

**Newsletter from the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN**  
**No. 33: ASEAN Day in Jakarta and Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan**

29 August 2025



ASEAN Day Parade at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan  
(8 August 2025, in Osaka, credit: ASEAN Secretariat)

Following the ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' Meetings in July, August marked the beginning of the ASEAN's annual schedule. The first highlight was the ASEAN Day celebrations held on 8 August in both Jakarta and at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. It was a memorable event!

Many other events followed. The next week, I attended the Commemoration of 25th Anniversary of the ASEAN Integration Initiative (IAI) Panel Exhibition & Roundtable Discussions, the ASEAN-Japan Young Environmental Leaders Network (AJYELN) Project Management Training Programme, and a lecture for the ASEAN Junior Fellowship Program (AJFP). In the second half of August, I traveled to Kuala Lumpur and Singapore to participate in promoting participation in a Regional Forum on the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Strategic Plan and the ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management (SPDDM). Japan also contributed to the ASEAN Law Forum 2025, held in Kuala Lumpur.

In this edition of the newsletter, we will look back on a series of events that took place in August, starting with the ASEAN Day celebrations, and reflect on the importance of trust and co-creation between ASEAN and Japan.



Expo 2025 Osaka-Kansai, Japan Booth at the ASEAN Day in Jakarta  
(8 August 2025, at ASEAN Secretariat, credit: ASEAN Secretariat)

## ● ASEAN Day Celebrations

To commemorate the founding of ASEAN by the Bangkok Declaration on 8 August 1967, a celebration is held every year on that date as “ASEAN Day” at the ASEAN Headquarters/Secretariat. This was my third time attending, and it has become more impressive each year. This year, an "ASEAN Special Day" was also held at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

At the ASEAN Headquarters/Secretariat, the opening ceremony began in the new hall. It featured a video message from Malaysian Prime Minister YAB Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, a keynote speech from Indonesian Foreign Minister Sugiono, a welcome address from ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, and cultural performances from ASEAN countries. The ceremony was followed by the ASEAN Food Festival in the lobby of the Heritage building. [The Japan booth and the Expo 2025 Osaka-Kansai booth](#) offered Unagi (eel) sushi, inari sushi, strawberry daifuku, and Yakult, which were a huge hit.

At the Expo 2025 Osaka-Kansai, Japan, [the official ceremony](#) included the raising of the Japanese and ASEAN flags, speeches by Mr. NAMAZU Hiroyuki, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, and H.E. Mr. Satvinder Singh, ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General, and a performance featuring traditional ASEAN musical instruments and songs. During the banquet, remarks were also delivered by Ms. UENO Michiko, Secretary-General of the House of Councillors' League for the Promotion of ASEAN Exchange, and H.E. Mr. Zafrul, Malaysian Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry and Minister in Charge of the Expo 2025 Osaka-Kansai, Japan. [A parade introducing ASEAN culture](#) was also held within the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai Japan premises on the same day, widely promoting the diverse cultures of ASEAN (*photos and [video](#) on previous page*).



Commemoration of 25th Anniversary of the IAI & Roundtable Discussions  
(11 August 2025, at ASEAN Secretariat, credit: ASEAN Secretariat)

### ● 25th Anniversary of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI)

The following week, on 11 August, a meeting between the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Task Force and ASEAN partners was held at the ASEAN Headquarters/Secretariat, followed by a panel exhibition and roundtable commemorating the 25th anniversary of the IAI.



[The Initiative for ASEAN Integration \(IAI\)](#) is an ASEAN initiative aimed at promoting further regional integration by assisting ASEAN's newest member countries—Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam (CLMV)—to narrow the development gaps. It was launched at the Fourth ASEAN Informal Summit in 2000, chaired by Singapore. This year marks its 25th anniversary.

Therefore, at the initiative of Vietnam, the chair of the IAI, Japan and ERIA cooperated to plan and hold [a panel exhibition and roundtable commemorating the 25th anniversary of the IAI](#). Following greetings from ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, President of ERIA Prof. WATANABE Tetsuya, and [myself](#), as well as a video message from former ASEAN Secretary-General Ong Keng Yong, the participants viewed the panel exhibition and discussed the future of the IAI in light of new developments, such as Timor-Leste's full membership of ASEAN. The discussion provided valuable input toward the formulation of IAI Work Plan V (2026-2030), which is scheduled to be adopted at the Summit in October this year.



AJYELN visited Mission of Japan to ASEAN's Office  
(12 August 2025, at the Mission of Japan to ASEAN Office)

## ● ASEAN-Japan Young Environmental Leaders Network (AJYELN) Training

On the following day, the 12th, 35 participants from [the ASEAN-Japan Young Environmental Leaders Network \(AJYELN\)](#) visited [the Mission of Japan to ASEAN](#). AJYELN is a network of young people selected from the 10 ASEAN Member States, Timor-Leste, and Japan who are tackling the issue of plastic pollution. The event was organized by the ASEAN-Japan Centre and supported by [the ASEAN Youth Organization \(AYO\)](#).

