

**Remarks by H.E. Mr. KIYA Masahiko,  
Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN,  
at the Launch of the ASEAN Blue Economy Innovation Project**

- H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary-General of ASEAN
- H.E. Satvinder Singh, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Economic Community,
- Ms. Joanne Tan, Chair, ASEAN Coordinating Committee on SMSE,
- Mr. Norimasa Shimomura, Resident Representative, UNDP Indonesia,
- Excellencies, Distinguished participants, Ladies and gentlemen,

**(1. Introduction)**

It is my great honour to have the opportunity to attend this launch event of the ASEAN Blue Economy Innovation Project and to deliver my remarks.

Thank you all for taking time out of your busy schedules to join us today.

**(2. Why we work together for ASEAN Blue Economy Framework?)**

Many of you may remember the ASEAN Summit in Jakarta in September last year. It was on that occasion that the ASEAN Blue Economy Framework was launched.

We welcome the adoption of this framework by the ASEAN leaders and commend Indonesia, last year's ASEAN Chair, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) for their joint endeavours.

Promoting the Blue Economy is an urgent and important issue from both economic and environmental perspectives.

Moreover, maritime cooperation is one of the priority areas of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), which will contribute to peace and prosperity not only in ASEAN but also in the Indo-Pacific region as a whole.

Japan is willing to cooperate with ASEAN in this field.

Even before the adoption of this framework, UNDP Director Shimomura, who has been passionate about blue economy, and I have been discussing how we can promote triangular cooperation with ASEAN and UNDP on blue economy.

As a first step of our cooperation, we are confidently launching the "ASEAN Blue Economy Innovation Project" today.

### (3. Why the Innovation Project?)

Then, why are we focusing on "innovation"?

Last year marked the 50th year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, and we have formulated the ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-Creation Vision. One of the four pillars of this vision is "Promoting Open Innovation beyond Borders".

We were greatly encouraged by the fact that one of the three strategies of the Blue Economy Framework is also "Blue Science, Technology, and Innovation".

I would like to express my gratitude to UNDP for making full use of its expertise in this area and for leading the institutional design of the project.

### (4. The key players are MSMEs and start-ups from ASEAN)

As we start this initiative, I would like to emphasize that the key to success of this project is the MSMEs and start-ups from the ASEAN Member States and Timor-Leste who apply to this challenge.

We are offering each of the 60 winning innovators and entrepreneurs up to US\$40,000 of financial backing as well as incubation support.

We are hoping for a large number of applications and would like to request the Governments of ASEAN Member States, Sectoral Bodies and the ASEAN Secretariat, as well as private companies, civil society organizations and media, to cooperate in publicizing this project. The application is open until 31 May.

We are also planning to organize matching opportunities for the winners with Japanese enterprises. We hope that our efforts will be scaled up through the cooperation with the Japanese private sector.

(Conclusion)

ASEAN-Japan cooperation has just started a new journey toward the next 50 years. Japan is determined to continue encouraging ASEAN's success in this new frontier of blue economy and innovation.

I look forward to working with all of you to make this project impactful to the people in the entire region. I am hopeful that this project will serve as a catalyst for further cooperation and investment in this field, and ASEAN as a whole!

Thank you very much for your attention.

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