

Newsletter from the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
No. 13: Trusted Partners

27 December 2023



The Commemorative Summit for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation Banquet hosted by Prime Minister KISHIDA and Mrs. KISHIDA
(16 December 2023, Credit: Cabinet Public Affairs Office)

From 16-18 December, the [Commemorative Summit for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation](#) was held in Tokyo. The official program started with a banquet hosted by Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio and Mrs. KISHIDA at the State Guest House. The next day, the Commemorative Summit, a press conference and gala dinner took place at the hotel. On the last day, a luncheon hosted by economic organisations and the Tea Reception by Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress at the Imperial Palace were held. During that time, many other events, such as the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) Leaders Meeting and bilateral Summit and Foreign Ministers Meetings also took place at the Prime Ministers' Office separately. I travelled to Tokyo to take charge of the negotiation for the outcome documents and attended many events, where I was able to feel the excitement of the historic meeting. A major achievement of this meeting was the adoption of a Joint Vision Statement and the Implementation

Plan by ASEAN-Japan leaders, confirming to deepen cooperation for the next 50 years as “Trusted Partners”.

Earlier this month, I also undertook other activities: attending a session on the Survey of ASEAN Peoples’ Perception on China, India, Japan, and the US; travelling to Lao PDR, the ASEAN Chair in 2024; and hosting a meeting with the ASEAN Association (ASEAN-Kai). In this edition of the Ambassador's Newsletter, I would like to review a series of events and achievements with you during this month.



FPCI Conference on Indonesian Foreign Policy (CIFP) 2023 during
'Living Among Giants' session (2 December 2023)

● Survey of ASEAN People’s Perception on China, India, Japan, and the US

On 2 December, [Conference on Indonesian Foreign Policy \(CIFP\) 2023](#), organised by a local think tank, FPCI, was held and attended by about 10,000 people - mainly youth. I attended the session, "[Living Among Giants](#)" with the presentation on the outcomes of the "[Survey of ASEAN Peoples’ Perception on](#)

[China, India, Japan, and the US](#)", co-conducted by FPCI and ERIA from August to September this year.

According to the survey, Japan is the most favourable partner in ASEAN. Japan is ranked at the first in many categories, as the most: reliable, dependable, respectable and credible, compliant with international law, consistent supporter of ASEAN-centrality, strongest projection of soft power, and importantly, loyal partner in supporting ASEAN's initiatives and mechanism. The panelists concluded the Fukuda Doctrine, ODA, and other forms of support made significant contributions as the main reasons for Japan's title as 'the most favourable partner for ASEAN'.

I conveyed that Japan would not take this result for granted and would further strengthen our efforts on the occasion of the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit to be held this month".



Meeting with Lao PDR Deputy Foreign Minister
H.E. Mr. Thongphane SAVANPHET
(5 December 2023)

- **Visit to Lao PDR, the next ASEAN Chair**

The following week, 4-6 December, I made my first visit to Lao PDR, the country to assume the ASEAN Chairmanship 2024, in preparation for next year's ASEAN-related meetings. When I arrived at the airport in the capital city, Vientiane, I found [a monumental stone](#) with Japan and Lao PDR flags. I learned that Japan had supported the expansion of the airport terminal building. I was pleased to see how the project was utilised to a great extent.

[In Lao PDR](#), I met with Deputy Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Thongphane Savanphet (ASEAN SOM Leader), Deputy Director General Mr. Chanpasith Sengphaathit, Former Minister to the Prime Minister's Office H.E. Alounkeo Kittikhoun, and the Lao Diplomatic Club president Mr. Sayakane Sisouvong (also former Deputy Secretary General of ASEAN) to be briefed on Laos' priorities as the next ASEAN Chair and to learn its policies on key ASEAN issues. In 2024, it will be the third time for Lao PDR to be Chair of ASEAN following 2004 and 2016, since it joined ASEAN in 1997. The country displayed its preparedness to make the most of the opportunity.

The theme of Lao PDR's ASEAN Chairmanship is 'ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience'. An official [website](#) has already been launched, with a section on the Japan intends to make use of the outcomes of the Commemorative Summit to make a positive contribution.

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Roundtable meeting with the ASEAN-Kai (8 December 2023).

● **Contribution of Japanese companies to ASEAN-Japan cooperation**

On 8 December, I invited the members of the ASEAN-Kai to my official residence for discussion and preparation ahead of the Commemorative Summit. The ASEAN-Kai is a community of Japanese companies in Jakarta to enhance ASEAN-Japan cooperation, started in 2011 when the Mission of Japan to ASEAN was established.

