For immediate release

PRESS STATEMENT

Nautical Forum 5/14

1.   The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC), Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) and Singapore Shipping Association (SSA) jointly organised the Fifth Nautical Forum on 14 January 2014 afternoon at the STI Auditorium, Capital Towers, Singapore.

2.   The main objective of this Forum was to bring together the ReCAAP ISC, MPA and members of the shipping industry to share on the findings of the piracy and sea robbery situation in Asia for 2013. It is also a platform set for the various stakeholders to share and exchanges views, and solicits feedback and recommendations from the maritime community and the ReCAAP ISC's stakeholders.

3.   Mr Yoshihisa Endo, Executive Director of the ReCAAP ISC introduced in his Opening Remarks that, referring to the continuous improvement of the situation in Asia since 2010, the overall improvement of the situation in Asia has continued in 2013. He expressed appreciations to the close working relationship between the law enforcement agencies and the maritime community.

4.   Assistant Director of ReCAAP ISC, Ms Lee Yin Mui presented a detail analysis on the incidents reported in 2013. She highlighted that the incidents continues to be less severe in nature though the number of incidents had increased slightly compared to 2012. It was noted 77% of the 149 incidents reported in 2013 were petty theft and Category 3 (less significant) incidents, while Category 1 (very significant) and Category 2 (moderately significant) incidents had the greatest decrease year-on-year.

5.   Recognising that the bulk of incidents were petty theft and Category 3 incidents occurred at certain ports and anchorages, the ReCAAP ISC urged ship owners and masters to enhance vigilance and exercise anti-piracy watch activities while their ships are at ports and anchorages; and tug boats and barges to exercise close vigilance while underway in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.

6.   Mr Tan Suan Jow, Director (Shipping Division) of MPA, welcoming an overall decline in the severity of piracy and sea robbery incidents in Asia for 2013, echoed ReCAAP ISC's advice for the industry to enhance vigilance and watch-keeping while at ports and anchorages, and while underway in the busy Straits of Malacca and Singapore. He also commended the ReCAAP ISC for playing an important role in providing governments and the industry with timely and accurate information.

7.   Executive Director of SSA, Mr Daniel Tan, highlighted the challenges faced by seafarers and urged the States which have yet to accede to the ReCAAP Agreement to do so early.

8.   The guest speakers at the Forum were from the Asian Shipowners' Forum (ASF) and Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA). ASF, representing approximated 50% of the world merchant fleet, acknowledged the excellent work carried out the ReCAAP ISC in sharing information and enhancing cooperation with the its members. MMEA, on the other hand, shared case studies of incidents involving siphoning of marine gas oil (MGO)/diesel (cargo or fuel); and reiterated the need for situation awareness, training of crew and vigilance. This was the third time an Official from MMEA speaking at this series of Forums since 2012 which demonstrated the good operation level linkages between the MMEA and the ReCAAP ISC.

9.   Noting the continuous improvement of the situation in Asia since 2010, the Forum concluded with an active Q&A session of engagements between the six-member panel led by the Deputy Director, LTC(Retd) Nicholas Teo, and some 120 participants. The deliverables of Forum were the practical suggestions and invaluable exchanges that further endorsed the need to cooperate closely for it is a shared responsibility.
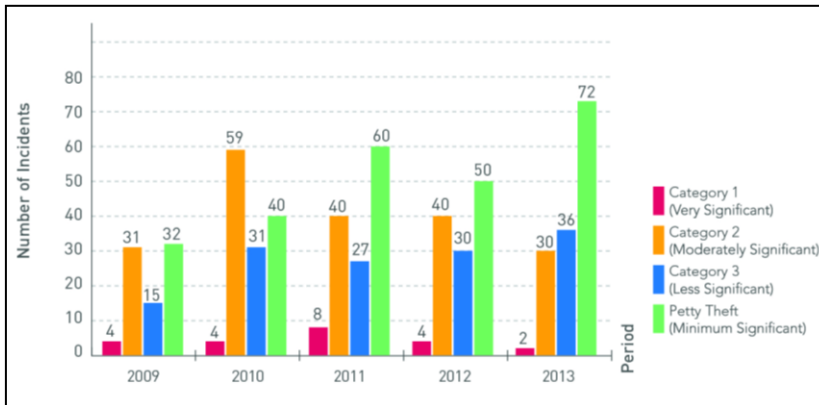
The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre
15 January 2014
For more media enquiries, please contact the ReCAAP ISC Secretariat at (65) 6376 3091.

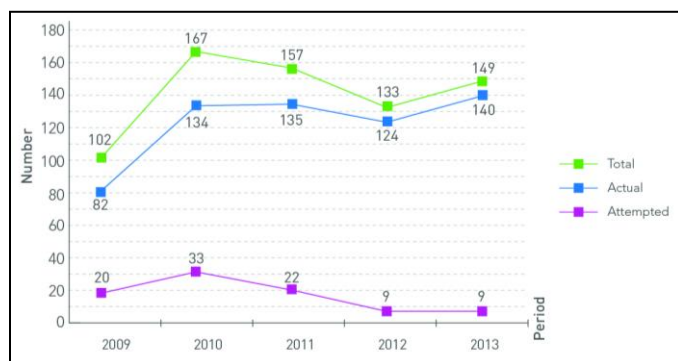## SUMMARY OF PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST SHIPS IN ASIA 2013

Reduced in severity of incidents

The overall improvement of the situation in Asia has continued in 2013. Although the number of incidents has increased slightly, they were mostly of less severe in nature; such as petty theft. Notably, there has been a remarkable reduction in the severity of incidents. The greatest decrease was the Category 1 (very significant) incidents and Category 2 (moderately significant) incidents while the Category 3 (less significant) incidents remained fairly consistent throughout the past four years (2010 to 2013). However, the number of petty theft incidents had increased in 2013.

