



ReCAP

Combating  
Piracy and Sea  
Robbery in Asia

# Commemorating 15 Years of Enhanced Regional Cooperation



# **Commemorating 15 Years of Enhanced Regional Cooperation**



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## Foreword

As the Chairperson of the ReCAAP ISC Governing Council, I would like to congratulate the Secretariat in coming with its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary publication that will highlight the achievements since its establishment in 2006.

As we celebrate ReCAAP ISC's 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, I would like to retrospect on its humble beginning and acknowledge what it had become since its establishment 15 years ago. The ReCAAP ISC has been making utmost efforts to contribute to the improvement of the situation of piracy and sea robbery in Asia, within the legal framework of the ReCAAP agreement.

It is a great pleasure for me to recognize that the ReCAAP ISC has achieved very positive results in its three missions of information sharing, capacity building, and cooperative arrangements. These pillars are what makes the ReCAAP ISC distinct as it reinforces and connects the governments and other maritime stakeholders directly. May it inspire, even more, to enable it to attain greater mobility and productivity.

The Republic of the Philippines is one of the 16 countries listed in Article 18 of the Agreement. For 15 years, the Philippines has actively participated and supported in all of the ReCAAP ISC's activities and endeavors. The increased number of incidents at the tri-border sea area, particularly in the Sibu-tu Passage, almost declared Sulu-Celebes a high-risk maritime area in 2016 and put the Philippines in the spotlight. Abu Sayyaf Group was pointed as the one responsible for this upsurge of piracy and abduction incidents.



**ADM George V. Ursabia, Jr.**

*Chairperson of the ReCAAP ISC  
Governing Council*

*Governor from the Philippines  
Commandant, Philippine Coast Guard*

I should say that ReCAAP ISC's verified, timely, and comprehensive, yet easy to understand reports and warnings, with invaluable analysis through its data analytics capability, has helped the law enforcement agencies and other maritime stakeholders increased awareness and in putting up stringent security measures and policies in the area. More so, ReCAAP ISC had successfully convened capacity-building programs and cluster meetings to its Member States in Manila and acted as the very link of the littoral states to the maritime community in dealing with the issues of piracy and armed robbery at sea.

With its proficient leadership, the ReCAAP ISC had made its mark in the international community as a consistent information-sharing agency dealing with piracy and armed robbery in Asia. In like manner, ReCAAP ISC is continuously establishing cooperation and coordination with other International Organizations, academes, and private firms to enhance further its objective of combating piracy and armed robbery.



Notably, as we welcome more and more States that are interested to join the ReCAAP, it also shows ReCAAP's unmatched significance in the international maritime community, as it continues to promote the value of international cooperation in combating the menace of piracy and armed robbery in the region.

In this unprecedented time brought about by the pandemic, maritime transportation remains vital in the delivery of goods and energy, essential for people and industries. At the same time, maritime agencies are stretched due to the pandemic, management along coastal lines, and seafarers have been subjected to prolonged periods at sea due to delays in crew changes. Under these circumstances, the role of ReCAAP in promoting safe maritime transport in Asia is more relevant than ever.

I am proud to say that ReCAAP ISC remains committed to its mission of protecting crew, vessels, and cargo from piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia, despite disruptions arising from the pandemic.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary offers the ReCAAP and the stakeholders a timely opportunity to reflect on the journey we have collectively taken, reconfirm the commitment to our shared mission, and look ahead at the future of ReCAAP to remain relevant amid changing external environment.

Congratulations and MABUHAY !



## Prologue

Maritime transport is indispensable to ensure the transport of essential goods such as food and energy as well as raw materials and manufactured goods around the world. With the globalisation of economies, more than 80% of world trade is carried by sea. The rapid economic growth of Asia has increased the importance of maritime transport between Asia and other parts of the world. About 65% of global port-container cargo handling is concentrated in Asia.

However, piracy has a long history in Asia and the piracy and armed robbery against ships are still posing threats to the safe transport of goods and energy, the safety of crew and causing higher operation cost. Particularly, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, there was a significant surge of incidents in Asia. More than 200 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships occurred every year. Against the escalating situation, Asian countries have agreed on a legal framework, ReCAAP, to promote regional cooperation to combat these maritime crimes collectively. The concept of the Agreement is to combat piracy and sea robbery through Information Sharing, Capacity Building and Cooperative Arrangements.

After the entry into force of the ReCAAP on 4 September 2006, the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) was established in Singapore on 29 November 2006 and it has been promoting the objective of the Agreement during the last 15 years, up to today.

Although the ReCAAP ISC is a small international organisation, I consider that it has made significant progress and contribution to combating piracy and sea robbery in Asia.



**Mr. Masafumi Kuroki**


*Executive Director, ReCAAP ISC*

On the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, this publication presents the evaluation by the Contracting Parties of ReCAAP and its stakeholders as well as the achievements made by the ReCAAP ISC.

These achievements are not possible without the collective efforts of all the stakeholders such as 20 Contracting Parties and their Focal Points, law enforcement and regulatory agencies as well as shipping associations and companies. I take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to all those who are working together for the common goal of mitigating piracy and sea robbery and to reconfirm the commitment of the ReCAAP ISC to make further efforts towards the goal.



# Messages from Partners



No single agency can address the crime of piracy and armed robbery against ships alone. Collective efforts and shared responsibility among the concerned stakeholders are indispensable. Over the past 15 years, the ReCAAP ISC has established an extensive network of partnerships with international organisations, shipping associations and academia. We have received encouraging messages from these partners.



ReCAAP is the first regional government-to-government agreement to promote and enhance cooperation against piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia, and a model to other regions in the world. It gave me great pleasure to undertake my second visit to ReCAAP ISC in the summer of 2019, making it the fifth such visit by an IMO Secretary-General.

IMO signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ReCAAP ISC in December 2007, with the aim to establish an arrangement to enhance regional cooperation through information sharing and capacity building. ReCAAP ISC was the first regional agreement of this kind, but not the last, because the success of ReCAAP has inspired other regions to set up similar arrangements, following in your footsteps. IMO remains committed to being a strong, supportive partner organization to ReCAAP to enhance regional cooperation through information sharing and capacity building.

IMO has been actively engaged in addressing piracy since 1983. This engagement led to the collection and publication of reports on acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships, thanks to continued international collaboration, including with ReCAAP ISC, as well as the development of a comprehensive range of guidance on prevention, repression and investigation of piracy and armed robbery, including the Best Management Practice and guidance on the carriage of armed security personnel.

We are supporting Member States to develop a coordinated “whole-of-government” approach to maritime security. Actions by IMO Member States have been successful in most areas in containing piracy – but it has required a strong



**Mr. Kitack Lim**

*Secretary-General*

*International Maritime Organization*

cooperative effort between Governments, their navies and law enforcement agencies, and with industry, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations, like ReCAAP ISC to achieve these results.

More recently, IMO has been applying the lessons learned from initiatives in the Asia-Pacific and Western Indian Ocean regions to the situation in the Gulf of Guinea. The challenges relating to maritime security in the region calls for our continued concerted support to states in the region to succeed in their efforts against the scourge of increasing hijackings of vessels and kidnappings of crew. It is particularly against this backdrop, that I encourage ReCAAP ISC to strengthen your efforts and capacity building activities to help promote and share the full understanding of your achievements globally.

Taking a cue from your theme: “Enhancing Regional Cooperation: 15 Years and Beyond”, I would like to encourage you to showcase and share what effective regional collaboration can achieve to address both the long-lasting, but also emerging security threats.

I am looking forward to our continued strong collaboration.



On behalf of the World Maritime University (WMU), it is my great pleasure to convey our sincerest and warmest felicitations to the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) and its Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP ISC) on the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its founding.

ReCAAP has proven to be an indispensable instrument for monitoring threats to the security of shipping in the region. Its information sharing, capacity-building, and public awareness activities have directly contributed to significantly improving the maritime security situation in Asian seas. WMU is genuinely proud of its long-standing partnership with ReCAAP ISC. Our close relationship with ReCAAP ISC means that our students — coming from all regions of the world — receive first-hand information on lessons learned and best practices relating to regional cooperation against acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships, which we all know continue to be a threat in many parts of the world. Collaborative activities covering our two institutions' shared interest in capacity-building particularly in the fields of maritime security and safety was formalised in a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2018.

I wish ReCAAP continued success in its important work of facilitating cooperation for the security of maritime activity in Asia. We at WMU look forward to increased collaboration with the ISC in the future.



**Dr. Cleopatra Dombia-Henry**  
*President*  
*World Maritime University*



Secure and safe shipping is a catalyst for economic growth and development. For the European Union, maritime transport is a critical sector with almost 90% of our external freight trade being seaborne. The safety and security of shipping routes, and of the crews involved, is therefore a key EU strategic priority.

It is in this context that we celebrate and welcome the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the work undertaken by the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP). The success of this inter-governmental agreement is undeniable. It is built on sound leadership and concerted actions in the core areas of information sharing, capacity building, and cooperative arrangements. ReCAAP has clearly demonstrated the vital role it plays in the regional anti-piracy architecture. Today, more than ever, we all benefit from its efforts as we witness the rise of incidents worldwide, including in Asia.

As we reflect on the future, we will continue to support ReCAAP's work. We also stand ready to engage and explore ways to reinforce it, where possible, and to share our experiences. We have much to learn from each other.

Happy 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ReCAAP, with much more success to come!



**H.E. Ms. Barbara Plinkert**

*Ambassador of the European Union (EU)  
to Singapore*





For more than a decade, the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) and the Information Fusion Centre (IFC) have been contributing extensively as key regional Maritime Security (MARSEC) stakeholders, sharing timely and accurate information and promoting cooperation between partner enforcement agencies and the shipping community. The value and importance of these contributions became even more apparent during the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which saw MARSEC incidents persist globally, even as the pandemic threatened to bring the world to a halt. Nevertheless, the ReCAAP ISC, together with partners like the IFC, remained at the forefront, and continued to facilitate information exchange and MARSEC cooperation amongst all maritime stakeholders. As the ReCAAP ISC celebrates its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2021, I would like to congratulate the leadership and all staff on your success, and commend you on your contributions. I look forward to many more years of collaboration between ReCAAP ISC and the IFC in ensuring safe and secure seas for all.

Happy Anniversary and we look forward to fostering a closer collaboration between ReCAAP ISC and IFC. Thank you.



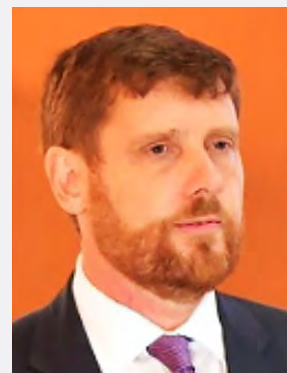
**RADM Aaron Beng**  
*Chief of Navy*  
*Republic of Singapore Navy*



The Southeast Asian region consist of major sea lanes of communication critical for global trade and energy security. The past year has demonstrated how unanticipated crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic can leave these sea lanes vulnerable to maritime crime such as incidents of piracy and armed robbery increased. The presence of such threats, even amid a global pandemic, is indicative of the need for information collection, analysis and dissemination.

The Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP) of UNODC congratulates ReCAAP on the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and the valuable contribution made by ReCAAP for safer seas. The timely alerts, annual publications, and statistics of maritime incidents have helped maritime stakeholders in the region with opportunities for capacity building and enhanced engagement.

ReCAAP's products have become a valuable complement to GMCP's efforts in the Southeast Asian region, which include the work under GMCP convened forums namely the Contact Group on the Sulu and Celebes Seas (CGSCS) and the Western Maritime Route Forum (WMRF). In executing these initiatives, ReCAAP has consistently demonstrated readiness to extend briefings on these areas and share in-depth analysis to the benefit of our maritime law enforcement agencies.



**Mr. Alan Cole**

*Head of Global Maritime  
Crime Programme  
UNODC*

The Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP) of UNODC, as a UN agency strongly advocates for a rule-based order at sea framed on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and is committed to the definitions instituted by UNCLOS.

The Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP) of UNODC, looks forward to continued engagement and cooperation with ReCAAP with the common objective of countering crime at sea and making the oceans safer.



The Asian Shipowners' Association (ASA) is a voluntary organisation of the shipowner associations of Australia, China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea and the Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Associations (FASA), comprising shipping associations of ASEAN countries, consisting of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The objectives of ASA are to act as a channel to convey Asian Shipowners' voices to the international shipping community as well as to enhance and strengthen the ASA's stature. At the same time, it is also a platform for all ASA members to liaise with one another and to help promote cooperation, amity and friendship amongst its members.

Between annual ASA meetings, the ongoing work is carried out by five Standing Committees: The Seafarers Committee (SC), the Ship Insurance and Liability Committee (SILC), the Safe Navigation and Environment Committee (SNEC), the Shipping Policy Committee (SPC), and the Ship Recycling Committee (SRC).

It has been estimated that ASA shipowners and managers control and operate around 50% of the world's cargo carrying fleet.

ASA appreciates ReCAAP ISC for your efforts and we will continue to support any actions that will contribute to the safety at sea by combating piracy and armed robbery. On this note, ASA wishes the celebration of ReCAAP ISC 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary every success in its deliberations.



**Mr. Yuichi Sonada**  
*Secretary-General*  
*Asian Shipowners' Association (ASA)*



BIMCO is a proud partner of ReCAAP and fully supports the goal of sharing information and analysing data to improve the transparency of maritime security issues in Southeast Asia. Over the past 15 years ReCAAP has established itself as an analytical force to be reckoned with in the field of maritime security with notable success in reducing the piracy and armed robbery problem in the region and facilitating much-needed capacity building of law enforcement capabilities.

BIMCO looks forward to enhancing our strong working relationship with ReCAAP through more active collaboration and engagement and we hope to see ReCAAP grow even stronger with more countries signing up to complement existing information sharing concepts to underpin maritime law enforcement efforts across the region.



**Mr. David Loosley**

*Secretary-General and CEO  
BIMCO*





INTERTANKO congratulates the ReCAAP ISC on the occasion of their 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and for reaching this significant milestone.

As early as 2006, INTERTANKO was among the first international organisations invited to take part in ReCAAP ISC's Governing Council – and that commitment has been honoured from both sides to this day. In order to establish a solid platform for collaboration, the two organisations formalised their cooperation by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at INTERTANKO's Annual Event in Singapore in 2012.

Piracy and armed robbery against ships is a blight on the industry, and INTERTANKO is proud to partner ReCAAP ISC in its efforts to stop such activities. Working closely with ReCAAP ISC in hosting regional events, the mutual exchange of information and expertise has also greatly benefited the development of guidance for the good of the entire industry. An excellent example is the Regional Guide to Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (2016). It is the results of such important collaboration that will eventually ensure the organisations reach their common goal of eradicating piracy.

Our respect and congratulations to everyone at the ReCAAP ISC, keep up the good work and we look forward to our continued work together!



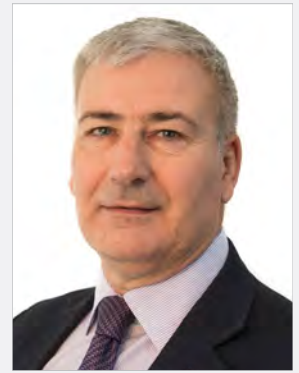
**Ms. Katharina Stanzel**  
*Managing Director*  
*INTERTANKO*



OCIMF congratulates ReCAAP ISC on 15 years of work to collectively reduce harm to seafarers through information sharing, capacity building and cooperative arrangements in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships.

The threat from Piracy and Armed Robbery not only impacts the ability of merchant vessels to keep the global economy moving but has a devastating effect on seafarers. During the last 15 years, ReCAAP ISC has played an important role in binding likeminded nations to encourage the sharing of information to combat piracy and armed robbery while developing regional coherence and best practice.

