

Nobuo Tanaka

Chairman of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation



Nobuo Tanaka is Chairman of The Sasakawa Peace Foundation. He has extensive national government and international experience in the fields of energy, trade and innovation. Executive Director of the International Energy Agency (IEA) from 2007 to 2011, Mr. Tanaka oversaw a seminal period in the Agency's work and direction. Under his leadership, the IEA initiated a collective release of oil stocks in June 2011, the third such collective action in the Agency's history, opening new scope and a new era for IEA emergency action. While IEA Executive Director, Mr. Tanaka was responsible for pioneering the concept of 'comprehensive energy security' while also expanding the Agency's focus on climate change, renewable energy and the transition to a low-carbon energy economy (with the 450 ppm scenario of the IEA's World Energy Outlook becoming the benchmark goal for global climate change mitigation). Mr. Tanaka led IEA work on fossil fuel subsidy reform, energy efficiency policy recommendations (adopted by the G8), low-carbon energy technology roadmaps, gas and electricity security, energy poverty and carbon capture and storage, among others. Notably, Mr. Tanaka also played a crucial and personal role in the strengthening of ties with major IEA non-Member energy players, including China, India, Russia, Brazil, Chile, Indonesia, Mexico and South Africa, and in IEA relations with business, including through the creation of the IEA Energy Business Council. Responsible for a great expansion of IEA engagement with other international fora, throughout his time as IEA Executive Director, Mr. Tanaka made numerous keynote speeches on global energy affairs and policy to summits of Heads of State and Ministers.

Mr. Tanaka began his career in 1973 in the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) in Tokyo, and has served in a number of high-ranking positions in METI, including Director-General of the Multilateral Trade System Department. In this capacity, he led many trade negotiations at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and for bilateral Free Trade Agreements. Mr. Tanaka's career has also included a strong focus on energy. He was responsible for Japan's involvement with the IEA and the G7 Energy Ministers' Meeting during the second oil crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s. He participated in establishing the comprehensive energy policy of Japan in the late 1980s, and oversaw the implementation of Japan's international nuclear energy policy and led negotiations of bilateral nuclear agreements. During the Kyoto COP3 negotiations, Mr. Tanaka worked for the Japanese government on formulating international strategy as well as co-ordinating domestic environment and energy policy. He was deeply engaged in a range of bilateral trade and economic issues with the US as Minister for Industry, Trade and Energy at the Embassy of Japan, Washington DC from 1998 to 2000, as well serving as the first secretary of the Embassy from 1982 to 1985.

With a strong background in international affairs, Mr. Tanaka has served as both Deputy Director and Director for Science, Technology and Industry (DSTI) of the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). During his time as Director from 2004 to 2007, he was responsible for the rollout of work on innovation, including innovation policy reviews of Member countries, collaboration with the OECD Economic Policy Directorate on the Innovation chapter of the landmark publication, "Going for Growth", and the role of innovation in intellectual property rights and biotechnology related regulations, among many others. Mr. Tanaka, a Japanese national, has a degree in Economics from the University of Tokyo and an MBA from Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. He and his wife, Gloria, have two children.