

D R A F T
Concept Paper
ARF Seminar on Enhancing Capacities of coastal countries to
Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery in Asia
To be held in 2014 – 2015

Proposal

Japan and Malaysia propose, together with other co-chairs, to conduct a seminar, or series of seminars, dealing with challenges that face capacities of coastal countries to address the issue of piracy and armed robbery in Asia with a particular focus on legal aspects. The goal of this proposal is to share best practices and lessons learned in addressing the issue, which requires each country to develop its capacity. Experts from relevant government ministries/agencies and the private sector will lead a two-day seminar in Tokyo, Japan, in the fourth quarter of 2014 or the first quarter of 2015.

Background

The number of piracy and armed robbery incidents off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden has drastically decreased from 237 in 2011 to 15 in 2013 on one hand; the number in South East Asia has marked a steep increase from 80 in 2011 to 128 in 2013 on the other. Ensuring maritime safety and security constitutes the indispensable basis for peace, stability and prosperity not only of this region but also of the international community as a whole. While primary responsibility for developing capacities to counter piracy and armed robbery rests with coastal countries, support extended to countries' capacity building efforts through cooperation at the regional level is very useful.

Japan and other ARF participants have enacted relevant domestic laws which enable to establish a maritime law enforcement agency and to criminalize piracy. Due to the fact that piracy poses threat to maritime safety and security at the regional level, an international approach to the issue may be the most appropriate way to deal with the issue.

The objectives of this ARF seminar will be consistent with the ARF Hanoi Plan of Action, which states that "the ARF should serve as a regional forum for maritime security issues that promotes and enhances maritime domain awareness, and develop concrete and effective regional responses to maritime security challenges." This ARF seminar will also contribute to the efforts and measures of the ARF Work Plan on Maritime Security, especially to Priority Area 2. Confidence building measures based on international and regional legal frameworks, arrangements and cooperation.

Aims

Aims for this seminar could include:

- a) Share awareness of the issue of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia

- b) Share best practices and lessons learned of countries concerned in addressing the issue in such areas as their respective historical background of legal system, their experiences in stipulating relevant laws, and both practical and operational merits and challenges in their laws
- c) Identify challenges and gaps in enhancing response measures related to law, policy and operation in the region
- d) Prioritize possible steps to respond to the challenges and gaps identified
- e) Make recommendations for further actions

Administrative arrangements

Japan will host the seminar, and Japan and Malaysia will co-chair the seminar. Other ARF member countries are welcomed to join Japan and Malaysia in co-chairing the seminar. International travel, accommodations and other related costs necessary for participation will be borne by the participants.

Please direct comments or questions on this proposal to:

Takeshi KOYAMA, Deputy Director – Maritime Security Policy Division, Foreign Policy Bureau,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan

takeshi.koyama@mofa.go.jp