Looking ahead, we must not be complacent despite the success of the last 15 years, the mission is not yet complete. It is more important than ever that global and regional maritime bodies continue to work towards eradicating the threats faced by those working at sea and delivering maritime trade. Time and resources provided by ReCAAP ISC are critical to maintaining counter-piracy initiatives. OCIMF looks forward to continuing our relationship and productive engagement with ReCAAP ISC well into the future.



**Mr. Rob Drysdale**

*Managing Director  
Oil Companies International  
Marine Forum (OCIMF)*





With more than 80% of the world's goods transported by sea, maritime security in international waters is crucial for the safe passage of ships and seafarers in the open seas.

Like merchant ships in other parts of the world, vessels in the South China Sea, or when transiting through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, are subject to piracy and attacks by armed perpetrators.

The Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Associations (FASA) believes that to combat transnational maritime crimes such as piracy and armed robbery, it requires the collaborative efforts of the global shipping community to ensure the safety and security of vessels and seafarers in international waters.

The reports and situation updates from ReCAAP ISC have helped the governments, the shipping industry, and other maritime stakeholders to be more aware and vigilant of such threats and to take the appropriate actions. Since its establishment in 2006, ReCAAP ISC is now internationally recognised as a reliable agency specialising in piracy and armed robbery in Asia.

On behalf of all at FASA, I would like to extend my heartiest congratulations to the team at ReCAAP on its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and best wishes in all its future undertakings.



**Mr. Le Anh Son**

*Chairman*

*Federation of ASEAN Shipowners'  
Association (FASA)*

In 2021, we celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP). Since its launch in 2006 as the first regional government-to-government agreement to promote cooperation against piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia, ReCAAP has made tremendous contributions towards advancing maritime security in the region. Now firmly established as a credible source of information and a reliable partner of the maritime community, it is testament to the importance and efficacy of international cooperation in combating maritime crime.

The number of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the region continues to be a reference point to which the international community assess the safety and security of Asian waters. Even as the number of incidents in Asia remained low, the threat to ships and seafarers remains. This serves as a reminder on the importance of sustaining the collective efforts and to always remain vigilant of the possible spill over effects of maritime crimes into wider safety and security concerns. In this regard, both ReCAAP and the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) continue to play an essential role through information sharing and capacity building.



**H.E. Ambassador  
Ong Keng Yong**

*Executive Deputy Chairman  
S. Rajaratnam School of International  
Studies (RSIS)  
Nanyang Technological University,  
Singapore*

RSIS shares ReCAAP's commitment to building a safe and secure maritime environment in Asia, and I believe ReCAAP deserves full recognition of its contributions to maritime safety and security in Asia. As we celebrate its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, this is the perfect opportunity for ReCAAP to showcase its tremendous achievements and contribution in raising public awareness on the importance of maritime safety and security in Asia.

# Messages from Contracting Parties

The membership of the ReCAAP has expanded from 14 Asian countries in 2006 to 20 countries (14 from Asia, 4 from Europe, Australia, the United States) as of today.

Each ReCAAP Contracting Party appoints a senior official as Governor to the Governing Council of the ReCAAP ISC. The Governors come from Coast Guards, Navies, Marine Police, Port Authority, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Oceans and Ministry of Shipping.

The diversity of the Governors brings a wide range of experiences and perspectives to the role of the Governing Council to provide overall policy guidance to the Centre in accordance with Article 4 of the ReCAAP.

The Governors of 20 Contracting Parties have shared their assessment of the ReCAAP. (The message of the Governor from the Philippines is posted in "Foreword" as the Chairperson of the ReCAAP ISC Governing Council.)



Australia places significant value on developing relationships and engagement opportunities with international partners on maritime security. Australia is proud to support ReCAAP in its mandate to promote and enhance cooperation against piracy and armed robbery in the Asia region, and at this important juncture, Australia reinforces its commitment to regional efforts to eradicate these threats.

In 2013, Australia was honoured to accede to ReCAAP. Through ReCAAP, Australia has continued to increase its regional awareness of emerging maritime threats while fostering strong relationships with regional authorities responsible for countering maritime piracy and armed robbery.

The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre continues to be a Centre of Excellence in the region and Australia acknowledges the steadfast efforts by the Centre to disseminate relevant and important information across the region. Engagement between the 20 Contracting Parties of ReCAAP, who share a common goal of identifying, mitigating and responding to maritime threats, is critical and reinforces a collaborative approach to regional stability through technological cooperation, information sharing and capacity building activities.

Australia congratulates ReCAAP on its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and commends ReCAAP for its resolute and significant commitment to combating piracy and armed robbery in the Asia region.



**Australia**  
**Commander Claire Rees**  
*Deputy Commander,  
Maritime Border Command*



Combating Piracy and armed robbery is collective effort by the various stakeholders, law enforcing agencies and shipping industry. To pursue same by cooperation and co-ordination ReCAAP has been established. Bangladesh is a founder member of ReCAAP and always not only committed but also carry out her obligatory responsibility as a Member State as per ReCAAP agreement. As a part of her duties and responsibility, Bangladesh has always tried to contribute ReCAAP's focal area to facilitate the exchange of information, communication, and operational cooperation so as to improve incident response, and support capacity building activities through collective management and hence reducing the piracy and armed robbery activities. In the recent time, Bangladesh improved the overall security environment of the country in the aspect of surveillance, monitoring, reporting, capacity building of the law enforcement agencies, awareness among the various stakeholders, and also the cooperation mechanism with the focal point, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders as result of our commitment towards the ReCAAP agreement.

ReCAAP also played an important role in laying Djibouti Code of Conduct with IMO. Importantly, ReCAAP contributes in bridging the gap of information sharing as an information hub for combating piracy and armed robbery and thus enhancing maritime safety in the region which is one of the key aspects of uninterrupted shipping and smooth economy world-wide.



**Bangladesh**  
**Ms. Laila Jesmin**

*Additional Secretary, Ministry of Shipping*  
*Vice Chairperson of the Governing Council*

I believe and wish that we will put our hands together so that ReCAAP will continue its journey with the favorable wind for the implementation of future roadmap and remain relevant amid changing environment to achieve our common target of safe and secure shipping.



Executive Director of ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre and Fellow Governors,

In commemorating the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the foundation of ReCAAP ISC, on behalf of the Government of Brunei Darussalam, I would like to congratulate and offer my deepest appreciation to ReCAAP ISC on this special milestone.

Looking back from its humble beginning when it was founded in November 2006, ReCAAP ISC has evolved and progressed positively and achieved great heights in its continuous effort to fulfil its role of being the information hub and enhance regional cooperation through the three main pillars, namely information sharing, capacity building and cooperative arrangements in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia region.

The year 2020 saw the world greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and like many organisations around the world, the activities of ReCAAP ISC were severely disrupted. ReCAAP ISC, however, has shown its great resilience and adaptability in this challenging time and remained committed to its mission of protecting crew, vessels and cargo against piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia.

Through virtual modality, capacity building workshops and Governing Council Meetings that were successfully organised, ReCAAP ISC has managed to establish closer ties with the maritime community through forums and dialogues. ReCAAP ISC is proven to be an important Information Sharing Centre platform and as a model for others to follow.



**Brunei**  
**Senior Superintendent Matusin**  
**bin Hj Jumat**

*Director Operations,  
Royal Brunei Police Force*

On this momentous occasion, Brunei Darussalam as one of the Contracting Parties to ReCAAP ISC will continue to support and collaborate with ReCAAP ISC in its activities to realise its mission as the Centre of Excellence.





## **What has changed for Member States by ReCAAP?**

Being a Member State of ReCAAP, Cambodia has not only received information on combating piracy and armed robbery against ship on time, but also be able to report any incident related to piracy and armed robbery against ships. Additionally, ReCAAP has provided professional training to Member States and exchanged knowledge and experiences through physical and virtual platforms.

### **Value of ReCAAP**

Non-government organisation works for promoting and enhancing cooperation anti-piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia.

### **Future of ReCAAP**

Strengthening cooperation with Member States on combating piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia.



**Cambodia**  
**Mr. Eang Vengsun**

*Secretary of State  
Ministry of Public Works and Transport*



As an original Contracting Party of Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), China has been vigorously supporting ISC's work on combating piracy and armed robbery for 15 years. China Coast Guard, China Maritime Search and Rescue Coordination Centre and Hong Kong Maritime Department have been actively participating in the works of capacity building, exchange of experiences and information sharing, which provide a strong guarantee for the safety of regional maritime shipping. In future, China will, as always, continue to firmly support the work of Information Sharing Centre's (ISC), to enhance communication and cooperation with ISC and other Contracting Parties, and to shoulder its responsibilities under the ReCAAP framework, so as to make its due contribution to safeguarding the safety of maritime shipping in the region.



**China**

**Mr. Cheng Lei**

*Counsellor, Department of Boundary  
and Ocean Affairs  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs*



Since its establishment in 2006, the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia has demonstrated its ability to effectively counter instances of piracy in Asia based on fruitful cooperation between all Members from both Asian and non-Asian states. Thus, the ReCAAP has contributed with concrete added-value to the security of seafarers, freedom of navigation and facilitated movement of trade in the region.

While focused on Asian waters and with its key activities in the fields of cross-boundary cooperation, capacity building and information sharing, ReCAAP has furthermore contributed to the wider global community by setting an example of how effective regional cooperation arrangements can be in countering piracy and armed robbery at sea. This role has, moreover, been positively reinforced by the active engagement of industry stakeholders and other international organizations such as the International Maritime Organization.

We look forward to ReCAAP and its Information Sharing Centre to further develop in the coming years and to remain a Centre of Excellence setting the standards for effective cooperation for the benefit of shipping, seafarers and the global maritime community.



**Denmark**

**Mr. Peter Mikael Ostenfeld**

*Director, Maritime Regulations  
and Legal Affairs*

*Danish Maritime Authority*



1. The year 2021 marks an important milestone for ReCAAP as it has completed 15 years. In this short period of time, ReCAAP has marked many pioneering achievements and made a profound impact on combating piracy and armed robbery through Information Sharing, Capacity Building and Cooperative Frameworks. The accomplishments under the ReCAAP framework generated keen interest amongst countries with significant stake in safe shipping in the region. India is proud of its association with ReCAAP and has played a stellar role in the deliberations for evolving and subsequent drafting this robust collaborative framework. In fact, it was the apprehension of the hijacked vessel Alondra Rainbow by the Indian Coast Guard in 1999 which kick-started the process of formation of regional cooperative arrangements like HACGAM and ReCAAP. India has been steadfast in supporting ReCAAP ISC and believes in playing a constructive role in the forum while according primacy to the principle of consensus building, which is the bedrock of this agreement.

2. The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi has outlined the vision of India's maritime cooperative engagements through SAGAR which means 'Ocean' in Hindi and stands for Security And Growth for All in the Region. Through SAGAR, India seeks to deepen economic cooperation, strengthen capacity and capabilities of maritime neighbours, seeks collective action and cooperation for peace, safety and security and enhance prospects of



**India**  
**DG K Natarajan, PVSM, PTM, TM**  
*Director General, Indian Coast Guard*

sustainable development for all in the region. Aligning with this vision, India has been contributing financially to ReCAAP ISC and has co-hosted capacity building workshops three times besides jointly hosting the international seminar on 'Safe and Secure Seas' at Goa in February 2017 to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ReCAAP.

3. A total of 20 Contracting Parties have acceded to the agreement and with likely accession of France and Germany, the forum will be further strengthened. This growing membership is reflective of ReCAAP's credibility and growing relevance to the international maritime community.

4. I congratulate and extend best wishes to ReCAAP ISC for the accomplishments, endeavours and initiatives over the past 15 years.



On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the ReCAAP ISC on its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and would also like to express my deepest gratitude to everyone involved with ReCAAP.

In recent years, the number of serious incidents of piracy and sea robbery in Southeast Asia has decreased dramatically. This is a significant achievement of the ReCAAP ISC which has made relentless efforts in this field in close cooperation with related countries. The ISC's activities, such as information sharing, capacity building, and cooperation with other organizations, have played an important role in this process. Today, the ReCAAP ISC is internationally acclaimed as a successful model of regional cooperation.

Furthermore, the ReCAAP ISC has started to address emerging issues such as maritime terrorism and maritime cybersecurity by raising awareness of these threats and collecting and analyzing information. We highly appreciate the flexibility of the ReCAAP ISC in adapting to the changing environment and extending its activities to the new fields.

We hope the ReCAAP ISC will develop further as an important international organization in the field of maritime security. Japan will, in close cooperation with related countries, spare no effort to support the activities of the ReCAAP ISC.



**Japan**

**Mr. Otsuru Tetsuya**

*Deputy Assistant Minister  
Deputy Director General,  
Foreign Policy Bureau  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs*



I would like to share this pleasure in celebrating the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ReCAAP with all Member States, looking back at the excellent performance of ReCAAP in keeping Asian waters from piracy for the last fifteen years.

Since the establishment of ReCAAP in 2006, piracy and armed robbery have been effectively addressed in Asia by means of close cooperation among Member States and other related States.

Although piracy peaked at 203 cases in 2015, the number of cases has been significantly decreased to approximately fewer than 100 cases a year for the last five years, which shows the performance of ReCAAP well.

In particular, severe types of piracy such as ship hijacking and hostage recorded the lowest last year since the first official statistics was conducted in 2007.

The aforementioned performance can be regarded as the outcome of endeavours of all Member States under the mission and vision of ReCAAP. I would say that the benefits are enjoyed by countries around the world beyond Member States of ReCAAP in both direct and indirect manner.



**Korea**

**Mr. Hwang Jong-woo**

*Director General, Maritime Safety  
Policy Bureau*

*Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries*

Yet, piracy in Asia is not yet eradicated, although the cases have significantly decreased under the auspices of ReCAAP. Therefore, the strategy for the prevention and eradication of piracy should be continuously and effectively implemented by information sharing and capacity building with the ReCAAP network.

The Republic of Korea will be a constant supporter of ReCAAP in future as always and exert its utmost effort to prevent and combat piracy along with all Member States. Thank you.



On behalf of the Governor of the Lao PDR, I have the pleasure of joining the ReCAAP Contracting Parties' Governors to commemorate the memorable occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the foundation of the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP ISC).

Over the past 15 years, the ReCAAP ISC has been a multilateral agreement in Asia. Established in Singapore on November 2006, it has made remarkable achievements in promoting practical cooperation at the regional level with an emphasis on information sharing, capacity building, cooperative arrangements and joint collaboration with a view to combating piracy and armed robbery against ships.

Today, countries from Asia and beyond have joined the ReCAAP. Despite being a landlocked country, the Lao PDR recognises the importance of maritime connectivity in facilitating regional integration and enhancing economic growth. Therefore, the Lao PDR, in its full capacity, has actively participated in the ReCAAP Governing Council Meeting and related programmes.

The Lao PDR highly values the significant role of and efforts by the ReCAAP ISC in strengthening government-to-government cooperation under relevant arrangements to address challenges of piracy and armed robbery faced in this region. Such practical cooperation is in line with the ReCAAP Contracting Parties' interest and priorities.



**Laos**  
**Mr. Soukhasavanh Sanaphay**  
*Deputy Chief of Mission,  
Minister Counsellor  
Embassy of Lao PDR to Singapore*

I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Executive Director and staff of the ReCAAP ISC for its continued support and commitment to working closely with the ReCAAP Contracting Parties in partnership with various agencies and stakeholders so as to realise its mission.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is yet another significant milestone of the ReCAAP ISC and provides us with a valuable opportunity to take stock of the past achievements and chart out a future for enhanced cooperation under the ReCAAP ISC. Taking this opportunity, I would like to reiterate the Lao PDR's commitment to continue to work closely with the ReCAAP ISC and Contracting Parties to advance the ReCAAP ISC's mission.



