

OPENING REMARK (1)

Mr. Koh Tin Fook
Director
Technical Cooperation Directorate,
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Republic of Singapore

Excellencies

Mr Hiroaki Isobe
Minister
Japan Embassy in Singapore

Mr Mitsuru Suemori
Director-General
Regional Department I
JICA Headquarters

Distinguished speakers and participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1 On behalf of the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I extend a warm welcome to all our colleagues from ASEAN, Timor-Leste and Japan as well as our partners from the various JICA offices to the opening of the 6th Japan-ASEAN Regional Cooperation Meeting, or JARCOM in short. We are indeed honoured to have the privilege of co-hosting the 6th JARCOM in Singapore with JICA. It is not only an occasion for member countries to discuss regional cooperation to breach the development gap within ASEAN, but also an opportunity for us to renew our friendships and build new ones.

2 As you are aware, the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) was first mooted in Singapore during the 4th ASEAN Informal Summit held here in 2000, seven years ago. The IAI is meant to give direction to and sharpen the focus of collective efforts in ASEAN to narrow the development gap within ASWAN as well as between ASEAN and other parts of the world. Since then, special efforts and resources have been devoted to promoting mutual assistance to narrow

the development gap among ASEAN member countries for dynamic and sustainable growth of the region.

3 On our part, Singapore has contributed in our modest way by pledging a total of S\$87.4 million to IAI in two separate tranches, stretching from 2001 to 2008. A concrete manifestation of Singapore's commitment is the setting up of four IAI Training Centres in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam to contribute to the human resource capacity development and promote integration. To date, about 20,000 officials from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam have participated in activities organised under the Singapore Cooperation Programme, of which about 11,000 officials have attended courses in our four IAI Centres.

4 The continued success of the IAI will depend not just on the efforts on the part of each ASEAN member but also on the valuable support of ASEAN's partners. Here, I would like to specially acknowledge the contributions of Japan, in particular the Japan International Cooperation Agency or JICA to ASEAN's integration. During the Japan-ASEAN Summit in 2005, Japan announced that it would contribute US\$70 million for efforts toward the building of the ASEAN community. Subsequently, the Japan-ASEAN integration fund was established in March 2006. The fund would go a long way to promote intra-ASEAN integration and address regional concerns such as the Avian Influenza.

5 As all of you would agree, JICA has been an active and strong partner for development in ASEAN. JICA has contributed substantial resources and expertise to help build up the region's infrastructure and human resource capacity in a wide range of fields ranging from economic development, environmental management, combating the spread of infectious diseases to disaster management.

6 I would also like to commend JICA for its proactive approach in initiating the JARCOM meetings. JARCOM is a useful platform to promote regional cooperation among its member countries under the technical cooperation framework of JICA. In particular, the need-based project formulation mechanism allows for greater efficiency in the allocation of resources and prevents duplication in meeting the need priorities. Besides reviewing the annual activities, the JARCOM meetings also provide a platform for the participating countries to exchange views on key development issues and trends.

Ladies and Gentlemen

7 Singapore has a long-standing partnership with JICA. Since 1994, we have been jointly organising human resource capacity-building programmes for various countries. To date, more than 2,700 officials from various parts of the world have participated in our joint programmes, spanning diverse fields such as IT, trade promotion, industrial development, healthcare, education, urban planning and the environment. The Japan-Singapore Partnership Programme for the 21st Century (JSPP21) was officially established in 1997. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the JSPP21. I am pleased to note that the JSPP21 is one of our largest and most successful partnerships to date.

8 Under the JSPP21, we have organised a series of country-specific and region-wide programmes aligned to the development priorities of countries within and beyond ASEAN. A key focus of JSPP21 is to build human resource capacity in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV). Special efforts have been made to ensure that the technical assistance programmes initiated under the JSPP21 umbrella are co-ordinated to enhance their overall effectiveness. In addition to country-specific programmes, regional programmes are also organized under the JSPP21 to allow ASEAN countries to share the experiences of our friends beyond the region as well as providing a wider platform for networking.

Ladies and Gentlemen

9 Over the next three days, the JARCOM Secretariat has put together a substantive agenda. Besides reviewing the annual activities and having the group dialogues on needs-resource matching, the 6th JARCOM will also discuss new developments in the IAI and South-South Cooperation. I wish all of you a fruitful and successful meeting, and a pleasant stay in Singapore.

Thank you

OPENING REMARK (2)

Mr. Hiroaki ISOBE
Minister,
Embassy of Japan to Singapore

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to join you here, and to say a few words at this opening of the 6th JICA-ASEAN Regional Cooperation Meeting.

First of all, I would like to welcome all of you to Singapore, where you can witness the successful Japan-Singapore cooperation. As you know, here in Singapore, Japan and Singapore jointly conduct the JSPP21 -Japan Singapore Partnership Programme for 21st Century. The training courses are provided in diverse fields including trade, public governance, banking, maritime navigation, information technology, policing management and so on. This Programme was launched in 1994 as JSPP, which aimed to help Singapore become donor country. This Programme was subsequently developed into JSPP21 in 1997, in which both Governments jointly bear the costs on equitable basis, and this cooperation formula was further extended in 2001 for an indefinite period.

