

Recommendations of the Study Group on ASEAN-Japan Strategic Partnership in ASEAN Community Building

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Japan has stood the test of time. The institutionalization of ASEAN-Japan relations started in 1973, through the establishment of informal dialogue relations. In 1977, that relationship was formalized with the establishment of the ASEAN-Japan Forum. Since then, ASEAN has benefited significantly from its cooperation with Japan. Japan has been the most important contributor to ASEAN's economic development and prosperity over the past four decades, which in turn has contributed to the creation of a stable Southeast Asia. For its part, Japan has also benefited from closer cooperation with ASEAN. ASEAN, through its collective efforts, has contributed to the creation of prosperity and stability in the region, benefiting ASEAN, Japan, and indeed the world. A stable and prosperous Southeast Asia has provided a conducive environment for Japan to fulfill its national objectives and play a positive international role.

At the beginning of the 21st century, that relationship had begun to consolidate even further. The ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit, which took place in December 2003 in Tokyo, was an important milestone in that regard. The summit adopted the Tokyo Declaration for the Dynamic and Enduring Japan-ASEAN Partnership in the New Millennium, providing the basis for future cooperation encompassing economic, political, and security areas. Leaders of ASEAN and Japan have also repeatedly emphasized their

optimism that ASEAN-Japan cooperation would continue to thrive and expand and that the relationship would continue to be strong. Indeed, it is not an exaggeration to say that ASEAN's relationship with Japan has been the closest and deepest of ASEAN's external relations with any regional or global partner.

The region, however, is changing rapidly, bringing about new challenges and opportunities that require both ASEAN and Japan to continually nurture their relationship and adapt to new circumstances. Particularly in the past decade, there have been dramatic changes that have ushered in a new geoeconomic and geopolitical context for ASEAN-Japan relations. ASEAN itself is rapidly approaching the completion of the first phase of its community-building project at the end of 2015. In this regard, the important task facing Japan and the ASEAN member states now is how to bring the cooperative relationship to a new level, where it is able to meet the challenges of the new emerging regional order in East Asia and beyond. More importantly, changes in both the needs and priorities of ASEAN member states and Japan, as a result of the changing economic and political-security environment in East Asia, necessitate that both sides forge a greater convergence of interests, institutionalize a more comprehensive agenda for cooperation, and find greater synergy in implementing that agenda. In the post-2015 period, ASEAN and Japan will need to forge a strategic partnership for democracy, peace, and prosperity in the region.

In order to generate fresh ideas on how ASEAN-Japan strategic partnership could be expanded and deepened into the coming decades, a group of scholars from ASEAN member states and Japan undertook a comprehensive study on ASEAN-Japan Strategic Partnership in ASEAN Community Building. This study, which lasted from September 2012 to July 2013, is part of a larger study supported by the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) that looks into the central theme of how ASEAN-Japan strategic partnership can strengthen the ASEAN Community-building process, contribute to the efforts of forging peace and prosperity in East Asia, and participate in the improvement of global governance. This current report, *Beyond 2015: ASEAN-Japan Strategic Partnership for Democracy, Peace, and Prosperity in Southeast Asia*, constitutes the first of two reports that the study group intends to produce.

In this first report, the study group focuses on how ASEAN-Japan strategic partnership can strengthen the ASEAN Community-building process in the post-2015 period. It covers ASEAN-Japan cooperation on the three pillars of the ASEAN Community: the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). This study recognizes that

ASEAN and Japan need new ways to enhance their partnership in order to facilitate the process of community building in ASEAN. ASEAN member states also strongly recognize that Japan's positive and active engagement is necessary and crucial in order to ensure the emergence of a rules-based regional order in East Asia, of which ASEAN and Japan are integral parts. That recognition is based on what ASEAN-Japan partnership has already accomplished over the last four decades.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR?

In the postwar era, Japan's relationship with Southeast Asian countries began to improve rapidly with the adoption of the Fukuda Doctrine in 1977, pledging that Japan (a) would never become a military power and on that basis would contribute to the peace and prosperity of Southeast Asia, (b) would build a "heart-to-heart" relationship of mutual confidence and trust with Southeast Asian countries, and (c) would endeavor to build a bridge between ASEAN countries and Indochinese states and, by doing so, contribute to the integration of the entire Southeast Asian region. Essentially, the Fukuda Doctrine not only reflected Japan's commitment to play a positive role in fostering stability and prosperity in Southeast Asia but also marked the beginning of a more comprehensive approach in Japan's policy toward the region. Indeed, since the enunciation of the Fukuda Doctrine, ASEAN-Japan relations have stood the challenge of time.

