



A summary of H.E. Mr. Kimihiro Ishikane's speech

On 30 April, the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN, H.E. Mr. Kimihiro Ishikane, delivered a keynote speech at the ASEAN Regional Seminar on “Toward a more cohesive and people-oriented ASEAN: 2015 and beyond” held at GadjahMada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The seminar was held following the launching ceremony of the ASEAN Studies Centre in the said University. Other three centers will be set up accordingly in other Universities in the country. Approximately 130 students attended the seminar.

In his speech entitled “The role of ASEAN dialogue partners in supporting ASEAN Community 2015”, Amb. Ishikane, though highly commending the efforts and achievements of ASEAN toward Community building, pointed out ASEAN is at crossroad. For ASEAN, he said, to enjoy real benefits of community building rather than just an addition of 10 countries, ASEAN has to be better connected within and beyond and be united. He especially raised three major challenges ASEAN faces, namely, connectivity, centrality and unity as well as “gap” issues (developmental gap, income gap, health gap, etc). It is in

these areas dialogue partners have to cooperate with ASEAN in coordinated and transparent manner. Japan has been conducting continuous dialogue with ASEAN and carrying out concrete cooperative projects based on dialogues. He also noted that dialogue partners need to respect ASEAN centrality and unity as a rule of engagement with ASEAN. ASEAN centrality, he said, is a wisdom to promote dialogue and cooperation in Asia Pacific among ASEAN and partners of different background, avoiding block making competition in the region. He concluded his speech by expressing his expectation on successful ASEAN integration, which will prove diversity can produce energy and creativity, not hatred and conflicts.

Mission of Japan to ASEAN intends to continue outreach activities to raise awareness of people in ASEAN about ASEAN-Japan relations.

(Source:http://www.asean.emb-japan.go.jp/release13_06.htmlretrieved 7/3/2014)