

## From the Curator's Desk

As the fourth quarter of 2025 begins, the global economic environment continues to evolve, shaped by new technologies, shifting demographics, and the ongoing realignment of international trade and geopolitical relations. Against this backdrop, our organization remains focused on advancing dialogue, and cross-sector collaboration across the Asia-Pacific region.

A central focus of this issue is the release of our annual **State of the Region Report 2025** during **APEC Economic Leaders' Week**, highlighting growing risks from protectionism, geopolitical tensions, and a global economic slowdown. It calls on APEC Leaders to prioritize mitigating trade conflicts, lowering geopolitical tensions, strengthening supply chain resilience, facilitating technological and AI adoption and mitigating risks arising from it, and supporting the multilateral trading system.

We also bring forth a review of the **32nd PECC General Meeting**, held in August 2025 in Seoul, Republic of Korea, under the theme: *"Reimagining Asia-Pacific Cooperation: Trade, AI, and Demographics in a Shifting Global Landscape."* This conference convened a diverse group of members, stakeholders, partners and the new generation to connect, collaborate, and chart the course forward.

The theme provided a forward-looking lens through which participants examined the opportunities and challenges facing the region, particularly in light of accelerating technological transformation, demographic shifts, and growing demands for more inclusive and sustainable models of cooperation. The discussions yielded valuable insights into critical policy areas, including regional trade integration, the governance of artificial intelligence, labor market transitions, and the socioeconomic impacts of aging populations.

In this issue, we also present updates from the Member Committees, along with spotlights on key projects and events designed to keep our community active and engaged.

We thank you for your continued engagement and invite your feedback and contributions for future editions of the PECC E-newsletter at [media@pecc.org](mailto:media@pecc.org).

Sincerely,

**PECC International Secretariat**

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## PECC Releases State of the Region 2025 Report

The Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) has recently released the *State of the Region 2025 report: Navigating Era of Rising Protectionism and Economic Uncertainty*, during the APEC’s Economic Leaders week in Gyeongju, Republic of Korea.

The report identified top risks that include global economic slowdown, supply chain disruptions, inflation and cost of living pressures and climate change impacts.

Despite the challenging environment, the report notes the Asia-Pacific’s resilience and continued confidence in cooperation through WTO, APEC, ASEAN, CPTPP, and RCEP.

It calls on APEC Leaders to prioritize mitigating trade conflicts, lowering geopolitical tensions, strengthening supply chain resilience, facilitating technological and AI adoption and mitigating risks arising from it, and supporting the multilateral trading system.

As uncertainty deepens, the report underscores the importance of **APEC’s open regionalism and consensus-building** in fostering a more resilient and cooperative Asia-Pacific future.

*\*Download here for the [full digital report](#) and [press release statement](#).*

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### Workshop

13 August 2025, Seoul, Korea:

[PECC Signature Project Workshop: Addressing Labor Shortages due to Low Birth Rates and Aging Population in the APEC Region](#)

### PECC Project > Addressing Labor Shortages

## Addressing Labor Shortages due to Low Birth Rates and Aging Population in the APEC region

Led by [KOPEC](#), [JANCOPEC](#) and supported by [CAN-CPEC](#), [CTPECC](#) and [TNCPECC](#)

The Asia-Pacific region faces a pressing challenge: declining birth rates and aging populations are shrinking the workforce and threatening long-term growth. East Asia already records some of the world’s lowest fertility rates, while emerging economies are projected to experience similar demographic shifts in the coming decades.

To tackle these challenges, the project highlights key policy priorities:

- **Boosting Productivity:** Through digitalization and innovation in high-value industries and services, in line with APEC’s Enhanced Agenda for Structural Reform (EAASR).
- **Inclusive Labor Markets:** Expanding opportunities for women, older workers, and non-regular employees while addressing skill mismatches.
- **Human Capital Development:** Aligning education and training with structural industry shifts to better equip the workforce.
- **Cross-Border Mobility:** Facilitating skilled migration, supported by mutual recognition of professional qualifications.
- **Strengthening Social Protection:** Expanding healthcare, childcare, and eldercare, with a strong focus on achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

This project underscores the urgent need for APEC to prioritize labor shortages, low birth rates, and aging populations in its agenda and strengthen regional cooperation for sustainable, inclusive growth.

