

## **Remarks of KIYA Masahiko, Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN Jakarta, Indonesia, 30 January 2023**

Thank you for your kind introduction. I am KIYA Masahiko, Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN. I would like to extend congratulations to ASEAN-BAC Indonesia on its successful hosting of this memorable event tonight, and to ASEAN-BAC Philippines on the regional launch of ASEAN Mentorship for Entrepreneurs Network, AMEN.

Let me first express our great appreciation to AMEN, as this is an excellent Public-Private Partnership to improve MSMEs' access to market, money and mentorship in the region, which will contribute to narrowing gaps. I would like to congratulate on the successful implementation of AMEN Phase I, which started in 2019. I am glad to hear beneficiaries' real voices as the videos just showed us.

As ASEAN-Japan relationship is to be elevated to a new stage on the occasion of the 50th Year, we are proud that the AMEN project is also moving to a next stage, from a three-country pilot project to a 10-country regional project. Japan has been supporting this project through the Japan ASEAN Integration Fund, JAIF, since the very beginning of this project.

It is my great pleasure to hear the Indonesia's priorities. It is the operationalization of AOIP mainstreaming. Japan was the first country to announce its full support to AOIP and will fully support this initiative by Indonesia.

This year, Japan will also advance ASEAN-Japan Co-creation Vision to deepen our economic and business collaboration. Now there are more than 10,000 Japanese companies operating in the region, and ASEAN is Japan's largest investment destination in the East Asia region. I believe that Japan will be further contributing to ASEAN's economic growth.

We will continue our cooperation with ASEAN by supporting effective projects

for the development of this region, like this project, as we closely listen to ASEAN's voice.

Let me close my remarks by wishing the success of ASEAN-BAC 2023 as well as AMEN Phase II project and the ever expanding cooperation between ASEAN and Japan for the region and the world.

Thank you very much for your attention.