

**Interventions of DG (SEA) in the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security, Seoul,
Korea, 18-19 April 2013**

Mr. Co-Chair,

At the outset, allow me to join other colleagues in thanking our host, the Government of the Republic of Korea, for excellent arrangement of this very important meeting. I also thank the Government of Indonesia and the United States for co-chairing this event.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh has significant large coast line compare to the modest size of the country. We share maritime boundary with two ARF member countries, India in the west and Myanmar in the east. We have peacefully settled maritime boundary dispute with Myanmar through historic verdict of International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) in March 2012. Demarcation of maritime boundary with India is currently undergoing in the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague. By the ITLOS verdict, Bangladesh was awarded with over one hundred thousand square kilometer of maritime area in the Bay of Bengal. As such, Bangladesh gives utmost importance and priority to the maritime security.

I am happy to report to this meeting that there has not been any single case of piracy in Bangladesh water in the recent years. However, there are cases of occasional arm robbery and petty theft in our ports. Moreover, as you all know, golden triangle is close to our maritime boundary. Drug trafficking and gun running are quite common problems in our neighbourhood. Illegal fishing by the foreign trawlers and maritime pollution also remains concern for Bangladesh.

Due to the strong measures by the law enforcing agencies of Bangladesh, cases of robbery and theft have dropped significantly in recent years. In this regard, I would like to take the opportunity to refer you to the ReCAAP annual report 2012, which says, (I quote) "In South Asia the improvement was most evident in the Arabian sea and Bangladesh. No incident was reported in the Arabian sea in 2012 and the lowest number of incidents was reported in Bangladesh in 2012 compare to the past four years (2008-2011). The ReCAAP ISC commends the actions undertaken by the Indian and Bangladeshi authorities in their surveillance and anti-piracy efforts carried out in the area." (Unquote)

In a similar finding, International Maritime Bureau (IMB) stated in its report (I quote) "Attacks in Bangladesh have fallen significantly over the past few years because of the efforts by the Bangladesh Authorities." (Unquote)

Mr. Co-Chair,

While Bangladesh is making progress in tackling maritime related crimes, new dimension has added in the recent months in our maritime security threats, that is, the illegal movement of large number of Myanmar Rohingya people using maritime routes. This group of Myanmar people escaping violence in their own country and fleeing in large number for taking shelter in Bangladesh as well as to the third countries like Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Srilanka and so on. Many of them are subject to the international human trafficking. There are incidents of drawn down of these Rohingya people in the high sea. It is not possible for the part of only Myanmar or Bangladesh to solve this problem. If the international community fail to act faster and engage effectively to solve the root cause of the Rohingya problem, some of this people might turn into maritime terrorism and make greater harm not only to the countries in the region, but also to the countries beyond the region.

I Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your attention.