

**Kick-Off Reception of the 40th Year of
ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation
Jakarta | 18 January 2013**

Remarks by

H.E. Le Luong Minh, Secretary-General of ASEAN

Excellency Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan

**Excellency Mr. Kimihiro Ishikane, Ambassador of Japan to
ASEAN**

**Excellencies, Permanent Representatives of ASEAN
Member States to ASEAN**

**Excellencies, Ambassadors to ASEAN and Members of the
Diplomatic Corps**

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be given this opportunity to speak at this Kick-off Reception to celebrate the 40th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. I would like to express my appreciation to the Mission of Japan to ASEAN and the Committee of the Permanent Representatives to ASEAN for hosting this Kick-off Reception.

For the last four decades, ASEAN-Japan cooperation has been founded on what the then Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda called in 1977 a 'heart-to-heart' relationship. The strong mutual solidarity between ASEAN and Japan was well signified throughout

the years. Most recently we saw this spirit following the Great East Japan earthquake, which triggered the devastating tsunami and nuclear power plant accident. ASEAN convened the Special ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Meeting on 9 April 2011 in Jakarta as a reflection of compassion and solidarity with Japan. At the Meeting, the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN and their representatives expressed their sympathy, solidarity, and support to the Government and people of Japan in their recovery and reconstruction efforts.

Through the years, one cannot but acknowledge the immense and significant contribution of Japan to ASEAN. Since the establishment of informal dialogue relations in 1973, cooperation between ASEAN and Japan has broadened and deepened, covering political and security, economic and financial and social and cultural areas.

Japan's strong commitment to support ASEAN Community building efforts is evident through its initiatives and support for many concrete and mutually beneficial activities. In recent years, we have seen a number of notable support from Japan to ASEAN through regional cooperation and building capacity to deal with challenges faced by the region.

In the area of disaster mitigation, for instance, Japan has provided strong support to the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), which was established on 17 November 2011. Japan provides funding support for the establishment of an Integrated Information and Communication Technology System to strengthen the operation

of the AHA Centre and for the establishment of a Disaster Emergency Logistic System for ASEAN.

In the area of people-to-people exchanges, I would like to congratulate Japan for the completion of the Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for students and Youth (JENESYS) Programme on 31 July 2012. Through the Programme about 13,500 youth from ASEAN Member States had visited Japan. In fact, through a succeeding youth exchange programme called *Kizuna* more opportunities are being provided to the young people of ASEAN and Japan to exchange experience and build strong friendship. I strongly believe that exchanges among the young people of ASEAN and Japan are and will remain crucial since they will be the ones that will continue and strengthen the close ties and cooperation between ASEAN and Japan.

Japan's strong commitment to support ASEAN Connectivity is also well recognised by ASEAN Leaders. Japan's support for the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) will be an added boost to intra-regional efforts towards greater connectivity and integration. In addition, not only will the enhanced connectivity bring benefits to ASEAN but also to Japan and other countries surrounding the region.

The 40th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Dialogue Relations in 2013 is an opportune moment for us to explore ways to further enhance the long standing ties, and widen and expand the partnership in new fields in the coming decades. In this connection, we look forward to the outcome of the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit in Tokyo in December 2013 where the

Leaders of ASEAN and Japan will discuss a mid-to long term vision for ASEAN-Japan partnership.

The continued strengthening of the ASEAN-Japan strategic partnership contributes to the maintenance of regional peace and stability and the promotion of peoples' prosperity. I firmly believe that ASEAN will continue to see Japan as the most reliable, trust-worthy and supportive partner.

I am confident that ASEAN and Japan will continue to steadfastly strengthen and reinvigorate their time-tested, enduring and strategic partnership. We all look forward to the successful convening of all commemorative activities to celebrate the 40th Year of ASEAN-Japan friendship and cooperation, including the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit in December 2013.

Thank you.

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