

Statement by Ambassador Ishikawa Hiroshi at
Japan-Southeast Asia Market Forum

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Mr. Hiromi Yamaji, Group CEO, Japan Exchange Group
Mr. Hiroshi Nakaso, Chairman, Daiwa Institute of Research
Dr. Jutaro Kaneko, Deputy Commissioner, FSA Japan
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It is a great pleasure to join you at the Japan-Southeast Asia Market Forum 2025. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Japan Exchange Group, JETRO, and Nikkei Group Asia for organizing this important gathering, and for inviting me to speak today.

Since its launch in 2022, this forum has grown into a vital platform for fostering collaboration between Japan and Southeast Asia. Thanks to the dedication of JPX —especially its Group CEO, Mr. Yamaji— and all the participating companies, we have seen growing interest in Japan's capital markets and business opportunities. It is truly encouraging to see this forum continue to strengthen the economic ties in our region.

This year's theme, "Path for Asia in the New World Order," is particularly timely. As we navigate these times together, I would like to share three observations about the future of Japan-Southeast Asia relations.

First, Southeast Asia has achieved remarkable development in recent years. This region is now a dynamic hub of talent and innovation, with startups and new ventures creating fresh opportunities across multiple sectors. This year marks a special occasion as Singapore celebrates its 60th anniversary of independence. Over the past six decades, Singapore has grown tremendously, cultivated outstanding talent, and become a beacon of innovation. This progress reflects not only Singapore's success, but also the vitality of the entire region.

Second, the world as we once knew it is changing. The international order that long supported free trade and multilateral cooperation faces unprecedented challenges, and uncertainty has increased. Countries must

navigate among increasingly complex choices. In order to avoid getting lost in today's stormy waters, it is even more important to hold on to long-term partnerships built on shared rules and principles, rather than short-term gains. Steady, reliable collaboration matters more than ever.

Third, Japan and Southeast Asia have built a strong relationship over the years - one that has benefited us all. Now is the time to expand our cooperation further. Japan brings capital, technology, and connections to global industries. Southeast Asia offers a dynamic talent pool, thriving innovation ecosystems, and expanding business opportunities. By connecting these strengths even more closely and effectively, we can drive sustainable economic growth across our region. In a world where overreliance on any single partner carries risk, this multilayered, complementary relationship becomes increasingly valuable.

Looking ahead, next year will mark the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Singapore. Both governments have agreed on a theme for SJ60: "Co-imagine, Co-create, Co-evolve." This captures perfectly what we hope to achieve together. Our goal extends beyond Singapore to embrace partners across Southeast Asia as we work together to build a shared future.

The opportunities before us are significant. As global conditions shift, the partnership between Japan and Southeast Asia offers stability, innovation, and mutual prosperity. By deepening our connections across finance, technology, and talent development, we can navigate the time of uncertainty together and create lasting value for our peoples.

I would like to conclude my remarks by thanking all the speakers, participants, and organizers who have made this forum possible. I wish you fruitful discussions today as we explore new ways to work together for the benefit of Japan, Southeast Asia, and the wider region.

Thank you very much.