One of the most important purposes of the JSPP21 is to narrow the development gap among ASEAN countries. For this purpose, not only joint training courses for ASEAN countries, but country-focused courses for CLMV countries are also conducted corresponding to the needs of each country.

I sincerely hope that you can have a good opportunity to know much about our efforts in Singapore and I appreciate your valuable suggestions to the activities of JSPP21.

Japan attaches importance to the regional cooperation with ASEAN, and is strongly committed to speed up the integration efforts among the ASEAN countries. Japan has provided development assistance to the Southeast Asian countries. In 2005, about 19% of total bilateral assistance of Japan went to Southeast Asian countries. In 2004, Japan provided about 40% of all DAC countries' bilateral assistance to the ASEAN.

I would like to remind you of the commitments made by Prime Minister Mr. Abe in the

ASEAN-Japan Summit and East Asia Summit in January this year, in Cebu. Japan's initiatives consisted of the (1) "Asia Gateway", (2) Energy Security, (3) Youth Exchange, (4) Grant Contribution for Comprehensive Economic Partnership Cooperation between Japan and ASEAN, (5) Fight against Avian and Human Influenza, (6) Natural Disaster management, (7) Japan-Mekong Region Partnership, and so on. As you may be aware, all of these agenda are important to the development of the ASEAN region.

For example, in the "Youth Exchange", Japan will invite approximately 6,000 youths each year for five years mainly from EAS Member Countries to Japan in order to help lay the foundation for solidarity in Asia. For the implementation of this project, Japan has decided to contribute approximately USD 196 million to the Japan ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF). In the Grant Contribution for Comprehensive Economic Partnership Cooperation between Japan and ASEAN, Japan will also provide USD 52 million of fresh grant contribution for enhancing Japan-ASEAN economic relationship, of which, USD 41 million is expected to be used for the CLMV countries. For the Japan-Mekong Region Partnership Program, Japan will expand its ODA to CLV countries in the Mekong Region for the next three years.

I would like to point out that the role of JARCOM in the ASEAN cooperation is more important than ever. This 6th meeting provides a good opportunity to strengthen the role of JARCOM and to enhance its activities. A number of challenges such as project formulations, needs-resource matching, follow-ups, and strengthening networks, needed to be tackled. I sincerely hope that this 6th meeting becomes the milestone in the history of JARCOM.

I sincerely wish that all participants can have very valuable discussions for coming three days to foster the integrity of ASEAN region and to further develop the Japan-ASEAN relationship.

In conclusion, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all the officials, especially those of the Technical Cooperation Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore and those of the JICA Office in Singapore, for their contribution to host this meeting.

Thank you.

OPENING REMARK (3)

Mr. Mitsuru SUEMORI
Director General
Regional Department I,
JICA Headquarters

Mr. Koh Tin Fook, Director of Technical Cooperation Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Singapore,

Mr. Hiroaki Isobe, Minister, the Embassy of Japan to Singapore,
All delegations from ASEAN member countries and East Timor,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to take this opportunity to say a few words at the 6th JARCOM meeting.

First of all, on behalf of JICA, I would like express my sincere appreciation to staff members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Singapore, and all other people who have been working hard to realize the 6th JARCOM meeting.

JICA has been promoting the south-south cooperation (SSC) scheme such as the third country training program, third country expert to the South East Asia region and so forth. Singapore and Japan are partners under the Japan Singapore Partnership Programme for the 21st Century (JSPP21) to support neighboring countries and also African nations.

Implementation of SSC by JICA is not merely contribution to least developing countries but alignment with the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All of us understand that JICA-ASEAN Regional Cooperation Meeting (JARCOM) is a needs-oriented project formulation support mechanism to promote South-South Cooperation. It was established in 2002 in Kuala Lumpur.

Five years has passed since then, and significant progress has been observed in the viewpoint

of successful needs-oriented project formulation. This meeting is a timely opportunity to share the positive result of the JARCOM and head for the future direction together.

As for the collaboration between the ASEAN Secretariat and JICA, it seems to go smoothly especially in terms of IAI. It is our honor to invite two significant persons from ASEAN IAI unit; Mr. Sayakane Sisouvong, the Chairman of the IAI Task Force and Mr. Gary Krishnan, Head of IAI Unit. Their participation in this meeting indicates growing trust between the two organizations for the sake of ASEAN integration.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to touch upon ongoing JICA's reform. The New JICA will be established in October 2008. JICA will be merged with substantial portion of grant aid from the Foreign Ministry and ODA Loans component of JBIC.

The ASEAN secretariat is also expected to be reformed in coming November by adopting the ASEAN Charter. It will then obtain a status of legal entity. I am strongly convinced that it is a golden opportunity for ASEAN and JICA to enhance our working relationship closely and deeply.

Prior to concluding my short remarks, I would like once again to thank all the participants for their efforts in improving and sustaining the JARCOM mechanism. I sincerely hope that the 6th JARCOM will bear a lot of fruit at the end of the three-day meeting.

Thank you.