On the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ReCAAP ISC, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude and warmest regards to Executive Director and the Staffs who helmed and brought up to the full-fledged international organization with invaluable achievements in combating piracy and armed robbery affairs.

On behalf of the Focal Point (Myanmar) and former governors, I am greatly proud to be one of the Contracting Parties of ReCAAP ISC. In these 15 years, ReCAAP ISC has grown into a well-known organization comprising 20 nations in addressing the safety and security of the regional maritime domain.

ReCAAP is now a “Centre of Excellence” for information sharing because of its efforts and contribution of ReCAAP’s Member States. We are not only sharing information and combating piracy against ships in Asia but also continuously communicate and exchange views as well as seeking opportunities to develop and strengthen collaboration. The ReCAAP ISC has provided us for mutual understanding, trust and solidarity among Contracting Parties.

In this regard, I am confident that the ReCAAP ISC will continue to perform as a key player to enhance sustainable security at sea. We look forward to have long lasting cooperation with ReCAAP ISC and I wish ReCAAP ISC to facilitate maritime security in future ahead.



**Myanmar**

**CAPT Tet Lwin Tun**

*Ayeyarwady Naval Regional Command  
Ministry of Defence*





The Netherlands would like to congratulate the ReCAAP ISC, its Executive director, the Chairperson of the Governing Council, and our fellow members with the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ReCAAP. The Netherlands recognizes and appreciates the achievements of ReCAAP over the past 15 years in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia, and would like to reaffirm its commitment to support ReCAAP and its activities in this field.

We consider the issue of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia not as a local problem, but as a threat to the flow of people and goods on maritime routes worldwide, which is a collective responsibility. By facilitating and enhancing international cooperation, the ReCAAP ISC plays a vital role in taking on this responsibility. Today, ReCAAP is internationally recognised as a successful model of inter-governmental cooperation in an environment of mutual trust. This is also illustrated by the recent decisions by Germany, France and Greece to apply for membership as well.

The Netherlands encourages ReCAAP to share its experience with other regions, as an example of effective regional collaboration. Furthermore, to assure ReCAAP's continued relevance in the future, we support the chosen



**Netherlands**

**Mr. Bastiaan Maltha**

*Head, Maritime Security Unit*

*National Focal Point for Maritime Security*

way forward in improving existing activities, enhancing collaboration with the international maritime community, and researching the nexus between Piracy and Terrorism and Piracy and Cybersecurity.

We wish the ReCAAP ISC and its current and future members even more success in the future, in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia.



Norway became the fifteenth Contracting Party to the ReCAAP agreement and the first non-Asian member of the agreement on 29 August 2009.

Even though Norway is geographically located outside Asia, we have a clear interest in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia as a shipping nation. A significant number of Norwegian ships trade in Asia. In the years leading up to the establishment of ReCAAP ISC, the situation with regard to piracy and armed robbery in Asia was of concern both to the states in the region, to the shipping industry and to states with an interest in providing shipping services.

The establishment of ReCAAP ISC was a turning point in the fight against piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia and it has played an important role in the reduction of attacks in the region. ReCAAP ISC provides a platform for cooperation and information sharing between States. It also provides States and industry with a clear system of reporting incidents. The dissemination of information regarding acts of piracy and armed robbery and the high quality analysis by the Secretariat, provides States and industry with a better understanding of the situation and allows States and the industry a more targeted approach to the problems.

Another important factor of the ReCAAP membership is that it provides States with a network of focal points and governors that can assist other States and the industry in the event of attacks. This is especially important for States located outside the region – like Norway. ReCAAP ISC is a shining example of a successful regional cooperation in the areas of information sharing and capacity building, and serves as a role model for other regions that



**Norway**

**Mr. Gaute Sivertsen**

*Director, Maritime Department*

*Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries*

have a problem with piracy and armed robbery against ships.

In the future, further efforts should be made to ensure that all States listed in Article 18(1) of the ReCAAP Agreement joins the Agreement to ensure that all of the littoral States join in this common objective.

Member States should continue to discuss the emerging maritime challenges such as cyber-threats and terrorism that may impact the situation of combating piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia. As a first step, the Secretariat should study these issues and their relationship to piracy and armed robbery. Further, we would need to discuss how ReCAAP ISC could interact and play a role with regard to these issues in line with its objectives.

We look forward to taking part in these discussions and to continuing to work together and cooperate with all Contracting Parties to ensure that ReCAAP ISC can continue its leading role as a platform for cooperation and information sharing in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia.



Singapore is proud to be a founding Contracting Party of ReCAAP, the only government-to-government agreement of its kind in Asia, upon which other regional anti-piracy agreements have been modelled. The roles of multilateralism, cooperation and strong industry partnership that were imprinted on ReCAAP continue to underpin its success and remains crucial to global efforts to prevent and suppress piracy.

Singapore is honoured to have hosted the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) since its inception. I believe the ReCAAP ISC can build on its good work by leveraging new tools including data analytics, by widening its network of partnerships, and by analysing upstream causes of piracy. I like to think of this as the “D-N-A” beacon to guide ReCAAP’s future. I am confident that the staff of the ReCAAP ISC, under the capable leadership of its Executive Director, are well-positioned to seize the opportunities ahead.

The growth of ReCAAP’s membership is also testament to its success. On behalf of Singapore, I convey our warmest congratulations to fellow ReCAAP Contracting Parties and to the ReCAAP ISC. We look forward to celebrating many more milestones in the years ahead.



**Singapore**  
**Ms. Quah Ley Hoon**  
*Chief Executive*  
*Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore*



It is with great pleasure that I pen this message on the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemoration of the ReCAAP ISC.

As you are aware, oceans have become the lifeline for global economy at present. The Indo-Pacific oceans have gained tremendous importance over the years and has now become the most concentrated area where global economic activities have conjoined political interests. It is home to the world's busiest waterways and choke points such as the Suez Canal, Bab al-Mandeb, Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca. All these choke points and waterways are crucial for ensuring maritime security in the region and are is vital for the smooth flow of East-West shipping traffic and emerging economies of the world.

I am proud to note that ReCAAP, being the first inter-governmental organisation against piracy and armed robbery, has tremendously contributed to the enhancement of maritime security of the region through numerous avenues over the years. Special mention should be given to ReCAAP's reporting procedure which has paved the way for prompt responses by the coastal States and has thereby contributed to the reduction/control of piracy and armed robbery incidents in the region. I would also like to take this opportunity to refer to the capacity building programmes,



**Sri Lanka**  
**CAPT (SBS) AD Weerasinghe, RSP, psc**  
*Deputy Director, Naval Operations*  
*Sri Lanka Navy*

joint exercises and information sharing facilitated by ReCAAP, which has helped to improve the capacities of the Focal Points to respond, analyse and share information. I sincerely believe that ReCAAP will enhance its scope on cyber security and maritime security in the future to become a more versatile and prominent organisation.

Sri Lanka is honoured to become a part of the ReCAAP ISC and will continue to work with all the Focal Points and Contracting Parties through maximum contributions and collaboration. It is my sincere wish that ReCAAP ISC will continue to grow from strength to strength in the future, and achieve greater heights. Thank you.



In recent years, ReCAAP ISC is playing a vital role to facilitate information sharing and collaboration between international navies, coast guards and other maritime agencies to deal with the full range of piracy and armed robbery at sea in order to enhance maritime security in the Southeast Asia region and beyond.

ReCAAP ISC is actively enhancing the cooperation among member countries and relevant agencies by sharing the information of piracy and armed robbery at sea timely and accurately, as well as factors that will affect maritime security in the South East Asia region to identify the root causes and the factors driving acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea in order to develop measures or initiatives to address the piracy and armed robbery threat to maintain the maritime safety in the region.

We all know that since 2006, ReCAAP ISC is working so hard toward the safety and stability in the sea. With good cooperation among member countries and international organisations, at the 12<sup>th</sup> Governing Council Meeting in 2018, the Council announced that ReCAAP ISC has met the criteria to be a Centre of Excellence for information sharing in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships at sea. At the present time in occasion of 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ReCAAP ISC, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the successful ReCAAP ISC activities that created the safety of the main sea lines of communications (SLOCs) in our region and looking forward to work closely with ReCAAP ISC to strengthen the cooperation among member countries in the future.



**Thailand**  
**RADM Wichnu Thupa-ang**  
*Director General,*  
*Office of Maritime Security Affairs*  
*Royal Thai Navy*



In this Anniversary year, it is appropriate to reflect on ReCAAP's contribution to global maritime security. During the past 15 years, piracy has evolved and in many ways are more organised and sophisticated than ever. The mechanisms to tackle it have also had to develop and ReCAAP is no exception, always seeking ways to improve its response and delivery for the benefit of the maritime community as a whole.

In these challenging times, ReCAAP has demonstrated its determination and commitment to continue to deliver to a high standard, thereby ensuring information sharing and cooperation are unimpeded.

ReCAAP's trusted proficiency to collate, analyse and disseminate data has led to an expansion of its remit to include raising awareness of maritime terrorism and maritime cybersecurity issues.

This ability to adapt and grow has contributed to ReCAAP being recognised as a model for regional cooperation across the world and ensures it is well positioned for the challenges of the future.

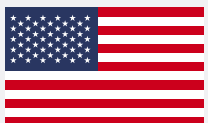
The UK highly values the work of ReCAAP as a pillar of the global effort to tackle piracy and armed robbery at sea. We therefore congratulate ReCAAP on its past achievements and look forward to working in partnership in the years ahead.



**United Kingdom**  
**Mr. Malcolm Brown**

*Director (International)*

*Joint Maritime Security Centre*



The United States sincerely congratulates the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery (ReCAAP) Information Sharing Centre (ISC) on its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as an organisation dedicated to combating transnational maritime crimes. Although last year presented significant challenges to the global maritime industry due to the occurrence of the pandemic, the ISC demonstrated its ongoing and sincere commitment to its mission of protecting crews, vessels and cargo from piracy and armed robbery onboard ships in Asia through significant information sharing, capacity building and cooperative arrangements. Year after year, ReCAAP continues to demonstrate its value and vital importance in supporting and ensuring regional maritime security.

The United States continues to be impressed with the ongoing cooperation and commitment of ReCAAP and its Member States, as well as by the growing interest by nations to accede to ReCAAP in the near future. In 2021, we look forward to the accomplishments of ReCAAP under the leadership of the Philippines as Chairperson and Bangladesh as Vice Chairperson. It is through the Governing Council's collective pledge of shared leadership that we will continue to exchange key information and best practices in the fight against piracy and armed robbery to protect the global maritime commons.



**United States of America**  
**RADM Peter W. Gautier**

*Deputy Commander, Pacific Area*  
*US Coast Guard*

It is without a doubt that ReCAAP will continue to play a crucial role in fostering maritime stability throughout Asia. The United States looks forward to furthering ReCAAP's continued growth, as well as contributing to the organisation's success via Focal Point training, capacity building opportunities, and ongoing bilateral engagements. We look forward to another productive 15 years!



On the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ReCAAP ISC (November 29<sup>th</sup> 2006 - November 29<sup>th</sup> 2021), on behalf of the Vietnam Coast Guard, I would like to send the best wishes to all the leaders and staffs of the ReCAAP ISC.

As one of the countries participating in the ReCAAP since the very beginning, and personally, I am a member of the ReCAAP ISC Governing Council, who represent the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, we have made great efforts to collect, analyze, evaluate and share information related to piracy and armed robbery against ships in Vietnam and the region.

Accompanying and developing with the ReCAAP ISC over the past 15 years, we highly appreciate the effective performance and information sharing efforts of ReCAAP ISC, as well as ReCAAP ISC Governing Council's members and the ReCAAP Focal Points, contributing to solving the situation of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia. The ReCAAP ISC has created excellent opportunities and became a bridge for us to cooperate in sharing information, exchanging experiences about enhancing maritime law enforcement capacity, aiming to prevent piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia.

In the coming time, the situation on the security, the order, piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia is still very complicated. Coping with the issues, we would like to continue maintaining and strengthening the information-



**Vietnam**  
**LG Nguyen Van Son**

*Commandant, Vietnam Coast Guard*

sharing mechanism of the ReCAAP ISC. Moreover, we will always be one of the active and responsible members of the ReCAAP ISC, fully participating in the activities of ReCAAP ISC, which contribute to maintaining security, stability and development at sea.

Once again, I would like to wish all the ReCAAP ISC leaders and staffs to continue to achieve outstanding achievements in the coming years. I wish the ReCAAP ISC achieves the goal of becoming "A Centre of Excellence for Information Sharing" and replicate this model in other parts of the world.





1ST GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING  
27 - 30 NOVEMBER 2006 , SINGAPORE



OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE RECAAP INFORMATION SHARING CENTRE  
29 NOVEMBER 2006



10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary High-Level Meeting (18 March 2016)



12<sup>th</sup> Governing Council Meeting (19-22 March 2018)



13<sup>th</sup> Governing Council Meeting (19-22 March 2019)



13<sup>th</sup> Governing Council Meeting (19-22 March 2019)



# Milestones of ReCAAP

Over the past 15 years, the ReCAAP ISC has had important milestones. We present some of these milestones.

# 1. ReCAAP and UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea)

I write to congratulate the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre, on its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. I thank its distinguished Executive Director, Masafumi Kuroki-san, for giving me an opportunity to send this message.

The 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), provides an international legal framework for the fight against piracy and armed robbery against ships. Given the importance of international shipping to the world economy, all countries must cooperate to combat such attacks against ships and seafarers. It is for this reason that piracy is an international crime.

The Straits of Malacca and Singapore are the busiest Straits in the world. The Lombok Strait is another critical international sea lane. For this reason, it is very important to protect the safety of ships traversing Southeast Asia. ReCAAP was founded in 2004, in response to this imperative. It is based upon UNCLOS.

I want to clarify the legal rules governing attacks against ships passing through these sea lanes of communication in Southeast Asia.

The lower half of the Strait of Malacca and the Singapore Strait are within the territorial seas of the coastal states. Therefore, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia have the exclusive right to arrest a ship which has committed a crime against another ship in their respective territorial seas.

Similarly, Indonesia has sovereignty in its archipelagic waters and territorial sea. It has



**Professor Tommy Koh**

*President, Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea  
Chairman, Governing Board, Centre for International Law  
National University of Singapore*

the sole right to exercise police power over ships in those waters.

ReCAAP has correctly categorized such attacks as “armed robbery against ships” and not “piracy”. Piracy is only applicable to crimes against ships committed on the high seas and in the exclusive economic zone. A warship from any state has the right to arrest a pirate ship on the high seas and in the exclusive economic zone of any coastal state.

For the past 15 years, ReCAAP’s Information Sharing Centre has done an excellent job, sharing timely and accurate information on incidents of piracy and sea robbery in Southeast Asia. I wish it continued success in its important work in the years ahead. I also hope that more countries will join ReCAAP.

## 2. IMO and ReCAAP

### “Value of ReCAAP for the sustainable shipping”

It is a great pleasure for me to remark on the activity of ReCAAP as my message to the Contracting Parties to ReCAAP with appreciations for their successful work during the past 15 years.

Since the establishment of the United Nations at the end of the last World War, the world economy has continued to grow and the living conditions and the quality of lives of mankind have been significantly improved and the level of poverty in the developing world has been largely mitigated. In this remarkably positive development, international shipping has made a major contribution, because it is indispensable for the world trade.

