

## **Annex A: About the Co-operative Mechanism**

The Co-operative Mechanism on Safety of Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS) was officially launched during the Singapore-IMO Meeting in September 2007 in Singapore. The launch was a culmination of a series of three meetings organized under the International Maritime Organization (IMO)'s "Protection of Vital Shipping Lanes" initiative. The meetings recognised the strategic importance of the SOMS for regional and global seaborne trade and economy, and the need to ensure that they remain safe and open to shipping at all times.

The establishment of the Co-operative Mechanism represented a historic breakthrough and landmark achievement in co-operation between States bordering a strait used for international navigation and user States, as well as other interested stakeholders, under Article 43 of United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Co-operative Mechanism re-affirms that sovereignty and primary responsibility over navigational safety and environmental protection in the SOMS lies with the littoral States. It also recognizes the interests of user States and stakeholders and the role they could play in respect of the SOMS, and that such co-operation should be on a voluntary basis.

The Co-operative Mechanism consists of 3 components which are inter-connected and complementary, namely

- (i) Co-operation Forum that serves as a platform for dialogue between the littoral States and the international maritime community on issues of common interest in the SOMS;
- (ii) Project Co-ordination Committee that co-ordinates the implementation of projects to promote safety of navigation and environmental protection in the SOMS; and
- (iii) Aids to Navigation Fund which receives direct financial contributions from the international maritime community to maintain critical marine navigational aids in the SOMS.