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President,

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**Representatives from Japan-related organizations in
Malaysia,**

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning and Assalaam alaikum.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to KSI Strategic Institute for Asia Pacific for hosting this forum to commemorate the 50th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. I am convinced that it is quite timely to have such an event that focuses on the ASEAN-Japan longstanding partnership and review Japanese values as well as business philosophy from the ASEAN's viewpoint.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by recalling discussion we had last year when we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Look East Policy or LEP. Since the launch of the LEP in 1982, about 26,000 Malaysians have visited Japan for

study and training. They have become the foundation of Malaysia's industrial development and played an indispensable role in connecting Japan and Malaysia with friendship and trust. We reconfirmed that the LEP has contributed significantly to the nation building of Malaysia.

On the other hand, lots of people emphasized that the LEP should evolve as times and needs change. While Malaysia has achieved the rapid economic and social developments thanks to the LEP, this country is now facing new challenges which were not so prevalent 40 years ago such as aging society, disaster prevention, and decarbonization. Japan reiterated its readiness to continue supporting Malaysia to overcome these new issues as a strategic partner and an indispensable friend.

Our relations are developing in line with these

discussions this year. On the issue of decarbonization for example, Japanese companies are implementing a feasibility study on the production of hydrogen in Malaysia. And in April this year a Japanese company has newly established a bio-plant in Kuching, Sarawak to promote carbon neutrality through producing biofuel and other organic goods.

As the Malaysian Ministry of Economy announced the "Malaysia Energy Transition Roadmap," last month and laid out a plan for decarbonization toward 2050, we expect further discussion on this issue between Japan and Malaysia, and specific cooperation projects to be identified between the two countries in the future.

Another discussion we had last year was that our bilateral relation is no more donor-recipient one, but become strategic partner to complement each other

and tackle the global issues together. We also discussed that Japan also had to learn from Malaysia. With decreasing population and introduction of more foreign workers, Japan needs to learn from Malaysia, how Malaysia continues economic development while maintaining social stability as a multi-ethnic nation.

In this context, I am delighted that the Bon Odori Festival, which has been organized by the Japanese Community of Kuala Lumpur since 1977, was successfully held in Shah Alam last month. The annual festival attracted about 40,000 visitors of diverse ethnic backgrounds. We felt by ourselves power of Malaysia's diversity and tolerance, and expect this Malaysian character continue to be a driving force in promoting bilateral relations in all aspects.

We continue to work together to update LEP and expand its scopes to create more benefit to peoples of

Japan and Malaysia toward its 50th anniversary.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan was the first country in the world to become a partner of ASEAN. In the half century since then, Japan and ASEAN have been working together not only as close business partners but also as true friends with “heart to heart” relationship as Fukuda Doctrine put it in 1977, and cooperated hand in hand for peace, stability, and prosperity of the region, even in times of difficulty.

With the increase of members in ASEAN, economic size of ASEAN as a whole grows bigger and composition of the organization become more diverse and complicated. However, I can say that there are lots of similarities between Japan-Malaysia relations and Japan-ASEAN relations. While Japan is ready to

continue helping ASEAN countries, Japan-ASEAN relations also developed in a way that we need to work together to overcome common challenges in front of us.

One element is more focus on Indo-Pacific. Japan has launched the Free and Open Indo-Pacific or FOIP, while ASEAN has launched the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific or AOIP. The principles shared by the two initiatives such as openness, transparency, inclusiveness and respect for international law are important ideas in this new era, and we are happy to note that Japan-ASEAN relationship is based on these principles, which is becoming increasingly important.

To contribute to maintaining and strengthening a free and open international order based on the rule of law, we should mainstream the AOIP together with ASEAN countries and all partners outside ASEAN. Japan will continue working with ASEAN countries

while respecting centrality of ASEAN.

Another approach is addressing cross-cutting global issues such as energy and food security, digital economy, public health, disaster management etc. These are the issues I already mentioned in the first part of my remark and I stop elaborating them here.

We will hold a commemorative summit to mark the 50th year of ASEAN-Japan partnership in Tokyo in the coming December. We will also jointly announce a new vision for cooperation for the next 50 years, taking into account the critical international situation at this pivotal time during the summit. I hope everybody here continue to pay attention to this process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is very appropriate that participants from Japan and ASEAN countries will engage in a lively discussion on the challenges and areas of growth shared by Japan and ASEAN including Malaysia at today's 50th anniversary commemorative forum.

We are determined to further deepen the friendship between Japan and ASEAN. To this end, the cooperation of our two governments and related organizations, think tanks such as KSI and private companies of both countries is indispensable. We must work as one. I would like to conclude by wishing all of you a fruitful and informative forum.

Thank you very much and Terima Kasih.