

Seminar on Capacity Building in Maritime Security and Disaster Relief

Opening Remarks

Wednesday, 24 September, 2014

Mr. Yasuhide NAKAYAMA, State Minister for Foreign Affairs

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I extend our most sincere welcome to every one of you to this seminar on Capacity Building in Maritime Security and Disaster Relief. I have spent a number of years closely involved in security policy, including as a board member of Security Committee of the House of Representatives and Chairman of the Defense Committee of the LDP. As such politician, I am particularly pleased to hold this seminar, which provides an interface of defense and foreign policy, with all of you from ASEAN countries.

Japan, as a “Proactive Contributor to Peace” based on the principle of international cooperation, announced its determination to contribute even more proactively towards securing peace and stability of the region and the international community. As the security environment has become increasingly severer, no nation can maintain its own peace alone. This is the rationale behind the policy of “Proactive Contribution to Peace” and why this policy is coupled with the principle of international cooperation. Close cooperation with ASEAN countries, our partners sharing common values and strategic interests, has become ever more important.

The Asia Pacific is a region prone to natural disasters, and the reinforcement of disaster relief cooperation is essential. “Open and Stable Seas,” upheld by the rule of law is global common goods. This is especially so if we consider this region plays an indispensable role in the international economy.

In his keynote address at the Shangri-La Dialogue last May, Prime Minister Shinzo ABE pledged that Japan will seamlessly support the

capacity of ASEAN countries in safeguarding the seas, by combining various options within Japan's assistance menu, including ODA, capacity building by the Self-Defense Forces, and defense equipment and technology cooperation. Such support to ASEAN countries embodies the implementation of Japan's policy of "Proactive Contribution to Peace" in Asia. This seminar is held with a view to fulfilling the pledge of Prime Minister Abe made to ASEAN countries.

This seminar has three objectives. First, we would like all of you to deepen the understanding of Japan's security policy. I am confident that you will realize Japan's security policy is based on Japan's firm orientation as a peace-loving nation.

Second, we would like to explain contents and procedures of the assistance that Japan can provide to ASEAN countries in the field of maritime security and disaster relief, in particular, capacity building cooperation by the Self-Defense Forces and defense equipment and technology cooperation.

Regarding defense equipment and technology cooperation, Japan adopted new principles in April. On the basis of strict examination, in cases in which appropriate control is ensured, we can now transfer some of Japan's superb defense equipment overseas. We will explain the basics and possible utilization of these principles for the cooperation.

Third, we would like to hear your needs of cooperation based on respective circumstances and the capacity building policies of each country. We believe this information sharing will lead to the identification of tangible projects between Japan and your countries.

In closing, we hope to develop trust through our sincere discussion at this seminar. We are eager to further develop the cooperative relationship

between Japan and ASEAN countries, and continue to be “the Partners for Peace and Stability.” Under the rule of law, may the peace, stability, and prosperity prevail throughout the region as we work together.

Thank you very much.