

KISARAZU STATEMENT

**ASEAN-Japan Cooperation in
East Asia Community Building**

September 2003

PREAMBLE

Meeting in Kisarazu, Japan, the Steering Committee of the Asia Pacific Agenda Project (APAP) has prepared this statement for the consideration of the Senior Officials of Japan and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. We hope that it will provide constructive input for the upcoming Bali ASEAN leaders meeting in October 2003 and the Japan-ASEAN leaders meeting in December 2003.

The world faces an enormous challenge in building a peaceful, prosperous, and just order in the wake of on-going processes of regionalization and globalization, the continuing threat of terrorism, the war in Iraq, the breakdown of the Cancun WTO ministerial meeting, and a crisis of relevance in the United Nations. These events will require a much deeper, more sustained level of dialogue and cooperation at all levels between Japan and the ASEAN nations and among East Asian nations as a whole if our voices are to be heard and our interests protected.

JAPAN-ASEAN RELATIONS

Japan and the ASEAN countries share a long history of cooperation and collaboration beginning with the 1976 Bali ASEAN leaders meeting. This relationship is built on a solid foundation and is mutually beneficial. While Japan and ASEAN can look back on more than a quarter century of cooperation with pride in their achievements, recent developments within their individual countries as well as regionally and globally demonstrate a con-

tinuing urgency for further enhancing political, economic, and socio-cultural cooperation.

In the political-security sphere, Japan and ASEAN can meaningfully cooperate in tackling non-traditional security issues and human security issues, like SARS. The upsurge of terrorism in Southeast Asia is a serious threat to the political and economic order of the region. Japan and ASEAN countries can strengthen their cooperation in such areas as intelligence sharing and maritime piracy abatement. They can also strengthen cooperation in reconstruction and national unity building in Afghanistan, where Japan is already providing ODA leadership, and Iraq. The ASEAN countries also have much to contribute given their expertise on issues of economic development and their knowledge of Muslim cultures.

In the economic sphere, Japan and ASEAN can contribute to restoring the credibility of the multilateral trading system and the development of sound regional initiatives. The failure of the Cancun ministerial meeting has dimmed the prospects for a meaningful Doha Development Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. Combining the perspectives of both developed and developing countries, one of the most meaningful activities that Japan and the ASEAN countries can do together is to help repair the prospects for the Round. In addition Japan and ASEAN should be catalysts in moving forward prospects of free trade and investment in the Asia and Pacific regions and in strengthening East Asian financial cooperation. The forthcoming ASEAN Bali meeting and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Bangkok meetings provide venues and opportunities for ASEAN and Japan to take leadership.

In the socio-cultural arena, Japan and ASEAN have established a number of programs over the years that have deepened contacts among their societies. But they have not been enough. To develop a more resilient, more broadly based relationship and to make government programs more effective, the governments need to expand their efforts to foster supportive non-governmental activities. Some well-intentioned institutions, such as the ASEAN Foundation, are not working effectively.

The December Japan-ASEAN leaders meeting provides a golden opportunity to recommit our countries to these tasks. To make the meeting successful, it should have the following three outcomes:

- A strong statement reiterating and updating the basis of the relationship as outlined by former Prime Minister Fukuda in 1977. This state-

ment will serve as guidepost for the relationship in the near and medium term future. It should also point to the areas of political, economic and cultural cooperation outlined above.

- A strong statement supporting the creation of an East Asian summit and partnership forum with the involvement of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea from the outset. As outlined below, this institution will take its place as an East Asian institution aside similar regional institutions in the Americas and Europe.
- A renewed and determined effort to build strong public and grassroots awareness of the stakes of the relationships. The institutions supporting Japan-ASEAN policy dialogue and civil society organizations should be reviewed and a political commitment made to enhance and support intellectual, public affairs, and grassroots activities meaningful to the relationship and the broader East Asian cooperation.

EAST ASIA SUMMIT AND PARTNERSHIP FORUM

Japan and ASEAN, together with China and Korea, can provide catalysts for a new, broader East Asian partnership organization based upon equal standing among the East Asian societies and rooted in values to which all aspire. These include mutual respect, equal opportunity, just and caring societies, democratic and accountable governance, open regionalism, human security, and a world free of war or terrorism. The time is ripe to implement the 2001 recommendations of the East Asian Vision group calling for an annual East Asia Summit to build upon and strengthen the ASEAN Plus Three framework. The *partnership forum* will be the institutional base of the summit.

An East Asian partnership forum is needed to stand as an intermediate regional organization between the sub-regional ASEAN and the mega-regional APEC, complementing and supporting both other cooperation processes. It will provide an appropriate venue for many forms of political, security, trade, financial, environmental, and cultural cooperation that will be building blocks for a stronger Asia-Pacific and global community. For example, working together, East Asian nations can strengthen their cooperation in reducing trade and investment barriers, thus contributing to the APEC Bogor Vision and the World Trade Organization goals. In-

cluding countries with the world's highest levels of foreign reserves, the East Asian group can provide resources above and beyond those available at the national level or through the International Monetary Fund to help make the region more resilient to financial crisis. Financial cooperation should be based on IMF disciplines and standards.

The East Asian partnership forum is based upon mutual benefits for the member nations and is not against any nation or nations. A major benefit of East Asian partnership shall be to improve political and security cooperation among the East Asian countries, strengthening the region and a zone of peace, free from international conflict and free from terrorism.

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Asia Pacific Agenda Project (APAP)

The Asia Pacific Agenda Project (APAP) was established in 1996 with major funding from the Japanese government and other funding sources to enhance policy-oriented intellectual exchange on the nongovernmental level, with special emphasis on independent research institutions in the region. It consists of four interconnected components: (1) the Asia Pacific Agenda Forum, a gathering of leaders of Asia Pacific policy research institutes to explore the future agenda for collaborative research and dialogue activities related to the development of an Asia Pacific community; (2) an Asia Pacific policy research information network utilizing the Internet; (3) annual multilateral joint research projects on pertinent issues of regional and global importance undertaken in collaboration with major research institutions in the region, featuring a new generation of Asia Pacific leaders who can participate in international intellectual dialogues; and (4) enhancement of intellectual exchange between Asia and Europe through Council for Asia-Europe Cooperation (CAEC) activities..

APAP is managed by an international steering committee composed of nine major research institutions in the region. The Japan Center for International Exchange has served as secretariat since APAP's inception.