

Opening Address by Mr. Akira Matsuda, Chairman,
Japan Ship Technology Research Association (JSTRA)
at the 7th ASEF (November 7, 2013)

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

I'm Akira Matsuda from the Japan Ship Technology Research Association.

It's a great honor to have the opportunity of addressing you on behalf of the organizers of the 7th Asian Shipbuilding Experts' Forum (ASEF).

I'd like to extend my sincere appreciation and a warm welcome to our attendees from a number of Asian countries – China, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand – as well as from across Japan.

This Kobe event represents the third time that Japan has hosted the ASEF meeting following the first forum in Tokyo and the fourth in Kyoto.

The Port of Kobe has long been known as a favorable natural port with deep water due to the city's proximity to the mountains and sea and the resulting steep terrain.

As soon as Japan began its process of modernization, the Port of Kobe was opened in 1868 as an important junction of sea routes connecting the country to the rest of the world. The port has since hosted domestic and foreign vessels of all sizes, and Kobe has developed strongly as an international maritime city with thriving shipping, shipbuilding and other industries.

Unfortunately, the Great Hanshin Earthquake of 1995 devastated port facilities and other infrastructure elements as well as various parts of the city. However, thanks to the generous support of people around the world and the dedicated efforts and tenacity of local residents, Kobe has rebuilt itself.

I'm very pleased to welcome you all to the 7th ASEF here in Kobe, which has resolutely reconstructed itself to become a truly international maritime city.

Looking back on the path we've traveled, we see that almost six years have passed since ASEF's establishment. During this time, exchanges and mutual understanding among Asian shipbuilders have developed well. I believe that ASEF discussions on timely

topics such as ship safety and marine environment protection have dramatically enhanced the technical expertise of everyone involved.

These activities have attracted considerable interest and attention from the maritime industry around the world. Today, we are highly regarded as shipbuilding experts and representatives of marine technology by Asian maritime organizations, including the Asian Shipowners' Forum (ASF) and the Association of Asian Classification Societies (ACS), and global maritime organizations such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS).

I thank you and respect you all, as I believe this outcome wouldn't have been possible without your hard work and dedication.

Based on this achievement, we must work to establish a new ASEF as an international organization so that we have more say in IMO affairs and enhanced communicative ability.

Asia is indisputably at the center of the world's shipbuilding industry, as more than 90% of all ships are built here.

However, our valuable shipbuilding experience and technical expertise are not fully reflected in the development of IMO technical regulations.

We assembled in Tokyo six years ago to address this situation and support the ASEF goal of giving Asian shipbuilders a greater say in the development of reasonable IMO regulations, and have since worked toward this shared goal.

The tide is at its highest today.

Now is the time for Asian shipbuilders to unite their efforts, make decisions and take action to establish an NGO in order to obtain consultative status with IMO and increase their influence.

I hope the earnest and lively discussions we have at the 7th ASEF will prompt us to take a further step toward establishing an NGO.

Finally, I'm confident that our efforts will bear fruit and that the voices of Asian

shipbuilders will soon be heard loud and clear in international maritime society. I wish you the best of health and prosperity in the years ahead. Thank you.