ASEAN-Japan cooperation in the first four decades of the relationship primarily focused on the paramount importance of economic development for countries in the region and on building a deep sense of trust and friendship between Japan and Southeast Asian countries. Japan has consistently served as one of the largest sources of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Southeast Asia. As the largest provider of official development assistance (ODA), Japan has also contributed to human resources and technological development in almost all ASEAN countries, leading to the acceleration of national development and economic growth in these countries. Peace and reconciliation between the founding members of ASEAN and the Indochinese states have now become a reality with all 10 Southeast Asian countries becoming members of ASEAN, while Japan continues to play an important role in bridging the development gap between the original and newer members.

Japan's ODA helped ASEAN countries expand and improve their economic infrastructures, creating the conditions that attracted investments

from Japan and elsewhere. Japanese investment, especially in the manufacturing sector, helped ASEAN countries embark on industrialization and start developing their own manufacturing sectors. Japanese investment, especially from Japanese multinational corporations, has also facilitated technology transfers to ASEAN member states. As a result of rapid economic development in Southeast Asian countries, trade relations between Japan and ASEAN countries grew rapidly. By 2002, ASEAN-Japan trade volume had reached US\$106.9 billion, up from only US\$15.7 billion in 1977.

The economic ties between ASEAN and Japan extend far beyond the private sector-led initiatives that are commercially driven. ASEAN-Japan economic cooperation found a greater impetus and became more comprehensive with the signing of the Tokyo Declaration for the Dynamic and Enduring Japan-ASEAN Partnership in the New Millennium and the adoption of the Japan-ASEAN Plan of Action (POA) in December 2003. Under this agreement, more than 20 sectoral bodies have been established, overseeing a broad range of areas of cooperation and support. Japan's ODA has also contributed toward community building in ASEAN through its assistance programs for the newer ASEAN member states (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam, known collectively as CLMV). The subsequent POA for 2011–2015 provided the basis for ASEAN-Japan cooperation in enhancing ASEAN-Japan connectivity to consolidate ties between the two sides. It initiated 21 wide-ranging economic cooperation programs, demonstrating the multipronged approach used to enhance the depth of economic cooperation between ASEAN and Japan. By 2012, the volume of trade between ASEAN and Japan had reached US\$255.9 billion.

Decades of productive economic cooperation between ASEAN and Japan have contributed to the creation of trust between the two sides. ASEAN and Japan have managed to put the problem of history behind them and move toward the future. For Japan, its role in the economic transformations in Southeast Asian countries helped facilitate the construction of regional perceptions of Japan as a positive force in the region. Japan has also played an important political-security role in building peace and stability in the region in five basic ways. First, Japan has consistently pursued a policy that imposed constraints on the use of force and worked within the US-Japan security alliance as the foundation of regional stability. Second, Japan has been a strong supporter of ASEAN integration and ASEAN as an institution. Third, Japan's political and security role has been manifested positively in its role in peacemaking and in post-conflict peacebuilding efforts in the region, particularly in Cambodia, Timor Leste, and Mindanao. Fourth, Japan's

political-security role has also been expressed in its commitment and efforts to address nontraditional security threats through a human security approach. Fifth, Japan has been favorable to, and an instrumental participant in, the expansion of ASEAN-driven multilateralism in East Asia, which also includes China and South Korea.

As ASEAN-Japan cooperation has moved into the 21st century, the relationship is no longer confined to economic cooperation alone but now includes long-overdue political and security cooperation as well. ASEAN and Japan have worked closely in ensuring maritime security and safety in such areas as the Malacca Straits, in stepping up their efforts to combat transnational crime, in addressing threats to health such as the growing threat of infectious diseases, in coordinating their efforts to strengthen capacity in disaster response and management, and in addressing global issues such as energy security, climate change, and food crises. Defense exchanges and cooperation between ASEAN and Japan have also begun to intensify, creating an atmosphere of trust and confidence among the armed forces of both sides.

