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# sustainable japan

## Athlete, entrepreneur Carole Fuchs raises awareness

### Roundtable

KERRY FURUKAWA  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Carole Fuchs is always ready to climb a mountain. If she has had a bad day, she conquers a peak and forgets her worries. She has climbed Mount Everest, and now has an ambitious plan to trek the Great Himalaya Trail at the highest possible point over Nepal.

Fuchs is a self-described nature lover who was absorbed by adventure TV programs as a child and went on an expedition to the Sahara Desert when she was 16 years old. Her reason for being enamored with the outdoors is simple: It's natural.

"This is the place I'm the happiest on Earth, in nature," she said. "If I'm not in nature, I'm just literally dying. So yeah, I cannot stay in town too long. I think nature gives me energy."

"Maybe it's scientifically proven that when you are in the forest, trees and nature release some hormones [so] that we can just be like in harmony with them, and I really believe this is true, so this is my element."

Fuchs sat down with Ross Rowbury at The Japan Times Sustainable Roundtable 29 on March 16, discussing how her love of nature has led to lobbying, climate change activism and advocacy for more sustainability in sports.

During the course of the conversation, while explaining her journey to Japan, Fuchs mentioned quite casually that she

had climbed Mount Everest. The Japanese company that sponsored her climb later invited her to work for it in Tokyo. Prod- ded by Rowbury, she said Everest was an interesting, though not intimidating, experience.

"Actually, I'm training a lot, so I'm always more or less ready to go, so this was not so daunting. But I tried to be the first French woman to climb it without supplement- ary oxygen. And this was really stressful. This was a goal within the goal. So it was really hard." She did end up using bottled oxygen but also suffered eye edema on the way down due to having gone so long without it.

Five years after Everest, Fuchs has more alpine aims, and plans to merge climbs with raising awareness about climate change.

"I climbed mostly in the Himalayas and the highest mountain, so a few 8,000-meter peaks, 7,000-meter peaks. So I spent a lot of time there. And through my own eyes, and through the eyes of the local people I was talking to, I noticed the gla- cier dying, literally, so this is really obvious. The glacier layers are receding and the avalanches are more frequent," she said.

"It's also [evident in] the climbing sea- sons. For example, Mount Everest: The climbing season now is a bit confusing, so you can climb longer. Fifty years ago, the weather window was really like May, just one month. Now you can push a little bit further. So you have the winter expedi- tions — more and more people can suc- ceed in climbing the mountain in winter.



Fuchs is a legal counsel and a policy manager on climate change and biodiversity at the British Embassy, combining climate action and climate diplomacy. YUICO TAIYA



Professional mountain athlete and nature lover Carole Fuchs YUICO TAIYA FOR PHOTOMATE

That was harder back in the day, so the seasons are changing."

To alert others to these changes in what she calls a 'positive way,' Fuchs wants to travel with a cameraman across the Great Himalaya Trail. Along the way, she intends to document the effects that climate change is having not only on the physical environment, but also on the livelihoods of people in some of the communities most vulnerable to its impacts.

"It has to be double-sided. It's not just a Western girl going there showing things. It's also us interviewing the locals about what they are thinking, what's the voice, what they want to raise about their

situation."

Fuchs' goal within the goal this time will be to become the fastest or one of the fast- est women ever to make it across the trail.

Other aspects of her climate activism include her Green Athletes initiative, in partnership with the Kyoko-based non- profit Kiko Network. One objective of the project is to document athletes' observa- tions about climate change. The idea is that as athletes often witness firsthand the effects of climate change, their voices can help raise awareness of the problem.

Additionally, to address the volume of waste generated by clothing, Green Ath- letes is focused on creating sustainable

sportswear. One of Fuchs' products, which she wore during the interview, is a T-shirt made of recycled plastic bottles and bam- boo fiber.

"My idea is very simple, actually: just creating sports clothes made of recycled and natural elements," she said. "For exam- ple, making a T-shirt like this one. The textile is made of 50% recycled PET bottles and 50% of bamboo fiber. Why? Because, you know, we as athletes like to have tech- nical gear, so the bamboo is actually very good — it's breathable but anti-odor, it doesn't stink, so it's great for sports."

"The full picture is like: this T-shirt, you get it, you buy it, then when it's damaged or when you don't need it anymore, you send it back. We recycle it and we give you another T-shirt. The T-shirt never ends up in the *gomi* (garbage). Basically, it's recy- cled and it just keeps circulating."

Even in her day job, as policy director at the British Embassy in Tokyo, Fuchs is engaged in work to protect nature — her best friend. Her post involves lobbying the Japanese government to align some of its climate policies with the U.K. gov- ernment's. Fuchs believes government policies must provide a framework for individual action against climate change to be effective.

"Because if we do clean up, we can clean up all our lives. But if the government is not changing things like the packaging ending up in the rivers, it's like Sisyphus climbing the mountain with the stone, always fall- ing and just climbing back up. So if we don't have the policy, then this is less impactful."

