

**ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Support Group  
on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy  
Singapore, 8–10 October 2008  
Co-Chairs' Summary Report**

**Introduction**

1. Pursuant to the decision of the 15th Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held in Singapore on 24 July 2008, the first meeting of the Inter-Sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy (ISG on CBMs and PD) for 2008-2009 was held in Singapore on 8-10 October 2008. The Meeting was co-chaired by Deputy Minister Lee Yong Joon, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT), Republic of Korea (ROK), and Peter Ho, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore.

2. The Meeting was attended by representatives of all ARF countries, except the DPRK. The ARF Unit of the ASEAN Secretariat was also present, as were representatives from CSCAP and ASEAN-ISIS. The ARF Defence Dialogue was held on 8 October. The Agenda of the Meeting is attached as **ANNEX 1**, the Programme of Activities as **ANNEX 2**, and the List of Participants as **ANNEX 3**.

**Exchange of Views on the Regional and International Security Situation, and Non-Traditional Security Issues**

3. The Meeting discussed the overall regional security situation and agreed that in general, the Asia-Pacific region remained generally positive, stable and economically dynamic. ARF Members noted the increasingly constructive cooperation of major actors in the region and the growing number of strategic partnerships. However, a number of traditional and non-traditional security issues such as climate change, food and energy security, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and natural disasters continued to pose serious threats to regional security and required even more multinational cooperation. The ARF was well placed to intensify such cooperation and to take concrete action.

### *Situation in the Korean Peninsula*

4. The Meeting stressed that the peaceful resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue was vital to enhancing stability and security of the region. Taking note of the importance of common efforts of the Six Parties to fully implement the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement, ARF Members urged that the Six-Party Talks move forward in the right direction through resumption and completion of the disablement process in cooperation with the IAEA inspection arrangements and early establishment of an effective verification mechanism, including fulfilment of all obligations under the agreements reached in the Six-Party Talks.

5. The Meeting also emphasised the importance of addressing humanitarian concerns of the international community.

6. The Meeting noted the efforts made by the government of the Republic of Korea to develop the inter-Korean relations for mutual benefit and common prosperity. The Meeting also expressed its expectations for the development of inter-Korean relations through dialogue and cooperation, and hoped for expeditious resumption of the inter-Korean dialogue.

### *Situation in Myanmar*

7. A number of ARF Members expressed their concern about the political and human rights situation in Myanmar. Myanmar briefed the Meeting on its Constitutional Referendum which was held in May 2008 and its plans for General Elections to be held in 2010. The Meeting expressed its strongest support for the UN to continue with its Good Offices mission and appealed to Myanmar to extend to the UN its cooperation. ARF Members called upon Myanmar to release all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and stressed the need for an inclusive process leading to meaningful national reconciliation. ARF Members urged Myanmar to work with the United Nations, ASEAN, and the international community to make meaningful and expeditious progress towards democratic reform and national reconciliation. The Meeting also underlined its support for the efforts to promote good governance, stability and reconstruction in Myanmar.

8. Myanmar briefed the Meeting on the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis and the emergency relief efforts, which were very much appreciated. The

Meeting commended ASEAN for its leadership and unity, and the work of the Tripartite Core Group in response to Cyclone Nargis.

### *Afghanistan*

9. The Meeting expressed its support for on-going international reconstruction and stabilisation efforts in Afghanistan, which was an important international priority. ARF Members agreed that the key to peace could be found in achieving national reconciliation and improving socio-economic conditions in Afghanistan. Canada observed that economic growth was a critical element of sustainable progress in Afghanistan and encouraged ARF Members to explore ways to increase trade with Afghanistan, as a way of fostering regional economic development. The EU briefed on its reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, in particular, its police training efforts to promote law and good governance in the country. The Meeting noted the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan as a result of a resurgent Taliban and Al Qaeda.

10. India briefed the Meeting on the terrorist attack on the Indian Embassy in Kabul on 7 July 2008, and its commitment of US\$1.2 billion to aid in Afghan reconstruction. The Meeting noted Australia, Pakistan and Japan's pledges of US\$600 million, US\$300 million and US\$550 million respectively to Afghanistan. The Meeting also noted Pakistan's efforts and contribution to the stabilisation and reconstruction of Afghanistan. For this purpose, the government of Pakistan has made a commitment of US\$300 million, of which US\$100 million has already been utilised. Japan also briefed the Meeting on the measures taken by it to secure the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Canada noted that Pakistan-Afghanistan cooperation was important for the promotion of long-term stability in the region, and looked forward to continuing its facilitation of the Pakistan-Afghanistan dialogue process on border management and cooperation.