Each team of participants gets seed funding to implement their innovative project, receives practical training in leadership and project management, and builds a network of peers and experts with the goal of cultivating a generation of change makers.

This time, I, along with other environmental officials from the Mission of Japan to ASEAN and [ERIA](#), participated in the event, where we gave presentations and exchanged views on ASEAN-Japan environmental projects and cooperation. For many participants, it was their first visit to Jakarta.

When asked, *"Are there any ongoing ASEAN-Japan cooperation projects in which you can participate?"* I encouraged them by replying, *"You're welcome to participate in all of them in the form of public relations and outreach!"*

I felt that this type of training was extremely meaningful, as it allows young people from ASEAN and Japan to broaden their horizons and networks, and make great strides.



AJFP Cultural Diplomacy Seminar and Reception Co-hosted by Japan and France  
(26 August 2025, at the residence of the Ambassador of France to Indonesia)

## ● ASEAN Junior Fellowship Programme (AJFP)

From 4 to 27 August, 21 young government officials from ASEAN countries and Timor-Leste visited Jakarta as part of the ASEAN Junior Fellowship Programme (AJFP).

The AJFP was launched in 2021 at the initiative of Brunei, which held the ASEAN Chairmanship that year, and began the following year in 2022—making this the fourth time it has taken place. On the occasion of the 50th year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, Japan has been providing support through JAIF, with last year marking the third time. Outstanding young government officials in charge of ASEAN-related work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or other relevant ministries and agencies from ASEAN Member States are selected to participate. They received explanations from a wide range of stakeholders, including the ASEAN Secretariat, and gained practical experience at the ASEAN Secretariat.

I kicked off the program by [attending the opening ceremony](#) on 7 August, followed by [an exchange of views and dinner on ASEAN-Japan cooperation](#) at my residence on the 14th. Furthermore, as a new initiative, we co-hosted a [France-Japan event on cultural diplomacy with AJFP fellows, a seminar and reception](#) on the 26th with France, another AJFP supporter. We hope to continue exploring new ways to further develop this program.



Promoting participation in a Regional Forum on the ASCC Strategic Plan  
(20 August 2025, in Kuala Lumpur, credit: ASEAN Secretariat)

● **Promoting participation in a Regional Forum on the ASCC Strategic Plan and the ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management (SPDDM)**

During the week of 18 August, I traveled to Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. On 19 August, [the Regional Forum on the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community \(ASCC\) Strategic Plan](#) was held in Kuala Lumpur. This forum served as a summary of [the JAIF project supporting the formulation of the ASCC Strategic Plan](#) and was attended by a wide range of stakeholders, including sectoral partners, external partners, companies, civil society, and university-affiliated think tanks.



The launch ceremony for the ASCC Strategic Plan was held in the presence of [ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn](#), Malaysian Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture Tiong King Sing (Chair of the ASCC Board of Directors), and other stakeholders involved in the plan. Video messages from ASCC ministers from all member states and discussions on cross-cutting issues created strong momentum for implementation.

[The ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management \(SPDDM\) 2025](#) was held in Singapore from the 20 to the 21 August. It was co-hosted by [the Singapore Civil Defence Force \(SCDF\)](#), the ASEAN Secretariat, and [the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management \(AHA Centre\)](#), with support from the EU. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the meeting. [I was invited as a panelist](#) and attended the entire meeting.

The participants shared their awareness of the importance of (1) localisation of capacity building, (2) knowledge exchange and collaboration, (3) innovation, and (4) integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change countermeasures. One particularly memorable comment was that ASEAN must now demonstrate leadership in disaster risk reduction measures globally.



Speech by State Minister of Justice Japan KOMURA Masahiro at the ASEAN Law Forum 2025  
(19 August 2025, in Kuala Lumpur)



## ● ASEAN Law Forum 2025

[The ASEAN Law Forum 2025 – Enhancing Access to Justice in the ASEAN Economic Community: Bridging Legal Cooperation for Inclusive Growth](#) – was held in Kuala Lumpur from 19-21 August. [State Minister of Justice KOMURA Masahiro participated in the forum](#) as the representative of Japan, with support from Counsellor ITO Atsushi of the Mission of Japan to ASEAN. A panel discussion was held on the 20th on the theme of Promotion of International Commercial Arbitration across ASEAN and Japan: Challenges and Opportunities, and the Joint Statement by ASEAN Law Ministers on International Commercial Arbitration and Mediation Development was adopted on the 21st.

Looking back on the month of August, I recognize that Japan has not only supported ASEAN's efforts in a wide range of fields but has also worked with them as a trusted partner. This is what "trust and co-creation" means in practice. I will work to expand new frontiers leading up to the ASEAN-related Summits in October and beyond. I am hopeful that you will all participate in various ways!

Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN  
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