

Newsletter from the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
No. 15: From Wrap-Up to Implementation

29 February 2024



Wrap-Up Symposium of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation
(21 February 2024)

In February in Jakarta, a wide range of activities started moving ahead. I attended various meetings and events every week, starting from a meeting between ERIA, Ambassadors of ERIA Member States and Dialogue Partners. In particular, the Wrap-Up Symposium of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation and the Emperor's Birthday Reception were attended by many participants with great success.

Across ASEAN countries and Japan, various meetings and exchange programs also took place this month. I myself went back to Japan to attend the Conference of the Ambassadors in Asian and Oceanian Countries and had the opportunity to exchange views with relevant ministries and experts to follow up the commitments during the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation last year.

In this edition of the Newsletter, I would like to review and wrap-up the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, to explain the current challenges and concrete initiatives to promote implementation, and to consider to work with you how ASEAN-Japan cooperation can further be promoted in the future.



Meeting between ERIA, Ambassadors of ERIA Member States,
and Dialogue Partners (6 February 2024)

● Enhanced cooperation with ERIA

On 6 February, the [meeting between ERIA, Ambassadors of ERIA Member States, and Dialogue Partners](#) took place at the ASEAN Headquarters. ERIA reported at the outset that Ramon M. Lopez, former Philippines Secretary, Department of Trade and Industry, was newly elected as Chair at their [Board meeting](#). ERIA then presented their contributions towards Indonesian Chairmanship and the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation as well as their plan of activities under Lao Chairmanship this year, followed by exchange of views.

With the launch of ERIA Digital Innovation and Sustainable Economy Centre (E-DISC) in August and the outcomes of the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit in December last year, I explained Japan's willingness to actively promote cooperation with ERIA in the following five areas:

1. Creating a platform to promote Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC),
2. Decarbonisation of industries, including the automotive industry,
3. Promoting digital economy and start-up ecosystem,
4. Human resource development through collaboration between industry, government, and academia,
5. Addressing challenges in the health and environment sectors.

I expressed my hope that ERIA will strengthen its function as a platform of public and private sectors to co-create solutions to economic and social challenges in the region.



JENESYS Japan-ASEAN Sports (Rugby) × SDGs Exchange (21 February 2024)

● ASEAN-Japan meetings and exchanges

From the end of January through February, various meetings and exchanges were held between ASEAN and Japan. On 30 January, the [13th Japan-ASEAN Defense Vice-Ministerial Forum](#) was held in Tokyo. The forum reaffirmed the “Japan-ASEAN Ministerial Initiative for Enhanced Defense Cooperation (JASMINE)” at the Vice-Ministerial level and discussed the implementation of this new initiative.

On 2 February, the [Japan-ASEAN Digital Ministers Meeting](#) in Singapore and was [attended by WATANABE Koichi](#), State Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan. The Japan-ASEAN Digital Work Plan for 2024, including initiatives on AI governance and cybersecurity, was approved. On 3 February, Minister for Digital Transformation KONO Taro hosted the [Ministerial Session on the Future of Data Governance in Asia and Operationalisation of “Data Free Flow with Trust \(DFFT\)”](#), co-chaired by Josephine Teo, Minister for Communications and Information of Singapore. The meeting discussed the future collaborations between Japan and the Asian countries.

From 19 to 26 February, about 80 students from 10 ASEAN countries and Timor-Leste visited Tokyo, Fukuoka and Saitama to participate in the [JENESYS Japan-ASEAN Sports\(Rugby\)×SDGs Exchange](#). They paid [a courtesy call to KOMURA Masahiko](#), Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs. A participant from Laos, the ASEAN Chair, expressed gratitude and hope for experiencing activities to promote SDGs action through Rugby and sports with friends from other ASEAN countries. As such, exchange activities of this year already started.



Wrap-Up Symposium of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation
(21 February 2024)

● Wrap-Up Symposium

On 21 February, the [Wrap-Up Symposium of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation](#), entitled “Co-Creating the Future with Trust,” was held at ERIA’s Digital Innovation and Sustainable Economy Centre (E-DISC). It was coorganised by our Mission, the Permanent Mission of Thailand and FPCI to confirm the outcomes of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation last year and to discuss future directions, with about 80 participants in person and about 200 participants [via YouTube live](#).

After the opening remarks, a [video](#) highlighting the series of commemorative events including the Commemorative Summit. It was followed by the first session on socio-economic challenges and the second session on the ASEAN-centred regional architecture, with keynote speeches by ERIA President Mr. WATANABE Tetsuya and former Indonesian Foreign Minister H.E. Hassan Wirayuda, and subsequent panel discussions.

In my [closing remarks](#), I expressed our renewed commitment to promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the region and the world through “co-creation” with ASEAN based on “trust”, thus making this symposium a new starting point of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation to this end.



Emperor's Birthday Reception (21 February 2024)

● Emperor's Birthday Reception

The Wrap-Up Symposium was followed by the [Emperor's Birthday Reception](#), co-organised by the Embassy of Japan in Indonesia and the Mission of Japan to ASEAN, at a hotel in Jakarta.

As the biggest event of the year, attended by more than 1,000 Indonesian and ASEAN officials and people with ties to Japan, the event was a great opportunity to deepen exchanges while enjoying Japanese food and drinks. Exhibitions by Japanese companies in a wide range of fields were made at the venue.

As I proposed a toast, I explained that ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit last year was attended by President Joko Widodo as Co-Chair and that the Joint Vision Statement and its Implementation Plan were jointly adopted by us as "Trusted Partners". I also pledged to work together towards a brighter future of Japan, Indonesia, and ASEAN, blessed with peace and prosperity in the region and the world.

I am grateful for the opportunity of the Wrap-Up Symposium and Emperor's Birthday Reception, as I could convey my gratitude to so many people who greatly contributed to the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation since the beginning of last year.



Dinner with eminent academics on ASEAN-Japan relations (26 February 2024)

● From Wrap-Up to Implementation.

From 26 February, I came back to Japan to attend the Conference of the Ambassadors to Asian and Oceanian Countries. On the first day, I met the eminent academics, including the members of the [Expert Panel for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation](#), to receive feedbacks on their assessment of last year's events and outcomes as well as challenges for implementation in the future. They pointed out that key parts of the recommendations have been reflected in the Joint Vision Statement and its Implementation Plan, while there are a number of points which would need to be realised in the course of implementation in the future. I expressed my hope to continue working with them.

I also visited to relevant ministries and agencies responsible for new major initiatives, such as the Partnership to Co-create a Future with the Next Generation: WA Project 2.0, promotion of sustainable researchers network, co-creation of next generation industries, and Asia Zero Emissions Community (AZEC), to discuss implementation for the future. I also made a [lecture](#) on ASEAN-Japan cooperation to promote the “rule of law”.

Through a series of events and meetings this month, I felt that the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation had moved from the stage of wrap-up to that of implementation. I hope to create a new era of ASEAN and Japan with all the people I met this month and also with the readers of this Newsletter.

Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
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