

Remarks by Ambassador H.E. Mr Sibi George at ‘Seminar on Indo-Pacific Oceans’ Initiative and India-Japan Cooperation in Indo-Pacific’ Tokyo, 30 May 2024

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Ms Paramita Tripathi, Joint Secretary, Indo-Pacific Division, Ministry of External Affairs of India

Distinguished guests,

Good afternoon and a warm welcome to you all.

I am delighted to address this gathering on the subject of Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative and collaboration between India and Japan in the Indo-Pacific region. This theme holds great significance reflecting the shared vision and strategic partnership between our countries. The synergy in our efforts in this region is not only for bilateral benefit but also aims to facilitate regional cooperation, promoting peace, prosperity and security in the world's most dynamic region.

2. The Indo-Pacific region holds critical importance to India, Japan, and the world. It is home to more than half of the world's population and serves as a crucial hub for global trade and commerce. For India, the Indo-Pacific is not just a geographical space but a strategic theatre which impacts our economic and security interests profoundly. Its stability and prosperity are integral to our national interests.

3. India's vision for the Indo-Pacific is for a free, open and inclusive order, based on respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, peaceful resolution of disputes through dialogue and adherence to international rules and laws. Our vision also includes fostering regional connectivity and economic integration, enhancing cooperation on maritime issues, and addressing all common challenges through collective action. India's Indo-Pacific vision is also based on the principle of ASEAN-centrality.

4. India's Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI), launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is a comprehensive framework aimed at implementing this vision and enhancing cooperation in the region. The IPOI, about which we will hear in greater detail later, focuses on a range of areas covering maritime security, disaster risk reduction, capacity building and trade & connectivity.

5. A key element in our approach is the Act East Policy, which aims to enhance strategic and economic ties with Southeast Asia and beyond. This policy, in its tenth year now, has been instrumental in strengthening our ties with countries of East and Southeast Asia. It has aimed to enhance economic and strategic ties, supporting greater regional integration and cooperation. By focusing on building infrastructure, increasing trade, and promoting people-to-people exchanges, the Act East Policy has laid a strong foundation for robust partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region.

6. Our approach to both the Indo-Pacific region and issues related to the maritime domain is also guided by the concept of Security and Growth for All in the Region or SAGAR, which means ocean in a number of Indian languages.

7. The Special Strategic and Global Partnership with Japan, which is also completing ten years in 2024, has been a key pillar of our vision for Act East and Indo-Pacific. This partnership is built on shared values, mutual respect, and a common commitment to democratic principles and a rules-based international order. Our collaboration spans various domains, including defense, infrastructure, technology, and people-to-people exchanges. The enduring friendship between our countries is a strong force for promotion of peace, security, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific.

8. Japan, too, recognizes the Indo-Pacific as a region of paramount importance. We welcome the vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), put forward by Prime Minister H.E. Mr Fumio Kishida during his visit to India in March 2023. This vision aligns with India's own vision for the region, emphasizing the need for a stable regional order where all countries, irrespective of size or power, adhere to the same rules. Japan's FOIP initiative also aims to foster economic development and connectivity through quality infrastructure investment, ensuring that growth is inclusive and sustainable.

9. The convergence between IPOI and Japan's FOIP vision exemplifies our shared objective to contribute positively to the region's security and economic landscape. Together, India and Japan are working towards enhancing maritime security, developing resilient supply chains, and addressing common challenges, thereby contributing to the overall stability and growth of the Indo-Pacific.

10. Our collaboration in the Indo-Pacific region is multifaceted and robust. Japan is leading the **Connectivity Pillar** under the Indo-Pacific Ocean's

Initiative. Our cooperation in this region also includes joint military exercises, strategic dialogues, and coordination on infrastructure development projects. We are committed to enhancing connectivity and building resilient infrastructure, which are crucial for the economic integration of the region.

11. In our commitment to a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, we place immense value on cooperation under Quad framework. Our collaborative efforts within the Quad are guided by our democratic values and dedicated to ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific. Quad's constructive and positive agenda is enhancing our ability to address contemporary global challenges such as maritime security, cyber affairs, space and critical & emerging technologies.

12. The collaboration between India and Japan is critical to realizing a vision for a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific. Both our countries will continue to strengthen our partnership and contribute positively to the region's future. By enhancing our strategic, economic, and cultural ties, we can create a resilient and prosperous Indo-Pacific. Our joint efforts will ensure that the region remains a dynamic and vibrant area, contributing to global peace, prosperity and stability .

Thank you.