



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

23 January 2025

ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre Conducts Cluster Meeting in Philippines *- Meeting enhanced cooperation between regional ReCAAP Focal Points and strengthened capabilities to fight piracy and sea robbery in the South East Asia*

The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) and Philippine Coast Guard today concluded a three-day cluster meeting in Manila, Philippines. The meeting brought together representatives from the Philippine Coast Guard, Philippines Ports Authority and Philippines Maritime Industry Authority. ReCAAP Focal Points from Cambodia, China, Thailand and Vietnam, as well as regional law enforcement agencies Malaysia Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) and Indonesian Maritime Security Agency (BAKAMLA), also attended the meeting.

Over the three-day meeting from 21 to 23 January 2025, participants updated on the countermeasures taken against sea robbery in their countries' ports and anchorages. They also discussed ways to strengthen regional cooperation and information sharing to combat armed robbery against ships, and deliberated on the impact of maritime terrorism and emerging maritime threats on the safety of crew and cargo.

Mr Krishnaswamy Natarajan, Executive Director, ReCAAP ISC, said, "The Straits of Malacca and Singapore is one of the world's busiest trade routes used by commercial vessels and tankers carrying valuable goods and oil cargo to various Asian countries. Littoral States in South East Asia therefore recognise the importance of protecting the large number of vessels, crew and cargo passing through this region daily. This cluster meeting provides a platform for maritime law enforcement agencies in the region to build trust and understanding, and strengthen cooperation to fight piracy, sea robbery and other transnational maritime crimes."

In addition to various presentations, participants also gained insights on the successful efforts made by the littoral States in addressing the abduction of crew incidents in the Sulu-Celebes Seas, and the progress in enhancing inter-agency cooperation to monitor and prevent piracy and sea robbery incidents.

Admiral Ronnie Gil Gavan, Commandant of the Philippine Coast Guard and ReCAAP ISC Governor for the Philippines, said, "Over the past few years, the number of

unauthorised boarding and theft incidents onboard ships berthed in Philippines' ports and anchorages have seen a steady decline, due to stepped up monitoring and enforcement efforts by the Philippine Coast Guard and port authority. In addition, the threat of abduction of crew for ransom by the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off eastern Sabah has been reduced significantly, thanks to sustained countermeasures taken by the Philippine Armed Forces and Malaysian authorities. As a maritime nation and Contracting Party to ReCAAP, the Philippines remains committed to partnering regional Focal Points to counter the threat of piracy and sea robbery in Southeast Asia.”

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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 (14 Asian countries, 5 European countries, Australia, the USA) 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>