

## Preface

The Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program aims to deepen understanding on culture of each country and to promote friendship and mutual understanding among the youths of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member countries and Japan as well as to broaden their perspectives on the world by participating in various activities such as discussions and homestay while living together onboard the ship and in the countries to be visited. Consequently, the Participating Youths are expected to show leadership in various sectors of the society amidst the progression of internationalization.

The Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program was launched in 1974 as a joint program between Japan and the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and sets sail every year to count 42 times.

The total number of participants, including 309 youths (37 from Japan and 272 from ASEAN member countries) of this year, reached 11,572. Among them are 10,002 from ASEAN member countries, meaning that over 10,000 youth of these countries participated in exchange with Japanese young people. The Program is now to be called the symbol of friendship between Japan and the respective ASEAN member states.

The 42nd Program was carried out from October to December 2015 and the homestay program was implemented in Lao P.D.R. for the first time and the Program made a port call at Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia after 20 years. With great effort by the respective governments and concerned people, each country programs was successfully implemented.

In the Program, the Participating Youths deepened understanding on the countries they visited through courtesy calls, visitations and interactions with the local youths. In addition, I am certain that they were also able to deepen mutual understanding through the various onboard activities such as discussions on the common issues and cultural introduction of respective countries. Furthermore, making use of the knowledge and experiences that they gained in this Program, the Participating Youths of each country designed and presented the plan of post-program activities after returning to their respective home countries. It is my hope that they would develop themselves by implementing these post-program activities and that they will engage themselves in the international exchange activities and social activities in the respective countries, communities and the world as a whole by taking advantage of the network they have established in the Program.

This Report records the various activities of the Participating Youths during the country program in Japan, onboard and during the country programs they experienced. It also includes the messages from heads-of-state as well as evaluations and suggestions concerning this Program from the Participating Youths themselves. I hope that this Report will be of use for your understanding of the fruits of the Program and also for your continued supports in the years to come.

Lastly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the governments of the participating countries, the Alumni Associations and the former Participating Youths who make up their members, the host families, the ministries and agencies in Japan including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, local public organizations, youth groups and all those who gave their gracious cooperation in this Program.

March 2016

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