

Newsletter from the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
No 9: Expanding areas of ASEAN-Japan cooperation and exchange

29 August 2023



Dialogue between the Federation of Japanese Chambers of Commerce and Industry in ASEAN (FJCCIA) and the Secretary-General of ASEAN
(2 Aug 2023, Credit: the ASEAN Secretariat)

What is your linkage with ASEAN? You may have got in touch with ASEAN countries at some point in your life, be it a business product, tourism, culture or sports.

This month, we welcomed a wide range of people from Japan and ASEAN countries to Jakarta, where the ASEAN Secretariat is located. I personally had many opportunities to hear from visitors and to attend a series of events, which gave a real sense of the expanding fields of ASEAN-Japan cooperation and exchange.

In this edition of the Ambassador's Newsletter, I would like to introduce you to this month's visits and events. As I give you an update on what areas of cooperation and exchange between ASEAN and Japan are deepening, let us together think over the future direction of cooperation and exchange.



Dialogue between the Secretary-General of ASEAN and FJCCIA
(2 Aug 2023, Credit: the ASEAN Secretariat)

● Business and ASEAN

Have you heard of the Federation of Japanese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of ASEAN (FJCCIA)? It is composed of the member companies/organisations of Japanese Chambers of Commerce and Industry operating in the ASEAN region, which has close to 7,283 members as of June 2023, with the JETRO Bangkok office acting as the secretariat.

On 2 August, [the dialogue between the Secretary-Generay of ASEAN and the FJCCIA](#) was held at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta. This dialogue is held annually since 2008 and this year marks the 15th anniversary. On this occasion, the FJCCIA was joined by the presidents and secretary-generals of the Japanese Chambers of Commerce and Industry from 10 cities in the ASEAN region and METI/JETRO executives from Tokyo. It provided an opportunity to demonstrate the significant presence and contribution of Japanese companies in ASEAN.

FJCCIA Chairperson, UEDA Hiroyuki (President, Jakarta Japan Club), and others briefed the [FJCCIA's requests and proposals from Japanese companies](#). Secretary-General Kao paid tribute to the significant contributions of Japanese

companies to the development of the ASEAN region and expressed his expectations for (1) building a sustainable society, (2) promoting the digital economy, and (3) promoting open innovation across borders, including technology transfer. In my [remarks](#), I expressed my appreciation for the contributions made by Japanese companies to date, and conveyed my message that cooperation with the private sector is essential to further strengthen ASEAN-Japan cooperation.



Dialogue with Japan at the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)
(8 August 2023)

● Parliamentary Exchanges with ASEAN

Parliamentary exchanges with ASEAN are also underway: the 44th ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) General Meeting was held in Jakarta from 7 to 9 August. The [House of Councillors delegation](#) from Japan attended, comprising MPs MORIYA Hiroshi (leader of the delegation) and ISHIBASHI Michihiro, participating as observers. The House of Councillors has the non-partisan Japan-ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Exchange Group and sends an official delegation to the AIPA every year.

On the first day, Head of Delegation Moriya addressed the plenary session of the AIPA General Assembly. A dialogue between AIPA and Japan was held on the following day, as well as meetings with delegations from the AIPA Chair Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Canada, Ukraine, the US and the European Parliament and field visits during the session.

This month, on the occasion of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, [a delegation from the Komeito Party](#) also visited the region. Representative YAMAGUCHI Natsuo (Member of the House of Councillors), together with Vice-Chairman UKISHIMA Tomoko (Member of the House of Representatives) and Chairperson of the Public Relations Committee TANIAI Masaaki (Secretary-General of the House of Councillors) visited the ASEAN Secretariat on 18 August and met with Mr Michael Tene, ASEAN Deputy Secretary General (Political and Security Community Affairs). Such exchanges between political parties and parliamentarians are a major boost to the promotion of friendly and cooperative relations.



ASEAN-Japan Economic Ministers Meeting
(22 August 2023, Credit: the ASEAN Secretariat).

