

OP-ED: The Golden Gate Declaration One Year Later: Engaging APEC to Promote American Prosperity

One year after San Francisco welcomed the leaders of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) member economies, leaders gathered in Lima, Peru, to advance APEC's agenda on trade and investment, innovation and digitalization, and sustainable and inclusive growth. For over 30 years, U.S. prosperity has been inextricably linked to the dynamic Asia-Pacific region, and U.S. leadership in APEC ensures the 21 economies — which account for half of global trade and 60 percent of global GDP — address the world's most significant economic challenges. In the United States' three-plus decades of engagement with APEC, we've collaborated to respond to shared challenges, such as the Asian financial crisis, 9/11 terrorist attacks, the global financial crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war against Ukraine. In doing so, we leveraged the APEC platform to advance practical, consensus-based approaches to promote American prosperity.

In 2023, the United States hosted APEC – demonstrating its leadership in promoting inclusive, sustainable growth through a full year of meetings and events with governments and private sector stakeholders. During APEC Economic Leaders' Week in San Francisco, President Biden announced the [APEC Leaders' Golden Gate Declaration](#), in which leaders expressed support for “creating a resilient and sustainable future for all.” Having hosted the San Francisco Conference for the signing of the United Nations Charter in June 1945, San Francisco – a gateway to the Asia-Pacific in a state with deep social and economic ties to APEC economies – served as the perfect backdrop to advance a more interconnected, innovative, and inclusive Asia-Pacific region. The Declaration called on all APEC members to “harness technological and economic progress to continue to unleash the enormous potential and tremendous dynamism across our region, spur economic growth, as well as to address all environmental challenges, including climate change.” President Biden also emphasized at the APEC CEO Summit in San Francisco that fulfilling this vision “supports good jobs and new opportunities all across the region,” not just in the United States.

As U.S. Senior Official for APEC, I was privileged to be able to connect with American workers, business-owners, academics, and others across the United States throughout our host year and learn first-hand how engagement with APEC can promote this vision of inclusive and sustainable prosperity. Through first-ever minister-level dialogues with labor leaders in Detroit and with Indigenous leaders in San Francisco, we sought to better understand the impact of trade on workers and Indigenous communities. Whether meeting with a small homegrown agri-business venture in Seattle, an artificial intelligence policy research organization in Pittsburgh, a Native Hawaiian tourism operator in Honolulu, foreign invested firms in the Atlanta metro area, a health sciences executive in suburban Maryland, or so many others, our team heard diverse views on how to foster a stronger linkage between international economic policy and domestic economic opportunity. It was clear throughout the U.S. APEC host year that stakeholder engagement, including public-private collaboration, is the “secret sauce” that makes APEC special — and relevant — to promote prosperity in an era of heightened strategic competition.

The United States revitalized APEC’s engagement with a broader range of stakeholders, including workers, Indigenous peoples, and the private sector, as we collaborated to promote sustainability and inclusivity in trade and investment policy. Stakeholder input was invaluable as APEC economies reached agreements on key priorities such as clean energy, food security and sustainable agri-food systems, disaster management, worker education and training, combatting corruption, economic opportunities for underserved communities, including women and those with disabilities, and cloud computing. We forged consensus in these areas in San Francisco despite ongoing geopolitical tensions, and we had productive discussions with our counterparts along the way.

The most encouraging part for me, though, is that the work continues. In 2023, U.S. APEC host year meetings in Honolulu, Palm Springs, Detroit, Seattle, and San Francisco demonstrated U.S. leadership by building broad-based support for APEC’s priorities. This year’s host, Peru, has followed the

U.S. example by emphasizing sustainable and inclusive economic growth and continuing APEC's focus on engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including the private sector. In 2025, the Republic of Korea will host APEC, which will be a tremendous opportunity for the United States to collaborate with a security ally and key partner, particularly on technology, innovation, labor, and the environment.

Facing a range of global economic challenges, the United States continues to "meet the moment," as Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said, through robust engagement with APEC and its member economies. U.S. economic leadership in the region and globally is stronger thanks to the partnerships forged in APEC, and our commitment to leading in APEC and other international fora will endure regardless of administration. We were glad to write the next chapter when APEC leaders met in Lima last week, and build off the success we had, working together, in San Francisco last year.

Ambassador Matt Murray serves as the United States' Senior Official for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).