

**CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY REPORT  
OF  
THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM  
EXPERTS AND EMINENT PERSONS  
DILI, TIMOR-LESTE, 27-28 JANUARY 2011**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Pursuant to the decision of the 17<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held in Hanoi, Viet Nam, on 23 July 2009, the Fifth Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) was held in Dili, Timor-Leste, from 27-28 January 2011. The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Marciano da Silva, Director-General for Cooperation and Regional Integration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste, and Gen. Boonsrang Niumpradit, EEP of Thailand.
2. The Meeting was attended by EEPs and representatives from ARF Participants except Bangladesh, the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam. Representatives from the ARF Unit of the ASEAN Secretariat and the United Nations were also present. The list of delegates is attached as **Annex 1**.

**OPENING SESSION**

3. In his opening remarks, Mr. Marciano da Silva, welcomed the delegates of the 5<sup>th</sup> ARF EEPs Meeting. He emphasized that ARF should reflect on ASEAN contribution in the past decade and develop what has been accomplished. He reminded the Meeting of the importance to develop robust forms of communication and dialogue in developing preventive diplomacy (PD). The welcoming remarks appear as **Annex 2**.
4. At the opening session, Gen. Boonsrang Niumpradit commended Timor-Leste's commitment to promoting greater trust and confidence in the Asia Pacific by hosting its first ARF meeting. Reflecting the ARF Vision Statement and the Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement, the convening of the Meeting is a manifestation of Timor-Leste's forward looking policy which deserves full support from ARF Participants. He stated that the ARF is recognizing the importance of preventive diplomacy in tackling new security challenges and promoting regional peace and security and encouraged all participants to actively discuss the issue. The welcoming remarks appear as **Annex 3**.
5. In his keynote address, H. E. Dr. Zacarias Albano da Costa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste highlighted Timor-Leste's efforts towards

admission to full membership in ASEAN. He stressed that a large amount of effort has been invested through both pragmatic and proactive approaches to intensify Timor-Leste's engagement with the Southeast Asian region. As part of its commitments and efforts, he informed the Meeting that Timor-Leste has accredited Ambassadors to all ASEAN Member States, achieved full membership of the ARF in 2005 and acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) in 2007. Timor-Leste has conceived a roadmap to be member of ASEAN. Dr. da Costa encouraged the ARF EEPs to find concrete ways to implement preventive diplomacy which can be used by countries in the region to promote peace and security in the region. The keynote address appears as **Annex 4**.

## **PLENARY SESSION 1**

6. The Meeting adopted the Agenda and Programme which appear as **Annex 5**.
7. The Co-Chairs clarified on the timeline and procedures to follow up on the outcomes of the Meeting. The Co-Chairs also briefed on the Meeting proceeding, emphasizing that the discussion would be conducted in an open, informal and frank manner. The Meeting would consist of plenary and discussion group formats. The Co-Chairs also informed the Meeting that the representatives from the United Nations were invited as resource persons in the Meeting based on ARF procedures and past practice, taking into consideration the experience of the United Nations in preventive diplomacy.
8. The Meeting considered all three agenda items together in the various plenary sessions and Discussion group meetings. Presentations were made by participants from Timor-Leste, Thailand, United States, the EU, China, Russia, Australia, New Zealand, India, Singapore and Indonesia. Their presentations appear as **Annex 6, 7 and 8**.
9. Timor-Leste reminded the Meeting on the proposal initially made at the 4<sup>th</sup> ARF EEPs Meeting in Bali in 2009 to conduct a fact finding/observation mission for the forthcoming elections in Timor-Leste in 2012. The Meeting took note of the briefing by Mr. Tomas Cabral of the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE) on the preparation for the upcoming election in 2012. Timor-Leste stated that since the 2007 elections, which saw voter turn-out in excess of 80 percent resulting in strong legal and administrative frameworks, democracy has been consolidated and has many experiences to share. Timor-Leste also emphasized the role of the international election observers, particularly the United Nations as well as representatives from the foreign embassies, particularly in providing

recommendations to the government. Details of the presentation appear as **Annex 9**.

