

Newsletter from the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN

No.22: Promoting Startups and Innovation

30 September 2024



Meeting with the participants of the pre-event for ASEAN-Japan Future Gen Business Leaders' Summit
(25 September 2024, at the residence of the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN)

How did you spend your time in September? In Jakarta, the Mission of Japan to ASEAN has been promoting ASEAN-Japan cooperation in a wide range of fields while attending various meetings at the ASEAN Headquarters and Secretariat and consultations with national delegations. In Vientiane, the ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meetings and Related Meetings and the ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meetings and Related Meetings were convened, and the ASEAN Business and Human Rights Workshop took place in Bangkok.

This month, I had an opportunity to attend a number of meetings and events related to startups and innovation towards ASEAN-Japan economic co-creation. The Blue Economy Innovation Project Joint Selection Committee, Sea and Human Security Training, report on new initiatives at the ERIA Ambassadors' Meeting, a visit of Myaku-Myaku, the official character of Osaka-Kansai Expo 2025, the pre-event for Future Gen Business Leaders' Summit, Indonesia-Japan Fast Track Pitch launch event, Sport SDGs workshop and much more, which portray the progress of various initiatives focused on the next generation of youth.

In this edition of the Ambassador's Newsletter, I would like to report on a series of these meetings and events to discuss future directions with you.



Closing ceremony for the Jakarta workshop of the “Leaders for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Sea and Human Security” training programme (19 September 2024, at a hotel in Jakarta)

● “Blue Economy Innovation” and “Sea and Human Security”

The [ASEAN Blue Economy Innovation](#) Project, which held its [launch ceremony](#) in May this year, has received more than 1,300 proposals from startups, SMEs, NGOs and universities from 10 ASEAN countries and Timor-Leste, and is now in the selection phase.

On 9 September, the [Joint Selection Committee](#), which comprises Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Economic Community H.E. Satvinder Singh, Resident Representative of UNDP Indonesia Mr. Norimasa Shimomura and myself, was convened to finalize the selection of the proposals. The best 60 companies and organizations will be announced by the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings in October, and further funding and incubation support and business matchmaking with private sector will take place.

On 19 September, the [closing ceremony for the Jakarta workshop](#) “Leaders for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Sea and Human Security” training programme (FOIP Training) was held. [I attended the ceremony, gave a speech](#), and handed over certificates to the 80 participants from 10 ASEAN countries and Timor-Leste, India and Sri Lanka who had completed the 10-day training.

The [FOIP training](#) is being implemented by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) with support from Japan. The first phase of the training, which lasted until the end of August this year, involved more than 400 participants, who completed a two-month online training course; the second phase included face-to-face training for about 80 participants from the Asia region in Jakarta this month and about 80 from the Pacific region in Fiji in October; and the third phase is scheduled for February next year in Japan for 50 participants selected from both regions.



ERIA Ambassadors' Meeting (12 September 2024, at a hotel in Jakarta)

● Report on the new initiative at the ERIA Ambassadors' Meeting

On 12 September, the [ERIA Ambassadors' Meeting](#) (a meeting between ERIA, Ambassadors of ERIA Member States, and Partner Countries) was held. ERIA is a think-tank for ASEAN and East Asia established as an international organisation in 2008 proposed by Japan on the occasion of the East Asia Summit (EAS) in 2005.

At the meeting, ERIA reported on the latest initiatives of the [ERIA Digital Innovation and Sustainable Economy Centre \(E-DISC\)](#) established in August last year, the establishment of the [Asia Zero Emission Center](#) to promote decarbonisation efforts in ASEAN, and the status of preparations for the [ERIA School of Government](#), which aims to strengthen public policy in ASEAN, followed by a discussion on the direction of ERIA's future activities. In the [opening remarks](#), Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, expressed his appreciation and expectations for ERIA's wide-ranging contributions and impressively stated: "to underline that ERIA belong to all of us".

