

SusHi Tech Tokyo 2024 climaxes with a pledge

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- SusHi Tech Tokyo 2024 climaxes with a pledge:

Cities and startups worldwide linking up further to create a sustainable future

The leaders of cities from five continents have reaffirmed their links with global startup companies at SusHi Tech Tokyo 2024, a large-scale month-long innovation event, to explore ways to solve common urban challenges and create a sustainable world.

https://www.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/english/topics/2024/documents/en_0424_01_03.pdf

Mayors, governors or other executives representing 45 cities ended the event's three-day City Leaders Program on May 17 with a communique. It committed them to utilize the "technologies of startups to find solutions to urban challenges" on top of "intercity technological exchanges aimed at sharing wisdom and expertise."

Unprecedented weather disasters blamed on climate change, international tensions due to war, needs for green and digital transformation and post-Covid shifts in municipal functions and people's values are identified by the joint statement as part of global issues.



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“We are determined to firmly implement efforts based on the discussions that have taken place here,” Tokyo Governor KOIKE Yuriko told media, having hosted the city leaders at Hotel New Otani Tokyo in central Tokyo and summing up a series of their sessions. “From this stage, we have already seen collaborations between cities and startups take off.”

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government has been organizing SusHi Tech Tokyo, which stands for Sustainable High City Tech Tokyo, in three parts to explore a sustainable future for the capital of 14 million residents.

<https://www.sushi-tech-tokyo2024.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/>

The City Leaders Program was held along with Global Startup Program in the third week of SusHi Tech Tokyo 2024, which started on April 27. An array of cutting-edge technologies of the “Tokyo of 2050,” such as a flying car successfully flown for the first time in Tokyo, a space elevator, a driverless ride-hail service, a future convenience store and plant-based alternative foods are on the Showcase Program being held over a month in the ever-changing Tokyo Bay area.

“This is huge,” Dagur Eggertsson, deputy mayor of Reykjavik, Iceland, said on the first day of the city leaders’ and startup timetable. “All these people are eager talking together making new connections. And that is what the event like this is all about.”

On May 15, he joined scores of other city leaders to tour the Tokyo Big Sight convention hall, where more than 430 startups set up booths. In this program, billed as Asia’s largest innovation conference, a total of 30 countries, regions or cities also had individual exhibits, bringing together a wide range of players including startups, investors, big businesses and municipalities.

<https://sushitech-startup.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/en/>

Aibek Dzhunushaliev, Mayor of Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, said his central Asian republic



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has startups “but not so many like in Japan.” He said a Japanese startup was involved in Bishkek’s first “Smart City” project to improve road safety. “It’s an excellent experience to see the startups here and to know all information they may offer.”

Tran Nghia Hoa, Hanoi’s deputy director of foreign affairs, said he was impressed with the technologies on display, which were “all important, from biochemistry to informatics solutions.” Vietnam’s national and local governments are benefitting from Japanese technical assistance in upgrading their railway systems, he noted.

At the startup venue, Nairobi and Helsinki each staged a so-called “reverse pitch” to invite foreign companies to their startup ecosystems.

The city and county of Nairobi, Kenya, called on Japanese startups to participate in efforts to contain damage caused by a spate of unusual heavy rains and floods. It offered such incentives as free office space and utilities to Japanese startups during their proof-of-concept (PoC) period.

Helsinki boasted that its startup ecosystem, embracing more than 4,000 companies and over 31,000 employees, is open to “global expansion due to a small home market.” The Finnish capital assured Japanese partners of various benefits including “personal assistance for setting up an EU company.”

As a highlight of the startup program, FERMENSTATION Co., Ltd. of Tokyo won the grand prize of the pitch contest “SusHi Tech Challenge 2024,” for which 507 companies from 43 countries and regions applied. It picked the first prize money of 10 million yen (some 65,000 U.S. dollars).

Using its own fermentation technology, the company upcycles food waste into bio-ethanol and fermented materials, and turns them into cosmetics, sanitary goods and household products.

Apart from their solid discussions on the themes of “environment,” “inclusive and just societies,” and “safe and secure cities,” the city leaders also took a time-out for a taste of a world-famous immersive, kaleidoscopic show of lights and colors titled teamLab Borderless: MORI Building DIGITAL ART MUSEUM. For over an hour at a digital art museum, they were made to “wander, explore and discover,” or walk through a few dozen spaces and corridors vibrant with a riot of imagery and sound.

The communique also commits city leaders to:

- 1) Promote wellbeing, women’s empowerment, a healthy and long-life society, barrier-free access, and culture and sports,
- 2) Seek to realize cities where everyone can live safely and with peace of mind through efforts that include building resilient cities, strengthening people and community ties, and ensuring the security of drinking water and other resources,

3) Promote zero-emissions and the transition to a circular economy, protect and conserve the natural environment, and build cities in harmony with nature.

In conclusion, the document says: “We hope solving issues shared by the participating cities will also contribute to resolving global challenges for the realization of a just and sustainable society.”

Governor Koike said the next city leaders’ summit will be held two years from now with a Senior Officials Meeting set for May 2025.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government launched the Global City Network for Sustainability (G-NETS) in 2022 as a forum for cities to discuss how to solve common challenges. It hosted the first G-NETS Leaders Summit in early 2023 along with a startup and tech event, City-Tech Tokyo, a predecessor of SusHi Tech Tokyo. The leaders of 34 cities took part, 26 of them in person.

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