Commentaries from experts in Japan, Korea, China, Chinese Taipei, and Canada are available:

- [Unmarried Adults and Gender Equality Matter in Low Fertility Contexts](#) by **Yen-hsin Alice CHENG** (Research Fellow, Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica) (Chinese Taipei)
- [Challenges and Policy Directions for Sustaining Economic Growth and Enhancing Productivity in an Aging Society](#) by **Keiko ITO** (Professor, Chiba University) (Japan)
- [Demography, Trade, and Social Policy: Comparisons with a Hundred Years Ago](#) by **Yasuhiro KAMIMURA** (Associate Professor, Graduate School of Environmental Studies, Nagoya University) (Japan)
- [What We Need to Do to Overcome Korea’s Ultra-low Fertility Rate](#) by **Nayoung KIM** (Research Fellow, Korea Institute of Child Care and Education) (Korea)
- [Successes and Failures of Cross-border Temporary Labour Migration Policies in Addressing Labour Shortages and Enhancing Economic Productivity](#) by **Sharon Zhengyang SUN** (Distinguished Fellow, Asia Pacific Foundation and Canada West Foundation/ **Stephany Laverty**, Senior Policy Analyst, Canada West Foundation) (Canada)
- [Challenges and Policy Directions for Sustaining Economic Growth and Enhancing Productivity in an Aging Society](#) by **Yuan XIN** (Professor, School of Economics, Nankai University) (China)
- [Shaping the Future Together: Lessons from Korea on Rethinking Policy Paradigms for Fertility Recovery](#) by **Jin Sung YOO** (Senior Research Fellow, Korea Economic Research Institute (KERI)) (Korea)

# An update on Track 1.5 Process to Review and Update the CPTPP Chapter 14 on Electronic Commerce

Led by CANCPEC and AusPECC

CANCPEC and AusPECC are pleased to share the final report and recommendations from the Track 1.5 Process to Review and Update the CPTPP Chapter 14 on Electronic Commerce.

Since November 2024, more than 20 digital trade experts from 11 economies have convened three hybrid and virtual roundtables to propose 13 actionable recommendations designed to future-proof Chapter 14 by elevating it to the frontier of digital trade policy. These recommendations address issues such as AI governance, cross-border data flows and governance, cybersecurity and digital trust, reflecting direct and active inputs by industry stakeholders, ensuring that they are commercially relevant, technically robust, and grounded in the realities of digital trade.

[Read the full report here.](#)

The report comes at a critical time. Against the backdrop of a rapidly deteriorating global trading system, experts highlighted the need to ensure that the CPTPP remains the highest possible standard that is dynamic and future-oriented. While the CPTPP Chapter 14 on Electronic Commerce was cutting-edge at its inception in 2017, there has been tremendous growth and evolution of the digital economy, necessitating an urgent development of new regulatory frameworks and international conventions to address the risks and opportunities in these new technological and economic conditions.

Building digital trust and confidence in digital trade are priority areas for PECC and other groupings within the APEC fora – including the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC), who are independently pursuing projects to relay the business perspectives on necessary regulatory updates and international cooperation to facilitate digital trade. In efforts to foster collaboration, the 13 recommendations from the Track 1.5 process were presented at the second ABAC meeting held in Toronto, Canada in April, 2025, to solicit feedback from business leaders across the APEC region.



The final report serves as a reflection of insights from industry stakeholders, including business leaders, digital service providers, MSMEs, academia, and policy experts and aims to make a constructive contribution to the CPTPP Commission's review process and support CPTPP members in reinforcing the Agreement's status as the gold standard for regional and global trade. AusPECC and CANCPEC are currently in discussions with government counterparts to deliver the recommendations to the CPTPP Commission under Australia's leadership.

For more information on the project, please contact Amanda Doyle (CANCPEC) at [amanda.doyle@asiapacific.ca](mailto:amanda.doyle@asiapacific.ca) or Kristen Bondiotti (AUSPECC) at [kristen@apecc.org.au](mailto:kristen@apecc.org.au).

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## CANCPEC: Updates

### Ambassador Don Campbell Appointed to the Order of Canada



On June 30, 2025, former CANCPEC Chair, Amb. Donald W. Campbell was [appointed](#) to the Order of Canada, one of Canada's highest honors which recognizes people across all sectors of society who have made extraordinary and sustained contributions to the country.

Amb. Campbell is a highly respected advisor in the private and public sectors and currently serves as Senior Strategy Advisor at Norton Rose Fulbright Canada. His stellar diplomatic career includes service as deputy minister of both Foreign Affairs and International Trade, G8 summit sherpa, and senior negotiator with the United States. As a former ambassador to Korea and Japan, he continues to play a central role in Canada-Asia relations as a distinguished fellow to the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada.

