

**Newsletter from the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN**  
**No. 7: How to formulate ASEAN-Japan cooperation projects**

30 June 2023



Opening Ceremony of the Exhibition of Commemorative Panels  
in the ASEAN Secretariat  
(6 June 2023, Credit: ASEAN Secretariat)

We are now half-way through the year 2023 and in the run-up to the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit at the end of the year, a series of related meetings and events are taking place.

This month, the ASEAN-Japan Business Week was held in Tokyo, and ASEAN Secretary-General H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn took part and visited Japan for the first time since taking office. In Jakarta, the ASEAN-Japan Joint Coordination Committee (AJJCC) held its annual Ambassador-level consultation between ASEAN Member States, the Secretariat and Japan. The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) also held its board meeting and Ambassadors' meeting on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of its establishment and elected the next Secretary-General of ERIA. Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress made a goodwill visit to Indonesia and greeted people with ties to Japan, including Secretary-General Kao. Exchanges are also underway in business and youth-related events.

In a series of meetings and events, discussions on formulating new ASEAN-Japan cooperation projects on the occasion of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation are in full swing. In this edition of the Ambassador's Newsletter, I would like to introduce these meetings and events and discuss with you how we should formulate cooperation projects.



Meeting between ASEAN Secretary-General and Foreign Minister  
(5 June 2023, Credit: ASEAN Secretariat)

### ● Attendance of ASEAN Secretary-General at the ASEAN-Japan Business Week

From 5-9 June, [the ASEAN-Japan Business Week 2023](#) was held in a hybrid format in Tokyo ([archived video](#)). ASEAN Secretary-General Kao visited Japan for the first time since taking office, delivering remarks at the opening session and meetings with [Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Mr. NISHIMURA Yasutoshi](#) and [Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. HAYASHI Yoshimasa](#), as well as visiting the ASEAN-Japan Centre.

In [his opening address at the opening session](#), Minister Nishimura announced [the interim report on ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-Creation Vision](#), and stated that the direction ASEAN-Japan economic relations should pursue is to promote cooperation between vibrant and rapidly changing ASEAN and technologically advanced Japan to co-create our future. The vision sets out three key objectives:

(1) to create a carbon-neutral society with ASEAN; (2) to make ASEAN-Japan a major centre of innovation by combining ASEAN's growth potential with Japan's technological capabilities; and (3) to create human links to support such initiatives.

Mr. M. Arshad Rasjid P.M., Chairman of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC), also visited Japan on this occasion and [signed a Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) with JETRO](#) on (1) organising the ASEAN-Japan Young Business Leaders Summit and Generation Z Business Leaders Summit, (2) promoting the ASEAN-Japan Co-Creation Fast-Track Initiative, and (3) the promotion of the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) and the ASEAN Net Zero Hub.



ASEAN-Japan Joint Coordination Committee  
(6 June 2023, Credit: ASEAN Secretariat)

### ● ASEAN-Japan Joint Coordination Committee (AJJCC)

On 6 June, the annual meeting of [the ASEAN-Japan Joint Coordination Committee \(AJJCC\)](#) was held at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta. It was the first face-to-face meeting in four years and the first for myself.

As this year marks the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, [an Exhibition of Commemorative Panels](#) was held in the ground-floor lobby before



the meeting. Taking advantage of this opportunity, third-year junior high school students from the Jakarta Japanese School visited the ASEAN Secretariat as part of their comprehensive studies, and attended the ceremony as representatives of the young generation, enabling them to feel the liveliness of the frontline of ASEAN-Japan cooperation.

At the AJJCC meeting, discussions took place on the follow-ups on past cooperation, regional and international developments, and further strengthening cooperation on the occasion of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. I myself explained Japan's thinking and listened to the views of respective member states, with representatives of all ASEAN Member States present, through which I realised the significance of ASEAN's multilayered regional cooperation framework. In particular, it was a great opportunity for me to hear what areas each country prioritises and values in the lead-up to the Commemorative Summit at the end of the year.

In the evening of the same day, I co-hosted a reception at my official residence, with Ambassador Urawadee, the Permanent Representative of Thailand to ASEAN, our country's coordinator. This was the first large-scale event in my official residence since my arrival. It was our pleasure to offer a delightful taste of the collaboration of Japanese and Thai cuisine.

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Ambassador-level meeting between ERIA, ASEAN and Dialogue Partners  
(7 June 2023).

### ● ERIA's 15th Anniversary and the election of the next President

On the following day, 7 June, also at the ASEAN Secretariat, the ERIA Council and the Ambassador-level meeting of ASEAN and Dialogue Partners took place. ERIA was established in 2008, making its 15th anniversary this year. At the meeting, [Professor WATANABE Tetsuya, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General of ERIA, was elected as the next Secretary-General of ERIA](#), ahead of the scheduled retirement of ERIA's incumbent Secretary-General Nishimura at the end of this month.

[The ambassador-level meeting between ERIA, ASEAN and the Dialogue Partners](#) started with an announcement on the appointment of the next President of ERIA, followed by his speech. In addition, presentations on the status of preparations for the ERIA Centre for Digital Transformation and Sustainable Economy to be established this year and on ERIA's major research outcome were made. Following the presentation, the Dialogue Partners and ERIA had an exchange of views on policy directions of activities in the future.