However, she acknowledged that it is not always easy to get countries within and outside the Group of Seven, of which Japan and the U.K. are members, to agree on envi- ronmental policies. One factor is countries' different economic situations, which influ- ences their approaches.

"I think it is very important to constantly lobby each other, and this is helping us to raise our ambitions as a group (the G7)," she



Fuchs founded the Feel fabric and sportswear startup and the Green Athletes initiative. YUICO TAIYA

said. "We are, like, constantly kindly saying to each other, 'OK, what are you doing in this field?' 'OK, we are doing this, so why not work together to just improve the situation?'"

Public education about environmental issues can help people determine what actions to take. And Fuchs believes the big- gest thing she or anyone can do for climate change is to think. For instance, she used to commute to Tokyo from Nagano by bicycle, stopping at shops along the very long journey for food. However, it occurred to her that perhaps there was a more sus- tainable way to travel daily. Not to mention that it was very demanding.

"Maybe if I have a vehicle powered by green energy, I will be more sustainable," she said. "The carbon footprint will be less than just riding my bike and eating plenty of carbs, and we are talking about sustain- able agriculture — how the food is pro- duced, the carbon footprint of food versus energy. So it's complicated. We have to make it like a game. For me, it's like a video game: OK, how can I save my carbon footprint today?"

Roundtable is a monthly series of English- language events organized by The Japan Times Cube. For more information visit [https://sustainable.japan- times.com/roundtable](https://sustainable.japan-times.com/roundtable)



## Hiroshima forum sees rising need for business role in global peace

### ESG/SGDs

MAIKO MURAOKA  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

How can business play a role in peacemak- ing? This is the question that the Hiroshima Business Forum for Global Peace has been asking since its launch in 2013, and the need for this kind of discussion is increasing amid the current heightened insecurity in international relations.

To pursue the potential of business to have a greater impact on the creation of peace, the fourth Tokyo session of the 2022 Hiroshima Business Forum for Global Peace was held in Kudan House in Tokyo's Chiyoda Ward on Feb. 4. The event was livestreamed for a remote audience as well. The Japan Times serves as one of the media sponsors of the event.

A special partner of the event, the Hiro- shima Organization for Global Peace (HOPE), is a network consisting of the Hiroshima prefectural government and 20 other organizations. It serves as a platform for research, human resource training, com- munication of information, community- building and resource accumulation related to global peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons.

The president of the organization and Hiroshima prefectural Gov. Hidehiko Yuzaki gave opening remarks in a video message; other speakers came from the public and private sectors as well as aca- demia. About 276 participants joined the event in person or online.



Some of the participants that joined the forum in person HIROSHIMA FOR GLOBAL PEACE + TOKYO COMMUNITY

Yuzaki touched on the history of the event and said: "The event held in 2016 received support from professor Philip Kot- ler, a world authority on modern market- ing, who made three recommendations based on the event that focused on the role of business and marketing in achieving global peace. The recommendations were to reduce armaments, to cut the chain of hatred and to enhance love."

He said the events in 2018 and 2019 had invited Jacque Attali, a French economist and the founder of the nonprofit Positive Planet, who recommended that the best way to solve global issues is for people and nations to think about what would benefit future generations. "The year 2020 was the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, and our discussion centered around how to clarify the roles of businesspeople in achieving 'positive peace' and take actions," Yuzaki said.

He also explained that the Hiroshima Appeal adopted at the end of the event in 2021 was a starting point for "building back better" from the COVID-19 pandemic based on the idea of "true utilitarianism" — "for one to seek personal gain, one needs to simultaneously seek to benefit others." The main session of the 2022 events was held in Hiroshima in September, focusing on how business can prepare for risks and envi- ronmental changes while contributing to peacemaking.

Yuzaki stressed that the Group of Seven summit to be held in Hiroshima in May will serve as a great opportunity for Hiroshima to gain attention from the entire world and expressed his hope that it will help increase the number of partners cooperating in building peace through business.

The Tokyo session consisted of inter- views, panel discussions, a pitching session and a networking session covering topics such as inequality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion, responsible supply chains, open innovation, involvement of young leaders, and solving social issues simultane- ously with growing businesses.

Among the speakers were scholars such as professor Tsutomu Horiuchi at the Tama University Center for Social Investment, business leaders such as Ken Shibusawa, the CEO of Shibusawa and Company Inc. and the chairperson of Commons Asset Management Inc., and young leaders



Video message by Hiroshima prefectural Gov. Hidehiko Yuzaki HIROSHIMA FOR GLOBAL PEACE + TOKYO COMMUNITY

including members of G7/G20 Youth Japan, a nonprofit dedicated to providing future leaders of the country with opportunities to take part in high-level youth diplomacy.

