

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Congratulatory Message to Singapore on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of ASEAN

Congratulations on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of ASEAN. The fact that the people of ASEAN, including Singapore, have overcome various differences while developing into a community and establishing its current position in the international community is indeed a historic achievement.

The Japanese people, who have deepened friendship and cooperation in a wide range of fields with the people of ASEAN, share both the hardships and the joys of the past 50 years.

As a friend of ASEAN, I have visited every ASEAN country. I have visited Singapore every year since being appointed as Prime Minister in 2012, a total of four times thus far. In each visit, I witnessed the dramatic development of your country and was pleased to be warmly welcomed by the people of Singapore.

Last year, Japan and Singapore celebrated the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. And we were able to further deepen the friendly relationship between our two countries by holding as many as 218 commemorative events in the year in Singapore, through the Japan Creative Centre, which Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and I agreed to set up. Among the SJ50 events, you may remember, in particular, our SJ50 "Matsuri", that attracted well over a hundred of thousands of people over two days.

Next year, Singapore will serve as the ASEAN chair, and Japan will make every effort to support Singapore's leadership.

Japan and ASEAN have now become indispensable "Strategic Partners" for peace and prosperity. I am convinced that Japan-ASEAN relations in the next 50 years will be even brighter if we could continue to cooperate while firmly upholding common values such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Let's forge the future of Asia and the world together, hand-in-hand.

Shinzo Abe,
Prime Minister of Japan