The centrality of economic cooperation and the gradual emphasis on political-security cooperation does not mean the absence of socio-cultural elements in the ASEAN-Japan relationship. In fact, social and cultural cooperation between the two sides has increased mutual understanding and formed a strong foundation of mutual respect and appreciation. Cultural and people-to-people exchanges—covering youth, civil society activists, media, academics, and artists—have been a regular feature in ASEAN-Japan relations since the 1970s. In addition to fostering greater understanding of each other, close and regular interactions among people have also cemented amicable feelings toward each other, creating a sense of togetherness and friendship between the peoples of ASEAN and Japan.

Indeed, much has been accomplished by ASEAN and Japan over the last four decades. However, despite the fact that Japan has been a consistent partner of ASEAN for decades, complacency is not an option. ASEAN-Japan partnership must never be taken for granted. Both ASEAN and Japan are responsible for ensuring that their partnership remains sustainable, deep rooted, enduring, and everlasting. The future of ASEAN-Japan cooperation and their strategic partnership need to be nurtured, especially within the rapidly changing environment in East Asia. If ASEAN and Japan want to manage geoeconomic and geopolitical changes in the region, the strategic significance of their partnership needs to be reinvigorated and consolidated well into the coming decade and beyond.

THE IMPERATIVE OF A POST-2015 PARTNERSHIP: A COMMON AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

The foundation for ASEAN-Japan strategic partnership in the 21st century was strongly anchored first in the Tokyo Declaration for the Dynamic and Enduring Japan-ASEAN Partnership in the New Millennium (2003) and later in the Joint Declaration for Enhancing ASEAN-Japan Strategic Partnership for Prospering Together, commonly referred to as the Bali Declaration (2011). The fulfillment of those commitments has been translated into a set of cooperative programs contained in the POA 2005–2010 and the POA 2011–2015. The implementation of the two action plans has undoubtedly brought ASEAN and Japan closer. Facilitating the attainment of the ASEAN Community by 2015 has been the central element of ASEAN-Japan strategic partnership in the first decade of the 21st century.

Now, as the 2015 deadline is fast approaching, it is imperative that ASEAN and Japan start preparing the platform for the next phase in their strategic partnership. In this regard, the ASEAN-Japan strategic partnership should continue to be guided by the ASEAN Community's ultimate goal of becoming a people-centered organization that ensures "durable peace, stability, and shared prosperity in the region."¹ The relationship between ASEAN and Japan is solid enough that they can capitalize on their converging interests and past achievements in deepening cooperation. Yet, the complexity of the challenges they will face over the next 15 years requires both sides to reinvigorate their cooperation by giving it more focus, strengthening their resolve, and sharpening the ultimate goal of their strategic partnership without losing sight of the imperative for comprehensiveness. ASEAN and Japan should gear their cooperation toward transforming their relationship into a partnership for democracy, peace, and prosperity. For that purpose, the study group proposes the agendas for future cooperation between ASEAN and Japan outlined in the chapters in this volume.

THE RESPONSIBILITY TO IMPLEMENT

Implementation constitutes one of the most difficult challenges in translating ideas and plans into reality. ASEAN-Japan cooperation, albeit framed within a strategic partnership, faces the same challenge. It is imperative that ASEAN and Japan adopt a principle of what could be called the "responsibility to implement" (R2I). In the context of promoting the ASEAN-Japan Strategic Partnership for Democracy, Peace, and Prosperity beyond the political will of leaders in ASEAN and Japan, the

successful application of the R2I principle requires a focus on capacity building, institutions, and strategies. Without concerted efforts to develop the capacity to implement, ASEAN-Japan cooperation will only evolve slowly. ASEAN-Japan cooperation will not grow unless both sides agree to strengthen institutions needed not only to implement a cooperative agenda but also to sustain and nurture that cooperation. Such institutions are needed at both the Track 1 and Track 2 levels. Finally, ASEAN-Japan strategic partnership in the post-2015 era also requires a strategy to guide the implementation process.

