

Opening Remarks by
Mr. KIYA Masahiko, Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
[ASEAN-JAPAN BHR NETWORK SESSION]
DRIVING RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS IN ASEAN
– EXPECTATIONS FOR GREATER RESPECT OF RIGHTS AND
GREAT PROSPERITY ACROSS VALUE CHAINS –

Date and time: 16 September 2025 9:00 – 10:15

Venue: ESCAP room AP

- Mr. Livio Sarandrea, Business and Human Rights Global Policy Advisor of UNDP
- H.E. Edmund Bon Tai Soon, Chair of AICHR and Representative of Malaysia to AICHR
- H.E. Asst. Prof. Dr. Bhanubhatra Jittiang, Representative of Thailand to AICHR
- Excellencies, Distinguished participants, Ladies and gentlemen,

(1. Introduction)

It is a great honor to welcome you all to this networking session for Japanese and ASEAN stakeholders, both from government and the business community, under the framework of the United Nations Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum 2025.

Let me begin by expressing sincere appreciation to UNDP for its leadership in advancing the business and human rights agenda globally and also for creating a platform like this. Japan is pleased to co-organize this valuable network session with UNDP.

(2. History of the activity both UNDP and Japan)

Over the past decade, UNDP has played a pivotal role in promoting the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

It has supported governments in developing National Action Plans, provided businesses with tools to strengthen human rights due diligence, and worked with civil society to amplify the voices of vulnerable communities. By bringing these stakeholders together, UNDP has helped turn international principles into concrete practice.

Japan has also been actively engaged in this global movement. In 2020, the Government of Japan adopted its first National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.

Building on this achievement, Japan is now in the process of revising the plan, through wide consultations with business, civil society, and experts. This effort demonstrates Japan's determination to stay aligned with evolving international standards, and to promote responsible business conduct as a foundation for sustainable growth.

(3. Why ASEAN and Japan Networking session on Business and Human Rights now?)

The partnership between ASEAN and Japan has long been a cornerstone of peace and prosperity in our region. This also applies to our common challenge in the field of business and human rights.

We are called upon to ensure that economic development and the protection of human rights advance together. It requires close cooperation between governments, which provide enabling policy frameworks, and businesses, which integrate respect for human rights into their operations and supply chains.

Supported by UNDP and other partners, we can build a model of responsible leadership that strengthens both resilience and trust.

(4. Conclusion)

This networking session is an important opportunity to share experiences, exchange good practices, and forge new partnerships. By learning from one another—whether in shaping policy, managing supply chains, or fostering inclusive workplaces—we can set a positive example for the wider region and beyond.

Let us reaffirm our shared vision: that prosperity and human dignity must advance hand in hand.

I am confident that today's discussions will be both meaningful and constructive and that the network you create will deepen ASEAN–Japan cooperation in the years ahead.

Thank you very much for your kind attention. (END)