The PECC Community would like to extend our greatest congratulations to Amb. Campbell who served as the Chair of the Canadian National Committee on Pacific Economic Cooperation (CANCPEC) since 2009 and concurrently International Co-Chair of PECC for three successive terms from 2012 to 2020. We thank him for his dedicated leadership of CANCPEC and PECC which has left a renowned impact on current and practical policy issues of the Asia Pacific region.

### About the Order of Canada

Established in 1967 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Order of Canada is the cornerstone of the Canadian Honors System and recognizes outstanding achievement, dedication to the community, and service to the nation. The Order recognizes people in all sectors of Canadian society. Their contributions are varied, yet they have all enriched the lives of others and made a difference to this country.

Read more about the Order of Canada [here](#).

### Ambassador Jonathan T. Fried appointed as the new CANCPEC Chair

As announced on the PECC website on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, [Amb. Jonathan T. Fried was appointed as the new Chair of the Canadian National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation \(CANCPEC\)](#) to succeed Amb. Donald W. Campbell, effective June 1, 2025. Amb. Campbell has served as Chair of CANCPEC since 2011 and was concurrently International Co-Chair of PECC from 2012 to 2020. Mr. Hugh Stephens will continue to serve as CANCPEC Vice Chair.



CANCPEC warmly welcomes Amb. Fried to his new role and looks forward to his leadership in advancing CANCPEC's contributions in PECC to foster meaningful dialogue and action on sustainable and resilient economic growth in the Asia-Pacific.

CANCPEC would like to express its appreciation to Amb. Campbell, currently Senior Strategy Advisor, Norton Rose Fulbright Canada, and former Canadian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Deputy Minister for International Trade and Ambassador to Japan. Amb. Campbell, having stepped down following years of dedicated leadership of CANCPEC and guiding PECC as International Co-Chair through three successive terms, was appointed by Canada's Governor General on July 1 to the Order of Canada. It is one of Canada's highest honours, which recognizes people across all sectors of society who have made extraordinary and sustained contributions to the country.

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## HKCPEC: Updates

### HKCPEC Youth Program 2024/2025 – “Model PECC – Innovating through Youth Voices”

The Hong Kong Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation (HKCPEC) organized its 10<sup>th</sup> edition of Youth Program in 2025. The Youth Program 2024/25 (the Program) for local secondary school students was organized in collaboration with the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Group (HKFYG) Leadership Institute.

Titled “Model PECC – Innovating through Youth Voices”, the Program entailed a four-month learning journey and attracted over 190 secondary students in 74 teams from 46 schools in Hong Kong to participate.

Through a series of nurturing activities, including seminars, workshops and a 24-hour case study, the Program encouraged the participants to engage in discussions on issues related to economic development in the region through researches, creative thinking and facilitated exchanges, raising the awareness among the younger generation of regional economic development and the importance of economic collaboration in the Asia-Pacific region.



The Program’s signature event - Model PECC was successfully held on 5 and 6 July 2025 at the HKFYG Leadership Institute, a heritage site of the former Fanling Magistracy. At the Model PECC, each of the 11 shortlisted teams was assigned to represent one of the Member Committees of PECC to conduct research and develop policy recommendations on a designated topic relating to the overarching theme, namely “Blue Economy”, and to present their findings and policy recommendations under a simulated setting of PECC Meeting.

In the Award Presentation Ceremony, the Chairman of the HKCPEC, Professor Tam Kar-yan, commended the active participation of the students in the discussions on issues related to economic development in the Asia-Pacific region and their creative and meaningful contributions to regional economic co-operation dialogues whilst the APEC Senior Official of Hong Kong, China and Director-General of Trade and Industry, Mr. Aaron Liu, expressed his appreciation to the global perspective possessed by the participants as well as their interests and proactive participation in regional economic co-operation.



For details, please visit the HKCPEC’s website at <https://www.hkcpec.org/en/Youth-Programme/Youth-Programme-2024-25/>.

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## NZPECC: Updates

NZPECC has completed a shortened version of its paper on Trade and Climate Change on under the PECC Signature Project: Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP) Pathways to Prosperity, led by AUSPECC. The shortened paper will in turn provide a good basis for engagement initially with stakeholders, the wider PECC community and APEC.

