

Speech by Prime Minister Kishida
at the banquet at the State Guest House, Akasaka Palace
commemorating the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan
Friendship and Cooperation
-Striving for Peace and Prosperity through Co-creation based on Trust-

- Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is my great honor to welcome you here this evening ahead of the Commemorative Summit for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation tomorrow.
- Valuing unity in diversity, ASEAN has grown significantly, established a vibrant community, and launched and promoted its own vision for the Indo-Pacific. I greatly respect ASEAN's efforts in this regard, and am pleased that Japan, as part of Asia, has always had a place in that part of ASEAN's history.
- Since assuming the office of Foreign Minister 11 years ago, until today, I have traveled to ASEAN countries 32 times in total. I feel grateful to our predecessors on all sides who have engaged with each other over the past 50 years even in difficult times, and I have experienced firsthand the close relationship that is the result of these efforts.
- Today, building on this foundation, I would like to propose three concrete measures to take the ASEAN-Japan relations to new heights for the next 50 years.

1) Heart-to-Heart Partners across Generations

- First of all, the core of Japan-ASEAN relations is, above all, mutual trust. What underpins this trust is our precious history of consistently walking together, even in times of hardship. We would like to pass on to the next generation this "heart to heart" relationship.
- To this end, we are launching a new comprehensive exchange program called the "Partnership to Co-create a Future with the Next Generation", which will benefit more than 10 million people over the next 10 years. In addition, we will further promote interactive exchanges such as those among young business leaders.

2) Partners for Co-creation of Economy and Society of the Future

- Then, based on our strong relationship of trust, it is our hope that Japan and ASEAN will bring together their strengths and find solutions in an era of compound crises that are difficult for any one country to solve. We also hope to create strong economies that generate further vitality through mutually channeling each other's vitality, and to grow together as partners to co-create a society and economy in which people from all walks of life can achieve and enjoy the middle-class dreams to which most of us aspire.
- To this end, we will work on public-private partnerships, focusing on strengthening connectivity, addressing climate change including through the realization of the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC), and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises as well as start-ups. We will further encourage private investment through utilizing new ODA tools, such as the Co-Creation for Common Agenda Initiative.

- We will also launch the ASEAN-Japan Co-Creation Initiative for the Next Generation Automotive Industry, in which we will work together to develop and implement strategies to ensure that ASEAN remains the world's leading hub for automotive production and export.

3) Partners for Peace and Stability

- Last but not least, what Japan and ASEAN have always pursued is "peace and prosperity". As we co-create and build upon stronger and more vibrant economies and societies, we will be better able to secure a free and open international order based on the rule of law. Let us together create peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region where human dignity is protected.
- To this end, we will promote our efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation based on the "Hiroshima Action Plan", judicial cooperation including legal technical assistance, Women, Peace and Security (WPS), cyber security, defense exchange and cooperation, and Official Security Assistance (OSA).
- Ladies and gentlemen, it is with these thoughts and true determination that I will approach tomorrow's meeting. As friends gathered here, let us present to the world a vision for the future that will last for generations to come.
- Well, I think I have spoken enough! I hope you will enjoy the delicious dinner and make the most of each other's company. I would like to propose a toast to your health and happiness and to the further development of Japan-ASEAN friendship in the future. Cheers!

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