15 Years' Analysis of Piracy & Sea Robbery Incidents in Asia

Masafumi Kuroki

Executive Director

ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre

Scope

I. **Long-term Trend of Incidents in Asia (1991- 2020)**

II. **Incident Types in Asia (2007-2020)**

III. **Achievements of ReCAAP**

IV. **The Way Forward**

15 YEARS
Re**C**AAP
Combating
Piracy and Sea
Robbery in Asia

1. Total Number of Incidents

- Late 1990s & early 2000s: Increase of incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia

- Threat to safe navigation and safety of crew, risk in transport of cargo and energy supplies and higher operation cost

Number of Incidents in Asia (1991-2020)
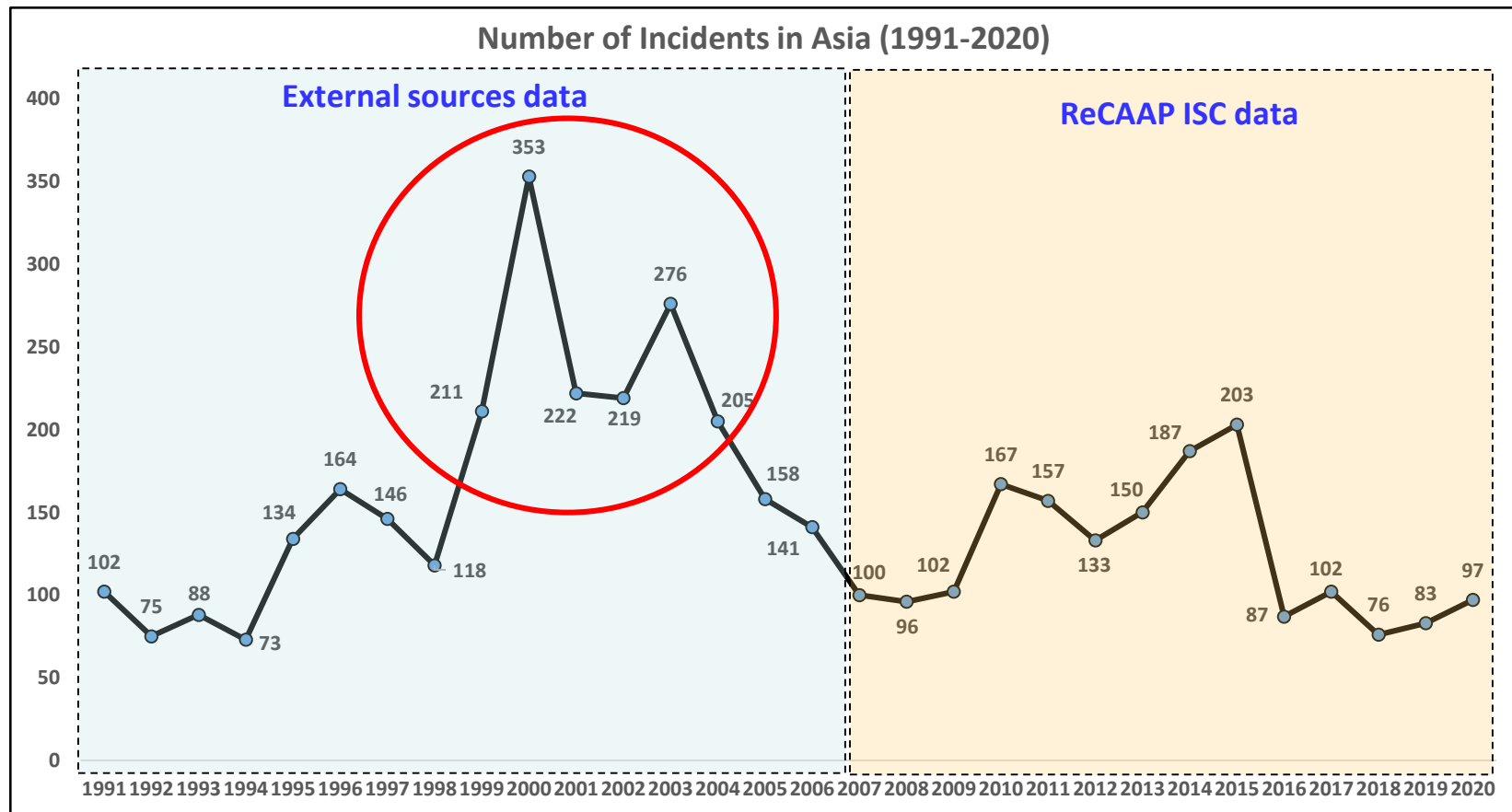
2. Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS: 1991-2020)

