

# Tokyo, Bangkok Aligned to Fight Disasters and Other Common Challenges

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- In a display of global city strategy, the governors of Tokyo and Bangkok have lined up to tackle climate-linked natural disasters, an aging and shrinking population, and other challenges facing their bustling Asian megalopolises.

Tokyo Governor Koike Yuriko and her Bangkok counterpart Chadchart Sittipunt signed a joint communiqué when they met for about an hour at the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration building on February 6, the second day of Ms. Koike's three-day stay in Bangkok at the invitation of Mr. Chadchart.

The statement commits the two governors to work together to build sustainable cities through addressing urban challenges such as "declining birthrates, aging populations and the creation of innovation." □

In the document, Ms. Koike emphasizes the importance of city-to-city cooperation in responding to "increasingly frequent and severe" natural disasters occurring worldwide amid climate change.

"A more livable city for everyone"

"With this joint communiqué as a new first step, we want to move forward as partners in



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Joint COMMUNIQUÉ signed

identifying common challenges and finding solutions,” the Tokyo governor said at a joint news conference following the signing ceremony. “We aim to make its effects felt by the respective citizens of Bangkok and Tokyo.”

Mr. Chadchart said he hoped the knowledge gained from this cooperation will benefit his citizens and help make Bangkok “a more livable city for everyone.” “We want to study some of Tokyo’s (flood-response) models,” he said referring to massive floods that have regularly hit Bangkok and elsewhere in Thailand. The governor also expressed interest in learning from Tokyo’s sewerage and waterworks measures.

His comment resonates with the slogan used by the former structural engineer to make Bangkok, a hub for the Southeast Asian region, “a livable city for everyone” when he won the 2022 gubernatorial election.

He aims to put Bangkok among the top 50 livable cities in the world by 2027, focusing on sustainable development that meets the needs of its 5.4 million residents.

Ms. Koike, a former member of national parliament who was elected in 2016 as Tokyo’s first female governor, also has a grand design for the Japanese capital city of 14 million that is the core of the world’s largest metropolitan area.

As part of Tokyo’s strategy for 2050, her administration has recently set policy targets for 2035, including an effort to make Tokyo the “best city in the world” that strikes a balance between ongoing “growth” and “maturity,” and makes people feel happy.

“Green infrastructure”, an underground network to tame floods



Meeting Bangkok Governor



Learning Disaster Prevention @Phrakanong Pumping Station

Before and after their formal talks, Mr. Chadchart guided Ms. Koike through a lush forest park in the city center and the huge Phra Khanong pumping station that controls water levels in Bangkok's canals and discharges water into the Chao Phraya River.

Both facilities help mitigate fatal floods. The "green infrastructure" built in the Benjakitti Forest Park is designed to absorb rainwater in the event of a downpour. The park's greenery also helps purify air and water while the city is gripped with chronic air pollution.



Tokyo is operating nearly 30

"underground regulating reservoirs" to contain floodwater. Ms. Koike, once a minister of the environment, told Thai media that her government is considering a massive new project to build an underground channel to divert excessive rainwater into the Bay of Tokyo by connecting additional regulating reservoirs under construction.

"We want to continue sharing the knowledge with Bangkok about anti-flooding measures and climate change that are our common challenges," she said.

Bangkok tips Tokyo on how to invigorate nightlife

In the evening, Ms. Koike and Mr. Chadchart viewed illuminated historic buildings along the Chao Phraya River, major attractions in Bangkok's nighttime tourism.

"You can revitalize the economy by making effective use of nighttime. Tokyo has needed to do something about its nightlife that ends too early after the COVID pandemic," she told reporters after the tour, which she described as "very helpful."

In the joint communiqué, Ms. Koike offers to share the knowledge necessary for further advancing sustainable tourism. She also proposed boosting cooperation in promoting the tourism industry in the two capital areas. Mr. Chadchart agrees to the idea.□

"How Tokyo should restore lively nighttime. Bangkok has given us a great hint," Ms. Koike told Thai media.□The number of foreign tourists visiting Tokyo is estimated to have reached a record 25 million in 2024.□

As an example of Tokyo's own initiative to boost nighttime tourism, the governor cited the nightly projection mapping show, "Tokyo Night & Light," organized by her administration and related

entities. It has already drawn half a million visitors since its launch in late February last year, she said.□

In the show, several short audio-visual artworks are projected onto the façade of the landmark 48-floor Tokyo Metropolitan Government No. 1 Building. Guinness World Records has recognized it as the largest permanent architectural projection-mapped display. The works feature popular characters and objects such as the premier movie monster Godzilla, traditional Ukiyo-e paintings and the world-famous J-pop duo YOASOBI.

Developing youth to play an active role on the world stage

Ms. Koike spent her last day in Bangkok visiting a top international school and meeting locally based representatives of small and medium enterprises from Tokyo.

In the morning at NIST International School, which provides full International Baccalaureate programs and offers foreign language lessons in 12 different languages, the Tokyo governor had a first-hand look at how global talents are nurtured.

“In the sense that we are required to develop human resources capable of competing with their peers in the world’s other megacities,” she said, “I have learned much here today.”

She later met the Bangkok representatives of startups and small- and medium-sized enterprises in Tokyo. Her official program in Bangkok ended when she visited the local offices of the Tokyo SME Support Center and the Tokyo Metropolitan Industrial Technology Research Institute.

It was Ms. Koike’s second official overseas engagement since her re-election to a third term last July. In November she toured Cairo, Abu Dhabi and Baku to cement Tokyo’s ties with the Arab world and present Tokyo’s initiatives at the U.N. COP29 climate conference in the capital of Azerbaijan.

In a wrap-up interview with Thai media, the Tokyo governor promised to continue working hard together with Bangkok to “solve common challenges and improve benefits for residents.” The Chao Phraya River may be a major tourist attraction but, at the same time, “it supports the livelihood of people and brings a great danger once it overflows,”she said. “This is also the case with Tokyo.”

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