

Newsletter from the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
No. 29: ASEAN's Participation in the Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan

28 April 2025



Prime Minister Ishiba greeted ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn
at the Welcome Reception for the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan
(12 April 2025, at a hotel in Osaka, credit: ASEAN Secretariat)

Here in Jakarta, work started to pick up on 28 March during the Lebaran holiday (a festival that marks the end of Ramadhan), as a large earthquake had occurred in central Myanmar. Our mission was in contact with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) and Tokyo to coordinate assistance.

ASEAN's participation in the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan was a big event in April. On 9 April, before the opening, I held a press conference with ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General Nararya at the ASEAN Headquarters/Secretariat. On 12 April, ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn attended the opening ceremony of the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, as well as unveiled the ASEAN Pavilion, and gave a speech at Kansai University. In late April, I attended a large-scale forum held in Singapore to summarise the ASEAN Football4SDGs project that began two years ago.

In this edition of the newsletter, I would like to introduce the progress of ASEAN-Japan cooperation, focusing on ASEAN-related events at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.



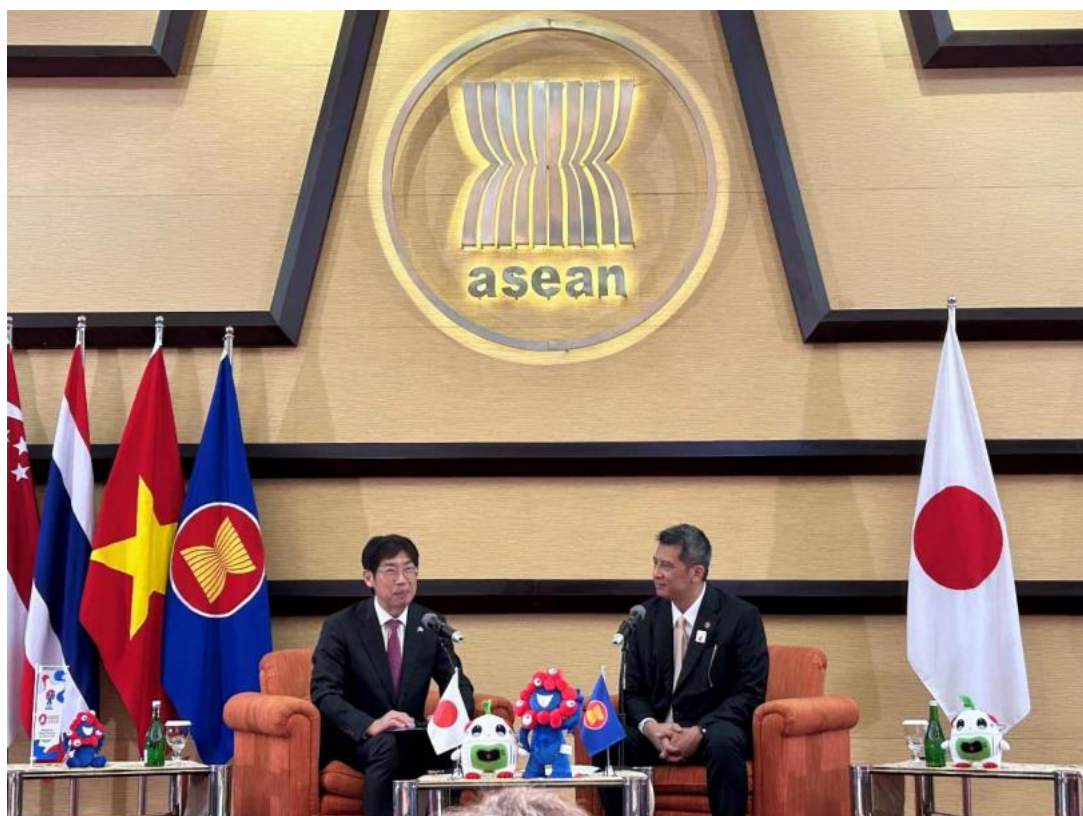
Humanitarian Relief Items from Japan that arrived in Yangon
(30 March 2025, at Yangon international Airport, credit: AHA Centre)

● Humanitarian assistance for the central Myanmar earthquake

On 28 March, a large earthquake occurred in central Myanmar. The AHA Centre sent our mission a report on the same day, and we immediately started responding. The following day, on 29 March, we received a message through the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) informing the use of [240 tarpaulins and 450 tents from their reserves, which had been donated by Japan](#). The first batch of relief items arrived at Yangon International Airport on the 30th.

The DELSA system was established with assistance from the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF), and the stockpiles donated by France and Switzerland were also delivered to Myanmar through DELSA. When the current ASEAN chair, Malaysia's Foreign Minister Hassan visited Myanmar on 5 April, [DELSA's relief items](#) were also handed over to Myanmar.

