

**Welcoming Remarks**  
**ASEAN Youth Economic Forum 2023**  
**Hosted by ASEAN Youth Organisation**  
**Supported by ASEAN Secretariat, METI and AMEICC**  
**KIYA Masahiko, Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN**  
**Jakarta, 17 March 2023**

Ambassador Bovonethat Douangchak, Permanent Representative of the Lao PDR to ASEAN, Minister Piyapong Nuntana, Permanent Mission of Thailand to ASEAN, Mr. Senjaya Mulia, Chair Person of ASEAN Youth Organisation, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning! First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to ASEAN Youth Organisation for hosting this event, as well as to the ASEAN Secretariat, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and AMEICC for their kind support.

It is my great pleasure to be with you all, including 20 promising future leaders from ASEAN, Timor Leste and Japan.

(Big Opportunity for ASEAN and Japan)

Today, I have just a few messages to share with you. First, this year is a big opportunity for ASEAN and Japan.

The priority of Indonesia as ASEAN Chair in 2023 has been made clear. Under the theme: “ASEAN Matters: the Epicentrum of Growth”, ASEAN, led by Indonesia, now aspires to play a central role as the engine of peace, stability and prosperity in the region and beyond, in an inclusive manner through innovation. ASEAN is now getting more important than ever.

This year is also the 50<sup>th</sup> Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. Japanese Prime Minister Kishida expressed his commitment to raise our relationship to a new stage and to set out a new vision for cooperation this year.

There will be a number of important events, including Summit and Ministerial Meetings, to accelerate the momentum. Already, so many people are engaged to make most of these opportunities to make desirable changes and transformations to take place. We are among them.

(50-year Journey of ASEAN and Japan)

It is important, at this point, to look back on our history to understand the values of ASEAN-Japan cooperation. Simply put, Japan has always been with ASEAN to overcome challenges, and will always be.

It all started in 1973, when ASEAN was united to address the issue of growing export of synthetic rubber from Japan. The dialogue turned out to be the very first successful experience of ASEAN's external engagement. Japan is proud to be the first partner of ASEAN since that time!

In 1977, after the 1<sup>st</sup> ASEAN-Japan Summit in Kuala Lumpur, then Prime Minister Fukuda outlined Japan's vision for its relationship with ASEAN. This included our commitment to peace and not becoming a military power, "heart to heart" relationship based on mutual trust, and support for ASEAN's own efforts to strengthen their solidarity and resilience. This vision is valid till today.

From around that time, ASEAN achieved rapid industrialisation as well as expansion to "ASEAN 10" by the 1990s. When ASEAN faced the financial crisis around 1997, the first ASEAN+3 Summit was held. As a framework to prevent the recurrence of such crises, the "Chiang Mai Initiative" was established and developed with Japan's active engagement.

AMEICC was also established in this occasion and has since played a significant role in deepening economic collaboration between ASEAN and Japan.

As ASEAN accelerated its efforts to promote the ASEAN Community in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Japan was again supportive, through the Japan ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA).

After the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in 2004, the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management, AHA Centre, was established. In response to Covid-19, it was agreed that the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases, ACPHEED, would be established. Again, both were strongly supported by Japan.

We are now facing new challenges, such as climate change and decarbonisation, digital transformation, food and energy security and environmental protection, as well as economic security and supply chain management. This event's main theme of circular economy is one of the most important challenges. I promise that Japan will always be there to address and overcome such challenges issues with ASEAN toward the future.

(ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-creation Vision)

On the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, the Japanese public and private sectors got together to make a working draft to lay out a vision of ASEAN-Japan cooperation for the future.

This initiative can only be complete with active engagement of the ASEAN side. Hence, today's event is organised.

I would just highlight the key elements of this draft. Towards the future, ASEAN and Japan can realise the society that we aim for by focusing on four pillars: sustainability, innovation, connectivity, and human capital. I am hopeful that there will be lively discussions today on how to improve as well as realise this vision.

(Events this year for ASEAN and Japan)

Let me conclude by highlighting some of the upcoming events this year.

After a number of important events both in Indonesia and Japan, there will be important events around December in Tokyo: ASEAN-Japan Special Business Summit, Young Leaders Summit, Generation Z Summit, and above all, ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit. There, Prime Minister of Japan and ASEAN leaders will get together to launch a new vision and to announce concrete

actions.

The participants of today's event, including the selected 20 participants, will be future leaders to realise our new vision and to make our society sustainable and resilient. I look forward to your presentations with policy recommendations on 20 March.

I will do my utmost to make most of your ideas and actions so that this year's opportunity for both ASEAN and Japan can be fully capitalised, not only for ASEAN and Japan, but for the region and the world, not only for those living today but for all living in the next 50 years and beyond.

Thank you very much for your attention.

(End)