

**Opening Remarks by Foreign Minister HAYASHI Yoshimasa  
at Public Seminar on “ASEAN-Japan Cooperation and Ways Forward  
in the Next 50 Years” by Asian Vision Institute**

6 August 2022

Excellencies,  
Distinguished participants,

Let me begin by thanking the Asian Vision Institute (AVI), a think-tank with Cambodia’s best and brightest young minds, for their cordial invitation to this seminar. I am honored to visit Cambodia for the first time since I assumed the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs and stand here together with H.E. Mr. PRAK Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia, on the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of ASEAN. It is my great pleasure to see the intellectual exchange with the AVI enhanced as consented in the Japan-Cambodia Joint Statement in March.

The ASEAN-Japan Foreign Ministers’ Meeting was held this week in person for the first time in three years despite various challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. This meeting, at which we confirmed the outcomes of our cooperation and envisioned our common future, epitomized the steadfast relations between ASEAN and Japan to date. Allow me to convey my heartfelt gratitude again for Cambodia’s contributions as the ASEAN Chair this year. Since well before assuming the post of Foreign Minister, I have visited Southeast Asian countries through parliamentary diplomacy for years and had multiple opportunities to interact face-to-face with people there. Through such real-life experience, I firmly believe in the importance of ASEAN-Japan relations and wholeheartedly welcome the steadfast development of the relations.

In addition, it is highly significant that this seminar, which is being held immediately after the ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers’ Meetings, provides a platform for active discussions on the history and outcomes of ASEAN-Japan cooperation as well as its further development.

Today, the environment in the Indo-Pacific region, including ASEAN countries and Japan, is becoming increasingly severe. We are faced with multiple challenges such as the situation in Myanmar, unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force in the East and South China Seas, and North Korea's nuclear and missile activities.

Furthermore, Russia's aggression against Ukraine has been challenging the rules-based international order and destabilizing the world economy, as evidenced by the soaring energy and food prices we are seeing today.

Under these circumstances, ASEAN, located at the "Confluence of the Two Seas"—namely, the Pacific and the Indian Oceans—is now more important than ever. Japan and ASEAN are strategic partners that share fundamental principles such as sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the rule of law, as well as the view to promote a rules-based free and open international order in the Indo-Pacific region. Japan is determined to further develop ASEAN-Japan relations by strongly upholding ASEAN centrality. I would also like to pay respect to Cambodia for its leadership and contributions as the ASEAN Chair in today's complex international situation especially in addressing the situation in Myanmar. We will continue supporting Cambodia's efforts.

As you are aware, Former Prime Minister ABE Shinzo, who last month was gunned down in a despicable and outrageous act of violence, made tremendous contributions to the ASEAN-Japan friendship and its development. In 2013, at the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, he adopted a Vision Statement together with ASEAN leaders, including Samdech Techo Prime Minister Hun Sen. Since then, ASEAN-Japan relations have made remarkable progress through comprehensive cooperation under the four partnerships—namely, "Partners for Peace and Stability," "Partners for Prosperity," "Partners for Quality of Life," and "Heart-to-Heart Partners." The Revised Implementation Plan of the Vision Statement has been carried out in full. This is testament to the fact that our partnership is far from being mere rhetoric.

Furthermore, Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)," which is now supported by many leaders, including Samdech Techo Prime Minister Hun Sen, and the "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)" share fundamental principles.

In accordance with the four priority areas of cooperation of the AOIP, Japan has been steadily advancing concrete cooperation with ASEAN nations. Prime Minister Kishida announced the "Kishida Vision for Peace" at the Shangri-La Dialogue in June and expressed his determination to proactively contribute to maintaining and strengthening the rules-based free and open international order amidst the ongoing challenges and crises faced by the international community. Under this vision, Japan has been making efforts to bring new developments towards FOIP and lay out a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Plan for Peace" with an emphasis on the enhancement of maritime law enforcement capabilities, cyber security, as well as digital and green initiatives.

Next year will be a historic milestone that commemorates the 50<sup>th</sup> Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. Japan was the first among ASEAN's external partners to build a framework for cooperation and dialogue with ASEAN back in 1973. Next year, we would like to welcome ASEAN leaders to Japan and host a commemorative summit meeting to launch a new vision for future ASEAN-Japan relations. It was with great joy that ASEAN and Japan, at the ASEAN-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting two days ago, jointly announced the official Logo Design and Catchphrase "Golden Friendship, Golden Opportunities" for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. This will surely add momentum to our preparation for the important year ahead.

As we look ahead to the 50th Anniversary, Japan will continue closely cooperating with ASEAN to promote the even greater development of ASEAN-Japan relations.

Thank you for listening.