I also expressed my appreciation for ERIA's progressive initiatives, including the E-DISC, the Asia Zero Emissions Center and the ERIA School of Government, and my hope that Japan and a wide range of partners will further deepen their cooperation with ERIA. On 18 September, the ERIA School of Government, promptly held a [Leadership Forum](#) with former Indonesian President Yudhoyono invited. I look forward to further encouraging ERIA's wide-ranging activities and new initiatives.



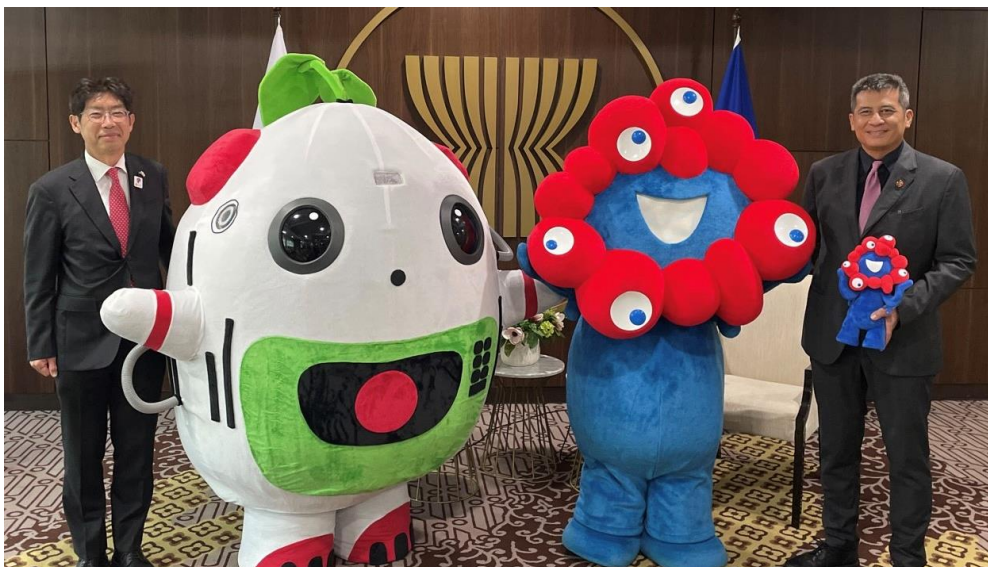
Indonesia-Japan Fast Track Pitch Launch Event (26 September 2024, at E-DISC)

● Future Gen Business Leaders' Summit and Fast Track Pitch

On 25-26 September, a series of pre-events for the ASEAN-Japan Future Gen Business Leaders' Summit and the launch event for the Indonesia-Japan Fast Track Pitch were held.

The ASEAN-Japan Future Generation Business Leaders' Summit was held in Karuizawa last December on the occasion of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, and [its outcomes were handed over to President Joko and Prime Minister Kishida at the Special Summit Meeting](#). In preparation for the next Summit scheduled for December this year, about 20 preparatory members visited Solo and Jakarta, Indonesia, to discuss future issues and the direction of cooperation. I was also briefed about the latest initiatives of both Japan and ASEAN in startups and social entrepreneurship from the participants [at the residence](#) and [the E-DISC](#), and sensed great potential.

The [Indonesia-Japan Fast Track Pitch](#) is a follow-up to [last year's events](#). To promote open innovation and co-creation through collaboration between companies from both ASEAN and Japan, major companies from ASEAN and Japan present challenges and invite proposals from companies from ASEAN, Japan and all over the world. Last year, more than 1,400 people participated in the pitch events in Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam, and [this year's events will be held in the same countries](#). At [this launch event](#), six challenges were presented. We expect a large number of [applications](#) ahead of the deadline on 20 October and the pitch event on 5 December.



