

**Japan's Statement at the Opening Ceremony
of the 20th East Asia Forum (EAF)
KIYA Masahiko, Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
Nha Trang, Viet Nam, 19 December 2022**

H.E. Vu Ho, Acting ASEAN SOM Leader of Viet Nam,
Mr. Le Huu Hoang, Standing Vice-chairman of Khanh Hoa Provincial
People's Committee,
H.E. Choi Youngsam, Deputy Minister for Political Affairs, Ministry of
Foreign Affairs, the ROK,
H.E. Cui Tiankai, Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China,
H.E. Tran Duc Binh, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for
Community and Corporate Affairs,
Representatives from APT countries and ASEAN Secretariat,
Distinguished speakers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

[Introduction]

Good morning. First, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Viet Nam for hosting the East Asia Forum in person for the first time in three years.

I would also like to thank the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund for supporting the Forum.

I am Kiya Masahiko, a new Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN. Pleased to meet you. It is an immense honour to be invited to make Japan's statement to celebrate the 25th anniversary of ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation under the theme: "Recovering Together toward Inclusive, Equitable and Sustainable Development in East Asia".

The topics for discussion at this forum, including building health capacities, economic and financial cooperation, as well as past and future APT cooperation across the fields, are of great importance to us, and I look forward to deepening our ideas through the sessions.

As we make efforts to recover from the impact of COVID-19, Russia's aggression against Ukraine has given rise to a number of challenges for us, including soaring prices of energy, food, and other commodities, as well as supply chain disruptions. Now is the time to address these challenges in a coordinated manner, and ASEAN Plus Three countries need to enhance our cooperation.

[Japan's cooperation in line with the AOIP]

ASEAN is currently gaining greater importance as an engine of the global economy. Japan has long been a staunch supporter of ASEAN Centrality and Unity.

As we will commemorate the 50th Year of Friendship and Cooperation between ASEAN and Japan next year with the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit in Tokyo in December, we are committed to further working with ASEAN to address various challenges and to realise peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) was adopted in 2019, and Japan expressed its support for AOIP ahead of other Dialogue Partners and has been implementing a wide range of concrete cooperation projects.

At this juncture, Japan would like to highlight the newly-adopted APT Cooperation Work Plan (2023-2027), which clearly stresses its aim to further strengthen the APT partnership in accordance with the principles of AOIP. Japan welcomes this new APT Cooperation Work Plan and will further strengthen our APT cooperation even more vigorously with our partners who are present today.

Taking this opportunity, I would like outline Japan's efforts and APT cooperation in accordance with the four priority areas of the AOIP.

(1. Maritime cooperation)

First, on maritime cooperation, under the ASEAN+3 Marine Plastics Debris Cooperative Action Initiative, Japan will support the development of national action plans and human resource development.

Japan will also continue to promote cooperation that contributes to maritime security and the freedom of navigation, including by the Advanced Personnel Training Program for Vessel Traffic Services (VTS).

(2. Connectivity)

Second, on connectivity, Japan will continue to support the efforts under the APT framework based on the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025. At the same time, Japan will continue to boost investment in quality infrastructure through the Japan-ASEAN Connectivity Initiative.

Japan will also support soft connectivity, such as information and communication technology (ICT), legal and institutional enhancement, as well as the promotion of people-to-people exchange.

(3. SDGs)

Third, Japan will support achieving the SDGs with an emphasis on human security.

Specifically, for food security, together with our partners, Japan will continue to support the ASEAN Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR) and the ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS).

On sustainable agricultural production and food systems, we will promote cooperation with ASEAN countries including through joint research projects.

On public health, we will continue to lead efforts to achieve Universal Health Coverage and to extend full support for the early operationalisation of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED).

On climate change, we will support balanced decarbonisation to address climate change while ensuring energy security and sustainable growth. We carry forward the ASEAN-Japan Climate Change Action Agenda 2.0, promotion of realistic energy transition, and sustainable forest management. We will also support the development of an ASEAN Climate Change Strategic Action Plan towards 2030.

(4. Economy and other areas)

Fourth, to recover and to achieve sustainable growth together, we will work with the APT countries towards the full implementation of the RCEP agreement and promotion of Data Free Flow with Trust. Japan will also work together for investment in innovation and start-ups, and enhanced resilience of supply chains.

On finance, Japan will contribute to further strengthening the functions of Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM). Moreover, Japan will continue to work on the new initiatives that Japan proposed under the APT framework on the impact of financial digitalisation and strengthening the region's financial resilience against natural disaster risks, so that we can achieve concrete outcomes next year.

[Conclusion]

To conclude, let me reiterate Japan's commitment to taking the lead in strengthening APT cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP). This will promote ASEAN Centrality, openness, transparency, inclusivity, and the rule of law.

I hope that today and tomorrow we will have productive discussions on practical ways to achieve inclusive, equitable and sustainable development in East Asia.

Thank you very much for your attention.

(End)