In the closing remarks, Yoshimitsu Kaji, chairman and chief sustainability devel- opment officer at the software company Cinnamon AI, expressed his delight in find- ing many speakers and participants from young generations. "No war is not enough to be called peace. A world free of struc- tural violence is a world that is less likely to experience conflicts. On this front, there are many things that businesses can do," Kaji said, encouraging youths to feel the connection with peace through working.

He concluded his remarks by saying that this year's G7 summit in Hiroshima has sig- nificant meaning because three of the G7 nations are nuclear powers.

The 2023 Hiroshima Business Forum for Global Peace, supported by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, will be held on April 20, ahead of the G7 summit. With Serhii Plokhyy, a professor and the director of the Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard University, as the key- note speaker, the event will focus on how international society and business can con- tribute to peace in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Aiming to highlight issues related to a sustainable soci- ety, The Japan Times gave its support to this event by becoming a media sponsor.



## IISE institute kindles 'guide stars' for solving global social issues

### ESG/SDGs

HIROKO NAKATA  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

To address increasingly complex issues amid global uncertainty, new ideas and innovative solutions are ever more important.

The NEC group's Institute for Inter- national Socio-Economic Studies (IISE), which explores new ways of thinking and acting to solve social issues, on Feb. 10 held a forum on potential issues facing the world and what the institute aims to do about them.

"We will take a role of thought leader- ship," IISE Chairperson Kumi Fujisawa said in a speech at the start of the forum. She said the institute will explore what issues the world must tackle, at the level of people as well as from a macroeco- nomic perspective. "We will help society implement a new framework, a new sys- tem and new business with those who agree with the future grand design we propose."

Fujisawa told the audience the think tank's mission is "illuminating the future with the world's wisdom." Like the stars that guided mariners in ancient times, "we would like to show you the way and create the future with you by connect- ing global issues, people's wisdom and advancing technologies."

The forum also featured a topic that broadly affects global issues: economic security. Christopher Johnstone, senior adviser and Japan chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), addressed that in a keynote speech titled "The Essential Partnership: U.S.-Japan Relations and the Future of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific."

Amid rising geopolitical tensions in the last two years due to Russia's inva- sion of Ukraine, North Korea's launch of ballistic and cruise missiles, and China's large-scale military exercises around Tai- wan, Johnstone said the importance of the U.S. partnership with Japan and other allies has become stronger. He said con- flict with China over Taiwan is possible but is avoidable if military and economic deterrence works, making the costs to China over such a conflict enormous. On

the economic side, the U.S. is taking steps, particularly in the semicon- ductor industry, to strengthen its capacity at home, make supply chain resilience a piv- otal element of national and eco- nomic security, and protect critical technologies from moving into China.

"For the govern- ments of Japan and the U.S. and other allies and partners, the key message is none of us can achieve economic security alone," Johnston said. "We must find a way to balance deter- rence and economic interdependence with China. ... This is, I believe, a fun- damental challenge that we must advance together in years to come. But fortunately, our alliances have never been stronger, and we're well positioned to tackle over challenges ahead."

The keynote speech was followed by a session with economists discussing the outlook for the global economy, in which U.S. inflation was peaking out, conditions in Europe were better than expected partly because of a warm winter, and the Japanese economy was expected to stay firm on the back of strong capital spending.

The forum also had breakout sessions on topics such as carbon neutrality, global health, digital transformation, digital health, data-driven city management and smart cities led by sports.

Established in 2000, the IISE was revamped in April 2022 and now features seven themes for its thought leadership activities. As a result, the institute on Feb. 6 announced a proposal, in collaboration with Keio University, to create a market to trade as "future carbon reduction cred- its" the carbon dioxide emissions that pre- venting and adapting to natural disasters would avoid.

Also, the institute proposed in January a new smart city concept called "purpose- driven city management," calling on



Kumi Fujisawa, chairperson of the NEC group's Institute for International Socio-Economic Studies IISE

municipal governments and all the stake- holders for city management to introduce ways of managing business with clear purposes and using competent analytic data in order to achieve well-being for all their citizens. The IISE has additionally published white papers on digital trans- formation for governments and support for developing countries.

As for the IISE's future projects, Fuji- sawa said the institute plans to make alli- ances with think tanks in the U.S., Britain, ASEAN and elsewhere to conduct joint studies on economic security.

"What we want to value is a global standpoint, so we want to collaborate with people around the world, share their wisdom and technologies, and create a new global market," she said.

For example, NEC has advanced tech- nologies such as digital transformation for government administration and bio- metrics for personal identification. "NEC has great technologies that can be used to address global issues. We want to further coordination to use such technologies to create new business and solve societal problems at the same time," Fujisawa said.

This section, "Sustainable Japan," features issues related to the environment and a sustainable society while highlighting the satoyama activities of com- panies and other organiza- tions. For more information, see <https://sustainable.japan- times.com>