10. The Meeting recalled the evolution of discussions and recommendations on preventive diplomacy in the ARF. On this note, the Meeting took note of the “Non-Table”: Evolution of Ideas on PD Measures circulated by Thailand (**Annex 10**) which provided a reference for the discussions. The Meeting agreed that it is timely and relevant for the EEPs to assist the Track I to develop an ARF Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy, as mandated by the ARF Foreign Ministers. The Meeting recognized that work on PD will have critical importance on the future work of the ARF, particularly in generating concrete actions in response to regional security challenges.
11. The Meeting recognized that preventive diplomacy is not the only venue for the peaceful resolution of disputes and that there needs to be balance between consideration of preventive diplomacy principles and norms on the one hand and practical measures on the other. The Meeting considered that while the key principles of the ARF such as consensus, voluntarism and relevant principles as contained in the UN Charter and the TAC apply to implementation of preventive diplomacy in the ARF, the ARF needs to continue moving forward to take concrete actions to maintain ARF relevance in responding to regional security challenges.
12. In the context of assessing the evolution of preventive diplomacy in the ARF, the Meeting was of the view that the commitment to preventive diplomacy needs to be further strengthened, in view of a number of emerging disputes amongst ARF participants in recent years. The role of the state in implementing preventive diplomacy, the operational procedures to activate preventive diplomacy, the concrete role of the EEPs in preventive diplomacy in the ARF, should be further developed. In support of preventive diplomacy, capacity building and training are also essential elements. The Meeting concurred that political will remains critical to the future of ARF preventive diplomacy.
13. The Meeting noted that the ARF Track I was working on a draft ARF PD Work Plan to be submitted to the ARF Ministers for consideration in July 2011 and had an exchange of views on ideas that may be incorporated into such a Work Plan, recognizing that amendments to such a Work Plan would be channeled through Track I. The Meeting was informed that further discussions on such a Work Plan would be undertaken at the ARF Intersessional Group Meeting on CBMs and PD in Sydney on 7-8 April 2011.
14. The Meeting took note of the experiences from other regional organizations, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in

Europe (OSCE) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The Meeting noted several examples of PD measures and institutions that implemented PD in the OSCE as well as the fact that while there are no official PD measures within the framework of the SCO, there were other transparency measures with verification based on legal agreements that could contribute to PD.

15. The ARF Unit of the ASEAN Secretariat briefed the Meeting on the past decisions and recommendations pertaining to the role of the ARF Unit in the implementation of ARF preventive diplomacy. The ARF Unit reported that two new staff members have been recruited to oversee ARF matters. The ARF Unit's briefing paper appears as **Annex 11**.

## **DISCUSSION GROUPS**

### **Discussion Group 1 – Ideas regarding regional preventive diplomacy mechanisms**

16. Ambassador Mushahid Ali, EEP of Singapore and Prof. Ralph Cossa, EEP of United States co-facilitated the discussions in Discussion Group 1.
17. The Discussion Group had an in-depth, interactive and concrete discussion on how to move towards PD in the ARF, stressing the importance of building on the work of the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ARF EEPs in Bali in 2009, particularly the recommendations made on elements for an ARF PD Work Plan.
18. The Discussion Group noted that this was the first time that the ARF EEPs had discussed the same issue in two consecutive meetings which provided for continuity and the potential to build-on previous recommendations. It recognized that there were other means for the peaceful settlement of disputes prescribed in Article 33 of the UN Charter such as conciliation and negotiations and that these could be considered as part of PD. The Discussion Group further recommended that the priority areas of focus of preventive diplomacy should cover traditional and non-traditional sources of conflict, and that an effective PD implementation mechanism should be developed.
19. The Discussion Group discussed the issue of early warning and observed that a regional centre for early warning may be premature at this stage. Nevertheless, it noted that there were entities such as the EEPs, CSCAP, ASEAN-ISIS or national institutes could play a role in early warning until such time that a regional centre could be established by the ARF.

20. The Discussion Group made the following recommendations:
- 20.1 It recommended that the priority areas of focus of preventive diplomacy should cover traditional and non-traditional sources of conflict, and that an effective PD implementation mechanism should be developed.
  - 20.2 Recognizing that the ARF as an entity could be perceived as a mechanism promoting PD, it was reflected that the ARF and the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) could, in addition to their existing goals and priorities, further explore ways to contribute effectively to preventive diplomacy. Furthermore, the ADMM-Plus should be encouraged to convene annually so that there would be two opportunities a year for Participants to engage on PD issues at the Ministerial level, one at the ARF and the other at the ADMM-Plus.
  - 20.3 Regarding the elections in Timor-Leste in 2012, Timor-Leste would develop a concept paper to submit to Track I on what elements should be contained in its proposal for the ARF to participate in elections monitoring, in correlation with the United Nations, focusing on: i) visiting programmes for Timor-Leste election officials to observe elections in ARF Participants; ii) an initiative for an observer team comprising EEPs to be established to observe the 2012 Timor-Leste elections; iii) a structured evaluation process to highlight the lessons learned from such observation missions. The EEPs hoped that this concept could be submitted to ARF Ministers in July 2011 for consideration.
  - 20.4 In view of the growing importance of maritime security issues in the region, it was proposed that the EEPs would initiate discussions on this issue, beginning with the drafting of a discussion paper exploring Cooperative Maritime Security Concepts by a voluntary group of EEPs with expertise on maritime security matters. The discussion paper could serve as an early EEPs contribution to an ARF Work Plan on Maritime Security which was expected to be submitted to ARF Ministers in July 2011 for consideration.
  - 20.5 EEPs would make contributions on the issue of the ARF Annual Security Outlook (ASO) by suggesting additional ways to make the ASO more substantive, allow for better comparison of data, facilitate further analysis. It was suggested that more ARF participants should contribute to the ASO since at present, only 16 of 27 contribute submissions to the ASO.

