

January 12, 2006

**Opening Address of Minister Kitagawa at the Ministerial Conference on International
Transport Security**
(Provisional)

It is a great honor for us to hold the opening ceremony for the Ministerial Conference on International Transport Security here today with so many overseas participants in the conference. Let me welcome all of you to Tokyo, members of the delegations of various countries, Dr. Kotaite of the ICAO, Mr. Mitropoulos of the IMO, and Mr. Mikuriya of the WCO, participating in the conference.

International society has closely cooperated in taking measures to combat terrorism. Nevertheless, despite such efforts to date, the potential threat of terrorism has not completely disappeared. Last year, on July 7th, a horrible terrorist attack against the underground and bus network occurred in London. We should never forget such acts of terrorism that negate the system of modern society and must remain determined to stand firmly against terrorists as members of contemporary civilized society.

Since international collaboration is particularly important to ensure international transport security, we have reached the stage where the ministers in charge of transport security of the primary countries from various regions, who play leading roles in this field, are gathering to attend this world's first conference to lead future international efforts. Let me express my deepest appreciation to all of you from many countries, who have cooperated for more than a year in pursuing this new attempt.

We should not lose this important opportunity in order to enhance transport security. In addition, this conference is attracting the attention of international society. It could be described as a kind of our obligation, to agree on a roadmap for future measures to be taken in the area of transport security and transmit to the world a firm political message that we continue our fight against terrorism.

The three main themes of this conference are "Overcoming existing vulnerabilities", "Assisting states that have not yet fully addressed security threats" and "Balancing security with smooth and efficient transport". I strongly hope a positive, wide-ranging and lively discussion will arise.

Now, let me conclude this opening address in the expectation that this conference will establish collaborative and cooperative relations among the ministers in charge of transport security and take further concrete steps through international partnerships and cooperation. Thank you.