- 2000-2007: More incidents in the Malacca Strait (MS)
  - Malacca Strait was designated by JWC as "war risk zone" in 2005
  - Improvement of situation in MS since 2007
- 2008-2020: More incidents in the Singapore Strait (SS):
  - Incidents continued to decrease in MS

Number of incidents in SOMS (1991-Jan 2021)
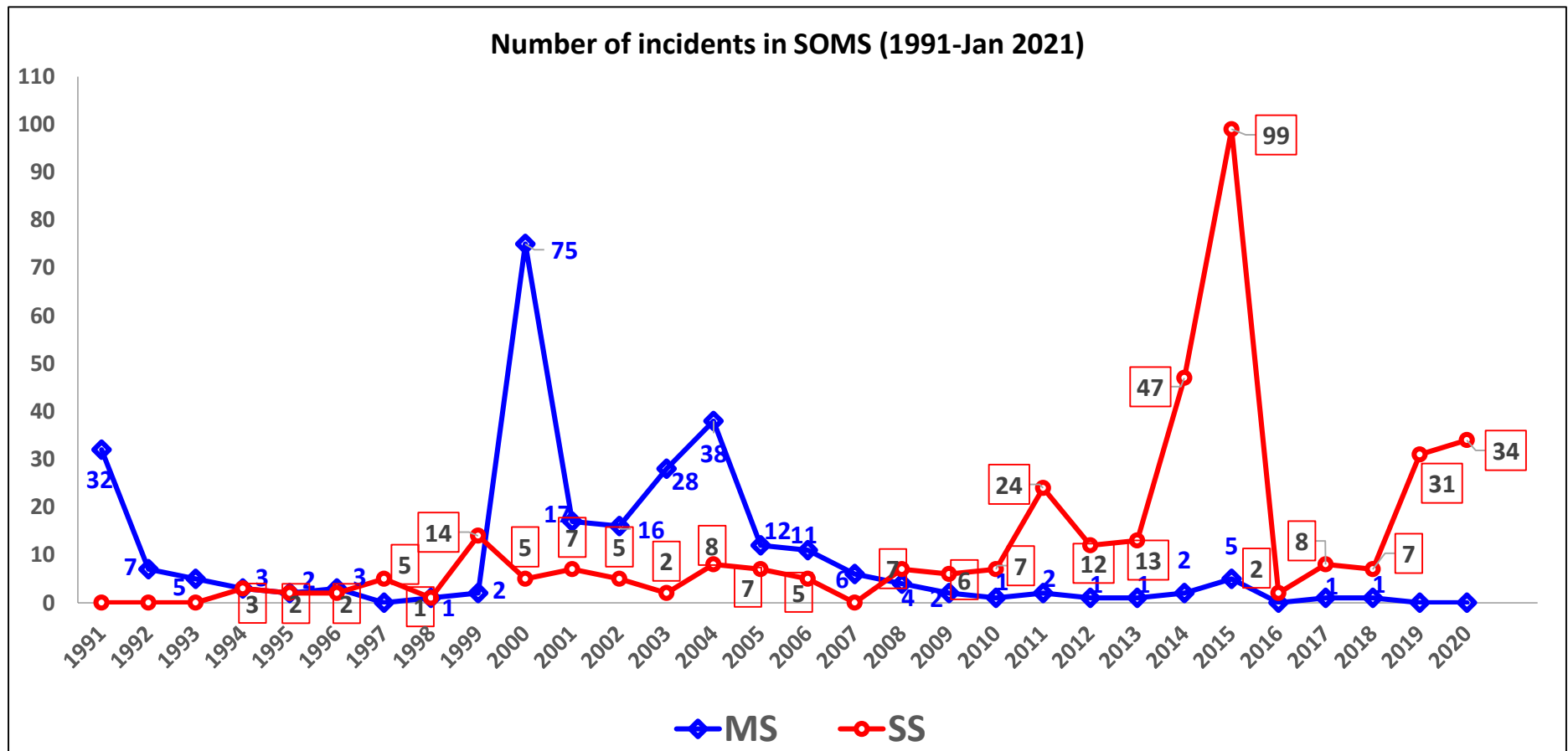
3. South China Sea (1991-2020)

