

Newsletter from the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
No. 21: Towards the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings

28 August 2024



ASEAN+3 Preparatory Senior Officials' Meeting (APT Prep-SOM)
(22 August 2024, in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR)

After the ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' Meetings in late July, it is now time to push towards the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings in the first half of October. In late August, the ASEAN+3 Preparatory Senior Officials' Meeting (APT Prep-SOM), the East Asia Summit Preparatory Senior Officials' Meeting (EAS Prep-SOM), and Connectivity-related Meetings were held in Luang Prabang, the ancient capital of Lao PDR, and I visited the city for the first time. With only a month and a half to go before the Summit Meetings, it was an important opportunity to confirm the concrete arrangements and the direction of the outcome documents.

This month was also packed with events such as the ASEAN Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) training, in which Japan cooperated; an exchange of views with participants of the ASEAN Junior Fellowship Programme (AJFP), which Japan joined the cooperation this year; the ASEAN Day commemoration; the Asia Zero Emissions Community (AZEC) Ministerial Meeting; and more. The events were successful in steadily advancing cooperation and exchanges between Japan and ASEAN.

In this edition of the Ambassador's Newsletter, I would like to report on a series of meetings and events, including the Prep-SOMs, and to reflect on their outcomes and significance together with you.



Closing ceremony of the ASEAN Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Training
(2 August 2024, in Tangerang, Indonesia)

● ASEAN Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Training

The [ASEAN Youth, Peace and Security \(YPS\) Training](#) "Enhancing the Role of Youth in Peacebuilding" was held in South Tangerang, outside Jakarta, from 29 July to 2 August. The training was organised by the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR) in cooperation with the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) with the participation of 34 youths from government agencies, NGOs and universities from 10 ASEAN countries, Timor-Leste and Japan.

The training invited peacebuilding experts from the ASEAN region and worked to improve the participants' capacities for conflict resolution and peacebuilding and to promote YPS in ASEAN through participatory workshops and other activities. The training was [filmed](#) and a report will be produced in the future. From Japan, Prof. YAMANAKA Akiko, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General of ERIA and former Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, attended the opening ceremony and delivered a keynote speech. I attended the closing ceremony, gave remarks and exchanged views with [three participants from Japan](#).

Since the adoption of [UN Security Council Resolution 2250](#) on [Youth, Peace and Security \(YPS\)](#) in 2015, [initiatives on YPS](#) have gradually progressed in the ASEAN arena. Based on the Implementation Plan for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, Japan has initiated cooperation on YPS for the first time. We would like to support ASEAN's efforts on YPS as well as Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in various ways in the future.



Exchange of views on ASEAN-Japan cooperation with AJFP participants
(14 August 2024, at the residence of the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN)

● ASEAN Junior Fellowship Programme (AJFP)

From 2 to 31 August, 22 young government officials from 10 ASEAN countries and Timor-Leste visited Jakarta under the ASEAN Junior Fellowship Programme (AJFP) to participate in a number of events held this month and to exchange views with a wide range of stakeholders.

The AJFP was launched in 2021 by the initiative of Brunei, the Chair of that year, and first programme started in 2022. The third programme is taking place this year. In the AJFP, outstanding young government officials who are in charge of ASEAN-related affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant ministries and agencies are selected and briefed on the latest developments in ASEAN by a wide range of stakeholders, including the ASEAN Secretariat, and exchange their views and opinions. Japan expressed its support for this programme on the occasion of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation last year and doubled the number of participants to 22 for the third programme this year by the cooperation of JAIF.

At the [AJFP opening ceremony](#) on 2 August, Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr. Kao Kim Hourn and Permanent Representative of Brunei Darussalam to ASEAN Ambassador Latifah Zaini expressed their appreciation for Japan's contribution to doubling the number of participants. On 14 August, 22 participants in the programme were invited to my residence to [exchange views](#) on ASEAN-Japan cooperation in the future. Following my [opening presentation](#), the participants asked many questions, including in the areas of their own responsibility, making it a very meaningful event that will lead to concrete follow-up.



Japanese food booth at ASEAN Day
(8 August 2024, at ASEAN Secretariat Hall)

● ASEAN Day events

On 8 August, [ASEAN Day](#), a number of events were held at the ASEAN Headquarters and Secretariat. The main event in the main hall of the New Building was broadcast on [video](#), which included remarks by Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr. Kao Kim Hourn and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia H.E. Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi and a video message from Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR H.E. Saleumxay Kommasith, followed by an announcement of ASEAN-themed batik, music and dance performances.

An Open House in the Main Hall of the Heritage Building followed. Japan, together with ASEAN Member States, ASEAN Dialogue Partners and the ASEAN centres, had a [food booth](#) ([video](#)), and offered Japanese Cuisine (Onigiri, Karaage, Tsukune and sweets, which you can buy in convenience stores in Indonesia), which were very popular and have gone like hotcakes. We would like to thank Mitsubishi Corporation and Lawson Indonesia for their cooperation. We were honoured to receive Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr. Kao Kim Hourn and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia H.E. Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi at the Japanese food booth.