● ASEAN-related Ministerial Meetings

This month, a number of ASEAN-related ministerial meetings were held: [the](#)

[Economic Ministers' Meeting and the RCEP Ministerial Meeting](#) in Semarang, Indonesia on 21-22 August, and [the Energy Ministers' Meeting](#) in Bali on 24-25 August, which were attended by Senior Vice Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry NAKATANI Shinichi. At the ASEAN-Japan Economic Ministers' Meeting on 22 August, the final version of the ASEAN-Japan [Economic Co-Creation Vision](#), discussed and examined over the past year, was released and welcomed, and the [Future Design & Action Plan](#), which includes measures that ASEAN and Japanese governments will take to realise the Vision, and was agreed ([all documents](#)).

On 21-22 August, [ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime\(AMMTC\) and Its Related Meetings](#) was held in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia. Chairperson of the National Public Safety Commission, TANI Koichi, attended the AMMTC+Japan and AMMTC+3 consultations to discuss various countermeasures against transnational crimes such as cybercrime, online and telephone scams and trafficking in persons, counter-terrorism, anti-drugs and abduction issues. He also held bilateral meetings with the representatives of the ASEAN countries including the Chief of the Indonesian National Police, Drs. Ristyo Sigit Prabowo([Website](#) of Mission of Japan to ASEAN).

From 22-24 August, [the ASEAN-related Environment Ministers' Meeting](#) was held in Vientiane, Lao PDR, and attended by Environment Minister NISHIMURA Akihiro. Minister Nishimura attended [the ASEAN+3 Environment Ministers Meeting](#), the [ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change](#) and the [ASEAN-Japan Environment Week](#) events. He advocated [the ASEAN-Japan cooperation initiative "Strategic Program for ASEAN Climate and Environment \(SPACE\)"](#) to address the three crises of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, which was welcomed by the participating countries.



ERIA-DISC inauguration ceremony (24 August 2023, Credit: ERIA).

● Investing in digital and green

While ASEAN-related ministerial meetings were held in various locations, [the inauguration ceremony of the ASEAN Economic Research Institute for East Asia \(ERIA\) Digital Innovation and Sustainable Economy Centre \(DISC\)](#) was jointly organised by the Indonesian Government and ERIA in Jakarta on 24 August, which I attended on behalf of the Government of Japan.

The ceremony began with a welcome address by ERIA President WATANABE Tetsuya and a keynote speech by Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Airlanga Hartanto. The event was followed by the DISC launch declaration and video introduction, then a dialogue between Indonesian start-up executives and Minister Airlanga continued. Digitalisation, decarbonisation and innovation panel discussions also took place. All those present, including myself, felt as if we were the 'birth parents' of DISC. Japan has contributed approximately JPY 5 billion to the launch of the DISC.

DISC is a virtual and face-to-face platform for policy practitioners, business stakeholders and researchers to achieve economic transformation towards digitally-led and sustainable growth, addressing digital trade, data governance, innovation and entrepreneurship as priorities and aiming for digital and green synergies.



East Asia Summit (EAS) Senior Officials Meeting (SOM)
(3 Aug 2023, Credit: the ASEAN Secretariat)

● **From politics and security to economic and social, cultural and human exchange**

Preparations for the ASEAN Summit in September are also making progress: the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) and related meetings were held in Bali from 2-4 August, with the attendance of YAMADA Shigeo, then Deputy Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs from Japan, and myself. At the EAS SOM we had a frank exchange of views on regional and international issues and preparations for the September Summit.

As described above, the regional cooperation framework centred on ASEAN is

characterised by the development of cooperation and exchange in a wide range of fields, from political and security affairs to economic, social and cultural affairs and human exchange, not only between all ASEAN Member States and Japan, but also under a multi-layered framework with other partner countries. As we deepen cooperation and exchange in our respective areas of expertise, we can open new possibilities by getting interested in initiatives in other fields and mutually collaborating and communicating with each other. From the Mission of Japan to ASEAN in Jakarta, I would also like to contribute to further development of ASEAN-Japan cooperation by providing updates on how cooperation and exchanges in a wide range of fields are developing.

Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
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