

**Newsletter from the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN  
No. 8: ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' Meetings (the 56th AMM/PMCs)**

25 July 2023



East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting (14 July 2023)

This month, the 56th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' (the 56th AMM/PMCs) and related meetings were held in Jakarta. Bringing together nearly 30 Foreign Ministers from within and outside the ASEAN region, a series of meetings took place, including ASEAN+1, ASEAN+3 (Japan, China, Korea), East Asia Summit (EAS), and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Foreign Ministers' Meetings, as well as bilateral and trilateral meetings. From Japan, Foreign Minister Mr. HAYASHI Yoshimasa attended the many meetings and conferences despite his tight schedule.

I was involved in the preparations and negotiations in advance and was present at some of the meetings. By taking part, I realised that the ASEAN-led framework for regional cooperation was effectively functioning at a high level and delivering results, as the participating countries respected ASEAN centrality.

Other events took place throughout this month, including Ambassador's Commendation Ceremony for Professor NISHIMURA Hidetoshi, former ERIA President; the ASEAN-Japan Special Justice Ministers' Meeting; and the Annual Meeting of the ASEAN Council of Japan Alumni (ASCOJA). In this Newsletter, I would like to share with you the significance and achievements of the AMM/PMCs and other major events this month.



Ambassador's Commendation Ceremony to the former ERIA President (3 July 2023).

#### ● Ambassador's Commendation Ceremony to the former ERIA President

Did you know that the [Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia \(ERIA\)](#) was established in 2008 as a think-tank for ASEAN and East Asia based on an agreement at the 2007 East Asia Summit (EAS)? In the past 15 years of its work, ERIA has advanced research and policy advocacy activities in key areas such as trade and investment, energy security, climate change, environment, digital economy, innovation, entrepreneurship, food security and health.

As a new President, Professor WATANABE Tetsuya, assumed office in July this year, [a ceremony and reception](#) was held at my official residence on 3 July to present the Ambassador's Commendation to former ERIA President, Professor NISHIMURA Hidetoshi, who led ERIA for 15 years since its establishment.

The ceremony was attended by ASEAN Secretary-General H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, three Deputy Secretary-Generals, Permanent Representatives and Ambassadors of ASEAN and Dialogue Partners, representatives of ASEAN organisations, Ambassador of Japan to Indonesia H.E. Kanasugi and many others, which demonstrated that ERIA's contribution to the ASEAN and East Asia region had been highly appreciated.

In his address, former ERIA President Professor Nishimura explained ERIA's contributions to each ASEAN Member State and Dialogue Partner over the past 15 years and expressed his gratitude, showing his deep affection to the countries and the region. I sincerely hope that he will continue to play an active role after his retirement.





ASEAN-G7 Justice Ministers' interface  
(7 July 2023, Credit: The Ministry of Justice of Japan).

● **“Justice Affairs Diplomacy” Ministerial Forum (ASEAN-Japan Special Meeting of Justice Ministers, ASEAN-G7 Justice Ministers' Interface, etc.)**

On 6 and 7 July, Special events for “Justice Affairs Diplomacy” Ministerial Forum were held in Tokyo. The “Justice Affairs Diplomacy” Ministerial Forum consisted of three meetings: the ASEAN-Japan Special Meeting of Justice Ministers, the ASEAN-G7 Justice Ministers' Interface, and the G7 Justice Ministers Meeting, of which the first two are ASEAN-related meetings.

On 6 July, the [ASEAN-Japan Special Meeting of Justice Ministers](#) was held. This is the first ministerial meeting held by ASEAN-Japan in the field of law and justice, building on Japan's longstanding legislative support for ASEAN countries and the Senior Official Level Meetings from 2021. The meeting was held on the occasion of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. The outcome of the meeting was the adoption and approval of a [Joint Statement and Work Plan](#), which will be followed up in concrete terms subsequently.

The ASEAN-G7 Justice Ministers' Interface was held on 7 July. At the opening ceremony, [Prime Minister H.E.Kishida delivered an address](#) which emphasised that this was the first-ever dialogue opportunity for the justice ministers and others of ASEAN and the G7, who are working on the promotion of the rule of law, to meet together. Prime Minister also said that serving as a bridge between ASEAN and the G7 in this milestone year is a mission for Japan, which understands the diverse cultures and legal systems of both groups and has developed a firm relationship of trust with each country. This special dialogue recognised the importance of sharing universal values such as the rule of law and the

significance of further dialogue and cooperation between ASEAN and G7 in the field of law and justice. Moreover, as a part of future dialogue, Japan proposed the Next Leaders Forum to promote exchange of young officials, which was supported by participating countries.

Following the ASEAN-Japan Business Week in June, ASEAN Secretary-General H.E. Dr. Kao visited Japan again during this time to attend a series of above-mentioned meetings and stressed the importance of ASEAN-Japan cooperation in the field of law and justice, such as the rule of law and respect for fundamental human rights. During the visit, he also publicly promoted ASEAN-Japan relations, including through an interview with NHK (in [Japanese](#) and [English](#)) a special lecture and dialogue with students at the University of Tokyo (in [Japanese](#) and [English](#)).