Next year, the [Osaka-Kansai Expo](#) will be held from 13 April to 13 October, with [ASEAN Day events](#) planned for 8 August at the Expo site. We have also promoted the Osaka-Kansai Expo at the ASEAN Day event. We look forward to promoting ASEAN not only in Jakarta but also in Osaka on ASEAN Day next year.



Asia Zero Emission Centre launch ceremony
(21 August 2024, in Jakarta, credit: METI)

● The 2nd AZEC Ministerial Meeting.

In August, further progress was made on the idea of [Asia Zero Emissions Community \(AZEC\)](#) that was proposed by Japan aiming for decarbonization while supporting economic growth and energy security in Asia. Following its announcement in January 2022, the first AZEC Ministerial Meeting was held in Tokyo in March 2023, followed by the first AZEC Summit Meeting in December 2023 in Tokyo.

On 5 August, the newly appointed Ambassador for the Promotion of the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) and Special Assistant to the Foreign Minister of Japan (former Ambassador to Vietnam), Mr. YAMADA Takio, visited Jakarta and [exchanged views with](#) Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr. Kao Kim Hourn on promoting cooperation towards decarbonisation. On the following day, 6 August, he visited the [ASEAN Centre for Energy \(ACE\)](#) and discussed future cooperation with its Executive Director Dr. Nuki Agya Utama.

The [2nd AZEC Ministerial Meeting](#) was held in Jakarta on 21 August, where a [Joint Statement](#) was adopted, a launch ceremony for the newly established [Asia Zero Emission Centre](#) at the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) took place, about 70 relevant Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) were publicised, and the MOU for cooperation between METI, ADB and ERIA was signed. Preparations are underway to hold the 2nd AZEC Summit Meeting on the occasion of the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings to be held in Vientiane in October this year.



East Asia Summit Preparatory Senior Officials' Meeting (EAS Prep-SOM)

(22 August 2024, in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR, credit: ASEAN Secretariat)

● **Prep-SOM and Connectivity-related Meetings**

In late August, ASEAN SOM-related meetings were held intensively in Luang Prabang, the ancient capital of Lao PDR, where I stayed for five nights from 18 to 23 August.

On 19 August, the [ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee \(ACCC\)](#) convened the ACCC Consultations with Dialogue Partners and other External Partners on Connectivity. In the meeting, the end-term review of the [ASEAN Connectivity Master Plan \(MPAC\) 2025](#) formulated in 2016 and participating in the development of the ASEAN Connectivity Strategic Plan (ACSP) for next year were the major issues, and Dialogues Partners including Japan explained their contributions. The [15th Connectivity Symposium](#), jointly organised by the Lao PDR Chairmanship in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat and ERIA, was held on 23 August, where a wide range of stakeholders deepened discussions on the same issues.

In the morning of 22 August, the [ASEAN +3 Preparatory Senior Officials' Meeting \(APT Prep-SOM\)](#) and the [East Asia Summit Preparatory Senior Officials' Meeting \(EAS Prep-SOM\)](#) were held, and a welcome dinner and numerous bilateral SOM consultations took place before and after the Prep-SOMs. With only a month and a half to go before the Summit Meetings, these meetings provided a useful opportunity to receive updates from the Chair on the concrete arrangements and the direction of the outcome documents, as well as to listen to the views and positions expressed by participating countries.



Questions at the ASEAN Connectivity Symposium
(23 August 2024, in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR)

● From Luang Prabang to Vientiane

The theme for the Lao PDR's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2024 is ["ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience"](#). The series of meetings in Luang Prabang provided a good opportunity to deepen our thoughts not only to address geopolitical challenges, but also to formulate concrete cooperation projects in preparation for the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings in Vientiane in October, and for the adoption of the ASEAN Community Vision (ACV) 2045 and four strategic plans under the Malaysia's Chairmanship next year.

For example, at the ASEAN Connectivity Symposium on 23 August, I asked a question about the need to simultaneously address the three challenges of regulatory harmonisation within ASEAN Member States, cooperation among Dialogue Partners and other External Partners, and private sector investment, and heard inspiring views from the panelists.

This month, the Nippon Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA) issued a special interview report, "My Vision" on the theme ["ASEAN-Japan, Towards a Partnership for the 21st Century"](#), and [my view](#) was also carried. In order for ASEAN and Japan to co-create solutions to various challenges in the Indo-Pacific region, I would like to make a positive contribution towards the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings in October by making the most of our commitment made during the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation last year and by actively formulating impactful cooperation projects.

Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
KIYA Masahiko