**PRESS RELEASE**
*The Seventh Governing Council Meeting of the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC)*


1       At the Seventh Governing Council Meeting of the ReCAAP ISC held on 5-7 March 2013 in Singapore, Governors from the eighteen[1] ReCAAP countries commended the ReCAAP ISC on further achievements in research and analysis, capacity building, engagement and co-operation with other organisations with interests in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships. Partner Organisations from International Organisations and maritime industry, as well as External Participants also participated in the Meeting.


2       The Council welcomed the notification by Australia on 1 March 2013 of their desire to accede to the ReCAAP Agreement, and Australia's participation at this Governing Council Meeting.   The expansion of ReCAAP membership demonstrates ReCAAP's relevance and growing credibility in the international maritime community, and further underscores the importance of international cooperation in combating piracy and armed robbery effectively. In this light, the Council recognised the importance of full participation of all countries listed in Article 18(1) of the ReCAAP Agreement, and hoped that those who have yet to sign and ratify the Agreement would do so to collectively address the issue of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia. The Council noted interests from other states in ReCAAP and requested any state interested in acceding to ReCAAP to furnish information on their areas of interest and potential areas of contribution to the ReCAAP ISC such as capacity building. Specific mention was made of United Kingdom joining the Governing Council as a fully-fledged member for the first time.   The Council also welcomed external participants[2] to attend part of its deliberation, including for the first time, the United States.


3       The Council noted the importance of our on-going deliberation on the evolution of ReCAAP aimed at striking the balance of ReCAAP ISC's value propositions in information-sharing, capacity building and co-operation with the industry and partner organisations. The Council commended ReCAAP ISC's innovative approach to facilitating inter-agency co-operation and industry engagement in each Contracting Party.

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[1] The ReCAAP Contracting Parties are listed in Annex 1.
[2] The list of external participants represented at the meeting is attached in Annex 2.

4	The Council further welcomed the ReCAAP ISC's release of its Annual Report 2012 which detailed the findings on piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia. The Council noted the 132 incidents (123 actual and nine attempted incidents) showed a marked improvement in the situation in Asia in 2012 – the largest year-on-year decrease of 16% in the total number of incidents reported during the five year reporting period of 2008-2012. It also shows a consecutive downward trend commencing from 2010.  The decrease was more apparent at the ports and anchorages in Bangladesh and Vietnam, in the South China Sea and the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.  The overall improvement of the situation of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia in 2012 highlighted the effectiveness of the ReCAAP information sharing network, and operational-level cooperation and collaboration among the stakeholders but noted progress was fragile and reversible.  To this end, the Council continues to urge ship masters to immediately report incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships to the relevant authorities, to enable a more effective response and encourage multi-channel reporting, as advocated by the IMO MSC Circ. 1333/1334.

5	In the area of capacity building, the Council welcomed the successful conduct of various ReCAAP ISC capacity building activities including the *ReCAAP ISC Capacity Building Seminar 1/12* on 23-25 October 2012 in Singapore.  The event was also used to conduct training of ReCAAP Focal Points' officials for the launch of the second generation Information Network System (IFN).

6	In addition, the Council was pleased to note the successful conduct of *Cluster Meeting 3/12* on 23-25 July 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand, co-organised by the ReCAAP ISC, Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Royal Thai Navy.  The Meeting shared best practices and consolidated components necessary for inter-ministry coordination, and the exchange of views with the Thailand's maritime industry representatives.

7	The Council noted that ReCAAP ISC's statistics and analyses are now frequently cited in media and industry publications.  The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has also held up the ReCAAP initiative as a model of inter-governmental co-operation against piracy that other regions could emulate.  In addition, the ReCAAP ISC participated in United Nations (UN) and other international conferences / forums on piracy matters.

8       The Council reiterated its serious concern over the piracy situation in the Gulf of Aden, off the coast of Somalia, and off the coast of West Africa.  The Council noted the relative success in recent years in operational coordination of international efforts and the positive work of the Contact Group on piracy off the coast of Somalia.  At the same time, the Council expressed its grave concern about the fate of the ships and their crew members which are still held captive by Somalia based pirates.  In this regard, the Council commended the inter-regional efforts of the ReCAAP ISC, in close partnership with the IMO, to share experience and expertise with the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia. These activities included the successful conduct of *Joint ReCAAP / DCoC Counter Piracy Seminar and Workshop* on 3-6 December 2012 in Tokyo, Japan, funded by the Special Contribution of Japan[3], arising from the need for closer cooperation. The event was supported by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and the Japan Coast Guard (JCG), endorsed by the IMO; and provided a platform for the DCoC Signatory States, international and regional stakeholders to come together.

9       Representatives from industry organisations who attended the meeting also expressed their support for the ReCAAP initiative, and reiterated their desire to collaborate with the ReCAAP ISC.

10      The Council was pleased to note the ReCAAP ISC's initiative in engaging the members of shipping community by conducting the *ReCAAP ISC Piracy and Sea Robbery Conference* and the *Nautical Forum* in 2012. The Council looked forward to the conduct of ReCAAP ISC Piracy and Sea Robbery Conference 2013, jointly organised with BIMCO, INTERTANKO, and RSIS[4] on 9 April 2013 in Singapore, with the main objective of engaging the shipping community.

