

Opening Remarks by Parliamentary Vice-Minister
for Foreign Affairs Mr. Minoru KIUCHI
24 September 2013, Tokyo

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very delighted that today we are able to hold this seminar on Capacity Building for Maritime Security in Emerging Countries.

On behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, I would like to extend a heartfelt welcome to all participants, especially those who have traveled long distances to attend this seminar.

In the two national elections held last year and this year, the Abe Administration garnered considerable support from the Japanese people.

As a member of the administration, I can say that we will continue to vigorously promote policies that make Japan, the region, and the world more peaceful and prosperous. In particular, in the field of security, responding to the ever changing international situations, Japan will continue to strive to further advance regional and international peace and stability based on the principle of international cooperation.

Japan is a world leading maritime and commercial nation. Even though our land territory is only 380 thousand square kilometers, our exclusive economic zone covers 4 million 470 thousand square kilometers, which ranks sixth in the world. In addition, Japan has based its prosperity on trade, and marine transportation accounts for 99.6 percent of our total trade in tonnage terms. Japan benefits greatly from the ocean, and consequently we deeply appreciate its importance.

The participating countries in this seminar are located at strategically important points along the vital sea lines of communication from Europe to the Indian and Pacific Oceans, via the Mediterranean Sea, Suez Canal, and Red Sea. I know that your countries also fully recognize the benefit of the world's oceans.

The ocean is a global commons which brings prosperity not only to coastal countries and regions, but to the international community as a whole. As a maritime nation, Japan believes it is very important to maintain maritime order and promote international cooperation in maritime affairs.

Japan has undertaken various activities aimed at preserving international maritime security through both bilateral agreements and multilateral frameworks such as the ASEAN Regional Forum. Japan is resolved to continue to actively contribute to international maritime security.

In light of this, I would like to explain the important basic principles, behind our support of international maritime affairs.

The first is maintaining the oceans as a global commons where the rule of law is fully realized. Changing the status quo by force is not acceptable and it is important to maintain order in accordance with the relevant international laws, in particular, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as well as by observing basic maritime principles such as

freedom of navigation and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

The second is maintaining an 'open and stable sea' while raising awareness that such a sea is in the common interest of not only this region, but also of the entire international community.

The third is assisting countries in reinforcing their maritime law enforcement capacities. This is based on the belief that it is indispensable for the maritime law enforcement capacities of different countries to work together to ensure that an 'open and stable sea' is maintained through the rule of law.

Japan as a maritime nation has worked for many years to strengthen and expand its maritime law enforcement capacity and to share its expertise and experience with other countries that have embarked on maritime law enforcement capacity building activities. Japan will continue to extend this kind of international cooperation to others.

The purpose of this seminar is for the participants to create a shared understanding of the importance of building and strengthening law enforcement capacity, and to produce useful inputs to such capacity building.

We hope that this seminar will contribute to concrete capacity building endeavors supported by international cooperation.

Let me conclude my remarks by expressing my hope that this seminar will provide Japan and the other participating countries with an

opportunity to further strengthen cooperative relations, and will help establish a network of contacts towards ensuring an 'open and stable sea'.

Last but not least, I wish all participants an enjoyable stay in Tokyo.
Thank you very much.

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