Building on its trade and climate change work NZPECC is now developing a new project on: **Product Substantiation, Climate-Related Disclosures and Attestations in the Value Chain Through Digital Standards**. Dr Peter Stevens, CEO of GS1 NZ and a member of the NZPECC board, is leading this project.

In brief, driven by regulators, procurers and consumers, the demand for transparency disclosures that necessitate reporting across *entire value chains* is increasing. The scale of attestations, including climate related sustainability, is becoming a new baseline requirement for global trade. Such disclosures are *qualitatively* different to simpler point-to-point product substantiation requirements. There is a requirement to disclose information down the value chain and data is required to be aggregated from many sources to the point-of-consumption. Such attestations are very challenging to do at scale without the adoption of standardised digital exchanges and an understanding of the concepts of *traceability, visibility and transparency*.

In short:

- If jurisdictions want to protect their export markets, strengthen their reputation for the clean, green and ethical products that underpin national brands or develop new ones, and support export premiums, there is a need now to invest in a coherent and scalable approach to provide digital, verifiable sustainability information across our value chains.
- Whole-of-value chain attestations are qualitatively different to the point-to-point product substantiations required for market access currently by regulatory or procurement processes.
- Sustainability disclosures and attestations, including climate-related are, in particular, very challenging to do at scale without the adoption of standardised digital exchanges.
- Although jurisdictions and markets are moving at different speeds – and occasionally pausing requirements- the long-run direction of travel is clear: What is the product? What is it made from? Where has it been? Why should I buy it? Can you substantiate claims?

NZPECC looks forward to engaging on this project with the FTAAP taskforce and the wider PECC community in due course.

NZPECC has also completed its international project “**Intellectual Property and Law: a Primer**” and is now engaging in policy outreach and discussion with stakeholders.

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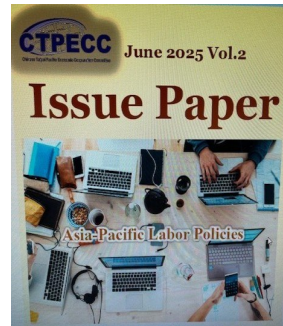
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## CTPECC: Updates

### Publication:

CTPECC issued the Issue Paper in June 2025. There are two essays in this issue. One is “Services Reform in APEC: Opportunities for the New Services Agenda”, which identifies critical avenues for reform and collaboration, emphasizing the potential for innovation and growth in sectors such as digital and professional services. The other one is “Advancing Digital Transformation Across the APEC Region: Benefits and Impacts for Workers”, which provides a nuanced look at how digitalization is reshaping employment across member economies and calls for inclusive strategies to ensure that workers are not left behind in this transition.



Together, these contributions offer a panoramic view of the challenges and opportunities facing APEC economies today.

The authors invite readers to consider how strategic policy choices, regional cooperation, and technological innovation can collectively build a more resilient, inclusive, and forward-looking economic order. You can get the two essays from CTPECC's website: <https://www.ctpecc.org.tw//storage/IP%E6%8E%92%E7%89%880623%20v1.pdf>.

### Activities:

1. CTPECC held the 18<sup>th</sup> “APEC Voices of the Future” Youth Camp on July 8-11 in Taipei and July 22-25 in Taichung this year. We were delighted to welcome 112 young people, who were selected from universities in Chinese Taipei. We introduced PECC and APEC to young people, sparking their interest in international affairs. We had the privilege of inviting industry, government, and academic experts to share their experiences with the participants, including their insights on entrepreneurship and business management. We designed the diverse programs to ensure that the participants had a rewarding experience.



2. CTPECC hosted an Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on July 28 in Taichung City this year. The Panel session was chaired by Dr. Chyungly Lee, who is CTPECC's Supervisor and Professor of the Institute of International Relations, National Chengchi University. The four panel-ists, including industry, government, and academic representatives, discussed topics on the economic landscape in the Asia-Pacific region, technological development and competition, and supply chain resilience. All attendees at this meeting were industry representatives from Taichung City.

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# PECC International Secretariat

**Dr. Karen Pitakdumrongkit speaks at Digital Trade Interface Session During UNESCAP Paperless Trade Week 2025**



*(Photo credits: UNESCAP, WEF)*

On June 10, 2025, Dr. Kaewkamol (Karen) Pitakdumrongkit, Interim Secretary General of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), participated as a speaker in the hybrid session titled “Digital Trade Interface: When Sound Regulation and Innovative Technologies Produce Economic Payoffs.” The event was co-organized by the World Economic Forum (WEF) as part of UNESCAP’s Paperless Trade Week, held at the United Nations Convention Center in Bangkok, Thailand.

