

**Newsletter from the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN  
No. 28: Sharing Principles and Benefits**

26 March 2025



ASEAN-Japan Forum  
(5 March 2025, in Karuizawa)

Greetings to you all! How are you doing? Here in Jakarta, the month of Ramadhan (the fasting month) in March is almost over, and we are about to enter the long Lebaran holidays (the festival marking the end of Ramadan). I took a long business trip to Japan in the first half of this month, and in the second half I attended various events and meetings in Jakarta. I believe I could further advance ASEAN-Japan cooperation across a wide range of areas and make progress in preparing for this year's ASEAN-related meetings.

In Japan, I attended the ASEAN-Japan Forum (Vice-Ministerial-level meeting) in Karuizawa and the Asia-Pacific Ambassadors' conference in Tokyo. It was a great opportunity for me to meet various stakeholders involved in ASEAN-Japan cooperation and to further expand my networks. After returning to Jakarta, I attended the opening ceremony for the IAI Attachment Programme, had a meeting with ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, and gave an online lecture at a university.

As the world is drastically changing, I consider that it is important for ASEAN and Japan to share values and principles as well as tangible benefits in order to further advance our cooperation. In this edition of the newsletter, along with the series of meetings and events that took place this month, I would also like to consider together with you the sharing of principles and benefits between ASEAN and Japan.



The excursion after the ASEAN-Japan Forum  
(5 March 2025, at the Harunire Terrace in Karuizawa)

## ● ASEAN-Japan Forum

The [ASEAN-Japan Forum](#) was held in Karuizawa from the evening of 4 March to 5 March. The ASEAN-Japan Forum has been held since 1977, in principle once a year, for senior officials (SOM leaders) of ASEAN and Japan to discuss cooperation between ASEAN and Japan. This year marked the 40th forum.

The meeting was co-chaired by Japan's Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs NAMAZU Hiroyuki and Singapore's Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs Albert Chua, who serves as ASEAN's coordinating country for Japan. Representatives from each ASEAN country and the ASEAN Secretariat attended, as did Timor-Leste as an observer, and I also participated.

At this forum, participants [exchanged views](#) on the progress of concrete cooperation in line with the ASEAN-Japan Joint Vision Statement and Implementation Plan adopted in 2023, as well as on ways to further strengthen future relations in regional and international contexts. The day before the meeting, Karuizawa experienced heavy snowfall, and the meeting was held surrounded by snow—an unusual sight in Southeast Asia. After the meeting, an optional [excursion](#) was organised to deepen friendships.



Meeting on Business and Human Rights

(7 March 2025, at the Research and Training Institute of the Ministry of Justice)

### ● The Asia-Pacific Ambassadors' Conference and meetings with key stakeholders in ASEAN-Japan Cooperation

The following week, on 10-11 March, the [Asia-Pacific Ambassadors' Conference](#) was held in Tokyo. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the three top political officials, ambassadors from Asia-Pacific and North America, and senior officials from relevant bureaus of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended and held an extensive discussion on Japan's diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region.

[In his address, Foreign Minister IWAYA Takeshi stated](#) that amid a fragile international order and an increasingly severe security environment, Japan must strategically and wholeheartedly pursue a “diplomacy of dialogue and cooperation”. He also emphasised the importance of not only strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance, but also promoting cooperation with allies and like-minded countries, as well as with the Global South, to realise a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”.

During my trip to Japan, I also exchanged views with a wide range of stakeholders involved in ASEAN-Japan cooperation. On 7 March, I gave a [presentation](#) at the ["Meeting on Business and Human Rights"](#) hosted by the Research and Training Institute of the Ministry of Justice of Japan, and it was a valuable experience to gather information from a wide range of related organisations. After returning to Jakarta, I exchanged views with [organisations related to business and human rights](#) at my residence and created a smartphone contact group with them.



Sustainability Management Seminar  
(12 March 2025, in Otemachi, Tokyo)

## ● Promotion of ASEAN-Japan Business Cooperation

On 12 March, I delivered a [keynote speech](#) at a half-day seminar co-hosted by KPMG FAS and Nishimura & Asahi law firm, entitled "[Proactive Sustainability Management in Light of the Latest Trends in Southeast Asia: How to Proceed with Business Development Based on Social Issues.](#)"

This seminar aimed to support the development of new businesses that address social issues, focusing on three key perspectives: 1) The growing Southeast Asia, 2) Business opportunities in sustainability, and 3) Proactive management. The seminar was a great success, with more than 100 people in attendance, and the enthusiasm of the business stakeholders was palpable. The "[ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-Creation Vision](#)" is now in the implementation stage.

During discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Environment, and JICA, I was able to learn about the latest initiatives in Japan while also explaining the various opportunities for ASEAN-Japan cooperation from the on-site perspective in Jakarta. In addition, the exchange of views with experts who have been studying ASEAN for many years was highly meaningful, and I received ideas for promoting future ASEAN-Japan intellectual exchanges. I would like to follow up on these precious opportunities.



IAI Attachment Programme Opening Ceremony  
(17 March 2025, at ASEAN Headquarters/Secretariat)

## ● IAI Attachment Programme Opening Ceremony

On 17 March, after returning to Jakarta, I attended the [Opening Ceremony for IAI Attachment Programme](#) at the ASEAN Headquarters/Secretariat. We celebrated the arrival of 15 attachment officers from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam (CLMV) and Timor-Leste. At the ceremony, [ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn](#) and [I](#) delivered welcoming remarks, and many representatives from ASEAN countries and members of the ASEAN Secretariat attended, including their Permanent Representatives.