The United Nations provided the legal and institutional foundations of the Maritime Governance. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides basic framework for international law and rules and regulations have been developed at various organizations for the activities of international shipping. UN Agencies and Programmes such as ILO, WMO, UNSCO/IOC, UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank have been providing their contributions for the Maritime Governance in their respective fields of operation, but, it was IMO that has provided international shipping with practical regulations and standards for almost all aspects of operation of ships and the



**Mr. Koji Sekimizu**

*Secretary-General Emeritus  
International Maritime Organization  
Chancellor Emeritus,  
World Maritime University*

international shipping industry.

In addition to the safety and environmental protection issues, IMO has been dealing with maritime security issues since mid-1980s. The SUA Convention was adopted in 1988; a number of recommendations to IMO Member Governments on anti-piracy measures were adopted in 1990s; ISPS Code was adopted and anti-piracy actions were taken in dealing with the Somali piracy in 2000s. IMO Council discussed a number of issues for the safety, environmental protection and security of the vital shipping lanes including the Straits of Malacca and Singapore and ReCAAP ISC has contributed to such discussions at IMO.

### 3. Centre of Excellence

It gives me great pleasure and a privilege to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre on the Occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ReCAAP in 2021.

Since its establishment in Singapore 15 years ago, the spirit of ReCAAP, which covers cooperation and compromise, could be considered as an essential element in multilateral, regional and bilateral diplomacy. All the Member States have one common goal which is to fight against piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia. I hope this 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary will enhance the spirit of ReCAAP into its core function.

As ACD Secretary-General, it would be my great pleasure if the ReCAAP can consider ACD Secretariat as one of your like-minded friends because we are also promoting maritime connectivity and supporting maritime cooperation. I do hope that the ReCAAP and the ACD Secretariat could be able to commence our cooperation in the near future for the benefit and betterment of all stakeholders in Asia as a whole.

On this special occasion, I wish 2021 is another year of achievement for the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre. I wish you all the best and every success for many more years to come.

Thank you.



**Dr. Pornchai Danvivthana**

*Secretary-General, Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)*

*Former Chairperson and Governor from Thailand*

*ReCAAP ISC Governing Council*



## 4. ReCAAP and IMO/MSC Circulars

### “ ReCAAP a model for excellent cooperation”

A few months after the ReCAAP agreement had entered into force Denmark was honored to be one of the first States outside the Asian region that was invited to join the agreement. The aim and spirit of the agreement was well in line with the Danish policy on combating piracy and armed robbery against ships and Denmark joined the agreement in 2009.

I was appointed the first Danish Governor and served as a Governor for 8 years. During that period, I experienced the development of the cooperation and the ReCAAP ISC from being “just” intentions and ideas on paper to a viable organization and cooperation which fulfills the expectations of its constituents and the shipping industry.

I was also involved in formulating the expectations of the ReCAAP Governing Council for ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre to evolve into a Centre of Excellence for Information Sharing to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea. It is a remarkable achievement that the Council in only 2 years could recognize that ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre was such a Centre of Excellence.

ReCAAP has since its establishment provided excellent results well underlined by the statistical data provided by the Secretariat evidencing that the cooperation has resulted



**Ms. Birgit Sølling Olsen**  
*Former Governor from Denmark*

in a more effective combating of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Asian region. These results are facilitated by a dedicated ReCAAP ISC Secretariat and the initiatives taken by supportive and effective maritime administrations in the region prioritizing the safety and security of ships and seafarers regardless of which nationality they may have.

The efforts and results of ReCAAP have rightfully been recognized internationally by the International Maritime Organization. IMO, in its guidelines on combating piracy and armed robbery against ships refers to ReCAAP as a good model of a cohesive and successful regional cooperation structure, which IMO seeks to replicate elsewhere around the world.

I can only commend all for the good work and hope for a continued and successful cooperation which will provide the ships and seafarers in the Asian region with safe journey.

## 5. Cooperation for Djibouti Code of Conduct

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is the specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for the safety, security and efficiency of international merchant shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships.

Since 1991, IMO has received and circulated reports of reported and attempted attacks by pirates and armed robbers and has developed and maintained a comprehensive range of guidance to Member States and the maritime industry on measures to suppress piracy and armed robbery against ships.

IMO has also promoted an orchestrated, multi-agency and international response to piracy, armed robbery against ships and other illicit maritime activities and has been proud to work with the ReCAAP ISC in its development.

IMO works with governments in affected regions to promote a coordinated approach to ensuring maritime security and countering piracy. Having recognized that the ReCAAP ISC promoted and enhanced cooperation against piracy and armed robbery in Asia and had been very successful in helping to reduce and contain piracy, IMO adopted this model for other regions. Indeed, the ReCAAP agreement was used as a basis in drafting and developing what became the Djibouti Code of Conduct<sup>1</sup>, signed by 20 countries from the Gulf of Aden and western Indian Ocean



**Mr. Christopher Trelawny**

*Chief, Sub-Division for Maritime Development  
Technical Cooperation Division  
International Maritime Organization*

area.

The four pillars of the Djibouti Code reflected lessons learned from ReCAAP ISC and called on signatory States to:

1. Review their national legislation to ensure that piracy and armed robbery were adequately addressed in national law so that offenders could be prosecuted and brought to justice;
2. Develop their capability to conduct maritime law enforcement activities;
3. Cooperate with other States in the region and external development partners to increase their capacity for maritime governance; and

<sup>1</sup> The Code of conduct concerning the repression of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden (the Djibouti Code of Conduct) was adopted on 29 January 2009 specifically to address the prevailing maritime threat in the region at that time, i.e. Somalia-based piracy.

4. Ensure coordinated, smooth, and effective communications through national focal points and information exchange centres.

The Djibouti Code itself served as a basis for the Code of Conduct concerning the repression of piracy, armed robbery against ships, and illicit maritime activities in West and Central Africa (also known as the “Yaoundé Code of Conduct”), adopted in 2013 by 25 countries. The circle was completed when the signatory States to the Djibouti Code, taking into account the lessons from west and central Africa as well as IMO initiatives on maritime security governance, agreed to expand the scope of the Code by developing the Jeddah Amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct, 2017.

The fact that some 45 States in Africa and the western Indian Ocean area are now implementing agreements based on the ReCAAP agreement is a testament to the enduring success of the ReCAAP ISC. Happy 15<sup>th</sup> Birthday, ReCAAP ISC!

## 6. Roadmap and Action Plan

### **Mr. Masafumi Kuroki** **Executive Director of ReCAAP ISC**

As a forward-looking International Organisation, the imperative to remain relevant for the maritime community has been on the agenda of the ReCAAP ISC (the Centre) since its early days.

The Centre and its Governing Council understood that a long-term framework should be developed to help the Centre to make constant improvement and to be responsive to emerging trends so that the Centre can effectively carry out its vision and mission.

At the same time, at the 10<sup>th</sup> Governing Council Meeting in 2016, the Council decided that the Centre should aspire to become a Centre of Excellence for Information Sharing by 2020. The Council asked the Executive Director to chair a Working Group (WG) to deliberate on a Roadmap with Action Plan, and its tangible performance measures, to chart the progress of the Centre.

At the WG, 30 participants from 16 ReCAAP Contracting Parties contributed views to drafting a “Strategy Paper and Roadmap with Action Plan on the Future of ReCAAP ISC” for a period of 10 years (2017-2027), with the objective of becoming a “Centre of Excellence for Information Sharing” by 2020. The Strategy Paper and the Roadmap with Action Plan were presented and endorsed at the 11<sup>th</sup> GC Meeting in 2017.

Whilst the Council decided at the 12<sup>th</sup> GC Meeting in 2018 that ReCAAP ISC had met the criteria to be a “Centre of Excellence for Information Sharing in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships at sea”, the Roadmap with Action Plan remains a framework and a “living document” constantly updated to guide the Centre to navigate a dynamic future.

The Roadmap has set the following seven objectives which are the results of long discussions of the Governing Council.

- 1. Improving information sharing structure**
- 2. Cooperation with law enforcement agency**
- 3. Strengthening rapport with maritime community**
- 4. Expansion of memberships**
- 5. Cooperation with other stakeholders**
- 6. Increasing profiling effort and publicity for branding**
- 7. Strengthening the Secretariat**

Based on these seven objectives, the Centre has developed an Action Plan with concrete actions under each objective. These actions are implemented under yearly workplan.

# **Key Achievements Over the Last 15 Years**

# 1. Establishment of an Effective Information Sharing Mechanism

Timely and accurate information sharing is the core mission of the Centre. Therefore, the most important achievement is the establishment of an effective information sharing mechanism. This mechanism is based on the IMO/Maritime Safety Committee Circulars 1333/Rev.1 and 1334 and provides clear and effective incident reporting procedures for ships transiting Asian waters.

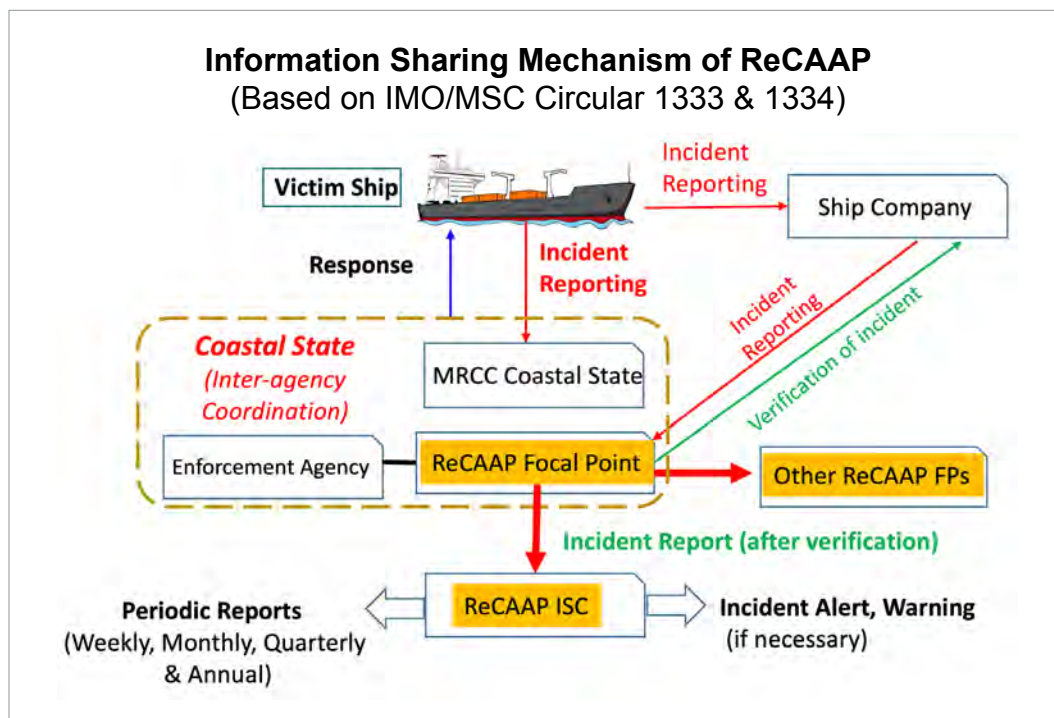
This mechanism is composed of 4 steps.

**1st step** is the incident reporting from ship to the nearest coastal State. The Centre has been advising the shipping companies to report all incidents immediately to the nearest coastal State. Ships are now reporting most of the incidents in Asia.

**2nd step** is the verification of incidents by Focal Point (FP) of ReCAAP Member States. It is an essential step for getting accurate information. This verification is quite unique with ReCAAP among various reporting centres. It is already a well-established practice of FP.

**3rd step** is the incident reporting from FP through ReCAAP network which is established among 20 FPs and the Centre. This network is promoting close cooperation and solidarity among Member States.

**4th step** is the dissemination of information by the Centre. The Centre has been doing a lot for quick dissemination of information to the broad maritime community, by using all the communication tools as possible.



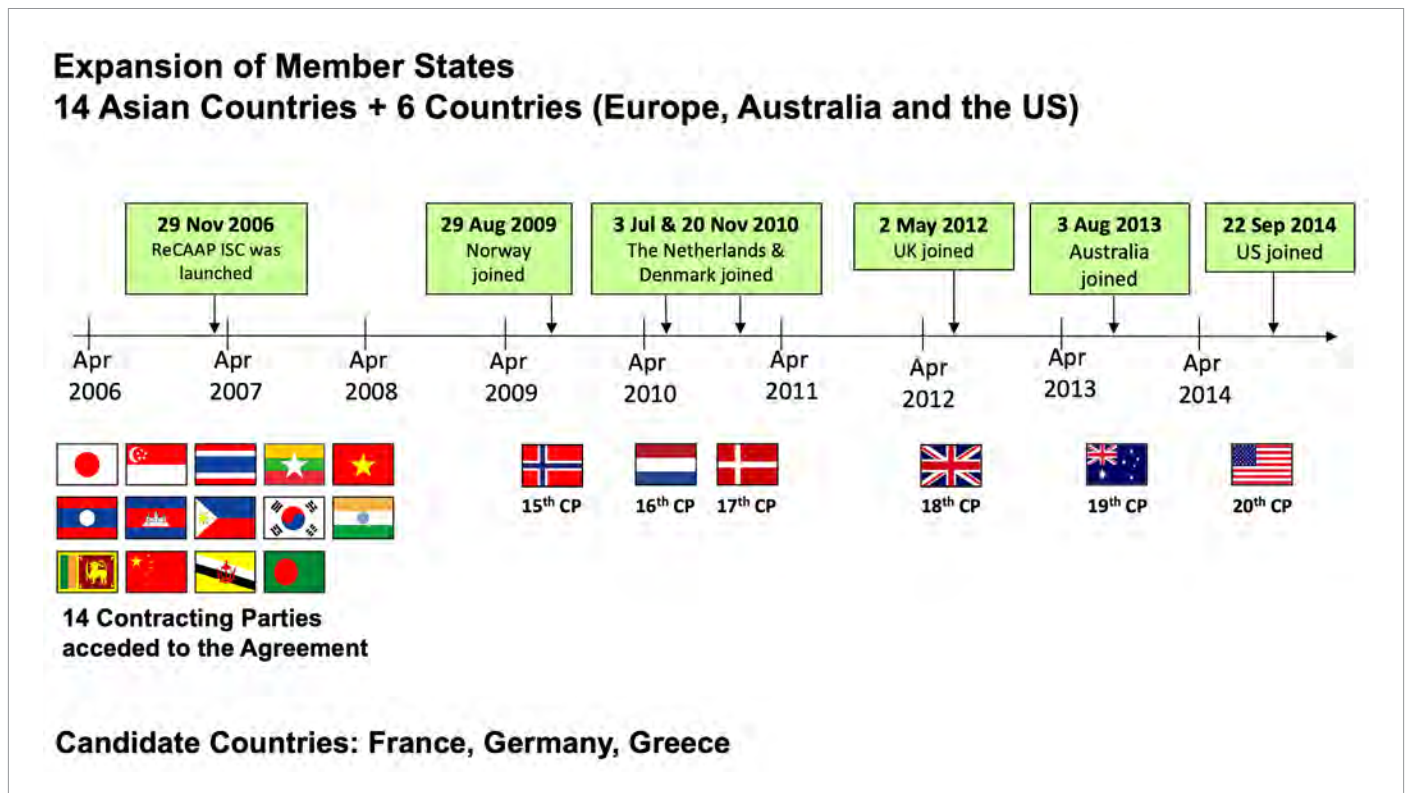
## 2. Expansion of Membership

The ReCAAP started in 2006 with 14 Contracting Parties from Asia, namely; Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam.

Currently, the ReCAAP has 20 Contracting Parties with 6 countries joining ReCAAP since 2009, namely; Norway, the Netherlands, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States.

Furthermore, France, Germany and Greece are taking respective procedures to join the ReCAAP.

