

Welcome Remarks
Sumo Demonstration for ASEAN-Japan 40th Anniversary Commemorative Event

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Deputy Secretary-General, Community & Corporate Affairs, ASEAN
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Excellencies, distinguished guests, colleagues and friends, and ladies and gentlemen:

On behalf of the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN Secretary-General, HE Le Luong Minh, it is a great pleasure for me to extend very warm welcome to you all to this special event of a Sumo Demonstration to commemorate the 40th anniversary of friendship and cooperation between ASEAN and Japan. It is auspicious that this event coincides with our observance of ASEAN's 46th founding anniversary that we did in the morning.

Over the past four decades, ASEAN-Japan partnership has grown from strength to strength. Sumo is therefore an apt and fitting symbol of the friendship between ASEAN and Japan. Our relationship is strong because of our mutual respect for each other's strengths.

Sumo is an old, unique culture of Japan. It is a fascinating sport, which commands a lot of awe and respect not only in Japan but world-wide. The opportunity to watch and observe various aspects of Sumo from up close today will hopefully deepen our understanding of Japan's traditions and cultures. This will hopefully strengthen people-to-people connectivity between ASEAN and Japan.

To express our appreciations to the Sumo Stable Masters and Wrestlers, allow me to say a few words in Japanese.

"Ooyama Oyakata, Edagawa Oyakata, Rikishi no minasan, harubaru Jakarta made okoshi itadaki arigatougozaimasu. Konoyouni nihon no subarashii bunkadearu sumo wo ASEAN ni shoukai suru kikai ni megumare hontouni ureshiku omoimasu."

Back to English, what I said was, "Thank you very much for coming all the way to Jakarta. I am indeed very happy to have this opportunity to have one of the wonderful Japanese cultures, Sumo, introduced to ASEAN."

With this note, I would like to end my remarks and it is my great honour to now call on His Excellency Kimihiro Ishikane, the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN, for his opening remarks.

Thank you.

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