

**REPORT OF THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM
DEFENCE OFFICIALS' DIALOGUE
PHNOM PENH, 24 MAY 2012**

1. The ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue was held in Phnom Penh on 24 May 2012. The Dialogue was chaired by Major General Lay Chenda, Director of ASEAN Affairs Department, General Department of Policy and Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defence of the Kingdom of Cambodia. Representatives from the Ministry of Defence of all ARF participants except Bangladesh, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, and Timor-Leste attended the Dialogue. Representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat were also present. The List of Participants appears as **ANNEX A**.

AGENDA ITEM 1: OPENING REMARKS

2. In his opening remarks, Lt. Gen. Nem Sowath, Director General for General Department of Policy and Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defence of the Kingdom of Cambodia highlighted that non-traditional security is common to all ARF participants and is shaping foreign and defence policies toward a more comprehensive security orientation and approach. He touched on existing territorial disputes of which adherence to international norms and laws should be maintained. He underscored the importance of the ARF DOD in linking foreign policy with defence policy since foreign policy without security dimension is less effective while security policy without strategic guidance is dangerous and directionless. While maintaining confidence-building measures, the ARF DOD also supports the implementation of preventive diplomacy. He underlined that the ARF should create regional mechanisms to reduce the adversity of conflicts in the region and focus more on people-centred approach in promoting security cooperation. He also shared the outcomes of the recent ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting, among others the adoption of the Concept Paper in the Review of the Frequency of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), the notation of the proposals to develop an ASEAN Security Master Plan, and the Concept Paper on ASEAN Civil War-Free Zone. He emphasised that synergy between the ARF, the ADMM-Plus and the expanded East Asia Summit (EAS) should continue to maintain ASEAN centrality. The opening remarks appear as **ANNEX B**.

AGENDA ITEM 2: ADOPTION OF AGENDA

3. The Dialogue adopted the Provisional Agenda which appears as **ANNEX C**.

AGENDA ITEM 3: ENHANCING MILITARY PRACTICAL COOPERATION ON HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF (HADR)

4. The Dialogue observed that practical cooperation in increasing roles of the military personnel and assets has been addressed. The Dialogue recognised the number of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) activities undertaken in various fora, both at the national and regional levels. The Dialogue viewed that while this demonstrates the commitment of countries in the region to better prepare for disasters, this situation might pose a challenge to the ARF participants, taking into account the limited resources. Therefore, it is imperative that the ARF should consider more combination of these activities in the future, with the ARF Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement. The Dialogue also emphasised the importance of better coordination and information sharing across the regional fora in which the ARF participants are involved.

5. The Dialogue also took note of potential overlaps between these activities and stressed the need to coordinate, synchronise, and synergise HADR efforts through information sharing and mutual briefing. The Dialogue touched on the legal mechanism necessary for the deployment of assets and swift response in the event of disasters. The Dialogue noted the proposal on the Rapid Disaster Relief (RDR) Agreement, proposed by the United States, for submission of the ARF SOM on 26 May 2012. The Dialogue welcomed the support by Lao PDR, Singapore and the Philippines in advancing the RDR proposal. The Dialogue also welcomed the convening of the 3rd ARF Seminar on Laws and Regulation in the Participation in the International Disaster Relief by the Armed Forces in Beijing on 11-13 June 2012.

6. The Dialogue viewed that while HADR is still considered to be the primary task of civilian agencies instead of the military, there is a need for a rapid response by military forces in relief and recovery efforts due to the unique attributes of the military in providing critical emergency response and assets within a short time frame.

7. The Dialogue noted the success the ARF Disaster Relief Exercise (ARF DiREx) held in Manado on 14-19 March 2011. The Dialogue welcomed the preparation for the next ARF Disaster Relief Exercise (ARF DiREx) to be co-chaired by the Republic of Korea and an ASEAN Member State in 2013. The Dialogue continued to encourage nomination of an ASEAN Member State to co-chair the ARF DiREx.