Dr. Karen highlighted the importance of regional cooperation and public-private collaboration in harmonizing digital trade regulations and ensuring cross-border interoperability. She emphasized that fostering these partnerships can create a valuable feedback loop—enabling governments to stay informed about industry best practices and emerging technologies. Such collaboration helps align public policy objectives with real-world market dynamics.

She also underscored the role of platforms like PECC in bridging diverse stakeholders and facilitating meaningful multi-stakeholder dialogue, which is essential for advancing inclusive and sustainable digital trade frameworks.



### Strengthening Academic and Regional Ties

On Monday, 2 June 2025, PECC International Secretariat hosted a distinguished delegation from Universidad Panamericana, Mexico City:

- Dr. Santiago García Álvarez, President
- Dr. Héctor Xavier Ramírez Pérez, Vice-Dean
- Mr. Gerson Garudno, CEO, Singapore-Mexico Chamber of Commerce

The delegation visited the PECC International Secretariat to gain insight into our mission, programs, and regional initiatives—and to explore

meaningful avenues for collaboration between Mexico and the Asia-Pacific.

Highlights from the visit:

- Dr. García Álvarez shared Universidad Panamericana’s impressive history, academic strength, and international outlook.
- Dr. Kaewkamol, Interim Secretary General of PECC, presented our vision and work across the region.

Founded in 1967, Universidad Panamericana is one of Mexico’s leading private research universities, with campuses in Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Aguascalientes. The university is globally ranked and offers a wide range of undergraduate, graduate, and Ph.D. programs—with a strong emphasis on innovation in AI, biotechnology, human rights, and the future of life. Looking forward to fostering deeper academic and policy linkages between Latin America and the Asia-Pacific.

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## The 32nd PECC General Meeting Concludes



Group Photo: Role-players for the 32nd PECC General Meeting.  
Photo credits: KOPEC / KIEP

The 32nd PECC General Meeting, co-hosted by the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) and the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI), was held in Seoul, Korea on August 12, 2025. The meeting, themed “Reimagining Asia-Pacific Cooperation: Trade, AI, and Demographics in a Shifting Global Landscape”, provided valuable insights and fostered discussions on a range of economic, social, and policy challenges.

The conference commenced with Opening Remarks from Dr. Siwook Lee, Co-Chair, KOPEC and President of KIEP. He emphasized PECC’s long history of bringing together government, business, and academic sectors to foster regional economic cooperation. He also noted that PECC is APEC’s sole non-governmental official observer and a crucial regional think tank. Welcome Remarks were provided by Prime Minister Minseok Kim of the Republic of Korea, and Ambassador Chang-beom Kim, Executive Vice Chairman of FKI. They praised PECC for its ability to foster multi-stakeholder dialogues and offer creative solutions to global challenges ranging from trade tensions to new technologies. Ambassador Kim Chang-beom also announced the launch of the KOPEC Youth Ambassador Program aimed at empowering young leaders.

In his Congratulatory Remarks, Dr. Richard Cantor, Co-Chair of PECC, and Vice Chairman of Moody’s Ratings outlined the PECC member committees’ initiatives supporting Korea’s 2025 APEC priorities which are Connect, Innovate, and Prosper. The work includes developing policy toolkits for economic integration including updates to the CPTPP E-Commerce Chapter, participating in the Paris AI Action Summit and a conference in Singapore to advance discussions on AI governance, and focusing on structural reform to address challenges caused by demographic changes. He highlighted that PECC’s value stems from its work and ability to translate ideas into practical policy actions.

A special session by Professor James Robinson examined anti-trade sentiment in the US partly driven by the unequal distribution of benefits from globalization and a backlash against a new liberal elite. The session explored ways to move forward, including designing a new institutional framework that is better aligned with the current US domestic political economy and creating a system that can function without US participation.

The **key takeaways** from the overall sessions:

- 1. Trade & Protectionism:** Transparent policies and support for multilateral frameworks like the WTO’s MPIA and FTAAP are essential to maintain open trade.
- 2. AI & Technology Governance:** There is a strong need for responsible innovation, regulatory clarity, global cooperation, and protection of data privacy and digital rights.
- 3. Demographic Shifts:** Structural reforms in child-care, retirement, and labor policies are urgently needed to ensure long-term sustainability.
- 4. Regional Cooperation:** APEC’s consensus-based approach remains vital, while PECC’s “Track 2” platform plays a key role in generating inclusive, research-driven solutions on emerging issues.

