

Opening Remarks by State Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Mr. HORII Iwao
at the OECD-Southeast Asia Policy Roundtable:
Strengthening Economic Security for Prosperity in Southeast Asia:
Policy Insights from Strategic Industries
February 6, 2026

Your Excellencies, Director Sheehan, Distinguished Delegates,

I am HORII Iwao, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. It is an honor to deliver the opening remarks.

On the occasion of this OECD-Southeast Asia Policy Roundtable, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of you for joining us here in Tokyo today.

In 2018, as Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, I participated in a meeting of the OECD Southeast Asia Regional Programme in Tokyo.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to address you again.

Japan has consistently demonstrated strong leadership in fostering cooperation between the OECD and Southeast Asia.

The Southeast Asia Regional Programme, launched in 2014 with the support of Japan, provides a framework for collaboration between the OECD and the region's economies.

It marked its tenth anniversary in 2024.

In that milestone year, Indonesia and Thailand began their accession processes to the OECD, which was a significant achievement.

Japan will continue to actively support their future accession efforts.

Today, we turn a new page in the evolving partnership between the OECD and Southeast Asia.

This policy dialogue represents the first-ever attempt for the OECD and Southeast Asian countries to exchange views on economic security, which is an urgent issue for the international community.

As global uncertainty grows, economic security risks, including supply chain vulnerabilities and market-distorting overcapacity, are becoming more pronounced.

In this context, we must address these challenges together, with greater cooperation than ever before.

Working closely with Southeast Asian countries is crucial, as the region is a leading engine of economic growth.

This helps ensure a global level playing field, strengthens supply chains, and promotes safe, trustworthy, and advanced technologies.

Today's dialogue aims to share the OECD's insights and work, discuss the current situation and challenges in Southeast Asia, and

explore the possibilities for joint action toward the region's prosperity.

The discussions will focus on three key areas:

- shipbuilding, which is vital for regional supply chains;
- AI, which is central to future growth; and
- the steel industry, where overcapacity is a concern.

The economic security risks cannot be addressed by any single country alone.

Therefore, Japan has steadfastly committed to enhancing collaboration in the global arena.

The OECD is an outstanding international organization that helps shape global rules and policies based on evidence and data.

In particular, the OECD Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation possesses immense expertise and experience, and it drives discussions in policy circles worldwide.

We are fortunate to have Director Sheehan here today to speak on a range of topics across various fields.

In addition, I am pleased to make two announcements regarding Japan's support through the OECD:

First, Japan plans to support Southeast Asian countries in the shipbuilding sector through an OECD peer review.

This sector is now attracting considerable attention from the international community.

For Japan, Prime Minister TAKAICHI has emphasized that shipbuilding “is an extremely important industry that supports economic security.”

Its revitalization is a policy priority.

The forthcoming report on “challenges and opportunities” in Southeast Asia will be highly insightful for the region, Japan, and the world.

Second, in the field of AI, Japan will support the establishment of a regular dialogue framework between the OECD and Southeast Asian countries.

Following last summer’s workshop, the second “Co-creation Workshop” on the AI Policy Toolkit to implement the OECD AI Principles will be held in Thailand in March.

Furthermore, the inaugural policy exchange on AI between Southeast Asia and the OECD took place in Tokyo last May.

This framework represents a new approach to institutionalize these excellent efforts.

We sincerely look forward to your active participation in these

projects.

The OECD Tokyo Office plays an indispensable role in advancing these promising activities.

Since 2024, under the strong leadership of Director Naoko Ueda, the Tokyo Office has served as the OECD's pivotal outreach hub for the Indo-Pacific region, especially Southeast Asia.

The Japanese government remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting various initiatives like today's roundtable, with the aim of elevating the relationship between the region and the OECD to unprecedented heights.

Distinguished guests,

I sincerely hope that today's valuable opportunity will lead to lively discussions that turn a new page for prosperity in Southeast Asia and pave the way for a bright future.

Thank you very much.