Courtesy call on the Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN, H.E. Nararya Soeprapto, by Myaku-Myaku
(17 September 2024, at ASEAN Headquarters and Secretariat)

● Myaku-Myaku's visit to ASEAN

At next year's [Osaka-Kansai Expo 2025](#), the ASEAN Pavilion is scheduled to be exhibited, and this will be an important opportunity for the promotion of cooperation and exchange between ASEAN and Japan. In mid-September, Myaku-Myaku, the official character of the Osaka-Kansai Expo 2025, [visited the ASEAN Headquarters and Secretariat](#) on the occasion of his visit to Jakarta to participate in the Jakarta Japan Festival (JJM).

On 17 September, Myaku-Myaku paid a courtesy call on Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for Community and Corporate Affairs and Commissioner-General of the ASEAN Secretariat for EXPO 2025, H.E. Nararya Soeprapto, to donate a stuffed doll of his alter ego, with ASEAN-Japan cooperation character JABOT and myself in attendance. Group photos were taken not only in the meeting room but also in the lobby, and it was such a fun time. [Click here](#) to watch the video. This visit was also [reported in Japan](#).

The Osaka-Kansai Expo 2025 will be held from 13 April to 13 October next year, with an ASEAN Day event scheduled to be held at the venue on 8 August. With less than 200 days to go, I would like to encourage the Osaka-Kansai Expo 2025 to become a platform for promoting ASEAN-Japan cooperation and exchange, including personnel exchanges between ASEAN countries and the Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition.



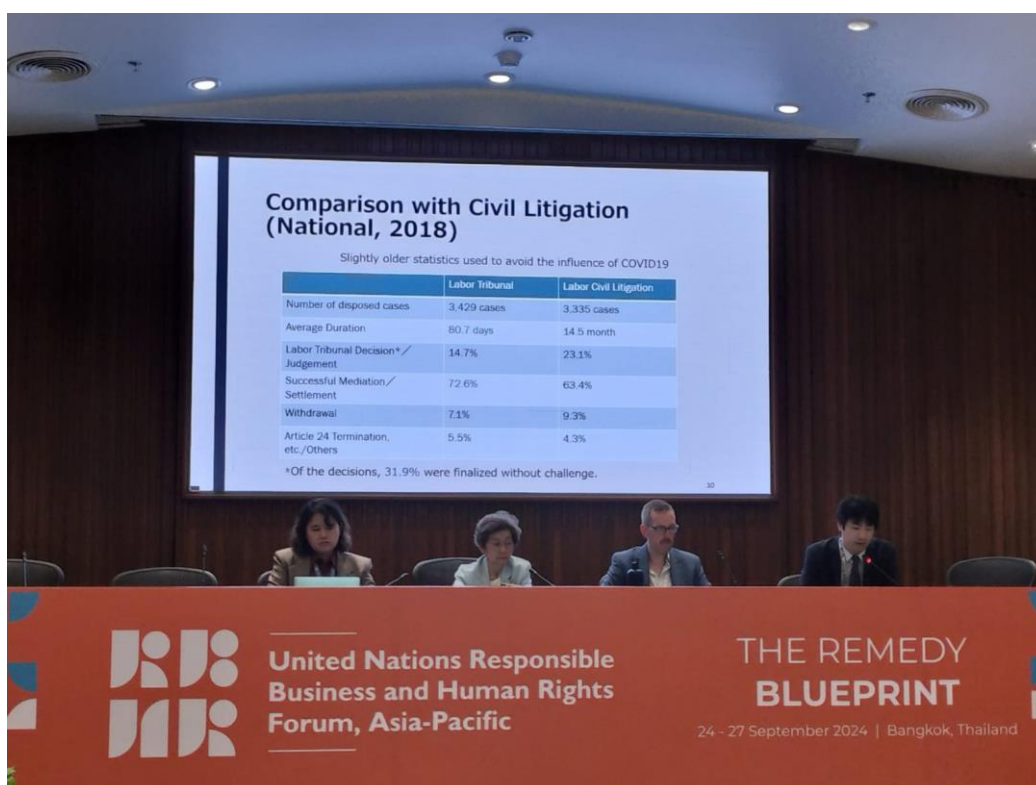
ASEAN Football4SDGs Workshop (26 September 2024, at FIFA Indonesia office)

● Sport SDGs workshop

The ASEAN Football4SDGs Workshop took place on 26 September at the FIFA office in Jakarta. This was the first event bringing stakeholders together from both ASEAN and Japan since when the [ASEAN Football4SDGs Project](#) was launched in October last year as part of the ASEAN-Japan Sport SDGs cooperation.

The ["ASEAN Declaration on Leveraging the Role of Sports in ASEAN Community-Building and Achieving the SDGs"](#) was adopted at the ASEAN Summit Meeting in 2022, starting with the implementation of the ASEAN Football4SDGs project in the [Chiang Mai Declaration](#) at the [ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Meeting on Sports](#) last September. It was agreed to promote ASEAN-Japan cooperation to achieve the SDGs through sports. Subsequently, a survey of best practices in ASEAN and the world was conducted as Phase 1, and the stage was set for a workshop to be held in Indonesia, Cambodia and Thailand from September this year as Phase 2.

In this workshop, besides the ASEAN Secretariat and the Mission and Embassy of Japan, the Indonesia Ministry of Youth and Sports and its football team, the Japanese J-League, Gamba Osaka and Urawa Red Diamonds, FIFA Indonesia representatives, project implementation consultants and other stakeholders gathered to share their experiences and knowledge. As Phase 3, the "ASEAN Football Forum" will be held in Singapore in the middle of next year, and further efforts will be made to reflect the results in the ASEAN's Plan of Action.



ASEAN Business and Human Rights Workshop (24 September 2024, in Bangkok)

● Business and Human Rights Workshop

Although not startup and innovation-related, there was a major development in ASEAN-Japan human rights cooperation this month. On 24 September, in Bangkok, as part of the programme of the ["Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum \(Asia Pacific\) 2024 program"](#), the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) and the Southeast Asian Organization for Human Rights (SEANF) jointly organized the ["AICHR-SEANF Workshop on Effective Remedies and Efficient Case Studies of Migrant Workers in the ASEAN Business and Human Rights Sector"](#) under the auspices of JAIF.

The workshop was a specific follow-up to the [AICHR-Japan Interface Meeting](#) held in Jakarta in May this year. From Japan, I sent a [video message](#) to the workshop as well as Director of International Civil and Commercial Law Center Foundation (ICCLC), an Professor of International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Justice, and Special Advisor to the President of JICA (Director of JP-Mirai) also attended the workshop as panelists and special speakers, and they contributed to the discussion.

ASEAN-Japan cooperation on business and human rights issues will make a significant contribution to the economic and social development of both ASEAN and Japan. We will continue to make our efforts.



ASEAN-Japan Economic Ministers' Meeting

(18 September 2024, in Vientiane, credit: the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry)

● From the Economic and Energy Ministerial Meetings to the Summit Meetings

In September, the ASEAN-related Economic Ministers' Meetings and the Energy Ministers' Meetings were held successively in Vientiane. Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Mr. Yoshida Nobuhiro, attended the [ASEAN Economic Ministers' related Meetings](#) from 21-22 September, where seven new projects were added to the Future Design Action Plan (FDAP), bringing the total to 86 action plans. In addition, there was new progress including the proposal of the ASEAN-Japan AI Innovation Roadmap and the announcement of the ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-Creation Forum to be held in Tokyo in December this year.

On 27 September, Director-General for Energy and Environmental Policy, Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, Mr. Shinichi Kihara, attended the ASEAN-related Energy Ministers' Meetings and gave a presentation at the AZEC session of the [ASEAN Energy Business Forum](#).

In Jakarta, various outcome documents are being prepared for the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings in October. In preparation for the EAS Summit, the draft Leaders' Statement negotiations by the EAS participating countries moved from the Working Group to the Ambassador-level late this month, and I am now involved in the negotiations day after day. I will make every effort in the lead-up to the Summit Meetings to ensure that the ASEAN-led mechanisms achieve maximum outcomes in both cooperation and dialogue.

Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
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