

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE ASEAN-JAPAN SPECIAL MEETING OF
JUSTICE MINISTERS

6 JULY 2023

TOKYO, JAPAN

The ASEAN-Japan Special Meeting of Justice Ministers was held in Tokyo, Japan on the 6th of July 2023, on the occasion of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, hosted by the Ministry of Justice of Japan and co-chaired by Japan and Malaysia,

Acknowledging the significant progress of the Revised Implementation Plan of the Vision Statement on ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation: Shared Vision, Shared Identity and Shared Future, adopted in Manila, Philippines on 6 August 2017 by the Foreign Ministers of both ASEAN Member States and Japan, in which both sides reaffirmed the shared commitment to maintaining and promoting peace, security, and stability in the region, as well as to the peaceful resolution of disputes, including respect for legal and diplomatic processes, without resorting to the threat or use of force in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law;

Referring to the Joint Statement of the 23rd ASEAN-Japan Summit on Cooperation on ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific adopted in Hanoi, Viet Nam on 12 November 2020 which noted that both the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific concept share relevant fundamental principles in promoting peace and cooperation;

Welcoming with satisfaction the remarkable achievements attained throughout five decades of ASEAN-Japan Dialogue Relations, which have significantly contributed to peace, stability, prosperity and sustainable development in the region;

Taking stock of the long-standing history of cooperation between ASEAN Member States (AMS) and Japan in the field of law and justice including through legal technical assistance, capacity building and networking initiatives;

Recalling the 1st ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting (ASLOM)-Japan Consultation convened online on 26 October 2021 in which the proposal by Japan to develop the ASEAN-Japan Work Plan on Law and Justice (hereinafter “the Work Plan”) and hold the ASEAN-Japan Special Meeting of Justice Ministers was positively welcomed by all ASLOM Members;

Committed to strengthening cooperation between ASEAN and Japan in the field of law and justice to a new phase beyond 2023 through continued dialogue on matters pertaining to law and justice, and

In conformity with respective obligation under international law and in accordance with domestic laws, regulations and policies of ASEAN Member States and Japan.

DO HEREBY DECLARE THE FOLLOWING:

1. The Meeting commits to upholding and promoting shared values and fundamental principles such as the rule of law and respect for human rights, as well as national sovereignty and territorial integrity, through, among others strengthening and elevating the level of cooperation in the field of law and justice between ASEAN and Japan taking momentum of the occasion of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation.
2. The Meeting emphasizes that cooperation and coordination between ASEAN and Japan in the field of law and justice, including through the “Justice Affairs Diplomacy” initiative promoted by the Ministry of Justice of Japan, contribute to strengthening the rule of law domestically, as well as developing a peaceful and prosperous international community that shares and upholds fundamental values such as the rule of law and respect for human rights.
3. The Meeting commits to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through our cooperation in the field of law and justice based on the firm recognition that the rule of law and respect for human rights are the bedrock for achieving sustainable development and fostering a society in which “no one is left behind.”

4. The Meeting will share values and experiences in the field of law and justice, deepen mutual understanding of our laws and legal systems, and keep ourselves updated on the needs and interests of both ASEAN and Japan in order to pave the way towards sustainable meaningful and mutually beneficial cooperation.

5. The Meeting will continue to strengthen the positive undertakings in legal technical assistance in ASEAN provided through the International Cooperation Department of the Research and Training Institute of the Ministry of Justice of Japan, which has contributed to promoting the rule of law in the region, and endeavours to work towards the legal technical assistance between ASEAN and Japan for the post-2023 era.

6. The Meeting will continue to strengthen capacity building in the field of law and justice, including through promoting the development of human resources and enhancing networks, building on the history of strong cooperation through the training courses and seminars provided by the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI), and organise new seminars to further strengthen our efforts.

7. The Meeting will strengthen operational connectivity and cooperation between ASEAN and Japan through the promotion of and active engagement in practical, action-oriented measures as reflected in the Work Plan.

8. The Meeting will strengthen our cooperation in promoting rules-based resolution to disputes arising from cross-border business transaction through the use of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms such as arbitration and mediation including the use of digitalisation in such proceedings.

9. The Meeting will strengthen our cooperation in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, including mutual legal assistance and reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and social reintegration in both correctional facilities and the community while promoting public-private partnerships, and the exchange of best practices with a view to developing

and improving technical standards for correctional facilities.

10. The Meeting will endeavour to work together to address other relevant issues in the field of law and justice that contribute to the promotion of the rule of law and human rights, such as improving access to justice, intellectual property dispute settlement, taking initiatives to foster understanding among citizens on the values that constitute the laws and legal systems including through education.

11. In order to fulfil its joint commitments, the Meeting will continue to work closely based on the Work Plan under the spirit of friendship, cooperation and equal partnership, and commits to elevating the ASEAN-Japan cooperation in the field of law and justice to the next phase.

12. While preserving full respect for the mandates of ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, the Meeting will take necessary measures to coordinate between the relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies in implementing the commitments made herein in this Joint Statement.

Adopted in Tokyo, Japan the 6th of July in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty-Three.