

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

29 September 2023

ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre and Australia Border Force Co-organised Regional Meeting to Enhance Cooperation Against Piracy and Sea Robbery in Asia

The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC), in cooperation with its Australia Focal Point, the Australia Border Force (Maritime Border Command), today concluded a four-day Capacity Building Executive Programme (CBEP) attended by the coast guards, navies and maritime law enforcement agencies from Australia and 12 ReCAAP Focal Points (Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Laos, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, United States), as well as the Indonesian Coast Guard and Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA).

The Australian Department of Home Affairs Cyber and Infrastructure Security Group and the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS) also attended the sixth edition of CBEP, which was held from 26-29 September 2023 in Sydney, Australia.

The CBEP provided ReCAAP Focal Points with the tools and knowledge to operate effectively within the ReCAAP information sharing framework. Focal Points of ReCAAP Member States play a vital role in timely and accurate information sharing, which facilitates swift operational response to incidents of piracy and sea robbery.

A wide range of topics were deliberated, including:

- Updates and situational analysis on piracy and sea robbery incidents in different parts of Asia
- Efforts to address unauthorised boarding and petty theft onboard ships in territorial waters, anchorages and ports
- Case studies on the arrest and prosecution of perpetrators
- Legal issues related to piracy and armed robbery against ships

A dialogue between the law enforcement agencies of different countries was also held to discuss maritime security issues and ways to strengthen cooperation to combat piracy and other transnational maritime crimes.

In addition, participants visited the Australian Border Force Container Examination Facility at Port Botany and learnt about the purpose-built container X-ray machines

used and operated across a range of border clearance environments to detect and respond to the import of prohibited goods and items.

Mr Krishnaswamy Natarajan, Executive Director, ReCAAP ISC, said, “Safe and secure shipping is a catalyst for economic growth and development, and the safety and security of shipping routes and crew is a priority for many countries. The CBEP has enabled ReCAAP member States to share best practices and learnings within the network, and collectively build our knowledge and capability to deal with piracy, sea robbery and other emerging maritime threats.”

Commander Neil Horne, Deputy Commander Maritime Border Command, said: “Maritime Border Command on behalf of the Australia Border Force is proud to co-host the CBEP in Sydney, Australia this year. The CBEP brings together operational officers across a range of levels from regional partners.”

“Australia values the importance of information sharing and Maritime Domain Awareness and we remain committed to contributing to ReCAAP ISC capacity building initiatives to promote regional security and stability.”

– End of Release –

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About ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP 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 against ships in Asia. The Agreement entered into force on September 4, 2006 with 14 Asian countries as Contracting Parties, and the Information Sharing Centre was established on November 29, 2006. To date, 21 States (Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Denmark, Germany, India, Japan, South Korea, Laos, Myanmar, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States and Vietnam) have become Contracting Parties to ReCAAP. To fulfil its vision as the Information Hub for combating piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia, ReCAAP ISC enhances regional cooperation through information sharing, capacity building and cooperative arrangements. At the 12th Governing Council Meeting in 2018, the Council announced that ReCAAP ISC has met the criteria to be

a Centre of Excellence for information sharing in combating piracy and armed robbery at sea. For more information about ReCAAP ISC, please visit <http://www.recaap.org>

About Australian Border Force and Maritime Border Command

The Australian Border Force (ABF) is Australia's frontline border law enforcement agency and customs service. Maritime Border Command (MBC) is a multi-agency task force within the ABF.

MBC is enabled by ABF and Australian Defence Force (ADF) assets and resources to implement a whole-of-Australian-Government effort, at the operational level, to protect civil maritime security interests through the provision of effects in the Australian maritime domain.

ABF maintains Australia's border sovereignty to ensure it can detect and respond to a range of concurrent security challenges; including illicit trade, unauthorised maritime arrivals, and illegal fishing and other regionally dispersed security threats over the full extent of Australia's air, maritime and terrestrial domains.

Read more about MBC on our website: <https://www.abf.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do/border-protection/maritime>