The Imperative of Capacity Building

The successful implementation of cooperative agendas within the ASEAN-Japan strategic partnership will depend on the capacity of all parties to translate plans into action. In this regard, ASEAN and Japan should work together in the following areas:

1. Strengthen the capacity of the ASEAN Secretariat to monitor and assess progress in the implementation of the ASEAN-Japan strategic partnership's POAs. This capacity-building program should be part of broader ASEAN-Japan cooperation to strengthen the capacity of the ASEAN Secretariat as a whole.
2. Provide adequate resources to support the work of the JAIF Management Team at the ASEAN Secretariat in order to enhance its capacity to manage programs and activities that facilitate ASEAN integration.
3. Provide training to various line-ministries in ASEAN member states responsible for implementing ASEAN-Japan agreements in various areas, especially in priority areas proposed by the Study Group on ASEAN-Japan Strategic Partnership contained in this report.
4. Enhance the capacity of universities and think tanks in the region, and especially in ASEAN member states, to conduct policy-oriented research and studies so that ASEAN and Japan can draw more independent, evidence-based lessons on how to promote and strengthen ASEAN-Japan strategic partnership.

Institutional Arrangements

The ASEAN-Japan strategic partnership will not live up to its potential unless solid institutional arrangements are put in place. In this regard, ASEAN and Japan should consider the following measures:

1. Create a new policy research institute for ASEAN-Japan strategic partnership. The institute, along with ERIA, should aim to promote implementation of these recommendations regarding ASEAN-Japan cooperation beyond 2015 by further investigating concrete action plans and facilitating intellectual exchange.
2. Upgrade the existing institutional frameworks of cooperation. For example, ASEAN-Japan vice-minister of defense meetings should be upgraded to a full minister of defense meeting. It is also time for ASEAN and Japan to convene a “2+2” meeting, facilitating closer coordination between ministers of foreign affairs and ministers of defense.
3. The ASEAN-Japan Forum should be revitalized so that it can better serve as a venue for exchanging views, generating new ideas, and providing assessments on the progress of cooperation between ASEAN and Japan.
4. ASEAN and Japan should facilitate greater interaction, cooperation, and dialogue among Track 2 and Track 3 stakeholders of the partnership on a regular basis.

A Strategy for Cooperation in the 21st Century

The implementation of ASEAN-Japan strategic partnership requires a common strategy that serves the shared objectives of both sides.

1. ASEAN-Japan strategic partnership is no longer a one-way relationship but one that is characterized by a truly equal partnership. This means that the two sides should share not only a common agenda but more importantly common principles of a regional order today and in the future. These principles should include the following:
 - (a) bottom-up, people-centered approaches to issues and challenges in the promotion of democracy, peace, and prosperity
 - (b) a rules-based regional order, particularly in the domain of maritime security, sustained by the principle of non-use of force as a means of settling disputes
 - (c) principles of internationalism and open regionalism in promoting cooperation among the governments, not only in the areas of economic and socio-cultural integration but also in political and security cooperation
 - (d) recognition of the increasing importance of a new type of PPP, based upon people-centered, rules-based, and internationalist principles
2. ASEAN-Japan strategic partnership is no longer confined to government-to-government cooperation but also involves broader stakeholders. In this regard, specific attention should be given to enhancing the following:

- (a) interaction between parliaments of ASEAN member states and Japan
- (b) participation of CSOs and NGOs in promoting ASEAN-Japan cooperation
- (c) an active role for the media in building awareness and mutual understanding between ASEAN and Japan
- (d) dialogue and cooperation between academia and think tanks



The ASEAN-Japan relationship has made great strides toward nurturing a truly equal partnership since the establishment of the ASEAN-Japan forum on synthetic rubber in 1973. During the last four decades, Japan has contributed to the regional integration of Southeast Asia primarily through economic means, which in turn has facilitated social and political stability in many ASEAN countries. During much of this time, if not recently, Japan has shied away somewhat from playing explicit political and security roles, although Tokyo has been claiming, quite rightly, that political democratization in Asia should ensue from economic development and social stability.

Today, the regional and global parameters affecting democracy, peace, and prosperity are undergoing historic and fundamental changes. ASEAN and Japan have the joint responsibility to steer this uncertain process of transformation in order to realize a more democratic, more peaceful, and more prosperous region. This should require bold, new thinking and action, such as the ideas suggested in this report. At this critical juncture of the 40th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan cooperation, the responsibility to implement is greater than ever.

NOTE

1. Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II), Bali, Indonesia, October 7, 2003, <http://www.asean.org/news/item/declaration-of-asean-concord-ii-bali-concord-ii>.