if other countries in the world can use Japan's case as a reference when challenged by similar problems. In other words, I hereby declare that, "Japan, a country providing creative solutions to the world's challenges," is the new mission of Cool Japan.

Based on this declaration, I had the core members of the Council list some attractive actions. While the government has implemented various projects in the past, the Cool Japan proposals made by so many front-line professionals as a group are unprecedented. Being packed with ideas to create new businesses and grow existing ones, these proposals should, by all means, be taken advantage of by government offices in their respective activities. Another remarkable achievement was the development of human resources, including the members and guests who participated in the Council. We ask for the continuous cooperation of the members and guests, by providing us with advice and cooperation in events when the government offices implement their projects.

The Cool Japan strategy has entered the next stage. There is no end to raising the brand value of "Japan," and we look forward to taking on new challenges in the future.

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Minister in charge of the "Cool Japan" strategy