- 1991-2020: Highest number of incidents in 2014 (42 incidents)
    - 18 incidents occurred to ships <u>while underway</u>; of these 15 were hijacking of tankers for <u>oil cargo theft</u>
    - 24 incidents occurred to ships <u>anchored</u> in the South China Sea

Number of incidents in South China Sea (1991-2020)
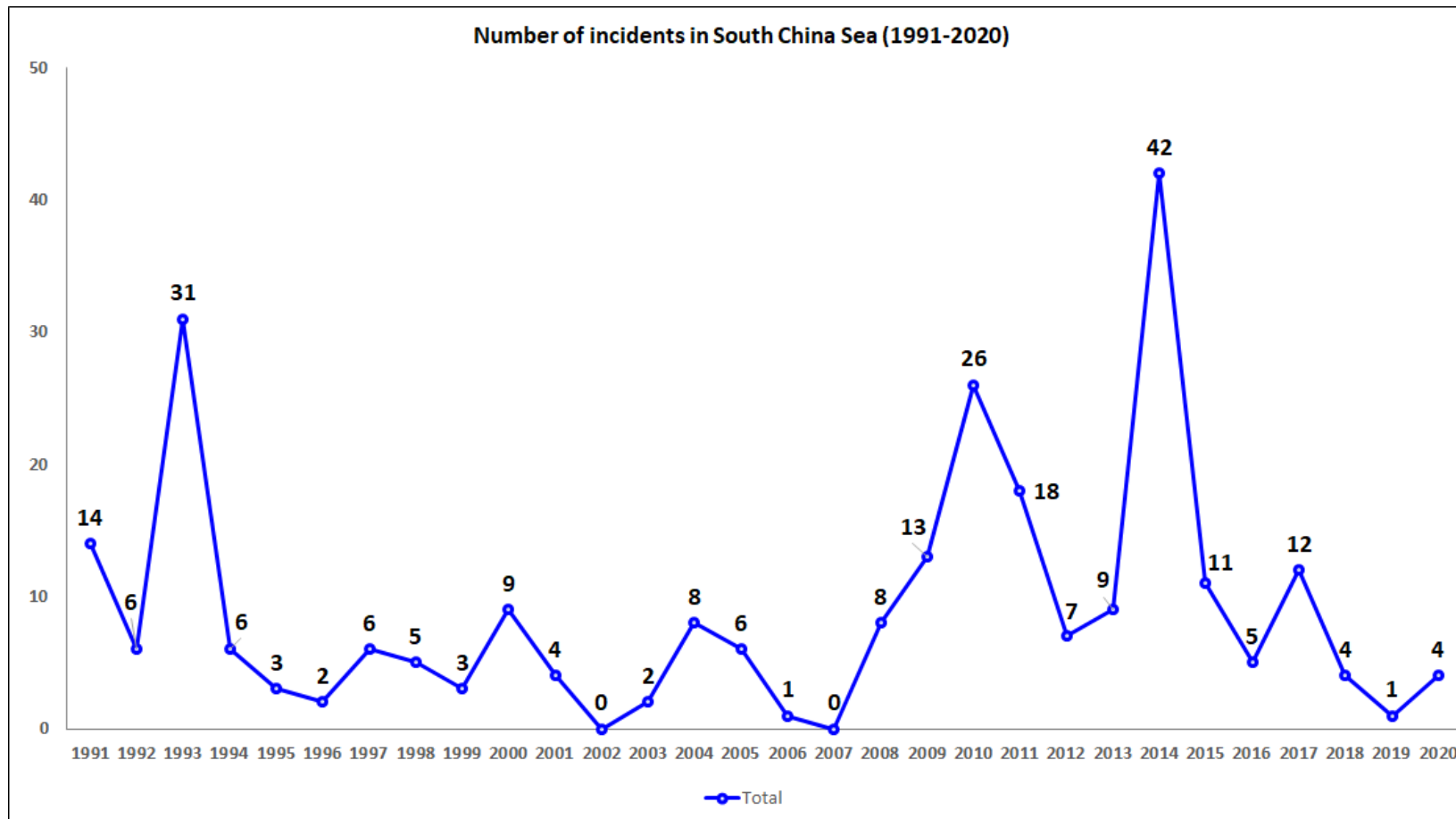
II. Incident Types in Asia (2007-2020)

