

Statement by Mr. Hitoshi Kikawada,
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs,
at the ReCAAP 10th Anniversary High Level Meeting

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is my honor to speak on behalf of the Government of Japan on this occasion of today's special meeting about our steady commitment to ensuring "open and stable seas" and the freedom and safety of navigation.

2. As I have been engaged in maritime issues first as a researcher and then as a politician, I am especially pleased to be here with you today to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of ReCAAP.

3. As Prime Minister Shinzo Abe emphasized yesterday in his congratulatory message, maintaining the seas as "a global commons" governed by the rule of law for the world and humankind is our common mission for our common interest. He made it clear that Japan will continue to support the ReCAAP ISC and continue to offer its utmost support for the efforts of the coastal states in Asia as they work to maintain freedom and safety of navigation.

4. Based upon such standpoint, the Government of Japan has been supporting counter piracy efforts in Asia. After hosting the international meetings in Tokyo in 2000 and 2001 to address the increasing amount of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia, Japan proposed to start drafting an anti-piracy regional cooperation agreement at the ASEAN+3 Summit in 2001. Experts from ASEAN Member States, Bangladesh, China, India, Korea and Sri Lanka then came together to formulate an agreement. The Agreement was eventually finalized as ReCAAP in 2004 and then came into force and established the Information Sharing Center here in Singapore in 2006. Since its very beginning, Japan has

been supporting activities of the ReCAAP ISC by sending Executive Directors and Assistant Executive Directors, as well as providing financial contributions to its capacity building activities as a main donor.

5. In addition to our support to the ReCAAP ISC, Japan has also been supporting the capacity building of maritime law enforcement agencies of the coastal states in Asia by providing patrol ships, technical assistance as well as human resource development programs. Last year, the Japan Coast Guard Academy started offering the world's first master's degree program on maritime safety policy to young coast guard executive trainees from Asia in collaboration with National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Nippon Foundation.

6. These efforts are concrete demonstrations of our determination to ensure the rule of law at sea in close cooperation with ASEAN and other countries. This is, indeed, Japan's banner of "Proactive contribution to Peace" in action. In fact, we have received robust support from many countries, especially those of ASEAN Member States toward this policy. This year, as the host country of the G7 Summit, Japan will lead the international discussion in this area.

7. Finally, on behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express once again our great respect for the efforts of the ISC Secretariat led by Executive Director Endo and members of the Governing Council who are with us today in countering piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia. I would also like to express the unwavering support of the Government of Japan toward ReCAAP. We hope that ReCAAP will further enhance its activities under the Governing Council and the newly-appointed next Executive Director, Mr. Masafumi Kuroki.

Thank you for your attention.