The expansion of membership to include the countries outside Asia, particularly the major maritime nations, demonstrates that the ReCAAP is recognised by the international community as a relevant organisation of cooperation to address piracy and sea robbery in Asia. Diversified and wide range of expertise and experiences of the Member States also enriches the activities of the Centre.



### 3. Qualitative Analysis of Incidents

While the number of incidents is important, the nature of incidents is also pertinent for maritime risk assessment. From this viewpoint, the Centre has developed a qualitative classification of incidents to reflect the level of seriousness of each incident.

By creating a matrix which takes into account the violence factor and the economic loss, the Centre classifies the incidents into four categories (CAT1, CAT2, CAT3 and CAT4). This classification is unique to ReCAAP ISC.

Among all the incidents from 2007 to 2020, 5% of incidents were very serious incidents (CAT 1) and 50% were the thefts without violence (CAT 4).

The Centre's qualitative analysis has contributed to a more accurate understanding of the maritime situation in Asia.

- **Matrix-based Assessment on the Severity of Incidents**

Combination of 2 Factors: Heavier Weightage on Violence Factor

- **Violence Factor (V-factor)**
  - Type of weapon carried by pirates/robbers
  - Treatment of crew
  - Number of pirates/robbers involved
- **Economic Factor (E-factor)**
  - Type of stolen property

**Each Incident is Classified into 1 of 4 Categories**

- **Total Number of Actual Incidents for Each Category (2007-2020)**

- CAT 1:** 83 incidents (5%)
- CAT 2:** 345 incidents (23%)
- CAT 3:** 334 incidents (22%)
- CAT 4:** 772 incidents (50%)

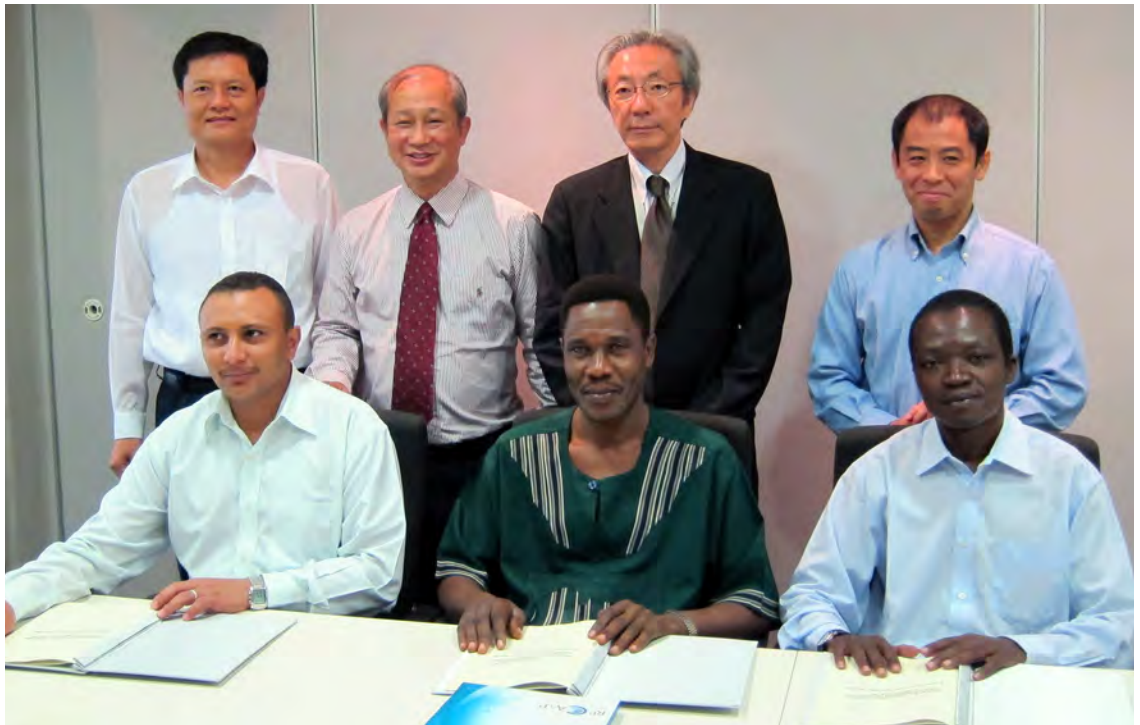
Category	Significance of Incident
CAT 1	Very Significant
CAT 2	Moderately Significant
CAT 3	Less Significant
CAT 4	Least Significant



## 4. Contribution to the Establishment of the Djibouti Code of Conduct

ReCAAP has been recognised as a successful model of regional cooperation in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships. The Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) in East Africa, established in January 2009, was modelled after ReCAAP.

The Centre has cooperated with the IMO to extend cooperation for the establishment of three Information Sharing Centres of DCoC and technical training of the staff of these centres.



Signing of SOP with three Regional ISCs of DCoC, 11 November 2011 (Singapore)

## 5. Wide Network of Cooperation

No single agency can address the crime of piracy and armed robbery against ships alone. Collective effort and shared responsibility among the concerned stakeholders are necessary and important towards the fight against this maritime crime. Over the past 15 years, the Centre has established an extensive network of partnership with international organisations, shipping associations and academia.

The Centre has signed MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with three international organisations such as IMO (International Maritime Organization), WMU (World Maritime University) and INTERPOL (International Criminal Police Organization).

It has signed MoU with four shipping associations such as ASA (Asian Shipowners' Association), BIMCO (Baltic and International Maritime Council), INTERTANKO (International Association of Independent Tanker Owners) and OCIMF (Oil Companies International Marine Forum).

The Centre has also signed SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) with IFC (Information Fusion Centre) in Singapore and three ISCs (Information Sharing Centres) of DCoC (Djibouti Code of Conduct).

The Centre is promoting working relations with these organisations, in such areas as sharing information and assessment of piracy situation, jointly organising conferences on maritime safety and security as well as developing the guides for the shipping industry.

The Centre is regularly participating in the IMO Council/Maritime Safety Committee meetings and shares the latest situation of piracy and sea robbery in Asia. The Centre is also invited to various international/regional meetings related with maritime safety and security such as HACGAM (Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting), CGGS (Coast Guards Global Summit), APHoMSA (Asia-Pacific Heads of Maritime Safety Agencies), Galle Dialogue, AMF (ASEAN Maritime Forum) etc., where the Centre shares updates on recent development and situations of piracy and armed robbery against ships.

# ReCAAP ISC Network / Connectivity



**Enhancing Regional Cooperation ....**



# Main Activities of ReCAAP ISC

# 1. Information Sharing

## 1. Basic Structure of Information Sharing

One of the key features of ReCAAP is information sharing through regional cooperation. During the last 15 years, the ReCAAP ISC (the Centre) has been making efforts to provide timely and accurate information on the incidents of piracy and sea robbery to the ReCAAP Contracting Parties and maritime community at large.

The main source of information is the Focal Points (FP) of 20 Contracting Parties who send the Incident Reports through the Information Network System (IFN). The IFN operates on a 24/7 web-based network system which links the Centre with 20 Focal Points. Incident Report sent by FP includes information of the incident such as date and time, location (longitude, latitude), number of perpetrators, type of weapons, treatment of crew, stolen items, description of incident, etc. The information contained in Incident Report is verified by the FP with the shipping company and/or ship master.

The Centre collects, collates and analyses the information of all the reported incidents. The Centre also evaluates each incident to determine its severity level. Each incident is evaluated based on the violence inflicted by the perpetrators onto the crew and the type of economic losses suffered by the ship. With these factors each incident is categorised into one of the four categories (refer to Page 55).

Since 2017, the Centre is using Data Analytics tool to make deeper analysis of the situation by identifying the correlations between various factors of the incidents as well as comparing with the patterns of past incidents. With the accumulation of data of past incidents, the Data Analytics can provide visible patterns and identify trend of incidents.

## 2. Dissemination of Information

The Centre has been also making efforts to disseminate the information of incidents quickly to a broad maritime community.

The Centre issues Warning and Incident Alert on serious incidents or a location of frequent incidents in order to advise the littoral States to take effective measures and the shipping industry to enhance vigilance and adopt preventive measures in these areas of concern. The Centre is trying to issue these alerts as timely as possible.

The Centre also issues periodic reports with statistics and analysis on a weekly/monthly/quarterly/half-yearly/annual basis in order to keep the stakeholders updated on the latest situation. The information of incidents in the weekly report is sent to the IMO to be included in its piracy and sea robbery database - Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS).

Over the last 15 years, the Centre has also expanded the tools for the dissemination of information. All the information is disseminated by e-mail to the relevant stakeholders and the same information is accessible on the Centre's Website ([www.recaap.org](http://www.recaap.org)), Mobile App and social media channels.



### 3. Trend of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (2007-2020)

Over the past 14 years of 2007-2020, 1,740 incidents in Asia were reported to the ReCAAP ISC. 87% of these incidents were armed robbery against ships in territorial waters of Coastal States, while 13% were piracy incidents at high seas.

The number of incidents in the last 14 years has declined compared to the period in the late 1990s and early 2000s when the growing trend was alarming (353 incidents in 2000). However, the number of incidents had fluctuated over the years with ups and downs of number of incidents in certain locations and certain types of incidents.

Most of the incidents in Asia were robberies and thefts of opportunistic nature, and usually they were not confrontational incidents (the crew were not harmed in 80% of the incidents).

However, there had been serious incidents reported in Asia throughout the 14-year period. These incidents were considered as being committed by organised criminal groups who were more violent. The serious incidents in the last 14 years were three types: (1) hijacking of tug boats and barges for resale, (2) theft of oil cargo from tankers (oil siphoning), and (3) abduction of crew for ransom.

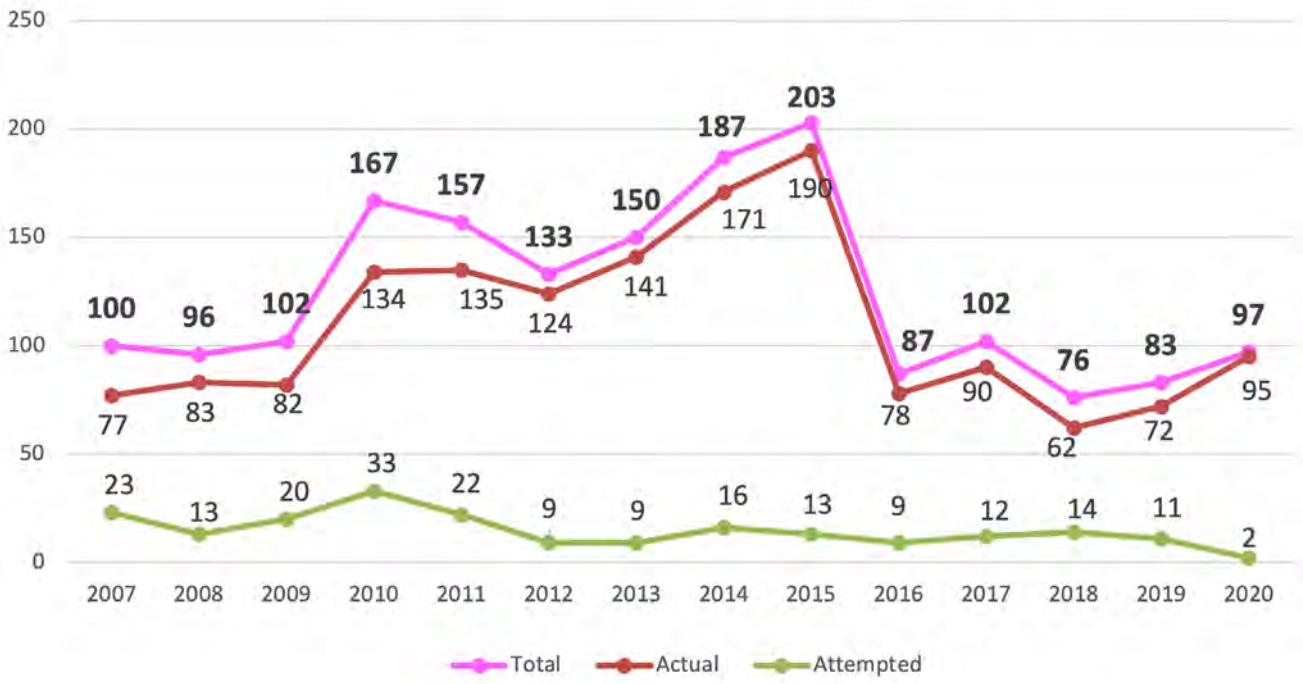
In the hijacking of tug boats (during 2009-2014), the perpetrators hijacked the tug boats and abandoned the crew in life rafts. The stolen tug boats and barges were renamed and sold in black markets. This type of incidents has not occurred since 2015, due to the timely intervention by the authorities.

In the oil siphoning incident (during 2011-2017), perpetrators hijacked tankers (<5,000 GT) loaded with oil cargo, tied up the crew and siphoned the oil cargo from tankers to another ships. The stolen oil products were sold in black markets. Oil siphoning incidents occurred mostly in the southern part of the South China Sea. This type of incident has not occurred since 2018; following the arrests of the perpetrators and masterminds.

In the abduction of crew incidents in the Sulu-Celebes Seas (since March 2016), the kidnappers were armed with firearms, kidnapped crew from ships and demanded ransom. The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), a terrorist group in Mindanao, claimed responsibility for these abductions. The number of the abduction incidents has decreased significantly over the years (from 18 incidents in 2016 to one incident in 2020). From 2016 to 2020, a total of 86 crew were abducted in 20 actual incidents. Except 11 crew who were killed or died, all the abducted crew are already released/rescued. However, the risk of the abduction of crew still remains in the area.



### Number of Incidents in Asia (2007-2020)



## 2. Capacity Building

Since the FPs of ReCAAP Contracting Parties are the backbone of timely and accurate information sharing, the Centre has, over the past 15 years, continuously conducted and intensified the capacity building activities for the FPs in order to enhance their capabilities and strengthen their network.