In addition to those assistance, Japan has dispatched the Japan Disaster Relief Medical Team ([1st batch 32 people](#), [2nd batch 37 people](#)) and [JICA Expert Team](#), [provided Emergency Grant worth 6 million US dollars \(in cooperation with ICRC, IOM, UNICEF and WRP\)](#), [transported medical supplies and equipment by Self-Defense Forces aircraft](#), [and provided emergency relief kits to monastic schools in the disaster-hit areas through the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects](#). Counsellor YAMAKAWA Hiroshi from our Mission also went to Mandalay to provide logistics support together with staffs from the Japanese Embassy in Myanmar.



Press Conference on ASEAN's Participation in the Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan
(9 April 2025, at the ASEAN Headquarters/Secretariat)

● Press Conference on ASEAN's Participation in the Expo 2025

On 9 April, [a press conference](#) announcing ASEAN's participation in the Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan was held. The ASEAN Hall at the ASEAN Headquarters/Secretariat was connected online with the ASEAN Pavilion at the Expo venue.

ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General Nararya shared details about the ASEAN Pavilion's participation in the Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan, including the purpose of the theme "Building Bridges," planned activities such as the [ASEAN Trail Challenge](#) (a stamp rally of ASEAN member countries' pavilions), and the ASEAN Day event on 8 August. I introduced the theme and highlights of the Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan, encouraging people to visit the Expo and also tour various regions of Japan. Meanwhile, the ASEAN Pavilion staff gave a live broadcast of the preparations and the exhibits at the venue.

On this occasion, I took the opportunity to record [a video](#) of my interview with Deputy Secretary-General Nararya regarding ASEAN's participation in the Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan. Please take a look if you are interested.



Opening Ceremony for the Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan
(12 April 2025, at the Expo 2025 Venue, credit: ASEAN Secretariat)

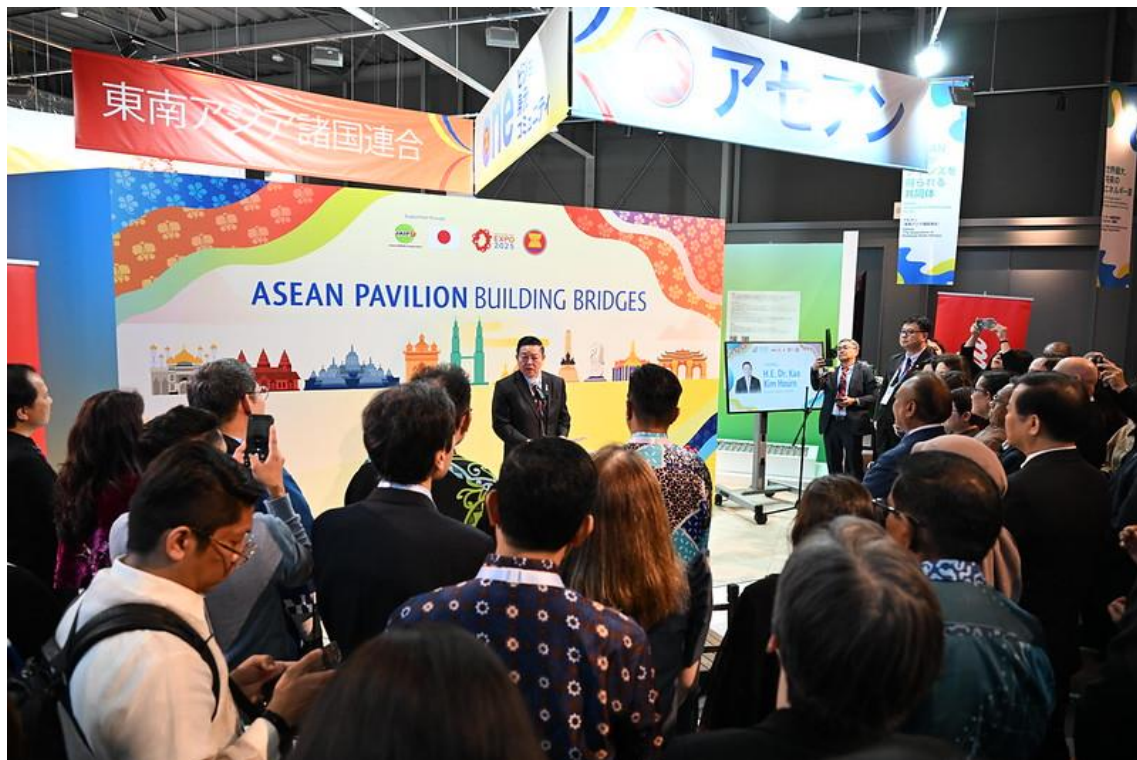
● Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan and the Welcome Reception

During the weekend of 12-14 April, ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn visited the Kansai region and attended events related to the Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan. From our Mission, First Secretary Ms. SAITO Mizuki accompanied him throughout the entire itinerary and provided support.