The conference concluded with closing remarks from Ambassador Zhan Yongxin, Co-Chair of PECC. He highlighted Korea’s past contributions to APEC, including the Seoul Declaration and the Busan Roadmap, which have paved the way for the Putrajaya Vision 2040. Amb. Zhan also commended PECC for its role as an incubator of new ideas and its commitment to fostering a more open, dynamic, and resilient Asia-Pacific community, especially during this time of uncertainty.

[Click here for full article](#)  
[Click here for program and presentations.](#)

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## 2025 PECC Yeouido Declaration

The Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) has released the *2025 Yeouido Declaration* at its 32nd General Meeting in Seoul, marking 20 years since the landmark 2005 Seoul Declaration.

While PECC has continued its essential work through consistent engagement with APEC, this occasion provides an opportunity to address the evolving challenges facing the world trading system and our Pacific Community and to reaffirm our commitment to open regionalism and multilateral cooperation.

The Asia-Pacific region stands at a crossroads, shaped by rapid technological advancement, profound demographic changes related to both low birth rates and aging populations in some economies and among the youngest populations in others, shifting global trade dynamics, and new imperatives for regional cooperation. These transformations, combined with the most consequential challenges to the rules-based open and liberal trading system in the 21st century, marked by rising economic uncertainty and a resurgence of protectionism, more than ever before calls urgently for renewed dedication to the principles that have long guided PECC's work.

Artificial intelligence (AI) offers the promise of new economic prosperity, yet uneven digital readiness threatens to deepen disparities and fragment global cooperation. The weakening of the multilateral trading system and the rise of protectionism further endanger economic growth and regional cooperation. Meanwhile, demographic shifts pose challenges to education, skills and labor markets and social systems that demand growth-focused structural reform through innovation, new technology and skills development beyond individual economies. Climate change remains a massive threat, challenging not only environmental stability but also economic resilience and inclusive growth.

The Declaration underscores the urgent need to renew multilateral cooperation and open regionalism to address today's most pressing challenges—rising protectionism, demographic transformations, technological disruption, and climate change.

Key calls to action include:

- Building trust in the rules-based trading system and advancing inclusive, sustainable growth.
- Harnessing AI and digital innovation responsibly to bridge divides and foster shared prosperity.
- Responding to demographic pressures with structural reforms that support aging societies, robust labor markets, and human capital development.
- Delivering on commitments to climate action by accelerating the transition to a low-carbon Asia-Pacific.

PECC reaffirms its role as a tripartite platform for dialogue and innovation, committed to empowering the next generation of regional leaders and providing policy insights through its *State of the Region* report.

Through this Declaration, PECC calls on APEC and the broader Asia-Pacific community to work together for a connected, innovative, sustainable, and resilient future.



\* [Click here to download the 2025 PECC Yeouido Declaration](#)



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## Youth Voices Shape PECC

By Mia Mikic (NZPECC)

*Promoting Youth Engagement in PECC: Building the Next Generation of Regional Leaders*

Engaging young people in regional cooperation is not just about preparing the next generation—it is also about enriching today’s policy discussions with fresh perspectives, creativity, and energy. As the Asia-Pacific confronts profound structural changes—digital transformation, climate challenges, demographic shifts, and evolving trade patterns—there is increasing recognition that youth must be part of the dialogue. Within the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), youth engagement is gaining momentum as a way to sustain regional cooperation into the future.

A recent example comes from the **32nd PECC General Meeting** and the accompanying conference on “Reimagining Asia-Pacific Cooperation: Trade, AI, and Demographics in a Shifting Global Landscape”, hosted by the Korea National Committee for PECC (KOPEC) in August 2025. There, I had the opportunity to interact directly with the **Korea PECC Youth Ambassadors**, whose work this year was especially impressive.

A total of **20 university students** with a strong interest in international cooperation issues took part in the program. Divided into four teams, they focused on two themes—**Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **Demographic Change**—and engaged in preparatory learning before attending the meetings. As part of their activities, they observed the General Meeting and Standing Committee sessions firsthand, conducted interviews with key speakers, and created digital content such as card news and on-site sketches to promote the program’s objectives.