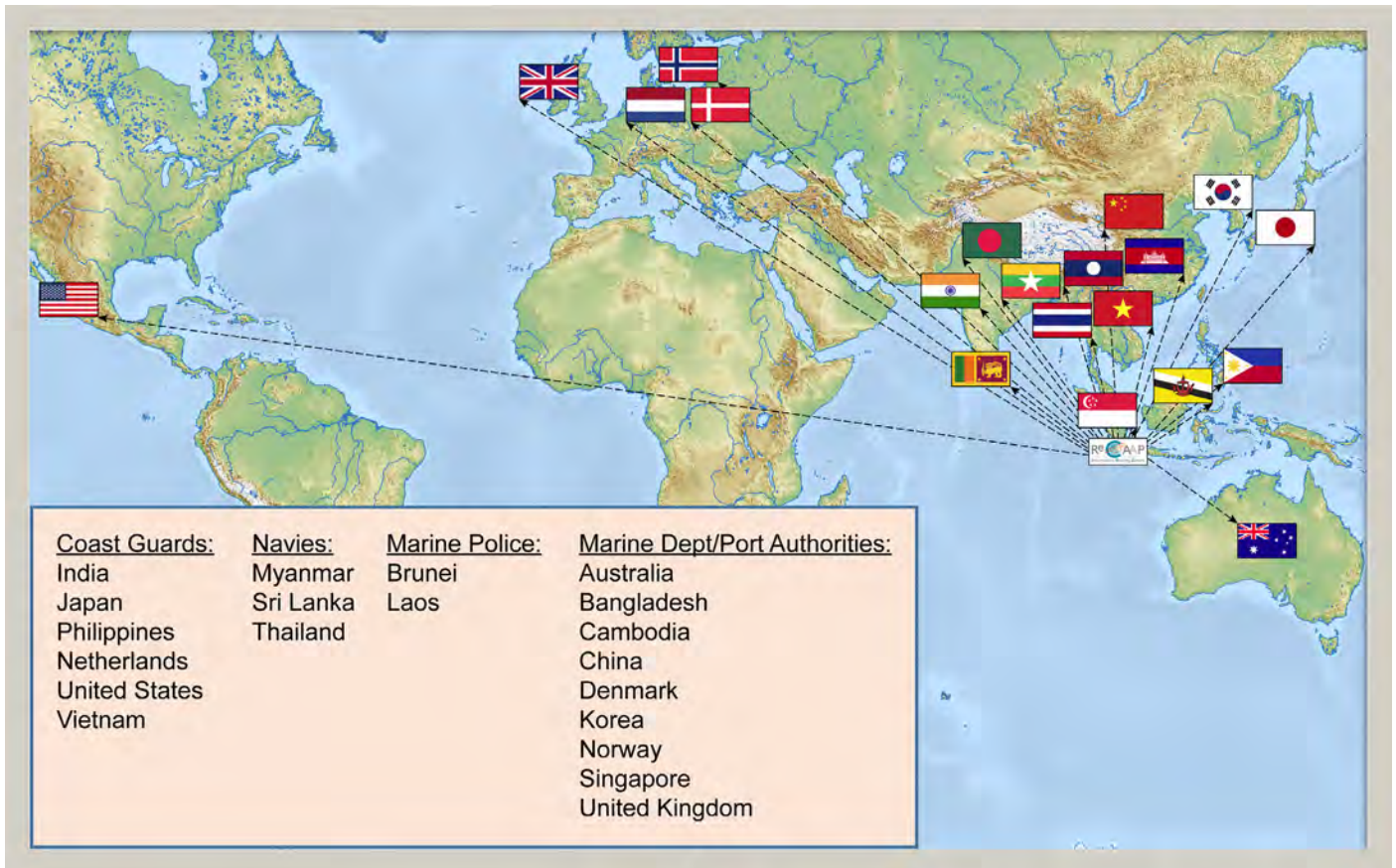
The objectives of capacity building activities are; (1) to share the updated situation of piracy and sea robbery and areas of concern, (2) to improve the role of FP in incident reporting, inter-agency coordination and engagement with shipping industry, (3) to deepen knowledge on subjects such as UNCLOS, emerging maritime threats, etc.

FPs are designated from various agencies, such as coast guard, navy, marine police, maritime and port authorities. The collective activities of capacity building strengthens the solidarity and network of FPs, by deepening mutual understanding and building confidence among them.

The Centre organises various capacity building activities such as “Capacity Building Workshop”, “Capacity Building Senior Officers’ Meeting”, Cluster Meetings and operational visits to FPs. In order to meet the different needs of FPs, the Centre has introduced, since 2018, new programmes such as “Capacity Building Executive Programme” and “FP Training Programme”.

Like many organisations around the world, the activities of the ReCAAP ISC were severely disrupted by the pandemic since 2020. During such unprecedented times, ReCAAP ISC has continued its capacity building activities using virtual application. These intensive efforts of ReCAAP ISC renewed the confidence of FPs to have a better understanding of their roles in the changing maritime domain and nurture their skills to assume operational responsibilities.

## Network of Focal Points



## 3. Cooperative Arrangements

### 1. Partner Organisations

The Centre is actively engaging its partner organisations and maritime community at large. As part of cooperative arrangements, the Centre organises two annual conferences with partner organisations. One is the “Nautical Forum” and the other is “Piracy and Sea Robbery Conference”.

The Centre also undertakes joint projects such as producing guidebooks for the shipping industry.

### 2. Tangible Products

#### a. Joint Organisation of Conferences

The Centre organises its annual Nautical Forum in January with the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) and Singapore Shipping Association (SSA).

The Centre also organises annually the Piracy and Sea Robbery Conference jointly with BIMCO, INTERTANKO and S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), during the Singapore Maritime Week.

These conferences provide the Centre with valuable opportunity to engage with the maritime community, particularly the shipping industry, in order to share information on updated situation and exchange views on challenges and areas of cooperation.

#### b. Regional and Thematic Guides

Against the occurrence of different types of serious incidents, the Centre has worked with the stakeholders concerned to produce four Guides to advise the shipping industry how to address these crimes.

In 2013, the Centre produced the ‘Tug Boats and Barges Guide Against Piracy and Sea Robbery’, when the incidents of hijacking of tug boats and barges occurred since 2009.

In 2015, the ‘Guide for Tankers Operating in Asia Against Piracy and Armed Robbery Involving Oil Cargo Theft’ was produced. Since 2011, many incidents of hijacking of tankers loaded with oil cargo (oil siphoning incidents) occurred.

There was a request from the shipping industry for a general guidebook for Asia to address piracy and sea robbery. In 2016, ‘Regional Guide to Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia’ was produced to address all types of incidents.

With the escalation of the abduction of crew incidents (kidnap for ransom) in the Sulu-Celebes Seas since 2016, the Centre produced the ‘Guidance on Abduction of Crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and Waters off Eastern Sabah’ in 2019.

All the Guides contain the information on the modus operandi of perpetrators, measures to be taken by ships including risk assessment, ship protection measures and reporting, as well as the contact details of the operation centres of the littoral States.



## 4. Corporate Communication and Profiling

### 1. Blueprint for Profiling and Branding of ReCAAP ISC

The 11<sup>th</sup> Governing Council Meeting of the ReCAAP ISC (March 2017) adopted the Roadmap for the Future of ReCAAP ISC and the Action Plan, which included among others, the 'Blueprint for the Profiling and Branding of ReCAAP ISC'. In August 2017, the Profiling and Branding Blueprint, which emphasises expanding into digital tools of communication, was produced and implemented immediately.

### 2. Tools of Communication

The Centre is using all the communication channels at its disposal, and investing in regular upgrading of its website and mobile app as well as leveraging on social media. Through these tools, the Centre is making efforts to enlarge the reach of its information so that the maritime community has more accurate and nuanced understanding of the maritime situation in Asia.

The Executive Director also holds twice-yearly media briefings to engage and inform the regional media based in Singapore on the latest situation of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia.

These efforts have resulted in extensive amplification of the Centre's activities on both traditional and social media.

### 3. Results

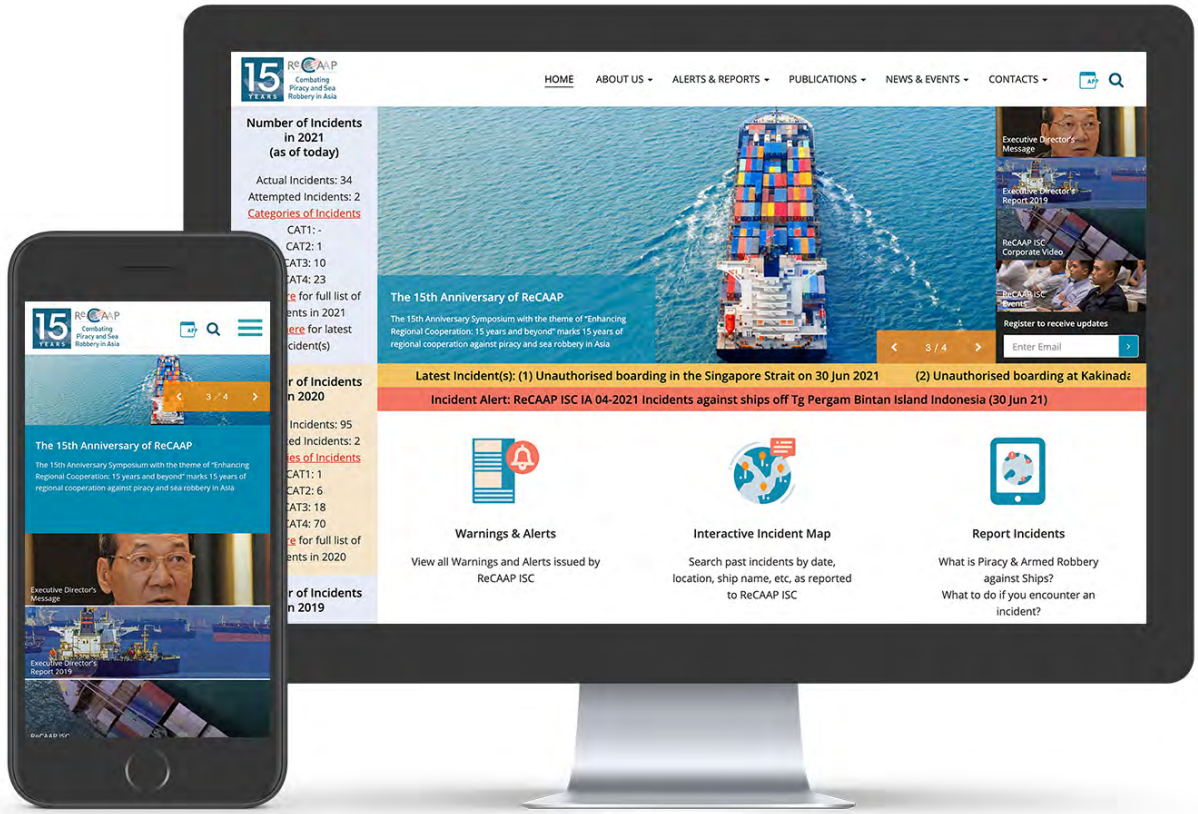
Today, the reports and activities of the Centre are widely cited, and ReCAAP ISC is seen as an authoritative voice on the situation of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia.

The average number of unique visitors to the ReCAAP ISC public website ([www.recaap.org](http://www.recaap.org)) increased to 2,626 per month in 2020, compared to 1,900 per month in 2019. This was the highest in the Centre's history.

On Google, the Centre's public website now consistently ranks within the top five organic search results for important keywords associated with ReCAAP's mission.

And despite 2020 being dominated by COVID-19 related news even in the shipping industry, the Centre earned a total of 2,012 media mentions on traditional media in 2020, compared to 1,524 in 2019.

The Centre will continue to invest in building its capability and capacity to communicate and profile its work to all its stakeholders.



Web and mobile access for the latest information on piracy and armed robbery against ships, enabling the maritime community to carry out their respective risk assessment



Capacity Building Workshop, 19-20 June 2019, India



Capacity Building Senior Officers' Meeting, 12-15 November 2018, Korea



Capacity Building Senior Officers' Meeting, 10-12 December 2019, Vietnam





Capacity Building Executive Programme, May 2018, Japan



Capacity Building Executive Programme, May 2018, Japan



Capacity Building Executive Programme, September 2019, Singapore



Cluster Meeting, 18-19 December 2019, the Philippines



Focal Point Training Programme, 18-19 January 2019, Singapore



Nautical Forum, 16 January 2018, Singapore



Piracy and Sea Robbery Conference, 12 June 2018, Hong Kong, China



Piracy and Sea Robbery Conference, 9 April 2019, Singapore



ReCAAP ISC - RSIS Maritime Roundtable, 25 April 2018, Singapore



Visit of Singapore's Minister for Transport, 21 April 2016



Visit of Minister of Oceans and Fisheries of Korea, 15 December 2017



Visit of Japanese Minister of State for Ocean Policy, 8 May 2019



Visit of Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, 9 May 2019



Visit of Secretary-General of IMO, 29 August 2016



Visit of Managing Director of OCIMF, 1 November 2019



Visit of Marine Director of INTERTANKO, 14 November 2019



Signing of MoU with OCIMF, 25 July 2017, London, UK



Signing of MoU with WMU, 2 July 2018, London, UK

# 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium

To mark the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the ReCAAP ISC organised a virtual Symposium on 18 March 2021 with the participation of the Governors, Focal Points of the ReCAAP ISC, international and regional organisations, shipping associations /companies and research institutes. The summary of the Symposium is as below. An integral video recording is posted at [www.recaap.org/recaap15](http://www.recaap.org/recaap15)



## Opening Remarks

The Chairperson commended ReCAAP ISC for making utmost efforts to contribute in addressing the situation of piracy and sea robbery in Asia since its inception in 2006 within the legal framework of ReCAAP Agreement.

The role of ReCAAP in promoting the safe maritime transport in Asia has evolved to become more prevalent than ever, even in this time of pandemic.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary offers ReCAAP and the stakeholders a timely opportunity to reflect on the journey we have collectively taken, to confirm the commitment to our shared mission and look ahead at the future of ReCAAP to remain relevant amid changing external environment. In this regard, he highly appreciated the Minister for Transport of Singapore, the Secretary-General of the IMO, the Contracting Parties of ReCAAP and the partners for sharing their invaluable perspectives at the symposium. On that note, he declared the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium open.



**ADM George V. Ursabia, Jr.**

*Chairperson of the ReCAAP ISC  
Governing Council*

*Governor from the Philippines  
Commandant, Philippine Coast Guard*



# Welcome Address

Singapore's Minister for Transport began his speech by highlighting that more than 80% of world merchandise trade by volume is carried by sea. While COVID-19 has caused upheavals in seaborne trade, it has also accentuated the importance of global shipping to ensure that people around the world have access to essential goods - food, energy, and medical supplies.

He also underscored the importance of Asia to seaborne trade. As a region, it is the largest end market of the world and the largest factory of the world. Today, the region remains the fastest growing part of the world, with a rising middle class.

In this web of sea lanes that make seaborne trade possible, the Straits of Malacca and Singapore stand out. For centuries, the Straits have been a major artery of free trade that provides passage to one-third of global container trade and about one quarter of global oil trade.

He posed a question of how we can protect the Straits of Malacca and Singapore as global commons. There are two important aspects. First, UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) guarantees freedom of navigation through the Straits.

Second, the global community needs to exercise collective responsibility, and work together to keep the Straits safe. Piracy has a long history in Asia. In more recent times, incidents of piracy and sea robbery in the



**H.E. Mr. Ong Ye Kung**  
*Minister for Transport*  
*Republic of Singapore*

Strait of Malacca in the early 2000s led to it being declared a “war risk” area by the Lloyds Joint War Committee. A major aspect of safe navigation along the Straits of Malacca and Singapore is to protect our seafarers from the perennial threat of piracy and sea robberies.

The ReCAAP entered into force in 2006 as the first regional government-to-government initiative, and a platform for international cooperation against a transboundary problem. ReCAAP's membership started with 14 Contracting Parties, which has grown to 20 today, including partners from Europe and the America. He looked forward to welcoming more partners to join ReCAAP.

The ReCAAP ISC was set up in Singapore in November 2006. Since then, it has established itself as a vital part of the regional anti-piracy architecture, through information sharing, capacity building, and cooperative arrangements. An example of the ISC's good

work was how it tackled the problem of oil cargo thefts. When the Centre observed an increase in incidents of oil cargo theft a few years ago, it worked with the industry, the Information Fusion Centre established by the Republic of Singapore Navy, and the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at NTU to produce a guide in 2015 for shipowners and crew of tankers transiting through this region. The guide provided practical information, such as key risks to be mindful, preventive measures to adopt, and also reporting channel. Such efforts, together with increased enforcement, contributed to the subsequent decline in oil cargo thefts from tankers.

In capacity building, the Centre adapted quickly during the pandemic to ensure that officials from ReCAAP's Contracting Parties could continue to attend virtual training sessions and lectures. Through technology, the Centre also continued its engagements with the shipping industry. More than 150 officials and shipping industry representatives participated in the Centre's events and workshops virtually last year.

In the area of international cooperation, the ReCAAP model has been emulated by the IMO in its formulation of the Djibouti Code of Conduct in 2009. Through these efforts, the ReCAAP ISC has created a community of practitioners coming from shipping lines, academia, and government agencies, fostering trust, understanding and collaboration between them.

As a major transshipment hub port serving the region and the world, Singapore is committed to doing its part in strengthening the role and effectiveness of the ReCAAP ISC, by hosting it since 15 years ago and devoting significant

resources towards its operations over the years.

