

**Newsletter from the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN**  
**No. 1 Towards the 50<sup>th</sup> Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation**

26 December 2022



Presenting the letter of authority to the Secretary-General of ASEAN  
(Photo: ASEAN Secretariat, 1 December 2022)

It is my pleasure to introduce myself. I am KIYA Masahiko. After the arrival in Jakarta on 30 November, I presented the letter of authority from Foreign Minister of Japan, HAYASHI Yoshimasa, to H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN, on 1 December, and began to work as Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN.

I will be posting this “ASEAN Ambassador Letter” series through our website, and introducing the latest actions of ASEAN-Japan relations as well as our activities and contributions by a wide range of stakeholders. This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. With dear readers, I hope we can achieve peace and stability in the region as well as prosperity and happiness by advancing cooperation in various fields.



Press conference at ASEAN Secretariat  
(Photo: Jakarta Shimbun, 1 December 2022)

### ● Press Conference on the Assumption of Office

On 1 December, after presenting the letter of authority to the Secretary-General, we held a press conference in the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC), and expressed my determination upon the assumption as follows:

This is my first posting to a Southeast Asian country, but I have been working with ASEAN Member States (AMS) in various fields such as security, peacebuilding, economy, energy, development cooperation, and global health in Japan as well as in other countries in the world. Making the most of such backgrounds, I would like to make my utmost efforts to enhance ASEAN-Japan relations, given the growing importance of ASEAN in the international community.

In particular, next year is the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. I am greatly honoured to work in the Mission of Japan to ASEAN at this important juncture. Various commemorative events will be held in Japan and AMS, culminating in the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit to be held in Tokyo in December 2023.

The official catchphrase of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation is “Golden Friendship, Golden Opportunity.” Making the most of this Golden Jubilee of ASEAN-Japan relations, I would like to do my utmost to elevate ASEAN-Japan relationship to a new stage, making our friendship, opportunities, and our future even greater and brighter.



My initial remarks at the ERIA Meeting (Photo: 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2022)

### ● ERIA Ambassador Meeting

On 2 December, the day following my assumption, the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) Ambassador Meeting was held at the ASEAN Secretariat. ERIA was established based on Japan's proposal at the East Asia Summit (EAS) in 2007. In 2008, ERIA commenced with the participation of board members from 16 East Asian countries.

ERIA is an international organisation that conducts a wide range of researches for policy recommendations. The ERIA Ambassadors meeting is convened every year among ERIA executives, the ambassadors of ASEAN Member States and 16 dialogue partner countries. This year was the first in-person meeting in the last three years, and it was a great opportunity to meet my counterparts.



At the beginning of the meeting, I first stated that I had adjusted my arrival in time for this important meeting. I also expressed that Japan would like to actively support the “Digital Innovation and Sustainable Economic Centre” to be established by ERIA. Furthermore, I conveyed my determination to collaborate with ERIA, ASEC, AMS and other Dialog partners towards the 50<sup>th</sup> Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation.



Visit to the ASEAN Coordination Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) (Photo: 15 December 2022)

### ●AHA Centre Visit

In that weekend, I set up my life by shopping while touring the city for the first time. Jakarta is a big city with skyscrapers, and I was amazed at the dynamics and convenience of the city.

From the second week of the arrival onwards, I had many courtesy calls to senior officials of ASEC and related organisations, Permanent Representatives to ASEAN and Ambassadors of dialogue partners, listening to their views on recent developments and expectations for Japan, and attended various receptions for expanding friendship.

On 14<sup>th</sup> December, I visited the ASEAN Coordination Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) and listened to the details about the AHA Centre from Mr. Lee, Executive Director of the Centre, and other senior officials, and had a tour of the Operation Centre. Since I had an experience of working as Ambassador of South Sudan and the Deputy Assistant Minister of International Cooperation Bureau, I was greatly impressed to see and hear, for the first time, the proactive efforts of the AHA Centre to coordinate and promote disaster management and capacity building in the ASEAN region.

Japan, as an advanced disaster prevention country, has been a major contributor to the AHA Centre since its establishment in 2011, by providing reserve stocks of emergency supplies and training programmes for AMS officials through the Japan-ASEAN Integration Found (JAIF). Japan also provided support for the establishment of the Operation Centre. I was pleased to learn that AHA Centre was not only making the best use of Japan's assistance, but also aiming for further improvement.

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Opening remarks at the 20<sup>th</sup> East Asia Forum  
(Photo: 19 December 2022)

### ●East Asia Forum

Two weeks later after the arrival, I had the first business trip to attend the East Asia Forum in Nha-trang, South seaside of Vietnam, from 19 to 20 December.

East Asia Forum, a platform under the ASEAN Plus Three (APT), is a meeting with experts from industries, governments, and academic circles, and submits the outcome to APT. As one of the plus three countries, Japan, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, as well as one of ASEAN Member States host a meeting in turn every year, this year was the in-person meeting held in Vietnam for the first time in last three years.

The theme of the 20th East Asia Forum was “25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Cooperation: Recovering Together, Growing Together toward Inclusive, Equitable and Sustainable Development in East Asia”. In my remarks, I expressed my support for four priority areas in line with the principles of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), as the newly-adopted APT Cooperation Work Plan (2023-2027) stresses its aim to further strengthen the APT partnership, and reiterated Japan's commitment to taking the lead in strengthening APT cooperation.

Mr. SHIKATA Tatsuo, a colleague in MITSUI & CO., LTD.; Associate Professor Mr. MIURA Hideyuki of Kyorin University; Mr. KIKUCHI Yona, Vice President of The Council on East Asia Community (Director of the Japan Forum on International Relation); and Mr. KIMURA Fukunari, Chief Economist of ERIA, not only contributed with their presentations in each session but also provided valuable opinions for promoting future intellectual exchange among ASEAN countries.



