

Good morning everybody.
Distinguished participants!

I am very grateful to meet the Secretary of Trade and Industry from the Philippines, Mr. Takashi Kawamura - Chairman of Hitachi, Ltd., and also Vice Chairman of Japan Business Federation Keidanren.

It is my great pleasure to have an opportunity today to make a remark at this Hitachi Young Leaders Initiative forum. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the people who have made tremendous efforts to organize this very important forum.

I am aware that Hitachi has held this initiative originally since 1996 in order to foster future Asian leaders, like you. Last year the program was held in Singapore to commemorate the 10th year of this initiative and the 100th anniversary of Hitachi's business. The forum this year marked a new stage of the history of this initiative as well as that of Hitachi. The subject of the year is "The New Stage for Asia" which, I believe, is the most suitable for this new stage.

I am aware that today is the second day of this program; the participants hold discussions and workshops under the subject "Economic partnership and integration".

Economic integration in Asia has been promoted through such mechanisms as The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Free Trade Area (AFTA), which is expected to be in force in the year 2015 except a limited number of exempted items. Under such business circumstances, it is crucially important that, on the basis of broadening supply chains in Asia, ASEAN leaders share the direction of the development of the whole Asia region and, on that direction, each country formulates its own development strategy.

From this point of view, it is quite timely and useful for young leaders from ASEAN countries to have discussion on this subject and deepen mutual understanding.

I am glad to conclude my remarks by hoping sincerely that this program supported by Hitachi will be meaningful for all the participants and contribute to the development of the ASEAN region.

Thank you very much and I hope this meeting will be successful.

REMARKS FORUM DAY 2 TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2012

By

H.E. Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary Yasuaki Tanizaki
Embassy of Japan