8. Cambodia, Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Singapore, Canada, the Philippines, and the United States presented their national experiences. The presentations appear as **ANNEXES D**.

AGENDA ITEM 4: COOPERATION ON PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

9. The Dialogue viewed that modern peacekeeping operations require an integrated approach that includes a range of measures including conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and post-conflict reconstruction.

10. The Dialogue recognised basic principles to be followed by peacekeeping forces including respect for the sovereignty, integrity and liberty of host nation, good sportsmanship with national agencies and local population at the theater, cooperation with participating nations throughout the operations, respect of the host nation's norms and culture, and clear understanding of international humanitarian law.

11. The Dialogue identified several challenges in the deployment of peacekeeping missions such as proficiency in foreign languages, commitment for long-term deployment, and selecting the right personnel for the right tasks.

12. The Dialogue discussed the growing impact and role of regional peacekeeping forces such as deployed by the African Union (AU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), and the interaction and cooperation between United Nations peacekeeping operations and regional peacekeeping operations.

13. The Dialogue took note of the following recommendations on enhancing cooperation on peacekeeping operations:

- Strengthen cooperation and exchanges in peacekeeping training.
- Establish a mechanism for experience sharing through, among others, regional peacekeeping seminars or symposiums and exchange of visits.
- Explore possibilities of bilateral and multilateral peacekeeping exercises, and conduct peacekeeping exercises when necessary.

14. Cambodia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Thailand, China, India, and Sri Lanka presented their national views. The presentations appear as **ANNEXES E**.

AGENDA ITEM 5: IMPLICATION OF REGIONAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURES

15. The Dialogue was of the view that regional security architecture provides avenues for information sharing, socialisation of new approaches of security, and promotion of trust and confidence, and thus contributes further to reducing the security threat. The outcomes of such a network will lead to connectivity among the people. The challenges at hand are linking the rules-based with the human-based approach in developing this architecture, coping with strategic competition between and among Major Powers, and synergising existing regional mechanisms. Another element of the regional architecture is the Track II with their various activities, such as Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI), and ASEAN Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS). The Dialogue underscored that the centrality of ASEAN is key to maintaining the equilibrium of the current regional security architecture.

16. The Dialogue identified areas of ARF cooperation which can be synergised with ongoing cooperative activities in other mechanisms. The synergy and complementarity among these mechanisms should be the focus of future direction of the ARF. The Dialogue recalled the discussion at the ARF DOD in Wellington on 7 May 2012 which suggested possible ways to link the ARF and the ADMM-Plus, including through mutual participation in each other's activities. Some participants also suggested that the ASEAN Secretariat act as a conduit of information sharing among the ARF DOD and the ADMM-Plus by presenting updates in each forum about the other's progress.

17. The Dialogue recognised the rapid change of the regional security architecture, citing the expanded East Asia Summit (EAS) and the development of the ADMM-Plus. The Dialogue viewed that the achievements made by the ARF in the past eighteen years should provide an advantage to the regional security architecture; as such it will be inept to consider starting a new mechanism. The Dialogue observed that the ARF has been progressive according to the phase comfortable to all participants.

18. The Dialogue noted the proposal by Cambodia to develop an ASEAN Master Plan on Security Connectivity which will link all existing security cooperation mechanisms in the region.

19. Cambodia, India, the United States, Brunei Darussalam, and Singapore presented their national views. The presentations appear as **ANNEXES F.**

AGENDA ITEM 6: OTHER MATTERS

20. No issues were discussed on this agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM 7: CLOSING REMARKS

21. In his closing remarks, Maj. Gen. Lay Chenda summarised the outcomes of the discussion and emphasised that security sector governance and reform along with regional security connectivity are the foundations of sustainable peace and stability. He expressed his appreciation to the ARF participants for their active participation and meaningful contribution to the Dialogue. The closing remarks appear as **ANNEX G.**

22. The Dialogue expressed appreciation to the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia for the effective chairmanship and the warm hospitality extended to all ARF participants.

■ ■ ■