World Bank Group Archives
Exhibit Series

19th Annual Meetings in Tokyo, Japan – September 1964

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The World Bank Group Archives Exhibit Series contains exhibits originally published on the Archives’ external website beginning in 2002. When the Archives’ website was transferred to a new platform in 2015, it was decided that older exhibits would be converted to pdf format and made available as a series on the World Bank’s external database, Documents & Reports.

These exhibits, authored by World Bank archivists, highlight key events, personalities, and publications in the history of the World Bank. They also bring attention to some of the more fascinating archival records contained in the Archives’ holdings.

To view current exhibits, visit the Exhibits page on the Archives’ website.
19th Annual Meetings in Tokyo, Japan – September 1964

The headquarters of the World Bank Group is located in Washington, DC, and the telltale sign of spring in this area is the blossoming of cherry trees. The first cherry trees planted in Washington DC were a gift from the City of Tokyo in 1912, and to celebrate the arrival of spring, the World Bank Group Archives is highlighting the 19th Annual Meeting of the Bank Group, which was held from September 7 – 11, 1964 in Tokyo, Japan.

There are many archival materials in the custody of the World Bank Group Archives which tell the story of the 1964 Annual Meetings in Japan. These records originated from many units across the Bank, and they illuminate the day-to-day work of Bank staff who were preparing for the meeting in 1964. The records show the discussions in the spring of 1963 about the selection of Tokyo, Japan as the host city for the meeting, as well as all the logistical work needed to organize the event. In his address to the Annual Meeting delegates, the President of the World Bank Group, George Woods, expressed his pleasure at the selection of Tokyo as the host city for the meetings:

“...I am particularly pleased that our Annual Meetings are in Tokyo this year, for Japan is a vibrant example of both reconstruction and development. From a state of economic prostration, this nation has risen to take its place among the industrial leaders of the world. The record of economic development in Japan has been magnificent and truly remarkable. Many policies, practices and procedures followed by Japan are worthy of consideration by officials of countries which are traveling the path of development.” -- “Annual Address by George D. Woods, President of the Bank and its Affiliate.” in 1964 Annual Meetings of the Boards of Governors: Summary Proceedings, pg. 8.
A June 11th, 1964 internal memorandum reproduced below from the Director of Operations for South Asia and Middle East, Escott Reid, to all of the leaders in his Department, illustrates a typical request for briefing papers. For any one country or region, the briefing papers detailed: the state of relations with the country; the political and economic situation at the time; and topics needing Management attention. The briefing papers were distributed across the Bank, but were primarily authored for the benefit of the President. The briefing papers were an essential tool that helped the President prepare for the Annual Meetings, where the issues of economic development would be discussed. A few months later, in August, the briefing papers from Mr. Reid’s department (as well as those from the other regions) were completed and sent to the Office of the President, and these can now be found within the holdings of the World Bank Group Archives. A description of these archival records from the Office of the President during George Woods’ presidency can be found on the Archives’ website here. These and many other stories about the 19th Annual Meeting in Japan can be found in the World Bank Group Archives - find out more about our holdings!
Group Heads

Escott Reid

June 11, 1964

Briefing Papers for Annual Meeting 1964

1. The Secretary's Office will distribute shortly the request for the briefing papers. I understand that the outline of the papers will be practically the same as last year.

2. I request that the divisions of this Department begin immediately to prepare drafts of the following sections of the briefing papers:

III. STATE OF RELATIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

(a) State of relations:

This section should provide the general background for sections III(b) and (c) and should include only a very brief summary of the lending prospects if these are dealt with in more detail under III(b) or (c).

(b) Topics to be raised by Management:

Brief description of the topics, a proposed line of action for Bank/IDA, followed by a guess as to the Government's reaction.

(c) Topics likely to be raised by delegation:

If a topic has already been listed under III(b), reference need only be made to the relevant sub-section. For any other item, give a brief description of the topic and the Government's attitude followed by a proposal for the Bank/IDA response.

V. POLITICAL SITUATION

Very brief note of any important highlights.

VI. ECONOMIC SITUATION

This section should begin with a table in the form explained in paragraph 5(c) of the attached memorandum of July 17, 1963 on the 1963 briefing papers, and should then give a brief review of the economic situation.
The drafts should be sent to Mr. Hartwich at the latest on June 30 with two carbon copies.

3. I would like to have a preliminary discussion on the topics to be included in sections III(b) and (c) with the Group Heads and Economic Advisers on Monday, June 15 at noon in my room. We should also then discuss some questions which were raised regarding the statistical data that were included in last year's briefing papers and are again proposed to be included this year.

cc: Messrs. Stevenson
    Mason
    Brakel
    Jeffries
    Wright
    Martin
    Hartwich