

## New Light of Myanmar (August 9, 2014)

*Q.* How are relations between Myanmar and Japan?

*A.* "This year, Japan and Myanmar celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Not only has our economic relationship developed rapidly since the transition to civilian rule in 2011, but our countries have had a long history of mutual appreciation that forms the cornerstone for this. Our bilateral relationship is about to leap forward into a new phase in a wide range of areas including politics/security, economics/economic cooperation, and culture/human exchange. As Myanmar takes the chair of ASEAN for the first time, Japan will continue to give its full support and cooperation."

"This visit will be my second since visiting Myanmar for the first time in March. In the four months since then, the Protocol Amending the Agreement for Air Services between Japan and Myanmar, which enables multiple airline companies from both countries to operate, and the Japan-Myanmar bilateral investment agreement that promotes further economic exchange, went into effect. The Japan-Myanmar relationship continues to develop and evolve on a daily basis like the towns and cities in Myanmar. Amidst these developments, Japan intends to continue to support



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the progress of Myanmar's democratic and economic reforms, and the improvement of people's livelihoods."

*Q.* How do you see the Japan-ASEAN relationship?

*A.* "Increased stability and prosperity of ASEAN, which is the driving force for various regional cooperation that is progressing in East Asia, is extremely important not only to Japan's peace and prosperity but also to the stability and prosperity of the region as a whole. Based on this recognition, Japan has actively supported the establishment of an ASEAN community by 2015. In particular, we are moving forward with cooperation in strengthening connectivity, disaster management, and people-to-people exchange, which are areas that hold the key to community building."

"In this context, at the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit to commem-

orate the 40<sup>th</sup> Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, held in Tokyo last year, the heads of state of Japan and ASEAN adopted the Vision Statement on ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, and agreed to advance cooperation from a medium to long-term perspective in four principles: "Political and Security Cooperation", "Economy and Economic Cooperation", "Cooperation Towards Better Quality of Life", "People-to-People and Cultural Exchange".

"To advance the cooperation set forth in the Vision Statement, Japan set up a USD 100 million Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF 2.0) at the ASEAN Secretariat and made a commitment of 2 trillion yen in ODA over the next five years. Furthermore, we launched a 30 billion yen "WA Project: Toward inter-

active Asia through Fusion and Harmony" under which we are implementing arts and cultural exchange with ASEAN member states, and support for Japanese language learners."

"Moving forward, Japan will steadily make efforts with follow-ups to the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit, and further strengthen friendly cooperative relationships with ASEAN member states as a partner that shares universal values of freedom, democracy, fundamental human rights, and rule of law."

*Q.* What is your opinion of the situation in the South China Sea?

*A.* "The issues involving the South China Sea are concerns of the entire international community, including Japan, and are directly linked to regional peace and stability. Japan cannot recognize a unilateral change to the status quo by force or coercion. We believe that it is important to the formation of an international order in the region that each country abstains from unilateral actions that increase tension, and acts based on the principle of the rule of law."

"Based on this view, Prime Minister Abe delivered a keynote address at the recent Shangri-La Dialogue. He proposed three principles of the rule of law at sea (that (1) States shall make and clarify their claims based on

international law, (2) States shall not use force or coercion in trying to drive their claims, and (3) States shall seek to settle disputes by peaceful means), and a return to the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, with all concerned parties agreeing not to undertake unilateral actions associated with a permanent physical change."

"At last year's ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit and various other opportunities, Japan and ASEAN have had a shared understanding regarding maritime issues. Moving forward, Japan will continue to deepen communication and cooperation with ASEAN."

*Q.* What is the position of the Japanese government on ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' Meetings?

*A.* "The ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' Meetings are important opportunities to promote Japan and ASEAN cooperation, as well as confidence-building among the various countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Japan would like to take these important opportunities to actively promote its views toward the realization of peace and prosperity in the region, and confirm its partnerships with participating parties."

"Every year at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), lively discussion is held regarding the regional security

situations, including North Korea and the South China Sea. I also want to cooperate closely with the ASEAN Chair, Myanmar, and carry out candid discussions regarding these issues that are especially important to the region. Furthermore, I would like to explain Japan's efforts at the ARF."

"The East Asia Summit (EAS) is a framework that should be further developed as a leaders-led premier forum for discussion of not only economic and social issues, but also political and security issues. At the next EAS Foreign Ministers' Meeting, in addition to the regional situation, Japan would like to pave the way to the strengthening of the EAS and link the results to top-level discussions."

"In ASEAN + 3 (Japan, China, and ROK) cooperation, we would like to discuss practical cooperation in various areas, including financial and food security."

"At the Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting, we would like to confirm the progress and direction of Mekong-Japan Cooperation based on the Tokyo Strategy 2012 for Mekong-Japan Cooperation and the Action Plan."

"I am looking forward to having frank exchanges of views with Foreign Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin and all of the other foreign ministers."