Since the beginning of the year, Japanese companies in the region have provided valuable advice and have taken part in a series of events throughout the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. In particular, they extended cooperation through participating in the [15th Dialogue between the ASEAN Secretary-General and the Federation of Japanese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of ASEAN \(FJCCIA\)](#) in August, opening booths at the [ASEAN-Japan Fair](#) in September, opening booths, contributing prizes at the [Golden Friendship Walk & Run](#) in November, organising the Jakarta Japan Matsuri ([Jakarta Japan Festival](#)) and participating in the [JETRO organized seminar](#). We are truly grateful for their support in enhancing Japan's presence in ASEAN and acting as a bridge between ASEAN and Japan.

Business is the engine in strengthening ASEAN-Japan relations. We intend to further promote such collaboration in the future.



Networking lunch with Asia's Next Generation Leaders (16 December 2023).

•Young Business Leaders' Summit, Generation Z Business Leaders' Summit and Economic Co-Creation Forum

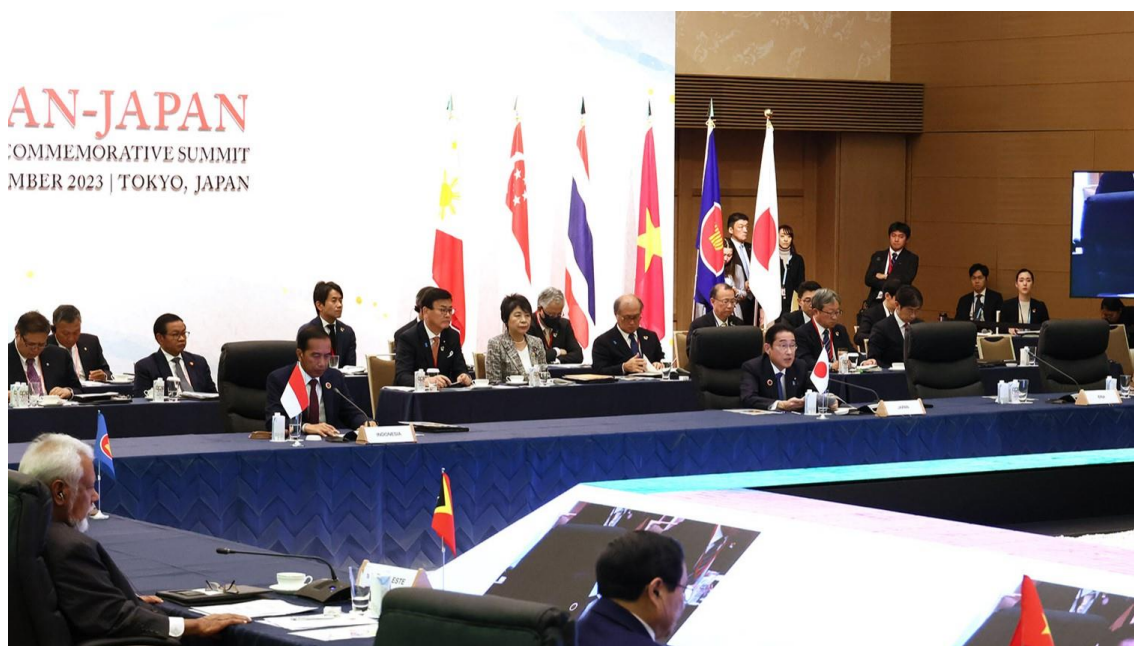
As pre-events of the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit, [the ASEAN-Japan Young Business Leaders' Summit and Generation Z Business Leaders' Summit](#) were held in Karuizawa from 13-15 December, and the [ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-Creation Forum](#) was held at Roppongi Hills in Tokyo on 16 December.

During Young Business Leaders' Summit, the young business leaders held their meeting from 13 to 14 September, while the generation Z entrepreneurs in their 20s did from 14 to 15 September. Following Prime Minister KISHIDA's [video message](#), they held discussions and compiled a '[Joint Declaration](#)', which was handed over to the Prime Minister KISHIDA and President Joko Widodo on 16 September.

The ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-Creation Forum was held on 16 September to promote co-creation by ASEAN and Japan. It featured [Prime Minister KISHIDA's video message](#) and speeches by economic ministers from some ASEAN countries. During the forum, panel discussions by leaders from the public and

private sectors and ERIA session were held, and about 70 MOUs were signed.

Amidst the preparations for the Commemorative Summit, I also went to the summit venue at Roppongi Hills and greeted stakeholders at the ERIA session and had a networking lunch with the next generation of Asian leaders. I truly felt the momentum of ASEAN-Japan co-creation and the tremendous enthusiasm of the participants.



ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit in Tokyo
(17 December 2023, Credit: Cabinet Public Affairs Office)

● Commemorative Summit of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation

The Commemorative Summit began in the evening of 16 December ([video](#)). On the first day, a [banquet was hosted by Prime Minister KISHIDA and his spouse at the State Guest House](#). Prime Minister KISHIDA conveyed Japan's key message in his opening address entitled "[Striving for Peace and Prosperity through Co-creation based on Trust](#)", and during dinner demonstrations of Japan's proud culinary culture, sushi, and the exquisite skills of craftsmanship in the traditional art of Amezaiku (candy craft) were presented.

