

**A Video Message from Foreign Minister HAYASHI Yoshimasa
to the Commemorative Symposium
for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation**

13 February 2023

Excellencies, Distinguished guests and My fellow citizens of Japan and ASEAN,

I am honored to have this opportunity to address you for this commemorative event that celebrates the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation.

Japan was the first country in the world to become a partner of ASEAN. In the half century since then, Japan and ASEAN have been working together not only as close business partners, but also as true friends with “heart to heart relations,” and cooperated hand in hand for peace, stability, and prosperity of the region, even in times of difficulty.

Encouraged by the dramatic development of the ASEAN countries, our region has now become the center of the ever-expanding global economy.

As we look around the world, we are at a turning point in history and are facing a difficult situation where various issues, including Russia's aggression against Ukraine, are intricately intertwined. It is important that Japan and ASEAN continue to grow together based on mutual trust and respect, upholding diversity and inclusiveness, and to lead the way in this new era.

Around December this year, we will hold a commemorative summit in Tokyo to mark the 50th year of ASEAN-Japan partnership. At that time, we will jointly announce a new vision for cooperation for the next 50 years, taking into account the critical international situation at this pivotal time.

Japan has launched the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) and ASEAN has launched the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).

The principles shared by the two initiatives, such as openness, transparency, inclusiveness, and respect for international law, are important ideas in this new era, and close cooperation between Japan and ASEAN based on these principles is becoming increasingly important.

In order to contribute to the maintenance and strengthening of a free and open international order based on the rule of law, we should mainstream the AOIP in the cooperation between ASEAN and all the external partners. Such cooperation should be in line with the principles and priority areas of the AOIP.

Japan will take the lead in supporting the mainstreaming of AOIP.

Our effort consists of three pillars.

First, we will promote concrete cooperation projects in line with the four priority areas of the AOIP, namely, maritime cooperation, connectivity, SDGs, and economic and other possible area of cooperation. We will work with ASEAN to identify specific projects to be announced at the Commemorative Summit, taking into account the new FOIP Plan which will be developed by Japan this spring. Those projects will implement the new vision to be issued on the occasion of the 50th year.

Second, we will support the functions of the ASEAN Secretariat for the promotion and mainstreaming of the AOIP. We would like to consider providing technical assistance to enhance the capacity of the Secretariat.

Third, we will support the human resource development of young government officials in ASEAN countries, with a focus on the AOIP. We would like to consider assisting ongoing ASEAN programs and also consider starting new programs to provide training.

Japan will take this opportunity of the 50th commemorative year to strongly promote these efforts in close dialogue with the ASEAN side and based on their needs.

"Golden Friendship, Golden Opportunities." The catchphrase of the 50th Year accurately describes the ASEAN-Japan relations. Japan would like to move forward with the people of ASEAN so that we can lead a new era and grow together. I hope that all of you who are here today will continue to support us in furthering the relationship and cooperation between Japan and ASEAN.

Thank you very much.