Singapore is honoured to have played an active part in the ISC's development over the years and will continue to work with the Contracting Parties of ReCAAP in giving the Centre our strongest support. Together with the able leadership of the ReCAAP ISC team, the Minister was confident that the Centre would continue to grow from strength to strength.

## Keynote Address (Video Message)

The Secretary-General expressed that the Covid-19 pandemic still impacts the world and the maritime sector in particular. But no matter how difficult the circumstances are, the world depends on safe, secure and efficient international shipping. The predicament of many seafarers who were stranded on ships or unable to join ships was highlighted by him. He urged all IMO States to take effective actions to facilitate the ship crew change in line with the Resolution adopted in December 2020 by the UN General Assembly which calls for the urgent designation of seafarers as core workers providing essential services.

In summer 2019, he had the pleasure of visiting ReCAAP ISC for the second time. IMO remains committed to being a strong partner organisation to ReCAAP to enhance regional cooperation through information sharing and capacity building. Since 2009, ReCAAP ISC has been sharing details of incidents reported with the IMO on a weekly basis which are incorporated into IMO's global database and annual reports. Since information sharing is one of the most important pillars to address piracy and armed robbery, he expressed appreciation for ReCAAP's continued support to IMO.

IMO has been actively engaged in addressing piracy issue since 1983. This led to the collection of publication and reports on acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships as well as the development of an accomplished range of guidance on prevention, repression



**Mr Kitack Lim**  
*Secretary-General*  
*International Maritime Organization*

and investigation of piracy and armed robbery. This includes the best management practice developed by the industry to outline appropriate procedures to be employed when responding to actual piracy and armed robbery against ships in specific regions which the IMO supports.

One of the key challenges in the Gulf of Guinea is under-reporting of incidents, sometimes estimated to be as high as 60-70%. This leads to ineffective analysis and understanding of the situations. This is why ReCAAP is encouraged to strengthen its efforts and capacity building activities to help and share its experiences and achievements with other regions. The Secretary-General encouraged ReCAAP to share what effective regional collaboration can achieve to address most long-lasting but also emerging security threat.

## “ReCAAP: The First 15 Years & the Way Forward”

Mr Wajima stated that since Japan has achieved economic growth through maritime trade, Japan considered it essential to realise free, open and stable seas upheld by a maritime order. Japan had proposed the drafting of an anti-piracy regional cooperation agreement at the ASEAN+3 Summit in 2001. The Agreement was eventually finalised as ReCAAP in 2004 and the Information Sharing Centre was established in Singapore in 2006. Since its very beginning, Japan has been supporting activities of the Centre by sending Executive Directors and other staff as well as providing financial contributions to its capacity building activities.

With regard to the contribution to Southeast Asian countries, Japan has provided patrol vessels and maritime safety equipment to maritime law enforcement agencies. Japan has also shared its knowledge and expertise with officials of maritime law enforcement agencies of Southeast Asian countries.

Japan’s vision is to maintain and strengthen the Indo-Pacific region’s free and open maritime order as international public goods, so as to bring stability and prosperity to all the countries in the Indo-Pacific region without discrimination. In order to promote this vision in practice, Japan is advancing three pillars: firstly, the promotion and establishment of fundamental principles such as the rule of law, freedom of navigation and free trade. Secondly, the pursuit of economic prosperity through enhancing connectivity including quality infrastructure development



**Mr. Wajima Takehiko**

*Acting Governor from Japan to ReCAAP ISC  
Governing Council*

*Director, Space and Maritime Security  
Policy Division*

*Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan*

in accordance with international standards. Thirdly, initiatives for ensuring peace and stability that include assistance for capacity building on maritime law enforcement, anti-piracy measures, disaster risk reduction and non-proliferation.

In recent years, under the leadership of Executive Director, Ambassador Kuroki, the ReCAAP ISC has made significant progress in improving timely and accurate information sharing as well as enhancing the partnership with Contracting Parties, engagement with maritime community and dissemination of information. With these achievements, the ReCAAP ISC is internationally acclaimed as a successful model of regional cooperation.

Accurate and timely information sharing greatly contributes to prompt actions by

coastal States and ensuring safe navigation of vessels. In recent years, higher quality information has been provided by analysing the accumulated data of past incidents to identify the trends. These efforts are highly appreciated. Capacity building activities have also contributed to improving participating countries' capability of dealing with incidents. Through these activities, confidence building and enhancement of partnership among Contracting Parties and with other countries are also promoted.

The Centre is now addressing emerging issues such as maritime cyber security and maritime terrorism by raising awareness and collecting and analysing information including the nexus of these crimes with piracy and sea robbery.

We appreciate the Centre's efforts and hope that it could continue to develop further as a relevant organisation in the field of maritime security by adjusting itself to the new era. On the other hand, to respond to the changing circumstances of maritime security in Asia, the ReCAAP ISC needs to evolve further as relevant organisation with the accession of new member countries, competent in maritime security.

All the stakeholders are required to share respective responsibility and play their roles. Japan will continue to take a leading role in stabilising Asian seas in cooperation with ReCAAP ISC and all the countries concerned.

## “The Relevance of ReCAAP to the Maritime Community: Perspective of India”

In the late 90s, Southeast Asia gained notoriety as a piracy hotspot, accounting for more than half of the annual recorded piracy incidents worldwide. Of the 469 globally reported attacks in 2000, 242 occurred in Southeast Asia. However, a remarkable downward trend was observed when countries in the region came together and started a collaborative framework in 2006 to combat the menace of piracy and armed robbery at sea.

ReCAAP was the first regional government-to-government agreement to combat piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia. The Agreement represented a transition from primarily local to increasingly regional efforts to address these issues according primacy to national sovereignty while facilitating cooperation between the Contracting Parties.

With the setting up of the Information Sharing Centre of ReCAAP in 2006, it had a profound impact on combating piracy and armed robbery through information sharing, capacity building and cooperative frameworks. It facilitated operational linkages amongst the national Focal Points for expeditious information sharing and response. In recognition of its success, it was declared a Centre of Excellence for Information Sharing in 2018.

In just 15 years, ReCAAP ISC has evolved and forged cooperative arrangements with the shipping industry, academia and other international maritime bodies. It has published numerous periodical updates, alerts, special



**IG K R Suresh, PTM, TM**

*Dy Director General  
(Operations & Coastal Security)  
Indian Coast Guard*

reports and guidebooks to share best practices, analysis and recommendations with the maritime industry, regional authorities and stakeholders. The framework was also emulated in the establishment of the Djibouti Code of Conduct. It has also seen its membership growing which is reflective of ReCAAP's credibility & growing relevance to the international maritime community.

It was the apprehension of hijacked vessel Alondra Rainbow by the Indian Coast Guard in 1999 which kick-started the process of formation of regional cooperative arrangements like HACGAM (Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting) and ReCAAP.

India was the 10<sup>th</sup> Contracting Party to ratify ReCAAP in June 2006 which enabled the Agreement to come into force and has been steadfast in supporting ReCAAP ISC since its formative years, holding the Vice Chairman,

contributing financially seconding ICG Officer to the Centre and hosting several Capacity Building events in 2011, 2017 and 2019.

We jointly hosted the International seminar on Safe and Secure Seas at Goa in February 2017 to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ReCAAP and 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Indian Coast Guard.

Their honourable Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi has outlined the vision of SAGAR which guides India's maritime cooperative engagements. SAGAR means ocean in Hindi and stands for security and growth for all in the region. Through SAGAR, India seeks to deepen economic cooperation, strengthen capacity and capabilities of maritime neighbours, seek collective actions and cooperation for peace, safety and security and enhance prospects of sustainable development for all in the region. India remains committed to curb incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in its area of responsibility. As the principal maritime law enforcement agency in India, Indian Coast Guard is undertaking round-the-clock surveillance of maritime zones to ensure the safety and security of mariners.

This 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ReCAAP bears testimony to the commitment of the twenty Contracting Parties, the shipping industry and other stakeholders. I am sanguine that ReCAAP ISC will continue to shore up its reputation, stature and reliability among the seafaring community and keep the seas and the region safe and secure through collaborative efforts. India remains proud of its association with ReCAAP ISC and reiterates its commitment and resolve towards supporting all endeavours of ReCAAP ISC.

## “15 Years’ Analysis of Piracy & Sea Robbery Incidents in Asia”

Executive Director shared the 15 Years’ Analysis of Piracy and Sea Robbery Incidents in Asia and achievements of ReCAAP, consisting of four points: (1) Long-term trend of Incidents in Asia (1991-2020), (2) Incident Types in Asia (2007-2020), (3) Achievements of ReCAAP, and (4) The Way Forward.

As a long-term trend of incidents in Asia, he compared the period of 15 years before and after the establishment of ReCAAP in 2006. Significant increase of incidents in the late 1990s and early 2000s, more than 200 incidents per year, prompted the Asian countries to make a legal framework for regional cooperation—ReCAAP. The long-term trend shows that, after the establishment of ReCAAP, the number of incidents has become lower.

Regarding the incident types in Asia, the Centre has identified some general patterns, based on the analysis of 1,740 incidents reported in the past 14 years. 87% of incidents were armed robbery against ships against 13% of piracy at high seas. Majority of the incidents involved small groups of one to six perpetrators. In terms of weapons, perpetrators were armed with guns and knives in 10% of the incidents, and with knives or machetes in 33% of the incidents. The crew members were not harmed in 80% of the incidents. Nothing was stolen in 33% of the incidents, otherwise, ship stores were mostly stolen items. 82% of the incidents occurred during hours of darkness.



**Mr. Masafumi Kuroki**

*Executive Director, ReCAAP ISC*

Serious incidents are those committed by organised criminal groups who do not hesitate to harm the group. Since 2007, three types of serious incidents have occurred in Asia, such as hijacking of tug boats (13 incidents from 2009 to 2014), theft of oil cargo from tankers (41 incidents from 2011 to 2017) and abduction of crew for ransom (20 incidents since 2016). Particularly, abduction of crew for ransom occurred in the Sulu-Celebes Seas in the Philippines, claimed by the Abu Sayyaf Group, the terrorist group in Mindanao. They were armed with heavy weapons, kidnapped crew from ships and claimed ransom. Since 2016, a total of 86 crew were abducted in 20 actual incidents.

### **Achievements of ReCAAP**

With 15 years of operation, ReCAAP has made steady progress and it is considered a



successful model of regional cooperation. He listed five main achievements.

1. Establishment of an effective information sharing mechanism
2. Expansion of ReCAAP Member States
3. Qualitative analysis of incidents
4. Cooperation for the establishment of Djibouti Code of Conduct
5. Wide network of cooperation with international and regional organisations as well as the shipping industry

### **The Way Forward**

Combating piracy and sea robbery should remain a priority task of maritime nations.

ReCAAP should sustain its efforts to strengthen the information sharing mechanism, continue capacity building activities for Focal Points, keep raising awareness of maritime community and respond quickly to new type of incidents.

Besides, there must be shared responsibility and collective efforts of the coastal States, shipping industry and regional and international organisations.

## “ReCAAP & the Fight against Piracy and Sea Robbery: Industry’s Perspective”

Mr Phoon congratulated ReCAAP for its 15 years of achievements. He highlighted the complexities and diversities of the shipping industry which have many types of vessels carrying different goods. Ships around the world, offers some level of reliability and consistency on how cargo is transported to destinations. There are many entities within the shipping community with vast interests as well as interactions, and also the relationships between stakeholders so that the right party can be engaged. Therefore, if a ship is held, detained or delayed by piracy or hijacking, that would kick-off a chain of events as well as complexities and contact people to get a complete picture of what is at stake in order to address the situation. The shipping industry appreciates the services of organisations that can help them in providing analysis of incidents, situational awareness and an appreciation of what may occur in certain high-risk areas.

For the shipping industry, he sees three major enablers that exist in order to assist the shipping industry in a critical operation at sea – safety, security and environment. For the safety of ships and their crew, tasks such as border control, search and rescue, safe navigational aids and vessel management systems are vital.

In security, data analytics and assessment on piracy in high-risk areas, anti-piracy measures such as patrols, the combined task force not only serve to prevent piracy attacks but also



**Mr. Michael Phoon**

*Secretary-General  
Federation of ASEAN Shipowners  
Association (FASA)*

provide a secure and safe environment for ships to sail unhindered by any unfriendly forces or aggressors. The third enabler, environment. Shipping industry upholds environmental protection and it has always been self-regulating to ensure that they don't pollute the very space that they all work in.

COVID-19 has certainly presented an increase in incidence of boarding of ships with intent to rob, steal or to take control of a vessel. Some of these incidents can be due to economic pressures with certain sectors of the population left in desperation. There has been news about thefts on board slow-moving vessels in the Strait of Singapore. While it may appear to be minor as in ReCAAP's classification of CAT 4 which is the least severe, but if left unchecked, perpetrators will feel emboldened to risk more and do more such incidents. It may give rise to a bigger problem if left unaddressed.

Recent incidents especially off the West coast of Africa again reminded the shipping industry that piracy is still very much alive. They are also reminders of the possible violence with which piracy attacks are conducted. They represent the dangers seafarers are facing as well as significant losses that may occur both in terms of human life and the property of the shipowners. As the IMO Secretary-General Mr Kitack Lim has said, the threat posed by piracy and armed robbery against ships has been on IMO's agenda since the 1980s till today. The focused areas have been South China Sea, Straits of Malacca and Singapore, more recently, in the African region and the wider Indian Ocean.

To the shipping industry, entities such as ReCAAP plays an important role to highlight worrying trends that threaten global trade and advise shipping operators to be aware as they plan their journey crossing over high-risk areas. Every incident, no matter how small it is, means that, if left unchecked, it can lead to bolder and more aggressive acts directed at shipping. To every nation with seaports and territorial waters, the industry calls for more measures to address thefts and robberies that occur in their waters. Vessels and crew need a safe harbour when they call to port. Vessels and crew also need to know they can navigate safely when they are delivering cargo to support our economies.

## Panel Discussion on “The Future of ReCAAP”

### Moderator:

Professor Max Mejia, World Maritime University

### Panellists:

- Mr. Gaute Sivertsen, Governor from Norway
- Ms. Quah Ley Hoon, Governor from Singapore
- Ms. Katharina Stanzel, Managing Director, INTERTANKO
- Professor Kentaro Furuya, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), Japan

The moderator, Professor Max Mejia opened the panel discussion with his sincerest congratulations on the auspicious occasion of ReCAAP’s 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and warmly greeted the governments of the ReCAAP Contracting Parties, the Chairperson, and Governors of the ReCAAP ISC Governing Council, and the Executive Director and staff of the ReCAAP ISC.

After having introduced each panellist, the moderator raised several questions regarding the assessment of each panellist on the achievements of ReCAAP and the panellists’ views and expectations on the future activities of ReCAAP.



### Question by the Moderator:

*What has ReCAAP meant for you and your organisation over the years?*

**Mr Sivertsen:** Norway, the first non-Asian member of the agreement became the 15<sup>th</sup> Contracting Party to ReCAAP on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2009. Though geographically located outside of Asia, we have a clear interest in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia because of a significant number of Norwegian ships trading in Asia. In the years leading up to the establishment of ReCAAP ISC, the situation of piracy and armed robbery in Asia was a serious concern to the States. We believe that the establishment of ReCAAP ISC was a turning point that has provided a platform for cooperation and information sharing between States. It also provides States and industry with a clear system of reporting incidents. The dissemination of information with its very high-quality analysis provide States and industry with a better understanding of the situation and allow them a more targeted approach to the problems. A very important factor of the ReCAAP membership is

that it has a network of Focal Points to assist States and the industry in the event of attacks. This is especially important for States located outside of the region like Norway and it sums up the main interest we had in the ReCAAP Agreement initially.