The highlight came when two teams were selected to present at the Standing Committee meeting on **13 August 2025**. The AGenda team addressed “Intergenerational Cooperation for Responding to Demographic Change,” while the VOYCE team presented on “**Job Creation Strategies in the AI Era.**” Their presentations generated significant interest and positive responses from Standing Committee members, who praised the students’ keen awareness of pressing issues and their creative approaches. Several members underlined the importance of expanding youth participation in international cooperation and encouraged KOPEC to continue such initiatives under the PECC framework.



*“Twenty Youth Ambassadors presented their views on AI and demographic change directly to the PECC Standing Committee—an unprecedented step in bringing youth voices into regional cooperation.”*

Another example of successful engagement is the **Hong Kong Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation (HKCPEC) Youth Program**, which has long provided opportunities for young people to participate in seminars, internships, and research activities linked to Asia-Pacific cooperation. At the Standing Committee meeting, several PECC members expressed interest in collaborating with Hong Kong’s initiatives—whether through an inter-PECC youth program or other forms of cooperation—to broaden the reach and impact of such efforts.

These experiences show how national committees can play an important role in cultivating youth participation, and how collaboration across the network could multiply the benefits. Structured programs not only give young people a chance to contribute ideas but also ensure continuity of knowledge and commitment within PECC across generations.

Looking forward, there is scope to systematically integrate youth voices into PECC’s and APEC’s work. Today’s young people are already experimenting with new technologies, business models, and social approaches that can help address the pressing challenges of the region—whether digital trade, sustainable growth, resilient supply chains, or demographic transitions. Providing them with opportunities to engage with policymakers and experts will help bridge the gap between innovation on the ground and regional policy development.

As we look toward PECC’s future, investing in youth engagement is not optional; it is a necessity. The initiatives in Korea and Hong Kong offer strong examples that others in the PECC family could emulate. By working together, we can build a network of young leaders who are not only aware of the issues at stake but also equipped to carry forward the vision of regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific.



Youth Ambassador with Dr Craig Emerson



Presentation from the AGenda team



Presentation from the VOYCE team

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# PECC Attends APEC Finance and Structural Reform Ministerial Meetings, Hosts Workshop to Improve Retirement Savings in the Asia-Pacific

PECC Co-Chair Dr. Richard Cantor attended the APEC Finance Ministers' Meeting and Structural Reform Ministers' Meeting in Incheon from October 21–23, where he presented to ministers on the outcomes of PECC's work this year.



He focused his remarks on the adoption and key pillars of the Yeouido Declaration; outcomes of the signature project on demographics; topical updates on AI and innovation; progress in advancing the FTAAP; and provided an early look at the 2025–2026 *PECC State of the Region Report*.

On the margins of these meetings, US-PECC, the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP), and AIF Global held a symposium on *Improving Retirement Savings in the Asia-Pacific*. The event brought together policymakers, researchers, and financial leaders to share practical ideas for building sustainable and equitable retirement systems.

Dr. Sungbae An (KIEP), S. Ali Abbas (IMF), Chong Hyun Won (National Pension Service), Hidekazu Ishida (FinCity Tokyo), Flore-Anne Messy (OECD), and Sunghwan Shin (Bank of Korea) offered insights into how APEC economies can design stronger, more future-ready pension frameworks. Richard Cantor (PECC and Moody's Ratings) and Sam Chung (AIF Global) guided thoughtful discussions on policy innovation and collaboration.



In the closing roundtable, Michaela Browning (Brunswick Group and ABAC Australia), Songye Yoon (Principal Venture Partners), and Matthew Michelini (Apollo Capital Management) highlighted how private capital and financial innovation can help create more resilient retirement systems for the region's future.

The shared message was clear: Asia-Pacific economies must act now to reform their retirement systems. Strengthening savings frameworks, improving fiscal sustainability, and expanding access today will determine how well APEC economies support their aging populations tomorrow.

The presentations from the event will be available to view here: <https://app.glueup.com/event/improving-retirement-savings-in-the-asia-pacific-156346/>

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(Photo credits: APEC)

## APEC-Related > APEC Ocean-Related Ministerial Meeting

# Amb. Zhan Addresses the APEC Ocean-Related Ministerial Meeting



From April 30th to May 1st, PECC Co-Chair, Amb. Zhan Yongxin attended the 5th APEC Ocean-Related Ministerial Meeting in Busan, South Korea. The ministerial meeting, under the theme of “Navigating our Blue Future-Connection, Innovation, and Prosperity,” was chaired by Kang Do-Hyung, Korea’s Minister of Oceans and Fisheries. APEC economies held in-depth discussions on three topics: ocean resilience, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, and ocean economic development. Amb. Zhan delivered a speech on behalf of PECC under the topic of ocean economic development.