[The opening ceremony](#) was held at the EXPO Hall "Shine Hut" on the afternoon of 12 May. The ceremony lasted for about an hour and included speeches by His Majesty the Emperor, a speech by Prime Minister Ishiba, a congratulatory address by Director General of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) Mr. Kerkentzes, and various performances. The ASEAN flag was waved at the front of the stage along with the flags of other countries.

Immediately afterwards, [the unveiling ceremony for the Cambodian Pavilion](#) was held, with Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn cutting the ribbon together with Cambodia's Minister of Commerce and its Ambassador to Japan.

In the evening, [a welcome reception for the Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan](#) was held at a hotel in Osaka city, attended by many dignitaries including Crown Prince Akishino and Prime Minister Ishiba. On this occasion, Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn also greeted Prime Minister Ishiba (photo on page 1).



The Unveiling Ceremony for the ASEAN Pavilion
(13 April 2025, at the Expo 2025 Venue, credit: ASEAN Secretariat)

● ASEAN Pavilion and ASEAN Member States' Pavilions

The [unveiling ceremony for the ASEAN Pavilion](#) was held on 13 April, the opening day of the Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan. In [his opening remarks](#), Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn said the following:

" At a time when fault lines are deepening and divisions are rising across the globe, it is more crucial than ever to build bridges and showcase the extraordinary potential of our region in trade, investment, tourism, and connectivity. As Secretary-General of ASEAN, I view our participation in this World Expo for the next six months as crucial to advancing our outreach priorities and raising global awareness of ASEAN's enduring commitment to regional integration, collective prosperity, and our comprehensive frameworks that guide political security, economic development, and socio-cultural harmony across Southeast Asia."

I think it was truly meaningful that during the opening day of the Expo 2025 and the unveiling of the ASEAN Pavilion, the Secretary-General of ASEAN clearly indicated the significance and direction of their participation in the Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan. On the same day, Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn also attended [the unveiling ceremony of the Philippine Pavilion](#), [the opening ceremony of the Malaysian Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry Week](#), and visited [the Pavilions of ASEAN Member States and Timor-Leste](#), as well as the [Japan Pavilion](#).



ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn's special lecture at Kansai University
(14 April 2025, at Kansai University, credit: ASEAN Secretariat)

● Meetings with important figures and a special lecture at university

From the 13-14 April, Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn took the opportunity of his visit to the Expo 2025 to meet with many government, local government, and business officials, including [State Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry KOGA Yuichiro](#), [Deputy Governor of Osaka Prefecture MORIOKA Takekazu](#), [Vice Chair of the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry HIROSE Kyoko](#), and [Secretary-General of the ASEAN-Japan Centre Dr. HIRABAYASHI Kunihiko](#).

On the afternoon of 14 April, Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn delivered [a special lecture at Kansai University](#). The theme of his lecture was "[ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Strategic Partnership \(CSP\): Peace, Prosperity and People.](#)"

In [his speech](#), the Secretary-General reflected on the history of ASEAN-Japan cooperation and highlighted recent developments, including non-conventional security issues such as cybersecurity and infectious diseases, the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), trade frameworks like AJCEP and RCEP, the ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-Creation Vision, as well as next-generation exchange programmes such as JENESYS. He also encouraged the students to seize the opportunity presented by Expo 2025 to contribute to the future of ASEAN-Japan cooperation and exchange. I believe this lecture was a truly valuable experience for the students.



ASEAN-Japan Football4SDGs Forum

(24 April 2025, in Singapore, credit: Portas Consulting)

● Promoting ASEAN-Japan Sports Cooperation

In late April, significant progress was made in ASEAN-Japan sports cooperation. A forum summarizing [the ASEAN Football4SDGs project](#), which was launched two years ago to mark the 50th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, was held in Singapore on 24-25 April. The forum brought together around 140 participants from governments, associations, leagues, teams, companies, and NGOs from ASEAN and Japan.

Japan has not only achieved great success in strengthening its national soccer team, such as participating in the World Cup, but also has a track record of contributing to local communities through social collaboration through the J.League. Building on ASEAN's previous initiatives, Japan introduced a new initiative developed in cooperation with ASEAN to achieve "sports development" and "sport for development" simultaneously.

The Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan and ASEAN-Japan sports cooperation have just begun. We hope that this month's kick-off events will lead to further exchanges and cooperation in the future.

Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
KIYA Masahiko