On 17 December, the [Commemorative Summit](#) was held at the Hotel Okura Tokyo from morning till early afternoon, under four agenda: (1) Review of ASEAN-Japan relations, (2) Partners for Peace and Stability & Regional and International

Issues, (3) Heart to Heart Partners across Generation (Working Lunch) and (4) Partners for Co-creation of Economy and Society of the Future. After the discussion, a [Joint Vision Statement](#) and an [Implementation Plan](#) were adopted. A [press conference](#) was then held by Prime Minister KISHIDA and President of the Republic of Indonesia, H.E. Mr. Joko Widodo, and [the outcomes of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation / the Commemorative Summit](#) were announced by the Japanese side.

In the evening, a [lighting ceremony](#) of the Tokyo Tower in the colours of ASEAN flag - red, yellow and blue – took place, attended by Prime Minister KISHIDA and his spouse, ASEAN leaders and their spouses, participants of the ASEAN-Japan Student Conference and students from ASEAN countries studying at the National Defence Academy of Japan. This was followed by a [gala dinner](#) hosted by the Prime Minister KISHIDA and his spouse, attended by about 200 people, including ASEAN leaders and their spouses, as well as persons concerned from political parties, related organisations, private companies, and cultural figures, who enjoyed performances and cuisines that represents Japanese tradition.



Asian Zero Emissions Community (AZEC) Summit
(18 Dec 2023, photo courtesy of the Cabinet Public Affairs Office)

● Asian Zero Emissions Community (AZEC) Summit

On 18 December, Prime Minister KISHIDA convened the [Asia Zero Emissions Community \(AZEC\) Leaders Meeting](#) at the Prime Minister's Office. In his [opening](#)

[remarks](#), he emphasised the importance of achieving the common goal of net zero emissions through various pathways and simultaneously achieving decarbonisation, economic growth, and energy security and expressed Japan's willingness to initiate and share its technologies and experiences through the AZEC platform. The leaders of AZEC partner countries expressed their support for the AZEC concept and high expectations for AZEC's activities and adopted the [AZEC Leaders' Joint Statement](#).

This was followed by [a luncheon](#) jointly organised by Keidanren and JCCI, attended by about 40 people from ASEAN and about 80 people from Japan. [Prime Minister KISHIDA](#), President Joko Widodo, Keidanren Chairman MASAKAZU Tokura and JCCI Vice Chairman TAKASHI Uyeno delivered opening remarks.

Later in the evening, the Tea Reception hosted by Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress was held [at the Imperial Palace](#), which was widely reported in [Japan](#) and [abroad](#).

During the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit, Prime Minister KISHIDA and Minister KAMIKAWA Yoko held [bilateral summits and foreign ministers' meetings](#), whilst Mrs. KISHIDA Yuko and other leaders spouses [met with students](#) and [watched Noh performance](#) under the Partners Programme. Minister KAMIKAWA Yoko also held a dialogue on [Women, Peace and Security \(WPS\)](#) with Indonesian Foreign Minister H.E. Retno Marsudi.



Celebration Dinner on the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and

Cooperation, hosted by the Permanent Representative of Thailand
(22 December 2023, Credit: Permanent Mission of Thailand)

● **Trusted Partners**

A significant outcome of this year's meeting was that the leaders of ASEAN and Japan defined themselves as "Trusted Partners", as in subtitle of the [Joint Vision Statement](#), set out a vision for the future and a concrete action plan, and confirmed to deepen their cooperation for the next 50 years. The 50th anniversary was an occasion for us to look back on history and to look ahead for the future. I feel this was a great opportunity to reaffirm the importance of the 'heart-to-heart relationship of mutual trust' and to convey this message within and beyond the region.

Many [initiatives](#) have been launched on the occasion of the Commemorative Summit. We would like to make our outmost effort to use the 50th anniversary as a starting point to promote new initiatives together with stakeholders from a wide range of fields, and to expand the network of trust and co-creation. We aspire to bring the benefits to all corners of society in both ASEAN and Japan, as well as to the Indo-Pacific and the world.

After the Commemorative Summit, a [dinner](#) was held in Jakarta to celebrate the closing of 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, hosted by Ambassador Urawadee Sriphiromya, the Permanent Representative of Thailand, ASEAN's coordinating country to Japan, I conveyed my gratitude to the Permanent Representatives of ASEAN countries and other partners for their hospitality and celebrated our achievements together. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the readers of this Newsletter for their continuous support. I hope that we can build on our history of trust and co-create the future together for the next 50 years. Please enjoy a happy holiday season over the New Year!

Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
Kiya Masahiko