In his speech, Amb. Zhan emphasized that the ocean is the common home of humanity and plays a crucial role in the sustainable development of mankind. Currently, the ocean is facing severe ecological challenges. APEC maritime cooperation should abide by international maritime law, balance the development of marine resources and environmental protection, and build a multi-stakeholder collaborative marine governance system to jointly advance regional maritime cooperation and achieve inter-generational equity in blue economy development. As a regional international organization and an official observer of APEC, PECC pays great attention to regional maritime cooperation and is willing to strengthen cooperation with APEC economies to jointly build a better marine future.

## APEC-Related > APEC High-Level Meeting on Health and the Economy

# PECC Participation at the APEC High-Level Meeting on Health and the Economy

Senior health leaders from across APEC met September 15-16 in Seoul for the 15th APEC High-Level Meeting on Health and the Economy (HLMHE) chaired by Korea’s Minister of Health and Welfare, H.E. Dr. Jeong Eun Kyeong. This gathering underscored the importance of the APEC health agenda by bringing together governments, local and regional experts, and the private sector.

Discussions during the HLMHE focused on AI in healthcare, creating an aging-responsive region, and fostering youth mental health and empowerment. Representing the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, the National Center for APEC’s [Nicole Vukonich](#) offered an intervention during the meeting highlighting the recent adoption of PECC’s Yeouido Declaration and shared four priorities from the 2025 Signature Project, *Addressing Labor Shortages Due to Low Birth Rates and Aging Populations in the APEC Region* which include:

1. Strengthening fertility and family formation policies
2. Boosting productivity through technology and human capital
3. Expanding social protection, financial sustainability, and universal health coverage
4. Promoting regional cooperation, mobility, and inclusive growth

As part of the official program, private sector leaders joined the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) lunch with Ministers and Heads of Delegation hosted by ABAC Korea. Conversations highlighted health data governance, data use cases, and AI-driven healthcare innovations.

PECC’s contributions to the health agenda are noted by Ministers in the HLMHE Joint Statement which reaffirms the health priorities mentioned above and encourages economies to chart a path toward a proactive, responsive, healthier, and more inclusive Asia-Pacific.

Read the full HLMHE Joint Statement here: <https://www.apec.org/meeting-papers/sectoral-ministerial-meetings/health/2025-apec-high-level-meeting-on-health-and-the-economy>

## About us



PECC established in 1980, is a unique tripartite partnership of senior individuals from business, government, academia, and intellectual circles to discuss practical policy issues facing the Asia-Pacific region.

It operates as an independent, non-governmental forum, aiming to promote economic growth, social progress, and regional stability through cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, and finance.

Any other business: PECC Internship Program

## Internship Program

The PECC Internship program aims to provide the intern working experience in a regional organization with a multicultural environment and to interact with/and learn from experienced professionals.

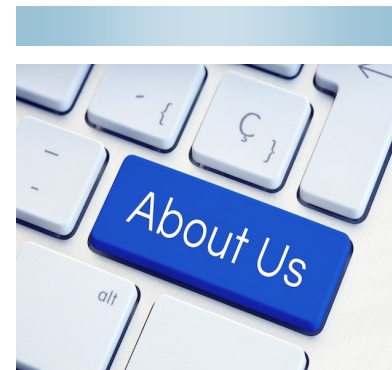
Interns will be required to perform administrative duties, research, and assist with organizing PECC events, among other activities as directed. Successful applicants can expect to gain direct exposure to the work and management of a leading regional organization.



### Criteria

- The candidate should be enrolled in an undergraduate or post graduate degree program in a PECC member economy.
- The candidate should have a demonstrated interest in the work of international organizations, international affairs, international economics and other areas addressed by PECC.
- The candidate should be able to work for at least 4 weeks continuously at the PECC International Secretariat.
- The candidate must be proficient in English and possess adequate computer skills.
- The candidate must be proposed or at least recommended by local member committees.
- All expenses connected to the candidate's travel to and stay in Singapore will be borne by the candidate and/or his/her sponsoring member committee/institution.
- The candidate's lodging/accommodation must be arranged by the candidate and/or his/her sponsoring institution.
- The candidate must hold health/accident insurance policies coverage including hospitalization and repatriation to home economy in case of emergency.

If you meet the criteria and you want to apply for internship, please get in contact with the PECC Committee in your home economy. [Click here](#) to see contact details.



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