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ASEAN Council of Japan Alumni (ASCOJA) Reception (9 July 2023)

#### ● ASEAN Council of Japan Alumni (ASCOJA) Annual Meeting

In the same week, Jakarta hosted the [ASEAN Council of Japan Alumni \(ASCOJA\)](#) Annual Meeting. I met the participants at the reception hosted by Japanese Ambassador to Indonesia Kanasugi on 7 July.

Established in 1977, ASCOJA is an organisation of former students in Japan from the ten ASEAN countries. It has more than 50,000 members and holds a general meeting annually on rotation. The 27th Annual General Meeting was hosted by [the Indonesian Association of Former Students in Japan \(PERSADA\)](#) under the theme, 'ASEAN-Japan Cooperation in SDGs for Quality of Life,' and attended by approximately 200 people from ASEAN countries.

At the reception, [Mr. TAKEI Shunsuke, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, attended and delivered a remarks](#). I gave a toast and discussed with members of the Association of Former International Students from ASEAN countries. I was strongly impressed by the fact that former international students in Japan from each country are not only active in research and education of the Japanese language and culture but have attained leadership positions in politics and business. Furthermore, younger generations are promoting ASEAN-Japan cooperation through start-ups and innovation. The general meeting was also reported on [NHK World-Japan](#) and [METRO TV](#).





At the ASEAN-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting (13 July 2023)

- **The 56th AMM/PMCs (ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers Meetings)**

ASEAN Foreign Ministers and related meetings were held from 11-14 July; 11-12 July focused on the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting and Retreat, a meeting attended only by ASEAN Member States. [Foreign Minister Mr. Hayashi visited Jakarta from 12-15 July](#) and attended the ASEAN-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting and the ASEAN+3 Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 13 July, the Foreign Ministers' Meeting of the East Asia Summit (EAS) participating countries, and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) on 14 July, and had 12 bilateral and trilateral meetings during his stay.

In a series of meetings, Minister Hayashi consistently reiterated his support for ASEAN centrality and unity and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP). He also stressed the importance of essential principles of Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) shared by the AOIP, such as openness, transparency, inclusivity and respects for international law. In addition, he confirmed close cooperation in preparation of the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit scheduled to be held in Tokyo from 16-18 December.

On regional and international issues, he had fruitful discussions on Japan's position on Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the East and South China Sea, Taiwan, North Korea, Myanmar and other issues with various countries.



Lobby in front of the chamber of the ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' Meetings  
(14 July 2023)

Through the visit of Minister Hayashi this time, Japan and ASEAN confirmed their commitment to strengthening collaboration for peace and prosperity of the world, which was of great significance. Japan will continue to work closely with ASEAN and other countries concerned to vigorously promote measures to realise a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

Since taking office in late November last year, it was my first experience in the ASEAN Foreign Ministers and related meetings. Although I had previously met with representatives of EAS participating countries during the EAS Senior Official (SOM) and Ambassador-level meetings, it was exceptionally impressive to attend the EAS participating countries' Foreign Ministers' Meeting, where all foreign ministers from ASEAN and the dialogue partners: Japan, China, Korea, Australia, NZ, India, the US and Russia actually met and exchanged views directly with each other. I felt the weight and significance of this high-level exchange.

Peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region is important to all participating countries, including ASEAN and Japan. ASEAN upholds its own 'centrality' and takes the lead in convening and chairing meetings, adhering to the principles of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia and other treaties. I believe this is why such an ASEAN-led framework is functioning effectively, with the dialogue partners respecting it.





With the 3rd and 4th generations of former Japanese soldiers  
at the opening ceremony of the History Gallery (15 July 2023)

#### ● Building the future on a foundation of history

On 15 July, immediately after the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' and related meetings, I attended the opening ceremony of [the History Gallery, YAYASAN WARGA PERSAHABATAN](#), in Indonesia, which was organised by the 3rd and 4th generations of former Japanese soldiers in Indonesia over the weekend as part of the opening ceremony held on 10 July.

After World War II, there were approximately 1,000 former Japanese soldiers who remained in Indonesia and fought for Indonesian independence, 324 of whom acquired Indonesian citizenship and chose to stay in the country. The former soldiers then played a role in promoting economic and cultural exchange between Indonesia and Japan, and the last former soldier passed away in 2014. The History Gallery was inaugurated to recall this history and to serve as a base for exchange between the two countries into the future. A calligraphy of 'Heart to Heart' by former Prime Minister FUKUDA Yasuo was displayed on the wall.

Seventy-eight years after the war, the current trust between ASEAN and Japan has been nurtured through the "heart to heart" exchanges and cooperation between our predecessors. Keeping this history in mind, I would like to make every effort to promote ASEAN-Japan cooperation in order to carve out our better future.

Ambassador of the Japan to ASEAN  
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