

SPEECH
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By

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The distinguished guests,
 Ladies and gentlemen,

May I begin by bidding my warmest welcome to all of you, to Asian young leaders, and to the 11th HYLII Forum. I highly appreciate HYLII - a platform to broaden the outlook on regional and global issues while promoting Asian value and cross cultural understanding. Thank you very much, the organizing committee, for inviting me to share with you some of my views, some preliminary reflections on the importance and implication of cooperating in a sustainable and prosperous community. For all the young Asian leaders here, I would like to tell you a fable. The fable "The tortoise and the hare" based on the original version of a Greek fabulist. Once upon a time, a tortoise and a hare had an argument about who was faster. They decided to settle the argument with a race. They agreed on a route and started off the race. The hare shot ahead and ran briskly for some time. Seeing that he was far ahead of the tortoise, he took a rest and felt asleep. The tortoise plodded on, and won the race. The hare challenged her to another race. The tortoise agreed. The hare went all out and ran quickly without stopping and won the race. The tortoise did some thinking and challenged him to another race but on a slightly different route. The hare ran at top speed until he came to a broad river. He sat there, thinking what to do. The tortoise trundled along, smiling at the hare. The hare had no way but asked the tortoise to carry him across the river and promised to carry her to the finish. The tortoise agreed, and carried the hare swimming across the river. Then the hare carried her from the other side of the river to the finish. Both felt a greater sense of satisfaction than they had felt earlier.

So what is the underlying meaning of this story? I think young people here will have different answers compared to the previous generation. After all, we will see teamwork is very necessary.

Back to the topic of the HYLII forum this year, we are living in a strongly changing world. The scientific and technological revolutions particularly information technology, biotechnology and new material science have radically changed our life leading to the strong trend of globalization and regionalism, and brought new faces and new strengths to Asian economies, Japan and ASEAN as well.

The ASEAN and Japan and other Asian countries have made amazing economic growth for many years. And you see that in the recent days the Asia members like Japan and ASEAN and other Asian countries are booming with confidence as there are no limits to rapid grow. Fund managers all around the world have been falling themselves in investing in and then lend money to ASEAN and other Asian countries. The skyscrapers have been rising every day, transforming the skyline of every ASEAN capital. Factories have been sprouting on erstwhile rice fields. The Asian young leaders with their phones to their ears and their eyes stick on stock prices are fired up with confidence in their bright future.

What I mean is our cooperation perspectives are promising. However, we all remain deeply concerned of social unrests & terrorism occurred in Middle East, in some African countries, and in Asia, etc. Japan has suffered from serious natural calamities particularly the recent tsunami and earthquake destroying the whole city of Fukushima. We have great admiration for Japan's quick recovery.

I should mention the current negotiation round within the framework of WTO. The current negotiation round within framework of WTO has already reached a standstill due to deep contradictions in interest between member countries, causing a lot of problems to the sustainable economic development of Asian countries and other countries. And the protectionism gets rising day by day because of the serious impacts caused by the recent global financial economic crisis. We have been seriously affected by the crisis. But we recovered and we survived much better, much quicker than the others. And now even in Europe and America they are suffering from serious economic crisis. We are still moving back to the past of the success, the growth and sustainable development of our economy. I just refer to some problems to say that what should be done now against these backdrops. I think the answer maybe or will be found by the Asian young leaders. I hope that the fable I mentioned right from the beginning may give you some hints to find the answer to the problems. I think that what should be done now is the question I would like to raise that we can together, with you, to continue to look into and research on the solutions. Japan and ASEAN and all countries should unite as one because the solidarity will create the stand, the solidarity will help all ASEAN, Japan and other countries recover to encounter the above mentioned challenges. In my opinion, all of you should think regional and work regional, dare to sacrifice the short term interests for the long term regional ones of all ASEAN countries, Japan and other Asian countries so that we can create the strong stand for winning after various sessions of multilateral negotiations, for example negotiation within the framework of ASEAN, APEC and WTO. We should build up our common position, common stand by getting together in a sustainable prosperous community. That is the implication of moving towards to a secure community. What I mean is the solidarity. We should enhance the international coherence and integration. You may be fully aware of important decisions of ASEAN leaders in October 2003. In the Summit in Bali Indonesia, ASEAN leaders agreed to establish ASEAN community based on three pillars: ASEAN economic community (AEC), security community, and socio-cultural community by 2015 to turn ASEAN into a highly competitive economic region. Their collective resolve looks beyond the immediate economic and financial challenges and enhance the momentum of growth and prosperity of ASEAN to enter the 21st century. ASEAN leaders have defined the way ahead for ASEAN is "to build an ASEAN as a concert of South East Asian Nations, outward-looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies". That is a very important decision and now ASEAN are doing their best to move to the target of 2015 and ASEAN community may be established as scheduled.

The relation between Japan and ASEAN, the economic tie between Japan and Vietnam have already been set up for ages. These ties are based on complementary endowments, geographical proximity and cultural affinity. Trade has, for decades, flowed in ever-rising volumes between Japan and ASEAN to the benefit of both. Japan, is today and has been for a long time, ASEAN's leading trading partner and biggest market. Japan accounted for 20-30% of the total approved FDI in manufacturing projects in ASEAN in 2010. Japan provided 30% of net FDI flows into ASEAN in all sectors. Obviously, among developing countries and region, ASEAN has been a prime destination for Japanese investments. To a great extent, ASEAN's trade with and investment from Japan are intimately related to each other with Japanese investors in ASEAN exporting to Japan and trading with one another as well as with the world. Both ASEAN and Japan and other Asian countries have the same objectives: Stability and Prosperity. Cooperating in partnership and community, we can fully tap the great potential of ASEAN, Japan and other Asian countries. I would like to say that we appreciate the idea of HYLI so that we get all together we all move to a community. The community here should be understood in a broad meaning, community should be enhanced by the regional coherence and integration. And of course we should be committed to the spirit of regionalism. We move together and adopt what we are looking with other countries in the world. That is open regionalism.

Ladies and gentlemen, Asian young leaders together, I would like to say that all ASEAN members should unite as one and ASEAN are not 10 isolated countries. And then if we are isolated as single, we will be defeated by the competitors. Let's hold high the spirit of a close partnership and sustainable community. A bright perspective ahead is opening to the Asian young leaders who are passionate, innovative and dynamic.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As the new year of the dragon dawns, may it open up for you more opportunities, lead you onto the path of continued success, happiness, good health and prosperity.

Happy New Year to you!