In my [closing remarks](#), I paid tribute to ERIA's contributions over the years and

expressed Japan's utmost support for the establishment of the new centre for the future development of ERIA. I also expressed my gratitude to President Nishimura and welcomed incoming President Watanabe.

[A reception to comemorate ERIA's 15th anniversary](#) was held in the evening of the same day. As a wide range of stakeholders came together, I felt the underlying strength of the network that ERIA has built over years.



Secretary-General of ASEAN at the venue of Their Majesties' audience  
(19 June 2023).

## ● Visit of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress to Indonesia

From 17 to 23 June, Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress visited Indonesia. It was their first goodwill visit since their accession to the throne.

[At a press conference before his visit](#), His Majesty the Emperor expressed his great pleasure to visit Indonesia for the first time on the occasion of the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Japan, and the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. Furthermore, during his visit, he would like to deepen his understanding of bilateral exchanges between Japan and ASEAN countries, including Indonesia,

and observing the current status of various initiatives promoted through cooperation between the two countries.

On 19 June, His Majesty received various officials with ties to Japan, including ASEAN Secretary-General Kao. [The Secretary-General directly informed Their Majesties that this year is a historic year to celebrate the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation.](#)

[In their post-visit impressions,](#) Their Majesties noted that the visit was also their first official visit together to a Southeast Asian country, and that it was very memorable.



ASEAN-Japan Business and Investment Forum (20 June 2023)

### ● ASEAN-Japan 50th anniversary celebrations

Two ASEAN-Japan 50th anniversary celebrations were organised by the ASEAN-Japan Centre during the visit of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress.

On 20-21 June, the [ASEAN-Japan Business and Investment Forum: the Road to](#)



[the ASEAN Indo-Pacific](#) was held in a hybrid format in Jakarta, in cooperation with ASEAN-BAC. Following a video message from ASEAN Secretary-General Kao, remarks by Indonesian Ambassador to Japan H.E. Heri Akhmadi and others, and speeches on the ASEAN Connectivity Master Plan 2025 and other related topics, business matching took place between about 50 participants from Japan, Indonesia and Vietnam who gathered at the venue.

On 22 June, the [Indo-Pacific Circular Economy Hackathon\(IPH\) for Japan-ASEAN Youth Strives for Circulation](#), also took place in a hybrid format in Jakarta. Nine pre-selected teams from the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia and Cambodia pitched in front of the panel of judges. I listened to all the pitches and felt the enthusiasm and new potentials of youth from all over ASEAN who are working to solve social issues through business.



Presentation at the ASEAN Junior Fellowship Programme (28 June 2023)

### ● How to formulate the ASEAN-Japan cooperation projects

As we are now halfway through the year, and in the course of the series of meetings and events, discussions are in full swing on the directions and contents



of new ASEAN-Japan cooperation projects to be agreed and announced at the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit at the end of the year.

Based on several reports and announcements, such as the [report](#) compiled by Expert Panel for 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation and the [ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific AOIP Mainstreaming Support](#) announced by Foreign Minister Hayashi in February, a [New Plan for a “Free Open Indo-Pacific \(FOIP\)”](#) and an additional new USD 100 million contribution to the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) announced by Prime Minister Kishida in March, [“Future of Asia” speech](#) by Prime Minister Kishida in May, and the [Interim Report](#) on ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-Creation Vision released by METI in June, we need to form cooperation projects to materialise the new vision in various fields with ASEAN.

In doing so, it is important to recognise ASEAN’s many partners and to make most of its own strengths to realise maximum impact. For the moment, it is important for Japan to play the role of a major partner based on its long-standing trust, technology and experience, with a focus on key issues in respective sectors, and to promote cooperation in an open manner in coordination with many other partners, with ASEAN at the centre.

There are many sectors to work on, such as maritime cooperation, infrastructure and transport, digital, energy transition and decarbonisation, circular economy and biodiversity, agriculture and food security, urbanisation, finance, economic co-creation, health, disaster prevention, sports, tourism, legal affairs, defence, peace building, scientific, technical and intellectual exchange, youth exchange and cultural exchange, etc. The formation of cooperation projects is being actively promoted, taking into account the current situation of respective sector.

On 28 June, [a presentation and exchange of views](#) was held at the ASEAN Secretariat for 13 participants of the second ASEAN Junior Fellowship Programme (AJFP), focusing on three aspects of the ASEAN-Japan partnership: (1) key achievements, (2) comparative advantages and (3) future challenges and opportunities. The event was held in Tokyo, Japan. The participants were young officials from all Member States and the government of Timor-Leste who are in charge of ASEAN, and we could sense their energy for the future of ASEAN.

In July, ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' meetings will be held in Jakarta; in September, an ASEAN-related Summit will be held in Jakarta; and in December,

an ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit will be held in Tokyo. Other ASEAN-Japan Ministerial meetings and [50th anniversary events](#) are also planned in a wide range of fields, including the [ASEAN-Japan Special Legal Ministers' Meeting](#) in July. For example, preparations are underway to hold the [ASEAN-Japan Fair \(tentative name\)](#) at Plaza Senayan in Jakarta at the end of September, which will be organised through public-private partnership.

I look forward to working with you to make the most of the opportunity of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation and to further develop our cooperation over the next 50 years and beyond.

Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN  
KIYA Masahiko