

Seminar on Capacity Building in Maritime Security
Opening Remarks by Mr. Masakazu Hamachi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for
Foreign Affairs
December 14, 2015

I'd like to begin by warmly welcoming each of the delegations, and thanking you for attending the Seminar on Capacity Building in Maritime Security. My name is Masakazu Hamachi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, responsible for the relations with ASEAN countries. It is a pleasure to see so many fine specialists from ASEAN countries here today, and I hope to see our cooperative, international efforts advance during our time together. I am very gratified that we are able to host today's discussions on maritime safety and security, a matter of great importance to both Japan and its ASEAN partners.

I'd like to briefly speak about the importance of Japan's 'Proactive Contribution to Peace' and the 'Three Principles of the Rule of Law at Sea.'

Under the banner of 'Proactive Contribution to Peace,' Japan is actively engaged towards securing peace, stability, and prosperity for the region, and for the world. More specifically, to implement this concept in September Japan passed its 'Legislation for Peace and Security', designed to play an instrumental role in securing lives and the peaceful livelihood of the Japanese people, all while contributing to peace and to the stability of the region. We've received great support and understanding from our neighboring countries, and for that, I wish to thank you.

Japan bases this decision on its clear understanding of the security challenges facing the Pacific region. The sea is a Global Commons, which must be open for all. And, at the same time, our activities on the sea have to be governed in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We absolutely cannot accept violent or coercive actions, which deviate from international law.

From this standpoint, Japan has been promoting the 'Three Principles of the Rule of Law at Sea', namely: (1) States should make and clarify their claims based on international law, (2) States should not use force or coercion in trying to promote their claims, and (3) States should seek to settle disputes by peaceful means. It is high time to implement these three principles. Therefore, I wish to ask you to combine with our voices and as one, to be heard by the international community.

Just as important as focusing on these three principles, are our actions which actually protect the seas. Concrete, cooperative efforts are made by Japan to strengthen the capacities of ASEAN countries protecting the sea. Combining Official Developmental Assistance, defense equipment and technology cooperation, and capacity building, Japan will realize our goal of 'seamless assistance.'

Japan's theme for this seminar, therefore, is 'Protecting the Seas of Asia Together.' During this three-day program, I believe we can more clearly define the problems our countries are facing in regional maritime security, increase future cooperation between Japan and its ASEAN partners, and frankly share our opinions with one another.

In conclusion, this seminar is an outstanding chance to contribute to regional peace and security. I wish you all the best and am very excited to see your active contributions to the discussions.

Thank you very much.