Special IGA Dialogue: AOIP Mainstreaming  
(Photo: ASEAN-Japan Centre, 19 December 2022)

### ●Special IGA Dialogue for Actions

On December 19, during a business trip to Vietnam, a special Industry-Government-Academic (IGA) Dialogue on mainstreaming the AOIP was held in a hybrid format, organised by the ASEAN-Japan Centre.

In view of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation and the Indonesian Chairmanship in 2023, this event was organised on the theme of “Acceleration of AOIP Mainstreaming for Peace, Stability and Prosperity in the Indo-Pacific,” on which both ASEAN and Japan stressed its importance, having participation of a senior official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and the former ASEAN Deputy Secretary General, as well as various Japanese and Indonesian participants from industry-government-academia.



In my opening remarks, I stated that this forum, elaborating ideas on acceleration of AOIP Mainstreaming, was timely and relevant for three reasons, and expressed my hope that the outcome of interactive and in-depth discussions would lead to progress on concrete cooperation in the future. Mr. Sidhorto R. Suryodipure, Director General of ASEAN Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Indonesia, also gave an elaborated presentation about the latest priorities of his countries' chairmanship.

In this dialogue, besides panels from companies and universities, young people from the generation Z also joined the discussion, while it was not planned, and that inter-generational discussion towards mainstreaming AOIP was immensely meaningful. If you are interested in it, please watch [the archived video](#).



The 50<sup>th</sup> Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation  
(Released on 21 December 2022)

**●Launch of special website of the 50<sup>th</sup> Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and start application for commemorative events**

On 21 December, two days after the special IGA dialogue, the ASEAN-Japan Centre launched [the special website](#) of the 50<sup>th</sup> Year of Japan-ASEAN Friendship and Cooperation.



This special website introduces various commemorative events in 2023 and people who are active in building bridges between the people of Japan and ASEAN countries. The website will also undertake some campaigns where people of Japan and ASEAN will participate together to give a boost to such commemorative events. What is more, with the help of the automatic translation function, you can even read it in the languages of the each ASEAN country!

In the meantime, application of the Commemorative Events for the 50<sup>th</sup> Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation has just begun. This is to be done with a view to further fostering friendly relations between Japan and ASEAN countries with the participation and cooperation of a wide range of stakeholders. Events that meet the objectives of the commemorative activities will not only be able to use the 50<sup>th</sup> Year Logo and Catchphrase, but will also be listed in [the list of commemorative events](#) on the special website after going through the application process for certification.

I hope that everyone involved in cooperation and exchange between ASEAN and Japan will take this opportunity to participate in this big platform of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation by planning and implementing commemorative activities. We are now living in an era of online/ hybrid communications. We look forward to your participation.

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Experience Japanese Food Culture  
(Photo: 22 December 2022)

### ●Experience Japanese Food Culture: Try and Enjoy “Real” Japanese Cuisine

On 22 December, the day after my return from business trip to Vietnam, Japanese food promotion event was held at the ASEC as a pre-launch celebration of the special year, the 50<sup>th</sup> Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation.

The highlight of the event was “Teuch-Soba,” handmade Japanese buckwheat noodle. Co-hosted by the Miyagi Soba-making Society, Soba Social (Zenmenkyo), and Japan Mission to ASEAN, eight Japanese Soba-making masters from Miyagi Prefecture came to demonstrate how to make “Teuch-Soba” and serve authentic soba.

Moreover, we were able to serve soba accompanied by tempura which Chef Morita, Executive Chef to the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN, cooked. Furthermore, with the cooperation of Kochi Prefecture, we promoted Yuzu Tea and Kombu Tea from the Prefecture. In my opening remarks, I expressed my appreciation for everyone’s cooperation.

This event was a great success!! A number of participants from ASEC and delegations, including a Deputy Secretary General, Permanent Representatives and Ambassadors, marked the depth of Japanese cuisine with tasting authentic Japanese soba noodles and beverages, and seeing the skills of soba masters up closely. [Ms. Melody Nurramdhani Laksani](#), one of the former JKT48 members, Japan-ASEAN Goodwill Ambassador on Food and Agriculture, also made a remark at the beginning of the event, and shared the appeal of Japanese food from the venue via [Instagram](#).



Christmas tree at ASEC Robby  
(Photo: 22 December 2022)

### ●Towards the 50<sup>th</sup> Year of Japan-ASEAN Friendship and Cooperation

It has been one month since my arrival in Jakarta on 30 November. I have had the opportunity to meet with many of you and could spent intensive days as described above.

What I strongly felt when listening to everyone was that people from a very wide range of fields have been involved in cooperation and exchange between ASEAN and Japan for many years and have become great assets.



We should not take this for granted. Current close ASEAN-Japan relationship we enjoy today has been built over the past 50 years by our predecessors in both ASEAN and Japan. The next 50 years must be built by each of us, making the most of the opportunities of the 50 Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. Today's world faces urgent major challenges such as peace and security, economy and energy, environment, disaster prevention and public health. It is also essential to strengthen mutual exchange, understanding and trust.

Celebrating my 58<sup>th</sup> birthday on 23 December, I was delighted to have my colleagues of the Mission of Japan to ASEAN celebrated with birthday cake. Throughout the coming year, ASEAN and Japan will be celebrating this birthday as well as thinking about the future. I look forward to working with you all to make this a great year for ASEAN and Japan, as well as the region and beyond.

KIYA Masahiko  
Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN