

**Newsletter from the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN**  
**No.23: ASEAN-related Summit Meetings and AZEC Leaders Meeting**

28 October 2024



Press conference by Prime Minister Ishiba  
following his participation in the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings  
(11 October 2024, in Vientiane, credit: the Cabinet Public Affairs Office)

October was a turbulent month for Japan. On 1 October, Prime Minister Ishiba took office, and a new cabinet was inaugurated. After a policy speech, representative questions and a party leaders' debate in the Diet, the House of Representatives was dissolved on 9 October. Prime Minister Ishiba left Tokyo late that night and attended the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings in Vientiane, Laos, on 10-11 October as his first overseas trip. The 2nd Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) Leaders Meeting was also held on this occasion. Then, on 27 October, the House of Representatives elections were held, and the ballots were counted on the same day.

I arrived in Vientiane four days before the Prime Minister's visit in order to negotiate the outcome documents and also to attend a series of Summit Meetings. The following week, in Jakarta, I co-hosted a reception with the Permanent Representatives of the ASEAN Chairs of this year and next year. The week after, I travelled to Brunei to attend the ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management and the ASEAN Commemoration of the 20th Year of the Indian Ocean Tsunami.

In this edition of the Ambassador's Newsletter, I would like to report on the outcomes and impressions of a series of ASEAN-related events from the sites and to discuss future initiatives together with you.



Working lunch with Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr. Kao Kim Hourn  
(3 October 2024, at the residence of the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN)

### ● Working lunch with Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr. Kao Kim Hourn

Secretary-General of ASEAN H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn plays an important role under the ASEAN Charter, including to represent ASEAN and to express ASEAN's position externally, and travels frequently to attend meetings held within and outside ASEAN. In between such meetings, in early October, I invited the Secretary-General to a [working lunch](#) at my residence.

One of the agenda items was the Secretary-General's visit to Japan. We discussed specific arrangements for his planned attendance at the [ASEAN-Japan Future Generation Business Leaders Forum](#) in Kyoto and the ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-Creation Forum in Tokyo in December this year. His visit to Japan is an excellent opportunity to strengthen ASEAN-Japan cooperation, and its preparation is an important task of the Mission of Japan to ASEAN. Secretary-General Kao has previously visited Japan in December two years ago, just before his inauguration, four times last year in June, July, October, and December to mark the 50th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, and already in May this year. He has deepened dialogues with a wide range of people from ministers to students through these visits. ERIA Secretary-General WATANABE Tetsuya, who accompanied him to Japan in May this year, also joined this working lunch.

Additionally, I was also briefed on the prospects for the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings the following week. Since the Secretary-General of ASEAN has attended all major ASEAN-related Meetings, this working lunch was a very valuable opportunity for us to learn ASEAN's response to the most pressing issues as well as their medium- and long-term policy directions.



ASEAN-Japan Summit Meeting

(10 October 2024, in Vientiane, credit: the Cabinet Public Affairs Office)



## ● ASEAN-related Summit Meetings

On 10-11 October, Prime Minister Ishiba attended [ASEAN-related Summit Meetings](#) as his first foreign visit since his inauguration. It was a valuable opportunity for our Prime Minister to meet many leaders in person at the extremely important meetings where key leaders in the Indo-Pacific get together and to underscore Japan's position on further strengthening ASEAN-Japan relations and on regional and international affairs, including North Korea, the East China Sea and the South China Sea.

This time, Prime Minister Ishiba attended the [ASEAN-Japan Summit](#), the [ASEAN+3 \(Japan, China, Republic of Korea\) Summit](#) and the [East Asia Summit \(EAS\)](#), hosted the [Asia Zero-Emission Community \(AZEC\) Leaders Meeting](#), and held bilateral meetings with [ROK](#), [China](#), [Laos](#), [Australia](#), [India](#) and [Vietnam](#), as well as standing meetings with other countries.

In particular, at the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings, Japan stated its determination to further strengthen the relationship with ASEAN, which it has built over more than half a century as a true friend with "heart to heart" bonds, and expressed its commitment to promoting cooperation in new areas such as GX and DX ([ASEAN-Japan Cooperation leaflet](#)). In addition, Japan reiterated that the principles of the UN Charter, such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, are becoming increasingly important amid the drastically changing security environment, and that unilateral changes to the status quo by force are unacceptable anywhere in the world.



2nd AZEC Leaders Meeting

(11 October 2024, in Vientiane, credit: the Cabinet Public Affairs Office)

## ● 2nd AZEC Leaders Meeting

This time, following the [first AZEC Leaders Meeting](#) in Tokyo last December, taking the opportunity of the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings, the [second AZEC Leaders Meeting](#) was held at the same venue. AZEC is an important mechanism for working together in Asia on initiatives towards Net Zero under diverse pathways in a manner compatible with economic growth and energy security.

At this meeting, the participants agreed on an [Action Plan](#) for the next decade to take AZEC to a new phase of policy coordination, including rule-making, in addition to the implementation of individual projects. This action plan has three main pillars: (1) promote “AZEC solutions”, including rule-making to facilitate activities that contribute to decarbonisation in Asia; (2) launch initiatives to promote decarbonisation and emission reductions in high-greenhouse gas emitting sectors; and (3) promote specific projects.

Prime Minister Ishiba introduced that [about 120 MOUs and other cooperation projects](#) have been signed between Japan and AZEC partner countries since the first AZEC Leaders Meeting. Based on this major achievement of "holding the AZEC Leaders Meeting at the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings", I hope that both projects and policy coordination will make further progress.



Reception jointly hosted by Laos, Malaysia and Japan after the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings  
(18 October 2024, at the residence of the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN)

## ● Follow-up on the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings

On the occasion of the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings, the Permanent Representatives of ASEAN Member States, the Ambassadors of the Dialogue Countries to ASEAN and many other officials in Jakarta travelled to Vientiane, prepared the events in advance and managed logistics on the ground. For instance, the Permanent Representatives and Ambassadors of the East Asia Summit (EAS) participating countries held meetings four days in a row prior to the EAS to negotiate the outcome document.

On the weekend immediately after the Summit Meetings, the outcome documents of the series of meetings, including Leaders Statements and Chairman's Statements, were published on the ASEAN Secretariat's [website](#). The following week, on 15 October, Secretary-General of ASEAN Kao Kim Hourn held an [briefing on the key outcomes](#) at the ASEAN Headquarters / Secretariat ([video](#)), which I attended and listened to together with the Permanent Representatives and the Ambassadors to ASEAN.



The ASEAN-related Summit Meetings were the biggest climax of the year for ASEAN-related officials in Jakarta. To celebrate its success, to express our gratitude and to discuss the prospects for the coming year, a reception was held at the residence of the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN, jointly hosted by the Permanent Representative of this year's Chair, Laos, H.E. Amb. Bovonethat Douangchak, and the Permanent Representative of next year's Chair, Malaysia, H.E. Amb. Sarah Al Bakri Devadason. It was a good opportunity for a wide range of stakeholders to meet and reflect on the Summit Meetings and to express their gratitude to each other.



ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management

(24 October 2024, in Bandar Sri Begawan)

### ● ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management and the Ceremony of the 20th Anniversary of the Indian Ocean Tsunami

The following week, I travelled to Bandar Seri Begawan, the capital of Brunei, to attend the [ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management and the Commemorative Event of the 20th Anniversary of the Indian Ocean Tsunami](#).

The [ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management](#) on 24 October was attended by the Chair of the Meeting, H.E. Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Ahmaddin bin Haji Abdul Rahman, Minister for Home Affairs of Brunei and the Ministers of Disaster Management of ASEAN Member States and their deputies on the ASEAN side, as well as Mr. NUKINA Koji, Assistant Vice Minister for Disaster Management, Cabinet Office, on the Japanese side. Japan declared JICA's ICT support to the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) and its newly announced support for the formulation of ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme 2026-2030 along with its long-standing cooperation with the AHA Centre so that we were highly appreciated. Just before this trip, I gave an online lecture in English on ASEAN-Japan cooperation in disaster management at Hitotsubashi University. Please see the [presentation](#) if you are interested.

On the following day, 25 October, the [ASEAN Commemoration of the 20th Year of the Indian Ocean Tsunami](#) was held in the park in front of the Old Mosque. This was an opportunity for everyone to reflect on the time of the disaster and renew their commitment to cooperate in disaster management in the future.

I also met with senior officials from the [Prime Minister's Office](#) and the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brunei](#) to discuss cooperation with the ASEAN Climate Change Centre (ACCC), which is to be established in the country, and the [ASEAN Junior Fellowship Programme \(AJFP\)](#) led by Brunei.





Photo with the Chair, Laos, Permanent Representative to ASEAN, H.E. Amb. Bovonethat Douangchak  
(10 October 2024, in Vientiane)

### ● Capitalize on this year's outcomes and lessons for next year

This year's ASEAN-related Summit Meetings have come to an end, but now that we have paused for breath, it is time to reflect on the outcomes and lessons learned from this year's meetings and make a fresh start for the coming year.

On the occasion of this year's Summit Meetings, the Mission of Japan to ASEAN also launched websites in [Japanese](#) and [English](#), which organise the 130 items of the Implementation Plan of the ASEAN-Japan Joint Vision Statement adopted last December into 44 key cooperation areas. In cooperation with relevant ministries and agencies, we will further promote “project formulation” and “visualization”.

Next year's ASEAN Summit will adopt the ASEAN Community Vision 2045. The East Asia Summit (EAS) will also mark the 20th anniversary of its establishment. It is important for Japan to further strengthen the ASEAN-led regional architecture, including through active cooperation in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP). I look forward to working with you all in the coming year to further advance ASEAN cooperation in many fields.

Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN  
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