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[3] The Government of Japan made a special contribution of USD 561,797 in addition to the yearly financial contribution in 2012.
[4] RSIS: S.Rajaratnam School of International Studies – a Graduate School of Nanyang Technological University of Singapore

11      The Council welcomed the voluntary contributions pledged by the ReCAAP Contracting Parties towards the work of the ReCAAP ISC for FY 2013[5] as follows:

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| Kingdom of the Netherlands | EUR | 25,000 |
| People's Republic of China | USD | 50,000 |
| Republic of India | USD | 50,000 |
| United Kingdom | GBP | 50,000 |
| Kingdom of Norway | USD | 100,000 |
| Republic of Korea | KRW | 150 million |
| Japan | SGD | 555,406   (estimate) |
| Republic of Singapore | SGD | 1,651,000 |

This assistance is in addition to the secondment of staff from China, India, the Republic of Korea, Japan, the Philippines and Thailand.

12      The Council unanimously supported the nominations of the Chairperson to be held by Governor for Thailand, His Excellency Dr Pornchai Danvivathana, and the Vice Chairperson by Governor for Bangladesh, Mr Nasir Arif Mahmud, with effect from 8 March 2013.   The Council expressed appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, the Philippines and Republic of Korea, respectively, for successfully steering the ReCAAP ISC in its workyear 2011-12 and 2012-13.  The Council also appointed Mr Yoshihisa Endo, the current Executive Director, to be the next Executive Director for the period of 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2016.

13      The Council reiterated the importance of the ReCAAP ISC being the conduit between the law enforcement agencies and the shipping agencies, called for greater cooperation among the like-minded agencies in suppressing piracy and armed robbery against ships, and having ReCAAP ISC continue to work with the IMO in their efforts to implement the DCoC to suppress piracy in the Gulf of Aden / Western Indian Ocean.

14      The Eighth Governing Council Meeting of the ReCAAP ISC is scheduled for week of 3-7 March 2014 to be held in Singapore.

The ReCAAP ISC Governing Council
7 March 2013

(Please contact The ReCAAP ISC Secretariat, Ms Amy Fang at 6376 3091, for further enquiries.)

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[5] FY 2013: 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014

**Further information on the ReCAAP and the ReCAAP ISC**

## FACT SHEET

**About the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), and the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC)**

The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) is the first regional government-to-government agreement to promote and enhance cooperation against piracy and armed robbery in Asia. It was finalised on 11 November 2004 and entered into force on 4 September 2006. To date, 18 States have become Contracting Parties to ReCAAP.

The eighteen Contracting Parties to ReCAAP are the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Republic of India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Kingdom of Norway, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, the Kingdom of Thailand, the United Kingdom and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP ISC) was established under the Agreement, and was officially launched in Singapore on 29 November 2006. It was formally recognised as an international organisation on 30 January 2007.

The roles of the ReCAAP ISC are to:
- serve as a platform for information exchange with the ReCAAP Focal Points via the Information Network System (IFN); facilitate communications and information exchange among participating governments to improve incident response by member countries; analyse and provide accurate statistics of the piracy and armed robbery incidents to foster better understanding of the situation in Asia;
- facilitate capacity building efforts that help improve the capability of member countries in combating piracy and armed robbery in the region; and
- cooperate with organizations and like-minded parties on joint exercises, information sharing, capacity building programme, or other forms of cooperation, as appropriate, and agreed upon among the Contracting Parties.

The ReCAAP ISC facilitates exchange of information among the ReCAAP Focal Points through a secure web-based Information Network System (IFN). Through this network, the ReCAAP Focal Points are linked to each other as well as the ReCAAP ISC on a 24/7 basis, and are able to facilitate appropriate responses to incident. The agency receiving the incident report will manage the incident in accordance to its national policies and response procedures, and provide assistance to the victim ship where possible. The agency will in turn, inform their ReCAAP Focal Point which will submit an incident report to the ReCAAP ISC and its neighbouring Focal Points.

For more information about the ReCAAP and ReCAAP ISC, please visit http://www.recaap.org

**Contracting Parties to the ReCAAP**

1. People's Republic of Bangladesh
2. Brunei Darussalam
3. Kingdom of Cambodia
4. People's Republic of China
5. Kingdom of Denmark
6. Republic of India
7. Japan
8. Republic of Korea
9. Lao People's Democratic Republic
10. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
11. Kingdom of the Netherlands
12. Kingdom of Norway
13. Republic of the Philippines
14. Republic of Singapore
15. Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
16. Kingdom of Thailand
17. United Kingdom
18. Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

**External Participants Represented at the Seventh Governing Council Meeting of the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre**

<u>States</u>

1.    Malaysia
2.    Australia
3.    United States

<u>Organisations</u>

4.    Asian Shipowners' Forum (ASF)
5.    Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO)
6.    European Commission (EC)
7.    Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Association (FASA) / Singapore Shipping
         Association (SSA)
8.    Information Fusion Centre (IFC)
9.    International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)
10.   International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)
11.   International Maritime Organization (IMO)