In 2013, a total of 149 incidents comprising 140 actual incidents and nine attempted incidents had been verified by the ReCAAP Focal Points and reported to the ReCAAP ISC. Of these, 10 were piracy incidents and 139 were robberies against ships. Compared to 2012, the number of incidents reported in 2013 has increased by 12%, but it is lower compared to 2011 and 2010 by 5% and 11% respectively. Of the 149 incidents reported in 2013, 77% were petty theft and Category 3 (less significant) incidents.
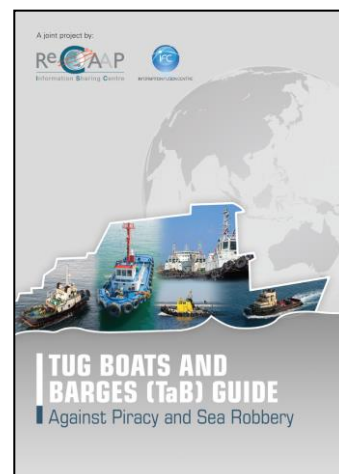

The increase in the number of incidents reported to the ReCAAP ISC could be a result of more reporting by ship owners and masters due to greater awareness of the need to report and reporting channels as advocated by the ReCAAP ISC and ReCAAP Focal Points. Within the ReCAAP network, more incidents had been verified and reported to the ReCAAP ISC by ReCAAP Focal Points.

Petty theft incidents at ports and anchorages

Among the 149 incidents reported in 2013, 21% (32) incidents occurred when ships were underway and 79% (117) incidents when the ships were at berth or anchored. Incidents were reported at the ports and anchorages in Indonesia (Belawan, Pulau Nipa, Samarinda, Dumai, East Kalimantan, etc), India, Vietnam and Bangladesh. Majority of incidents at ports and anchorages were petty theft and Category 3 incidents.

Incidents in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore

Incidents involving ships while underway were reported in the South China Sea (10) and the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (12). Among the incidents in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, 11 involved tug boats towing barges in the Singapore Strait. Of these, 10 incidents involved robbers boarded the barges loaded with stores while towed by slow-moving tug boats during hours of darkness. The ReCAAP ISC encourages tug boat owners and masters to adopt the guidelines suggested in the "Tug boats and Barges (TaB)" Guide which was published by the ReCAAP ISC and the Information Fusion Centre (IFC). A copy of the TaB Guide can be found at the ReCAAP ISC website at www.recaap.org

Case study: Timely reporting and prompt responses

The ReCAAP ISC reiterates the importance of timely reporting by ship owners and masters; and prompt responses by enforcement agencies in rendering assistance to victim ships. This was evidenced in an incident involving a Honduras-registered oil product tanker, *Moresby 9*. On 17 Aug 13 at or about 2045 hrs, *Moresby 9* was anchored at approximately 1.83 nm southeast of Tanjung Ramunia, Malaysia when 10 masked robbers armed with long knives boarded the vessel from two speed boats. The Chief Officer spotted the speed boats and activated the SSAS. One of the crew managed to alert other vessels anchored nearby via the radio.

The Singapore-based ship agent reported the incident to the ReCAAP ISC immediately, who in turn informed the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) Southern Maritime Region, the Focal Point (Singapore) and the relevant agencies and authorities. The MMEA despatched a patrol vessel to the location. The robbers escaped after seeing the presence of the patrol vessel. Subsequent investigation revealed that the robbers intended to hijack the tanker to bring her to a less monitored location to siphon off the Marine Gas Oil (MGO) onboard. The unsuccessful attempt by the robbers was attributed to timely reporting by the ship agent, master and quick responses by the authorities.

Conclusion

Although there has been an increase in the total number of incidents in 2013 compared to 2012, the severity of incidents has reduced in 2013. The bulk of the incidents were petty theft and Category 3 incidents occurred at certain ports and anchorages. The ReCAAP ISC urges ship owners and masters to enhance vigilance and exercise anti-piracy watch activities while their ships are at ports and anchorages; and tug boats and barges to exercise close vigilance while underway in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.

ReCAAP Factsheet

Background Information

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, 19 States have become Contracting Parties to ReCAAP.

The nineteen Contracting Parties to ReCAAP are Australia, 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.

"ReCAAP is the first regional government-to-government agreement to promote and enhance cooperation against piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia."

Mission
To enhance regional cooperation through information sharing, capacity building and cooperative arrangements in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships

Vision
To be the information hub for combating piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia

ReCAAP ISC Factsheet

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:

• **Information Sharing**
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;

• **Capacity Building**
Facilitate capacity building efforts that help improve the capability of member countries in combating piracy and armed robbery in the region; and

• **Cooperative Arrangements**
Cooperate with organisations 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

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