

Speech by Mr. Atsuo Shibota,  
Director-General of Trade Control Department,  
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry,  
Government of Japan

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the great honor of being here today to sign the Statement on Strengthening Bilateral Export Control Cooperation between the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan (METI) and Singapore Customs. On behalf of METI, I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Ng How Yue, Director-General of Singapore Customs, and all the other persons concerned. Before signing the statement, let me say a few words.

In the present international situation, the development and proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) pose a genuine threat to our common security. Under such circumstances, preventing the proliferation of WMD and related items and technology is becoming increasingly important for the sustainable development of the Asian region, even more than it was during the Cold War.

Unfortunately, procurement activities by countries of concern have not lessened, and indeed are becoming more and more cunning through the use of false front companies and circumvention via a third country. There are limits, however, to the effective prevention of such procurement if each country implements export controls independently. Therefore, it is more important than ever for every country and region in Asia to cooperate to prevent proliferation of concern.

This recognition has been shared with every country and region in Asia, as it was agreed to adopt and enforce effective export controls at the 11<sup>th</sup> APEC Economic Leader's Meeting in Bangkok in October 2003, and also at the Japan-ASEAN Commemorative Summit in December 2003. METI has been positively conducting outreach activities, such as holding the Asian Export Control Policy Dialogue and the Asian Export Control Seminar.

Since the security situation is changing from day to day, it is essential for

every country and region to make continuous efforts to eliminate the threat of WMD proliferation.

Based on this understanding, METI is willing to strengthen cooperation on export controls with countries and regions in Asia. Cooperation with countries and regions which have developed export control systems related to WMD will be strengthened first.

Singapore is one of the major transshipment countries in the Asian region, and an important partner for Japan. It is necessary for both countries to maintain a close relationship for sustainable development.

Therefore, Singapore Customs and METI have agreed on a common policy of export control related to WMD and formulated the joint statement, which includes the following Action Plan:

- METI, in cooperation with Singapore Customs, conducts outreach activities such as holding seminars and other programs for capacity-building for export control in Asian countries and regions,
- METI may dispatch experts on Commodity Identification Technology in order to strengthen the enforcement of export controls by Singapore Customs.
- Each authority will provide contact points that are reachable in emergencies.

I think that it is important not simply to express our will, but also to conduct specific activities in accordance with this statement. In conclusion, I hope for the establishment of a secure trade environment, so that our mutual efforts will bear much fruit, and for the expansion of our export control policy to other countries and regions in Asia.

Thank you very much for your attention.