

**A Video Message from Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio  
to the International Symposium on the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan  
Friendship and Cooperation**

March 16, 2023

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

I would like to congratulate the Japan Foundation for organizing this International Symposium on the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation.

Japan became the first ASEAN partner in the world. And since then, we have been working together for peace, stability and prosperity in the region for the last half-century, as true friends with “heart-to-heart” relations.

I myself have visited all of the ASEAN Member States and deepened exchanges with them in various capacities including as Foreign Minister and as Prime Minister. Every time I came into contact with their enthusiasm, liveliness, and kindness, I felt how precious the relationship is.

The foundation of the current strong ASEAN-Japan relationship is nothing less than trust and respect established through exchanges among people in all walks of life. The Japan Foundation has also promoted exchanges between ASEAN and Japan through intellectual exchanges, and arts and cultural exchanges and support for Japanese language education under the “WA project”.

In order to pass this relationship on to the next generation, we would like to further promote attractive cultural and people-to-people exchange initiatives that will succeed these projects in the future.

Today, at this commemorative symposium for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan, it is very timely to discuss issues shared by ASEAN and Japan. These issues include peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and the entire world, the realization of sustainable and prosperous societies, and building mutual understanding and trust among people.

Japan and ASEAN share their wisdom each other and discuss the future together. Based on such discussions, we would like to jointly launch a new vision for cooperation together with the Leaders of ASEAN countries at the commemorative summit to be held in Tokyo around December this year.

Let’s cherish the progress we have made so far and together take a new step forward for the next 50 years.

Thank you very much for your attention.