

Newsletter from the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
No. 19: Progress during half a year after the Commemorative Summit

28 June 2024



ASEAN-Japan Forum (25 June 2024, credit: MOFA Thailand)

Six months have already passed since the Commemorative Summit for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation took place last December. The annual ASEAN events for this year have reached its halfway point, with preparations in full swing for the ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' Meeting in July and the Summit in October.

This month, the ASEAN+3 (APT), the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Senior Officials' Meetings (SOM) were held for the first time this year in Vientiane, Lao PDR, hosting as ASEAN Chair. In addition, ASEAN also holds annual Ambassador-level meetings and SOM meetings under the framework of ASEAN+1 with 11 Dialogue Partners. For Japan, the ASEAN-Japan Joint Cooperation Committee (AJJCC) was held in Jakarta and the ASEAN-Japan Forum in Bangkok respectively this month. Furthermore, a joint visit to Timor-Leste with Ambassadors of the U.S. and the Republic of Korea to ASEAN was successfully conducted.

In this edition, I would like to report a series of meetings and events this month and to look back with you on the progress made during half a year after the Commemorative Summit.



EAS SOM (7 June 2024, credit: ASEAN Secretariat)

●ASEAN-related SOMs

During the week of 3 June, ASEAN Member States and External Partners gathered at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Vientiane, Lao PDR, for Senior Officials' Meetings (SOMs).

While ASEAN-only SOMs had been held several times, ASEAN Plus Three (APT), East Asia Summit (EAS) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) SOMs were held for the first time this year. Japan was represented by Mr. HAYASHI Makoto, Ambassador in charge of Cooperation with ASEAN, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and I participated in the APT and EAS SOMs.

[The APT SOM](#) was held on 7 June. The discussion focused on reviewing the progress of cooperation under the co-chairs of Lao PDR and Japan, following the transfer of coordinator for +3 countries from the Republic of Korea to Japan, after the Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Summit held in late May. [The EAS SOM](#) was held on the same day. We exchanged views on directions for outcome documents as well as regional and international issues in preparation for the EAS Foreign Ministers' Meeting and the Summit this year. Many officials, including from ARF participating countries, joined the gala dinner that evening and deepened exchanges while enjoying Lao cultural performances.



ASEAN-Japan Joint Cooperation Committee (10 June 2024, credit: ASEAN Secretariat)

● ASEAN-Japan Joint Cooperation Committee

[The ASEAN-Japan Joint Cooperation Committee \(AJJCC\)](#) was held at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta on 10 June. In the first half of each year, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), composed of Permanent Representatives of 10 ASEAN Member States, ASEAN Secretariat and an observer, hold Ambassador-level Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meetings with representatives of 11 Dialogue Partners to review the progress of cooperation.

ASEAN designates Country Coordinators for respective Dialogue Partners on a rotating basis for a three-year term. Thailand has been the Country Coordinator for Japan until the ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' Meeting this July. Therefore, Thailand Permanent Representative H.E. Phantipha Iamsudha Ekarohit and I co-chaired the meeting.

The AJJCC this year was an important opportunity to follow up the new Joint Vision Statement and Implementation Plan after the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation and the Commemorative Summit last year. With full cooperation of the relevant ministries and agencies from both ASEAN and Japan, we reviewed the status of progress and confirmed that 81 of 130 items (approx. 62%) of the Implementation Plan have already been addressed within six months since its adoption in December last year.

I explained in my [presentation](#) major progress in 43 areas of cooperation to the ASEAN side. I am hoping that it helped deepen ASEAN's understanding of Japan's proactive contributions. It was also very fruitful for me to discuss regional and international issues.



CPR + 3 (13 June 2024, credit: ASEAN Secretariat)

● Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN Plus Three (CPR + 3)

In the same week on 13 June, [the Committee of Permanent Representatives Plus Three \(CPR+3\)](#) was held at the ASEAN Headquarters/Secretariat. Under the [ASEAN Plus Three \(APT\) framework](#), meetings with CPR are held twice a year, before the APT Foreign Ministers' Meeting and the APT Summit respectively, to review the progress of cooperation.

As in the previous week's APT SOM, the meeting was co-chaired by the ASEAN Chair Lao PDR and Japan, since the trilateral coordinating country was transferred from the Republic of Korea to Japan, after the Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Summit in late May. At this meeting, the three countries reported the progress of cooperation, and ASEAN Member States and the ASEAN Secretariat made concrete proposals for cooperation in various areas.

More than a quarter of a century since its launch in 1997, the APT framework has delivered numerous results, including in financial and agricultural sectors, with many sectorals (ministerial processes) and institutions such as the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Fund (APTCF) in place. We will continue to further deepen our multi-layered cooperation with ASEAN, drawing on the strengths of respective frameworks, including ASEAN-Japan, APT, EAS, and ARF.