- 20.6 Improving capacities for PD would be undertaken through activities such as strengthening the capabilities of the ARF Unit and enhanced exchange of ideas and best practices with relevant regional organizations such as the OSCE and the SCO, including through the ARF Chair and the ARF Unit.
- 20.7 The EEPs underscored the importance of the recommendations of their 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting in Bali in 2009, including those related to enhancing the role of EEPs, and requested that these also be considered by ARF Track I. The EEPs emphasized that they would continue to make contributions to facilitate further progress on PD in the ARF through appropriate interaction modalities with Track I. In this connection, EEPs would explore establishing thematic sub-groups, as appropriate; to advance discussions on important PD issues of shared interests. Furthermore, EEPs should be given ample time to prepare for discussions on issues assigned by ARF Ministers by providing agendas for EEPs meetings well in advance and encouraging participants to nominate EEPs with the necessary expertise to discuss those agendas.

### **Discussion Group 2 – Future direction of the ARF in the evolving regional security architecture**

21. Ambassador Tan Sri Kadir Mohammad, EEP of Malaysia and Prof. Paul Dibb, EEP of Australia co-facilitated the discussions in Discussion Group 2.
22. The Discussion Group had an extensive discussion on the future of the ARF and its role in the emerging regional architecture which comprised overlapping and multi-layered regional arrangements, reflecting the diversity of the Asia-Pacific region. It recognized the ASEAN centrality of the regional architecture.
23. The Discussion Group noted that the ARF needs to be cognizant of new arrangements like the ADMM-Plus and the East Asia Summit (EAS) and continue to adapt itself and contribute effectively to the evolving regional architecture, in fulfilling the goals set out in the ARF Vision Statement and Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement. At the same time, the Discussion Group noted that, in view of the growing comfort level within the ARF, its 18 year history and other comparative advantages, the ARF should be able to make value-added contributions to the region's peace and stability.
24. The Discussion Group made the following recommendations:

- 24.1 Recognizing that civilian-military interaction was one of the strengths of the ARF, it was suggested that civilian-military cooperation in the ARF be geared towards strengthening the ASO and cooperation in all of the ARF's existing priority areas.
- 24.2 The EEPs should develop a paper on the future role of the ARF in the context of new developments affecting the regional architecture. Further ideas on how to develop synergies between the ARF, ADMM-Plus and the expanded EAS would also be explored.

### **PLENARY SESSIONS II-III**

25. The Meeting took note of the briefings by the Co-Facilitators on the outcomes of the Discussion Groups, concurred with their recommendations and agreed to submit them for further consideration by ARF Track I.

### **PLENARY SESSION IV**

26. The Meeting made the following additional recommendations to be considered further by ARF Track I:
  - 26.1 The Meeting noted that CSCAP and ASEAN-ISIS delivered inputs to ARF Track I meetings and thus recommended that a representative of the ARF EEP, likewise, present outcomes of EEP meetings to ARF Track I. Given Australia's hosting of the ARF ISG on CBMs and PD in Sydney in April 2011, it was suggested that Prof. Paul Dibb, Australia's EEP representative, report to this ISG Meeting.
  - 26.2 The Meeting agreed that future EEPs meetings should, as a general rule, be convened in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of January in order to facilitate long-term planning. The actual dates for such meetings would be coordinated by future Co-Chairs with the assistance of the ARF Unit.
  - 26.3 The Meeting suggested that, in order to develop continuity in the EEPs contribution to the ARF process, it would continue to discuss PD issues, amongst others. In this connection, the themes and agenda would be developed well in advance of the meetings by future Co-Chairs with the assistance of the ARF Unit.
  - 26.4 The Meeting recommended that the full version of the "Joint Study on Best Practices and Lessons Learnt in Preventive

Diplomacy” by the Pacific Forum CSIS and the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) be publicized.

27. The Meeting noted the Co-Chairs’ Summary Report which would be submitted to the ARF ISG on CBM and PD through the appropriate channels.
28. The Meeting noted that the Co-Chairs of the next meeting of the ARF EEPs would be designated in due course.
29. The Meeting expressed appreciation to the Co-Chairs for facilitating a frank and open discussion. The Meeting also thanked the Governments of Timor-Leste and of the Kingdom of Thailand for the excellent arrangements and hospitality extended to all participants. The Meeting congratulated the Government of Timor-Leste for successfully hosting its first ARF meeting, reflecting its firm commitment to contribute to the ARF and to peace and stability in the region.

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