1. General Patterns
(database of 1,740 incidents from 2007 to 2020)

- **87% of incidents are armed robbery against ships** vs 13% piracy
- Number of perpetrators: Majority of the incidents involved **small groups** (4-6 perpetrators (33%) and 1-3 perpetrators (25%))
- Type of weapons: If armed, mostly with knives/machetes (33%), guns/knives (10%)
- Treatment of crew: **80%** reported **no injury to crew** or there was **no information.**
- Stolen item: **Nothing stolen in 33%** of incidents; Among stolen items, **ship stores** were commonly targeted
- Time of incident: **81% occurred during hours of darkness**

2. Types of Incidents in Asia

- Majority of the incidents are **Opportunistic crimes**
  - Robbery and petty theft (mostly occurred at ports/anchorages)

- Smaller number of incidents are **Organised crimes**
  - Hijack of tugs boats (2007-2014), Hijack of tankers for oil cargo theft (2011-2017), Abduction of crew (2016-2020)
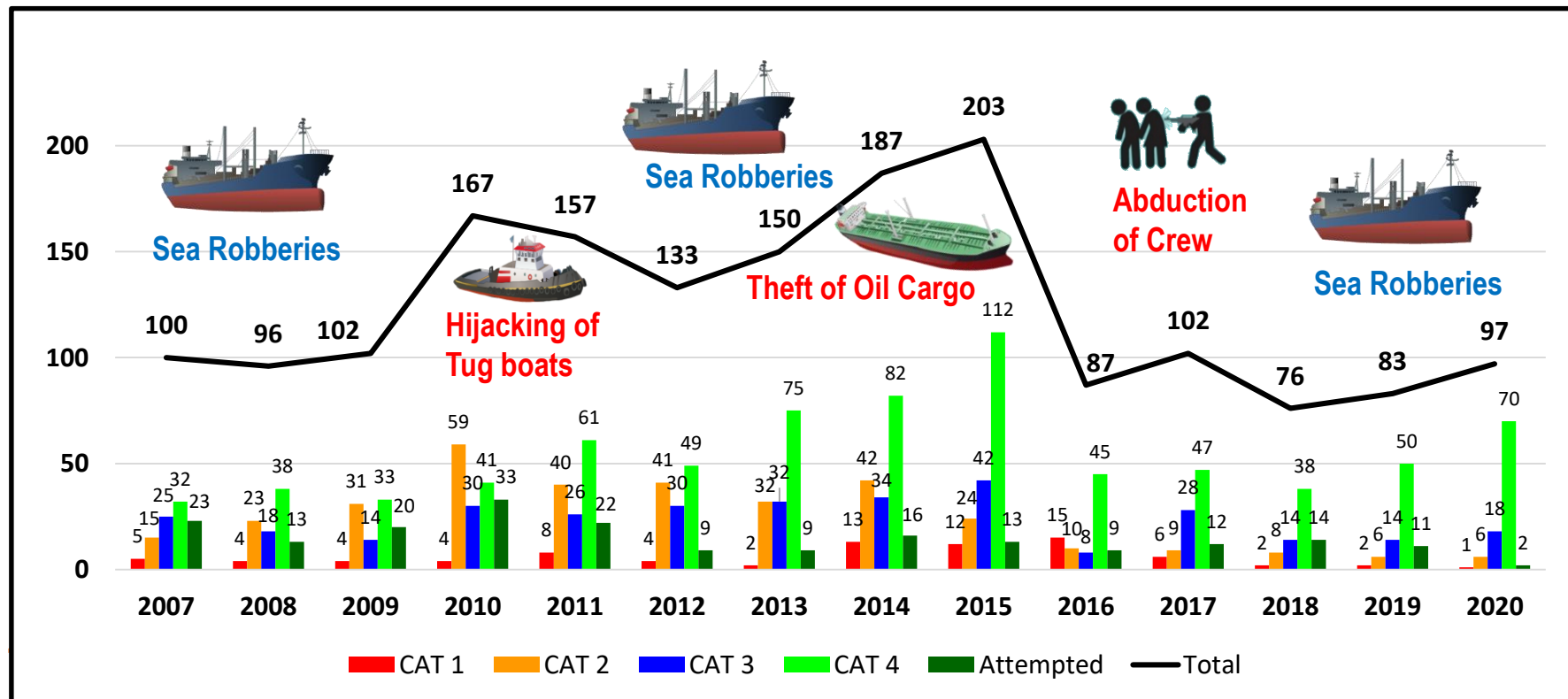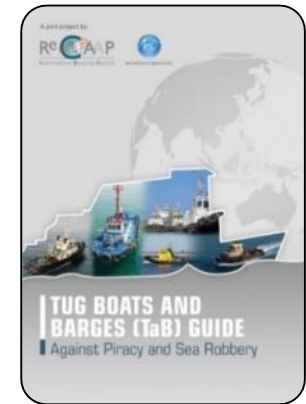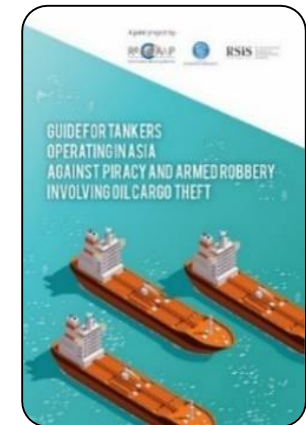
3. Modus Operandi of Serious Incidents

