

The 12th ASEAN & Japan High Level Officials Meeting
on Caring Societies

Opening Remarks of Ms. Atsuko Muraki,
Vice-Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare
Tuesday, October 21, 2014, Shinagawa Prince Hotel

(Opening Remarks)

- Good morning, distinguished delegates from the ASEAN member states as well as the delegates from the People's Republic of China, WHO Center for Health Development, ILO Office for Japan, JICA, and all of the other honored guests who have joined us here today.

- I am Atsuko Muraki, Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in Japan. As a representative of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, I wish to express my gratitude to all delegates who have come all the way to Japan in order to participate in “The 12th ASEAN-Japan High Level Officials Meeting on Caring Society”.

- In the previous meetings, which have been held since 2003, we have moved forward with every participant for the purpose of sharing knowledge, thinking together, learning from good practices and strengthening cooperative relations between Japan and ASEAN countries about common challenges related to health, social welfare, labor and human resources.

- The theme of the previous meeting was “Active Aging.” As the participants of the last meeting know, the growing population aging is a common issue not only in ASEAN countries and countries in East Asia but also around the world. In such situation, in order to achieve “Active Aging” and improve the quality of life of the elderly, we need to keep their good health, encourage them to participate in social participation including job, and need to provide social security to people in need.
And last year, we tackled these cross-sectoral and extreme challenging issues of how to make our efforts sustainable.
Its result was reported to the previous ASEAN plus 3 Health Minister’s Meeting, and was taken as one of the important agendas in the meeting.

- However, the discussions related to policies addressing the aging are so wide and it will not be covered in only a single meeting. Therefore, in this meeting, we have decided its theme as “Resilient Communities for Active Aging”, will focusing on the role of communities for Active Aging. Through the meeting, we would like to think together about the followings: what the elderly friendly communities are; how we can formulate communities encouraging the elderly to actively participate in; and how we can make policies of the financially-sustainable health, welfare and labour for the elderly.

- Japan has a long history of maintaining friendship with ASEAN

countries, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea and we appreciate its relationship. We have worked together to build strong relationships in a variety of fields, and it is my sincere hope that we will continue to share this path together to build an even better future.

- I believe that this 3 days' meeting will provide valuable opportunities for all of us to share our information and experiences with each other, and to deepen our friendships. Thank you very much for your presence and attention. I hope you enjoy your stay in Japan.