

Message from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in celebration of
the 10th Anniversary of ReCAAP

Thursday, March 17, 2016

[Provisional Translation]

1 On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to congratulate for the 10th Anniversary of the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP).

2 From ancient times, we have benefited from the many blessings the sea provides, and maritime transportation has been connecting the world. The freedom on the high seas and the free flow of trade have been the cornerstones of the development and prosperity of humankind. Open and stable seas are indispensable for the peace and prosperity of the international community.

3 Piracy has been coined as “hostis humani generis” as it is a threat to the order of law of the seas which is a product of wisdom of mankind. Piracy is a threat to the safety of sea lanes around the world, and countering piracy is a vital issue for all of us as we benefit from maritime trade. For the last ten years, the ReCAAP Information Sharing Center (ISC) has been countering pirates in Asia. I would like to take this opportunity to express our great respect to its mission. Japan has been supporting its activities together with other Contracting Parties by sending Executive Directors and Assistant Executive Directors.

4 In my Keynote Address at the Shangri-La Dialogue in 2014, I spoke on the importance of the rule of law at sea and emphasized that maintaining the seas as “global commons” governed by the rule of law for the world and humankind is our common mission for our common interest. We must hand these magnificent seas down to the next generation. “The seas are for all humankind to use.” Even today, these words of Hugo Grotius, the “father of international law,” from 400 years ago still ring true. At the G7 Ise-Shima Summit which I will chair in May this year, I would like to renew our commitment, as a maritime nation, in cooperating with other countries to firmly maintain the rule of law at sea.

5 Japan will offer its utmost support for the efforts of the coastal countries in Asia as they work to ensure the security of the seas and thoroughly maintain the freedom and safety of navigation. We will continue our supports to the ReCAAP ISC as an international organization. We have been supporting the capacity building of maritime law enforcement agencies of coastal states in Asia by providing them with patrol ships, technical assistance and human resource development programs and would like to further enhance these assistances.

6 I sincerely hope that ReCAAP will further enhance its activities under the Contracting Parties and the newly-appointed next Executive Director, Mr. Masafumi Kuroki, and thereby contribute to protect and ensure “open and stable seas.”

Shinzo Abe
Prime Minister of Japan