(1) Hijacking of tug boats for resale (2007-2014)

- Hijack tug boat, abandon crew into life rafts
- Repaint, rename and sell tug boat with 'new' identity
- <u>13 incidents</u> from 2007 to 2014, particularly <u>3 incidents in 2010 and 4 incidents in 2011</u>
- "*Tug Boats and Barges (TaB) Guide*" (in 2011)

(2) Hijacking of tanker for oil cargo theft (2011-2017)

- Hijack tanker, tie up crew, steer ship away from shore
- Siphon the oil cargo from the tanker to another ship
- <u>41 incidents</u> from 2011 to 2017, particularly <u>15 incidents in 2014 and 12 incidents in 2015</u>
- "*Guide for Tankers Operating in Asia Against Piracy and Armed Robbery Involving Oil Cargo Theft*" (in 2015)

Modus Operandi of Serious Incidents (2)

(3) Abduction of crew for ransom (2016-2020)

- Armed with heavy weapons/guns, abduct crew and escape in speed boats
- Kidnap for ransom claimed by <u>Abu Sayyaf Group (terrorist group)</u>
- <u>20 actual incidents since 2016</u>
  <u>A total of 86 crew abducted</u>: 11 killed/died, 71 released, 4 still in captivity
- *"Guidance on Abduction of Crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and Waters off Eastern Sabah"* (in 2019)

☐ ReCAAP ISC also produced <u>a general guidebook for all types of incidents</u> *"Regional Guide to Combat Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia"* (in 2016)
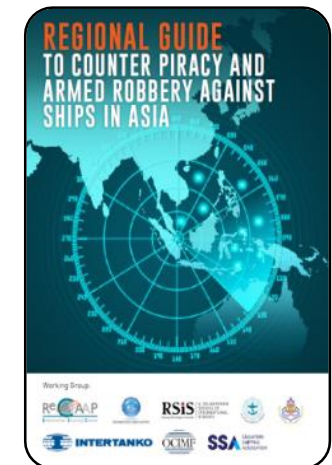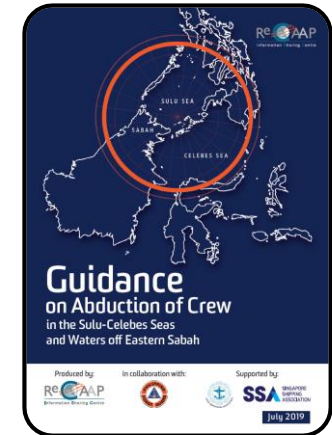
III. Achievements of ReCAAP

1. Establishment of an effective information sharing mechanism

2. Expansion of Member States

3. Qualitative analysis of incidents

4. Cooperation for the establishment of Djibouti Code of Conduct

5. Wide network and cooperation with international & regional organisations as well as the shipping industry

1. Establishment of an effective information sharing mechanism

> ➤ Based on IMO/MSC Circulars 1333 & 1334

1st Step: <u>Reporting of incidents from ships</u> to coastal States

2nd Step: <u>Verification</u> of incidents by Focal Points
Accurate information of incidents