[The Attachment Programme](#) has been dispatching young government officials from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV) countries to the ASEAN Secretariat for one year, aiming to improve the administrative skills of the participants and to reduce the disparities within the ASEAN region. This programme has trained many excellent leaders to date. The government of Japan supported this programme through the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF). Starting from this year, young government officials from Timor-Leste are joining the programme as well.

I look forward to the contributions of the attachment officers to ASEAN's initiatives and ASEAN Community's further development.



Meeting with ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn  
(17 March 2025, at ASEAN Headquarters/Secretariat, credit: ASEAN Secretariat)

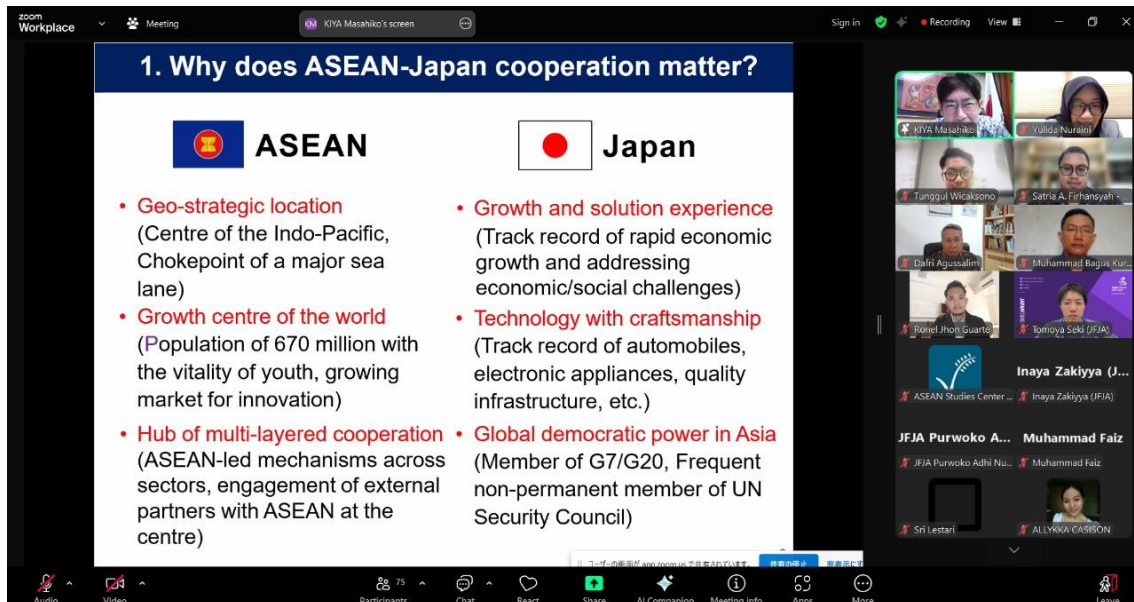
## ● Meeting with ASEAN Secretary-General

In the afternoon of 17 March, I paid [a courtesy call on ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn](#) and had an exchange of views.

I explained, regarding the situation in Myanmar, that Japan will continue to support ASEAN's efforts, including the implementation of the "Five Consensus," and will work to improve the situation, particularly through humanitarian aid. I also conveyed that Japan made a new contribution to the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) on 17 March to provide [humanitarian aid to Myanmar through AHA Centre](#).

Both sides exchanged views and agreed to continue working closely together to further promote ASEAN-Japan cooperation, including cooperation in GX and DX, and the promotion and implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), as well as the ASEAN Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, starting from next month.

Unlike previous meetings, this time the meeting was held in [a face-to-face format across tables](#), and many staff members from the ASEAN Secretariat were also in attendance. It was a comprehensive meeting lasting approximately one hour. I look forward to making further cooperation into reality in preparation for the upcoming ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' Meetings and Summit Meetings.



Online Lecture organized by Gadjah Mada University ASEAN Studies Centre  
(21 March 2025)

## ● Sharing values and benefits

On 21 March, I gave [a presentation](#) on "Collaborative Roles between Japan and ASEAN in Navigating the Indo-Pacific" at [an online lecture hosted by the ASEAN Studies Center of Gadjah Mada University](#), a prestigious university in the historic city of Yogyakarta, which was attended by more than 80 people. An awards ceremony was also held for an [essay competition](#) on the same topic.

Through the series of events this month, from the ASEAN-Japan Forum to an online lecture hosted by a university, I have come to realise that both "sharing values and principles" and "sharing tangible benefits" are important for ASEAN-Japan cooperation.



As the international community is now being greatly disrupted, it is crucial to safeguard freedom and the rule of law, and to respect diversity, inclusiveness and openness. I am strongly encouraged that the AOIP shares fundamental principles with "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" which Japan advocates. At the same time, promoting concrete cooperation in emerging fields such as GX and DX is also essential to create a vibrant future together. In order to achieve both goals simultaneously, I would like to keep working on ASEAN-Japan cooperation with people from a wide range of fields. I appreciate your continued support.

Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN  
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