Courtesy call on President Ramos-Horta by the Ambassadors of U.S., ROK and Japan to ASEAN
(20 June 2024, credit: U.S. Mission to ASEAN)

● **Joint visit to Timor-Leste by Ambassadors of Japan-U.S.-ROK to ASEAN**

From 19-21 June, [Ambassadors KIYA with the Ambassadors of the United States \(U.S.\) and the Republic of Korea \(ROK\) to ASEAN paid a joint visit to Timor-Leste.](#) As concrete efforts based on the Joint Statement adopted at the [the Japan-U.S.-ROK Summit](#) held at Camp David, U.S., in August 2023 and to support Timor-Leste's full membership to ASEAN.

During the visit, along with U.S. Ambassador Yohannes Abraham and ROK Ambassador Lee Jang-keun, we paid courtesy calls on H.E. Dr. José Ramos-Horta, President of Timor-Leste, H.E. Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister, and met with H.E. Mrs. Milena Marina da Costa Rangel, Vice Minister for ASEAN Affairs., and exchanged views with Ms. Olufunmilayo (Funmi) Aboosed Balogun-Alexander, UN Resident Coordinator.

Furthermore, we gave a joint seminar at the National University of Timor-Leste, met with relevant Timor-Leste ministries involved in preparations for the formal accession to ASEAN, and exchanged views with Ms. Olufunmilayo (Funmi) Aboosedo Balogun-Alexander, UN Resident Coordinator. I also learnt a lot from [the briefing by JICA expert Koji Sakane](#), who is my longtime friend and has a deep knowledge in assisting peacebuilding.

Through the visit, I deepened my understanding about the importance of Timor-Leste's full membership to ASEAN and renewed my determination to work together with the U.S. and ROK to promote cooperation in a mutually reinforcing manner. I felt myself great achievements of wide-ranging support Japan has provided to Timor-Leste over 25 years, including the dispatch of Japan Self-Defence Force and police to UN Peacekeeping Operations, since hosting the Donors' Meeting for Timor-Leste in Tokyo in 1999, prior to Timor-Leste's independence.



ASEAN-Japan Forum (25 June 2024)

● ASEAN-Japan Forum

From 24 to 26 June, I travelled to Bangkok to attend the [39th ASEAN-Japan Forum](#). As I explained at the beginning of this Newsletter, ASEAN holds Senior Officials' Meetings (SOMs) every year with 11 Dialogue Partners under the framework of ASEAN+1. The ASEAN-Japan Forum was established in 1977 and this is the 39th Forum. Japan's SOM leader, Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs (Political Affairs), attended from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and co-chaired the meeting with the Permanent Secretary of the Foreign Ministry of Thailand, Ms. Eksiri Pintaruchi (Thai SOM leader).

On 24 June, we were invited to a dinner hosted by Ms. Eksiri Pintaruchi and were welcomed with Thai cuisine which incorporated Japanese ingredients such as Hokkaido scallops, miso, and edamame. The following day, after an in-depth exchange of views between the ASEAN Member States and Japan on future directions of ASEAN-Japan cooperation and regional and international issues, the meeting concluded with remarks by Timor-Leste as observer and the Co-Chairs.

On the final day, the ASEAN Department of the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised an excursion to [visit a Japanese village in Ayutthaya](#) and other places by the former train of JR Hokkaido, KIHA 183. This deepened exchanges among the forum participants as well as Embassy staff of ASEAN Member States and Japan in Thailand. I am thankful to the Thai Government for their kind hospitality towards Japan.



ASEAN-G7 Legal and Justice Next Leaders Forum (26 June 2024, credit: ASEAN Secretariat)

- **Progress during half a year after the Commemorative Summit**

On 19 June, while I was away on my business trip, the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR) co-organised [a Kick-Off Roundtable on Women, Peace and Security \(WPS\) and Women in the Digital Economy \(WDE\)](#) in Jakarta. Foreign Minister of Japan Ms Kamikawa delivered [a video message](#) on this occasion. In late June, ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General (Community & Corporate Affairs) H.E. Nararya Soeprapto visited Japan to participate in the International Participants Meetings (IPM) of the Osaka Kansai Expo in Nara and to deliver an [opening remarks](#) at [the ASEAN-G7 Legal and Justice Next Leaders Forum](#) in Tokyo.

As I explained above, during the six months after the Commemorative Summit for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Cooperation last December, concrete cooperation has been making progress in wide areas. Follow-up efforts and discussions on the next steps are underway, taking advantage of the opportunities such as the ASEAN-Japan Joint Cooperation Committee (AJJCC) and the ASEAN-Japan Forum. To materialize and accelerate the momentum in the past six months, I look forward to working with you all. Thank you for your continued support.

Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
KIYA Masahiko