3rd Step: <u>Incident reporting by FPs</u> through IFN system
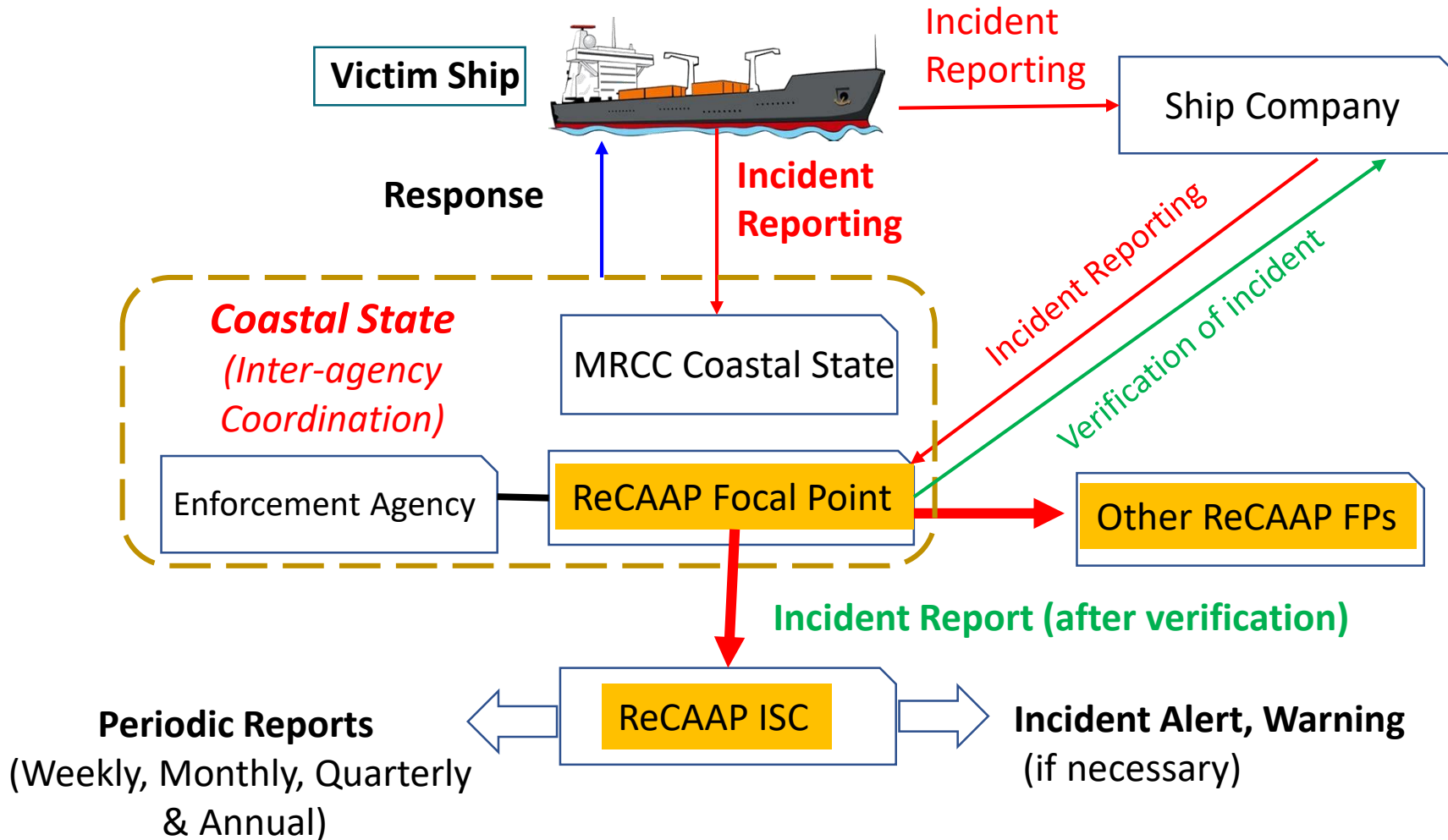Information sharing network of 20 FPs and the Centre