**Moderator:** The international character of shipping means maritime security concerns in one region become a concern for countries outside the region as well.

**Ms Quah Ley Hoon:** ReCAAP for Singapore and for myself holds a very special position as an international organisation that is hosted by Singapore. Given the importance of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore for the transportation of containers and energy, Singapore has always been a very firm believer in the ReCAAP that it plays a very critical role to ensure safe navigation in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. It was a hard work to draft, finalise and adopt the ReCAAP Agreement, creating this first inter-governmental agreement to combat piracy and sea robbery. When it was time to implement and put ReCAAP into action, Singapore came forward with significant resources and financial support, and hosted ISC for the past 15 years. On the personal front, for the past two or three years, I have also witnessed and appreciated ReCAAP's strength as a unique regional architecture with diverse membership. Now the membership is not just regional but members are from all around the world. They are represented by various and varied agencies and ministries. These include coast guards, navies, maritime authorities, transport ministries, foreign affairs ministries. For the past years when we have our networking sessions, we are able to harness our different capabilities and mandate, come together and share our knowledge, expertise and collective commitment to keep our regional waters safe. As part of a larger ReCAAP community, we take pride in what ReCAAP has grown in the last 15 years. It is now a global collaboration through information sharing and capacity building with the countries from beyond Asia, adding the richness of their experiences. I believe ReCAAP has proven its value to the maritime community through its active engagement and understanding the needs of the industry. Our industry players have also appreciated the regular interaction with ReCAAP ISC. ReCAAP ISC is the go-to resource now for reliable information. I look forward to more and more 15 years of ReCAAP in the coming years.

**Ms. Katharina Stanzel:** From the perspective of INTERTANKO and their shipowner members, the few headlines of important issues that surround ReCAAP is that it is our single point of contact with a large multi-agency alliance that is dedicated to tackling piracy and armed robbery. That is quite a unique thing and it is incredibly important. It is a trusted entity we can come to and that is not just when things happen, but also when we have concerns about how the industry can work with the government agencies and other entities because the multi-agency nature of what is behind ReCAAP is really crucial in this whole achievement. It is a true example of coordinated action which is also really important when time is of essence and when lives are potentially at risk. This is something that we often forget. Being boarded, whether it is by a pirate or just somebody trying to get a paint, it is something personal to our seafarers and that is why it is important to have quick and strong support. We have seen the impressive track record of ReCAAP on what they have achieved in the last 15 years. It is an example to the rest of the world. As a global industry, we operate across boundaries. So transboundary problems such as piracy require transboundary solutions as well. A regional cooperation agreement such as ReCAAP is the only way of tackling that.

**Professor Kentaro Furuya:** ReCAAP and Japan Coast Guard (JCG) have maintained close ties from the very beginning. In April 2000, JCG hosted a regional conference on combating piracy and armed robbery against ships in Tokyo. In 2001, the Koizumi administration proposed to establish a legal framework to promote further regional cooperation. The discussions on this issue continued in subsequent expert meetings and the concept of the ReCAAP was developed and finalised in 2004. After the establishment of ReCAAP ISC, JCG despatched a secondee officer to the ISC. Besides, the JCG has accepted numerous seminars such as capacity building programmes and invited ReCAAP ISC to join the exercises planned by JCG. My institutions, JCG Academy and GRIPS, also invites officers of ReCAAP every year to deliver lectures concerning the role of ReCAAP in Asia and comprehensive analysis on the piracy and armed robbery in Asia to the students of maritime safety and security policy programme from Asia. This lecture has become a pertinent part of the programme since the students have a precious opportunity to experience international cooperation in combating piracy and armed robbery. Besides, the students have a chance to deepen understanding of ReCAAP which will support the future collaboration among the respective countries and ReCAAP.

**Moderator:** I share what ReCAAP has meant for my organisation. The World Maritime University has over the years benefited from a long-standing partnership with ReCAAP ISC which was officially forged through a memorandum of understanding. ReCAAP ISC has been providing lectures to our students of WMU. Our close relationship with ReCAAP ISC means that our students receive information on lessons learnt and best practices.

#### **Question by the Moderator:**

*How do you see or would like to see ReCAAP in the future? Can I ask the view of each panellist?*

**Mr Sivertsen:** We would like ReCAAP to continue the way it has been operating as a platform for collaboration and discussions and that all States listed in Article 18 of the Agreement to join ReCAAP in order to ensure that all of the littoral States join in this common objective as the number one on our wish list. It is imperative for the success of ReCAAP. In addition, we believe that ReCAAP should remain open to States outside of the region too as long as they would like to contribute to the objectives of ReCAAP.

**Ms Quah:** To build on what the Norwegian Governor said, I would suggest to further build on its DNA. D means Data; N means Network; A means Analysis.

**Data:** ReCAAP ISC has accumulated data of incidents over the past 15 years and there's a wealth of information there. There is a need to continue a deeper analysis of these data of incidents by using data analytics. With predictive analysis, we can all be more vigilant in terms of what time, which area, which zone, it will be very helpful for the industry.

**Network:** It is hoped that ReCAAP will continue to build on its network of collaboration and expand

it further. First, more new members to join us, second, the Focal Points to continue its capacity building to build up the monitoring network, third, linking up with port authorities and law enforcement agencies in order to help reduce the incidents, and, fourth, networking with academics and institutions who have expertise area to complement ReCAAP ISC.

**Analysis:** Beyond information sharing and data analysis, ReCAAP ISC can explore an analysis on, for example, the reasons and the root causes of piracy and armed robbery. It requires to work alongside stakeholders to address the deeper and more complex root causes on land. There are several institutions like the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), the Centre for International Law (CIL) and institutions in other countries which could come work together.

These are the three suggestions and aspirations for ReCAAP. DNA – data, network and analysis.

**Ms Stanzel:** From the industry's perspective, what has been and hopefully will continue to be important is the open-door policy that ReCAAP has operated from the beginning. It is important to continue that open approach to industry as a partner, welcoming industry's comments and the expertise of our members, for example, when we are collaborating in putting out guidance to the shipping industry. It is important that the guidance is applied to the realities of seafarers and shipping in the region generally. I echo Mr Sivertsen's viewpoint that the littoral States are crucial. If it is a wish for the future, I absolutely agree to bring the whole region on board because that will make it so much stronger. Ultimately, it's acting as a single point of contact for the reporting part because it is sometimes quite confusing to report to littoral States specifically in a region that is so complex in geography. Having ReCAAP as a single point of contact makes things easier. It would be ideal to have these closed links to the policing agencies behind, so the information sharing activates resources whether that is to protect or prosecute. It is that link that is crucial and links with the D in the DNA example. It is about sharing that information both on the incident side but also later to make sure that the consequences can be taken and we can make it better over time.

**Professor Furuya:** I would expect the ReCAAP ISC to further strengthen the ties amongst Contracting Parties and take initiative to mitigate the number of acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships for the safety and security of shipping in the region. That is in line with the Japanese policy in 2016 when the Abe Administration articulated the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) concept and considered it vital to connect Africa with the flow potential for development and Asia which is the middle of the economic expansion so as to pass the international peace, stability and prosperity since FOIP is based on the connectivity between Asia and Africa via the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, and the safety and security of these oceans are the foundation to materialise the concept. From that perspective, the ReCAAP is supporting the regional States through numerous capacity building programmes. The information sharing is obviously the key to crack down on criminal activities in addition to the data analysis. No single State may counter piracy and armed robbery without international cooperation because of its transnational nature of the crimes. ReCAAP has taken significant role in connecting relevant States and share information of the Contracting Parties and this is why the ReCAAP model has been successfully expanded to counter piracy in the Gulf of Aden, an agreement of the Djibouti Code of Conduct. ReCAAP was

accepted not only in the regional States but beyond that, we have Norway, the UK and even the United States. ReCAAP has become an essential part of the maritime security system in the region. I expect ReCAAP to continue to assume this significant role. I would like to add C – the capacity building to the DNA to make it DNAC.

**Question by the Moderator:**

*What further role do you think ReCAAP could or should play in the future in terms of similar regional arrangements in other regions? There are regions around the world that are experiencing threats from maritime security incidents.*

**Mr Sivertsen:** I had been involved in similar regional arrangements both in East Africa and in the Gulf of Guinea. We had hoped that the ReCAAP model would provide the example for these regions to follow. Unfortunately, we have not been successful in those attempts. Even though ReCAAP serves as a role model, the attempts of copying it have not been as successful in other regions. I hope that the stakeholders will see how the ReCAAP model has functioned in Asia and the benefits it has provided. I hope that other regions and the stakeholders in those regions will continue to look to ReCAAP as a model and try to learn from ReCAAP, its experiences, and try to copy and adapt it to their regional needs. We know now from our experiences that the ReCAAP model works and it continues to be a role model for other regions.

**Ms Stanzel:** ReCAAP as an advisor for capacity building is a core role that will benefit others but there is one crucial element that must be remembered – to demonstrate the results that ReCAAP has achieved required a lot of hard work, commitment and stability; Without it, it will be a lot harder. Thus, it is not something one can easily transplant unless those crucial factors are given. I cannot stress enough the hard work element of it because ReCAAP did not just happen. There are a lot of entities that have put a lot of efforts into making this work and to transpose it to somewhere else, that ethic has to go with it.

**Ms Quah:** ReCAAP has been contributing and sharing its expertise and its model of collaboration in forums such as IMO and also in the establishment of the Djibouti Code of Conduct. The way of going forward is to continue as what Mr Furuya said in terms of DNAC, focusing on the collaboration part to share and go through, for example, the experiences that we have gone through. Having said that, every region has its own unique circumstances. I have spoken to my Nigerian counterpart and I could see the commitment that he has in trying to resolve the situation in that part of the world. It might take some time because the circumstances are unique. What we have is a reference for them to learn from with a lot of international support helping them as well. It is indeed the C element as mentioned by Professor Furuya that will help us and be needed to get different regions out of the piracy and armed robbery.

**Moderator:** ReCAAP is being held as a model and it must continue to serve as a model for regional cooperation in maritime security affairs. As the panellists have emphasised, it is not easy to transpose it. There are regional realities, geo-political realities that may be different between regions. But we need to press on and concentrate on things like the element C, capacity building.



### Question by the Moderator:

*How about pursuing new cooperative agreements with other organisations? Should ReCAAP also be setting aside some effort or focus on this and if so, which organisations and why?*

**Ms Quah:** In Singapore, there is complementary strength of the ReCAAP ISC with the Information Fusion Centre (IFC) where they look at maritime security on a broader and larger scope. Our panel today consists of representatives from port authority, international organisation, academic research institutes – that is really the network or the end that we can further build up with ReCAAP with relevant organisations. I mentioned earlier RSIS, CIL and WMU who have done thinking and research into the various aspects of piracy and armed robbery. With evolution of the nature of such instances as well, how do we keep watch of such trends and be ahead of the game? Crimes always go ahead of laws, so we just have to keep constantly catch up with the crime.

**Ms Stanzel:** Reacting to crime or being on top of crime, we also need to look forward and say what is coming next. I think cyber security is something that MPA has done incredibly well with the maritime cyber security operations centre. I wonder whether that is something ReCAAP needs to be at least aware of to make sure that we're ready when those issues start appearing. I am sure we will see more and more cyber-attacks on vessels where people try to take over systems on board. We are dealing with that at the industry in terms of contingency planning and security. This is something potentially where information sharing could also be crucial and there is already an established capacity.

### Question by the Moderator:

*How does ReCAAP consider the impact of rapid technological development? For example, cyber security is one obvious impact on maritime security.*

**Professor Furuya:** ReCAAP is gradually extending its mandate to include maritime terrorism and cyber security. I view these criminal activities as significant to maintain stability and good order at sea. It is often pointed out that terrorist organisations and pirate syndicates are closely connected to each other and cyber security in the maritime domain has become an issue at the IMO too. It would be natural to consider widening the mandate to such important areas. It is also true that different approaches may be taken to curtail these crimes. While piracy and armed robbery are often viewed as a crime against international trade, those other crimes are viewed in a different manner. The interest of the States on piracy and terrorism would differ and the nature of the crime is different. Thus, the level of cooperation required would differ in counter-terrorism. The needs, experts and mutual understanding among States at a different level. For example, the cyber security is very technical and thus a group of experts is essential to support the service at ReCAAP. That will require an increase of budget. Maybe an amendment to the existing document is also necessary to include other crimes, thus the expansion to other categories of crimes is not so simple to add on from the practical point of view. Now ReCAAP is taking a gradual approach, so cooperation among Contracting Parties, mutual understanding and the experts necessary to support activities of ReCAAP will be increased also gradually. I hope this approach affects favourably the

existing services as well as the capacity building of the Contracting Parties. I would like to highlight the capacity building of the Contracting Parties. Since anti-terrorism operations and counter cybersecurity is highly technical and highly political, unless there is enough number of experts in ReCAAP to analyse and deal with data and also to look after the Contracting Parties for capacity building, the (existing) service of ReCAAP may be decreased in the future. So, I would like ReCAAP to maintain the same level of services as it is now.

**Mr Sivertsen:** We have discussions within the member countries and we are looking at the emerging maritime challenges such as cyber threats and terrorism that may have an impact on the situation and are related to piracy and armed robbery. Norway has an open mind and we would like the Secretariat to study the issues, their relationship with piracy and armed robbery and how these topics would fit in the information sharing and analysis. We believe that the ReCAAP ISC could interact and play a role with regard to these threats. We would like to have the whole member countries on board on these issues and I think it is a gradual approach. I really think that the Secretariat can study the matter and we will continue these discussions.

**Ms Quah:** To build on what Mr Sivertsen said, definitely ReCAAP should be alert of the possible nexus between piracy and other threats. This would require ReCAAP to actually forge partnerships. This is not an issue which starts from scratch; there are some organisations who already have some deep expertise in this area and can we build the network of collaboration so that there are better synergies. From Singapore side, there is also a port authority roundtable where we have linked with a few ports around the world in terms of sharing of information, harmonising of some of the data that we can share, should there be an incident that happens in another part of the world. With this fast alert, it allows you some heads up and time to prepare, should the incident hit you. It is this mode of collaboration and information sharing that is critical and crucial to help stop some of these crimes from taking place.

**Ms Stanzel:** It comes back to the single point of contact idea. It just short circuits so much redundancy in systems. When information can flow one way and you know that that's the dedicated route, then it gets shared out to everyone who needs to know it. It is so much quicker. It is great because it builds on existing strengths and it is a very efficient way that we have already built. So the process is there, we have just to apply it to a different focus.

Moderator closed the panel discussion by thanking the panellists for their excellent exchange of views.

# Closing Remarks

## **Mr. Masafumi Kuroki, Executive Director of ReCAAP ISC**

Executive Director expressed his deep appreciation to all for attending the Symposium on the occasion of 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ReCAAP. He also extended his appreciation to the speakers for highly evaluating the achievements of ReCAAP. He was very much encouraged by the strong commitment expressed by speakers to continue their support and cooperation with ReCAAP in the future.

He thanked the panellists and the moderator for having shared their invaluable views and suggestions for the future of ReCAAP. He mentioned that there were suggestions for short-term targets and there were those for longer-term objectives. He assured that the ReCAAP ISC would pay full consideration to these suggestions which would surely give added value to what the ISC have been doing.

On this occasion, he expressed his appreciation to all the stakeholders of the maritime community for having worked closely with ReCAAP for the past 15 years to combat piracy and sea robbery in Asia. Without their cooperation and shared responsibility, ReCAAP could not have made so much achievements. He stated that the ReCAAP would remain relevant, open and inclusive with the maritime community to ensure the safety at seas by building on the past achievements and watching closely the evolving maritime situation.

And lastly, he was very much pleased that the Symposium has provided a good opportunity to deliberate on the way to pursue the mission of ReCAAP in the future.





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