

**Speech by Mr. Hitoshi Kikawada,  
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs,  
at the Reception hosted by the Government of Japan  
in celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ReCAAP**

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Good evening.

1. Thank you for joining us at this reception hosted by the Government of Japan today. I am Hitoshi Kikawada, Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs. I am delighted to welcome you on behalf of the Japanese Government in celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ReCAAP.

2. Japan is a maritime nation; a nation surrounded by ocean and deriving its sustenance from the ocean; a nation that views the safety of the seas as its own safety. We believe that it is indispensable for the peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific and the entire international community to keep Asia's seas open, free and peaceful.

3. Based upon such standpoint, Japan has been supporting counter piracy efforts of the ReCAAP Information Sharing Center since its inception in cooperation with other Contracting Parties. Japan has been sending successive Executive Directors and Assistant Executive Directors, as well as providing financial contributions to its capacity building activities as a main donor.

4. I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Singapore, the host country of ReCAAP ISC and to Chairman Pornchai who has been leading the ReCAAP Governing Council. We would also like to thank Executive Director Endo who has been leading the Secretariat for

a long time. In addition, I also wish to congratulate Mr. Kuroki on his new appointment as next Executive Director, and I hope that ISC's activities will be further enhanced under Mr. Kuroki.

5. Japan's efforts to maintain "open and stable seas" are not limited to Asia. Japan has been engaged in counter-piracy operations with two destroyers and two P-3C patrol aircraft of the Japan Maritime Self Defence Forces (JMSDF) in the waters off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden since 2009 in close cooperation with other countries. Let me inform you that two destroyers named "Yuudachi" and "Yuugiri" are now visiting Singapore on their way to the Gulf of Aden to continue the counter-piracy mission. Commander of Counter Piracy Surface Forces, Captain Takashi Inoue is here with us today. They will work together with deployed forces of other countries in the scorching heat of East Africa. I would like to express my great respect for their missions and wish their safe return after fulfilling their duties far away from home.

6. In order to maintain "open and stable seas," Japan will continue to support regional cooperation under ReCAAP as well as the capacity building of maritime law enforcement agencies of coastal states in Asia by providing patrol ships, technical assistance and human resource development programs. We must join hands together and enhance our regional cooperation in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia.

7. I would like to conclude my welcome remarks by wishing a fruitful success for the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary High Level Meeting tomorrow. Thank you very much.