4th Step: <u>Dissemination of information</u> to the maritime community
- Warnings, Incident Alerts, Special Reports, Periodic Reports (weekly, monthly, quarterly, annual)
- Quick dissemination tools: E-mails, Social media (Twitter, LinkedIn), Website, Mobile App
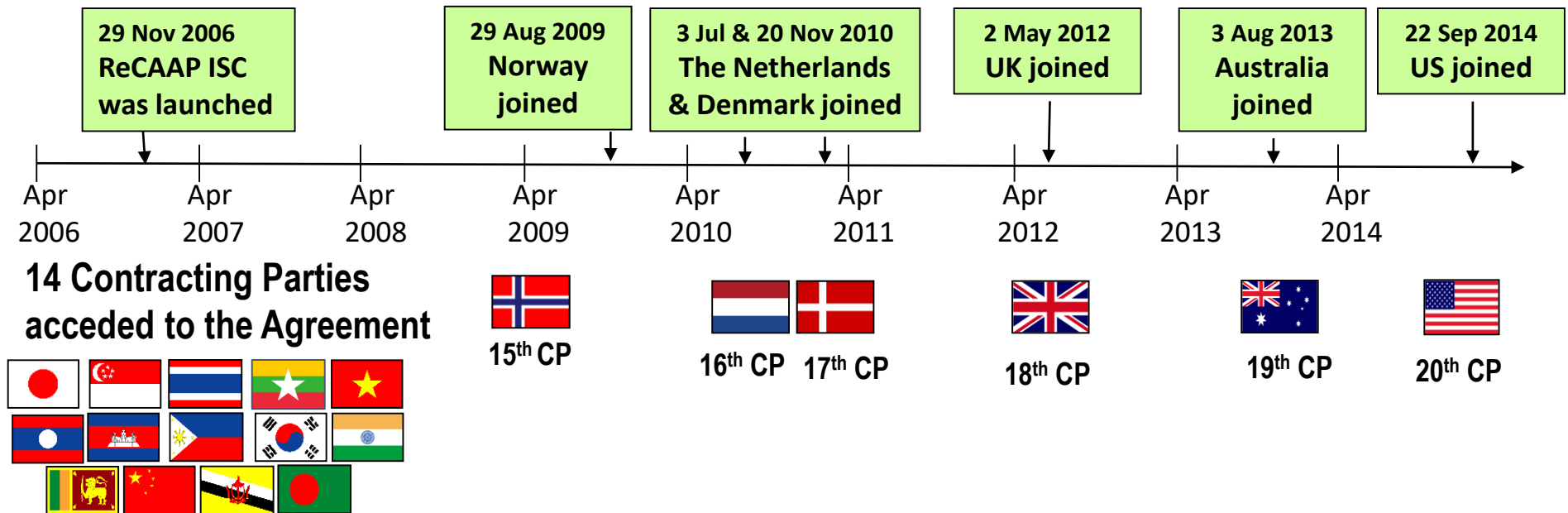- Reporting to GISIS (global database) of IMO

Information Sharing Mechanism of ReCAAP
(Based on IMO/MSC Circular 1333 & 1334)

2. Expansion of Member States
14 Asian countries + 6 countries (Europe, Australia and US)

| 29 Nov 2006 ReCAAP ISC was launched | 29 Aug 2009 Norway joined | 3 Jul & 20 Nov 2010 The Netherlands & Denmark joined | 2 May 2012 UK joined | 3 Aug 2013 Australia joined | 22 Sep 2014 US joined |

Apr 2006 — Apr 2007 — Apr 2008 — Apr 2009 — Apr 2010 — Apr 2011 — Apr 2012 — Apr 2013 — Apr 2014

14 Contracting Parties acceded to the Agreement

15th CP

16th CP   17th CP

18th CP

19th CP

20th CP

❖ **Candidate countries: France and Germany**

3. Qualitative analysis of incidents: Severity

❑ **Matrix-based assessment on <u>the severity of incidents</u>**
combination of 2 factors: bigger weight 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 one of <u>4 Categories.</u>

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

❑ **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%**)

14

15th Anniversary Symposium | 18 March 2021

IV. The Way Forward

1. **To sustain the efforts of ReCAAP**
(1) Effectively maintain and strengthen the information sharing mechanism
(2) Continued capacity building activities for Focal Points
(3) Keep raising awareness of maritime community
(4) Respond quickly to new type of incidents

2. **Shared responsibility**
(1) Coastal States
(2) Shipping industry
(3) Regional and international organisations