

**Plenary Session Address**  
**Monday, November 21, 2022**  
**DOKO Shigeru, Head of the Japanese Delegation**

His Excellency Mr. Samdech Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia (His Excellency Mr. Samdech Hun Sen, prime minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia), and all delegates. I am Doko Shigeru, the head of the delegation from the National Diet of Japan.

On behalf of the Japanese delegation, I would like to express my warmest congratulations to the host country, the Kingdom of Cambodia. We are sincerely grateful for the invitation to participate as observers in the 43rd AIPA General Assembly.

The relationship between Japan and ASEAN has seen considerable achievements in political-security, economics, and socio-cultural cooperation. Next year will mark the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, and we are confident that further cooperation will be forged in the years to come.

Through its annual general assembly, AIPA has played a key part in facilitating exchange and mutual understanding between its members, thereby contributing to peace, stability, and prosperity throughout Southeast Asia. The role of parliamentary bodies in supporting the peace and prosperity of the region is now increasingly significant. In addition to conventional sessions, this general assembly includes Meeting of the Young Parliamentarians of AIPA. Providing those who are set to spearhead the next generation with a forum to engage freely in open-minded discussion will no doubt contribute to the further development of AIPA. We look forward to AIPA's continued contributions to ASEAN integration as well as continued peace and stability throughout the region.

As a member of the Japan-ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Exchange Group of the House of Councillors, I have been engaged in inter-parliamentary exchange between Japan and ASEAN for quite some time.

Over the last few years, the COVID-19 pandemic has prevented opportunities for face-to-face exchange. However, since last month's removal of the daily limit on overseas arrivals and implementation of other significant steps to relax border control, Japan is again able to welcome many visitors from other nations. It is my hope that we will relaunch the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Exchange Group and in doing so further cultivate inter-parliamentary

exchange between JAPAN and ASEAN.

This general assembly will focus on the subject of “Advancing Together for Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient ASEAN”. Japan likewise seeks to maintain and enhance a free, open, and rules-based international order. In addition, we strive to facilitate new development under our strategy for a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”. We seek to ensure synergy within the principles of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific by working to enhance connectivity in three areas: “Physical connectivity,” which involves the development of a high-quality infrastructure that includes ports, railways, roads, energy, and ICT; “people-to-people connectivity,” which is achieved through the development of human resources; and “institutional connectivity,” which facilitates the smooth movement of goods through customs. In doing so, we aim to provide greater support to strengthen the unity of the ASEAN community.

As one of the observer countries, we look forward to the opportunities that this assembly provides for us to participate in dialogue with ASEAN delegations on the important topic “Investing in Peace, Sustainable Development, and Post Covid-19 Recovery”. Japan’s measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have included the provision of vaccines, medical materials, medical equipment, and technical assistance as well as a donation of one million US dollars to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund. We will continue to assist fair and transparent development as a means of supporting the sustainable growth of the ASEAN community in the future.

The discussions at this general assembly serve as a forum for frank exchanges of opinion with ASEAN delegates on the various issues faced by each nation. I would like to conclude by expressing my hope that these interactions will foster even greater mutual trust and pave the way for increasingly meaningful inter-parliamentary exchange in the future.

Thank you for your kind attention.