### *Terrorism*

11. Pakistan briefed the Meeting on the deadly terrorist bombing of the Marriot Hotel in Islamabad on 20 September 2008 which caused 53 deaths. As a result of this, their Prime Minister had established a high powered committee to review the disaster management system. At the same time, Pakistan noted that it was a victim of terrorism with over 1200 soldiers killed in action, including several generals. Pakistan informed the Meeting

that the tribes in the border areas had taken action against terrorist elements, and more needs to be done to stabilise Afghanistan economically and institutionally, as well as to control narcotics in order to weaken the Taliban. ARF Members appreciated and welcomed increased support for Pakistan's efforts in counter-terrorism and reaffirmed support for Pakistan's stability, security and democracy. The Meeting also expressed sympathy and condolences to the government of Pakistan for the lost of precious lives in the bombing of the Marriot Hotel.

12. ARF Members expressed concern on the continuing challenge posed by terrorism in the Asia-Pacific region. The Meeting stressed the importance of strengthening regional cooperation including within the context of ARF to improve measures that would effectively combat the threat of terrorism in the Asia-Pacific region. Some ARF Members cited the need for better information and intelligence sharing to fine tune regional and global efforts. ARF Members also welcomed various counterterrorism initiatives and programs presented by Indonesia and Japan and reaffirmed the central role of the United Nations in the fight against terrorism in the region. Some delegations also stressed the importance of dealing with the root causes of terrorism and tackling the factors contributing to support for, and recruitment into, terrorism. The Meeting noted however, that no goal or grievance could justify acts of terrorism. Many ARF Members underlined the crucial nature of the fight against terrorism, which required not only the adoption of international and national laws and the improvement of law-enforcement efforts but also better regional and international cooperation.

#### *Democracy in Fiji*

13. New Zealand briefed the Meeting and voiced concern on the current situation in Fiji after the 2006 military coup, and expressed disappointment at the lack of progress towards holding elections in March 2009. New Zealand called for regional and international pressure for Fiji to adhere to its undertakings and timetable to return to democratic rule. The Meeting hoped that progress could be made to improve bilateral relations with ARF Members.

#### *Climate Change and Food Security*

14. The Meeting noted that adverse global climate change would become a significant catalyst for existing security threats as damage to infrastructure

and access to basic necessities would impede disaster relief efforts and compromise national security and stability. The Meeting noted the ARF Seminar on International Security Implications of Climate-related events and trends, to be held in February 2009 and co-chaired by the EU and Cambodia. Korea informed the Meeting on the project of East Asian Climate Partnership to counter climate change in East Asia. The size of the fund would be US\$200 million over five years, a portion of which will be allocated to aid developing countries adapt to climate change. On food security, the EU is considering an additional EUR 1 billion over the next two years to help increase food production and to protect the most vulnerable population in the developing countries.

### *Iran*

15. ARF Members encouraged Iran to extend its full cooperation to the IAEA and resolve all outstanding issues by fully implementing the requirements of previous Board resolutions and the requirements of UNSC Resolutions 1696 (2006), 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008) and 1835 (2008). ARF Members noted with concern that Iran's continued defiance of all three UNSC Resolutions and response to the P5+1 offer to start negotiations does not reassure the international community that Iran's nuclear power programme is for purely peaceful purposes. As such, the Meeting expressed hope that Iran will work with the UNSC and IAEA towards a constructive, peaceful and sustainable long term solution towards Iran's international obligations.

### *Sino-Japan Relations*

16. Japan briefed the Meeting on the improving state of Sino-Japan relations and the importance attached to this relationship by Prime Minister Taro Aso's Cabinet. China acknowledged the improved relations and expressed its willingness to push for long-term and stable development between the two countries.

## **Briefing by Track II**

17. ASEAN-ISIS and CSCAP briefed the Meeting on "Track 2 Processes at a Crossroads: ASEAN ISIS and its Future" and the "Report of the Co-Chairs of the Council for Security-Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific"

(ANNEXES 4 – 8) respectively. In particular, the Meeting commended CSCAP for its efforts in conducting a comprehensive study on Preventive Diplomacy. Singapore also informed Track II that the Meeting would consider the study and discuss the key follow-ups of the Study on Preventive Diplomacy.

### **Voluntary Background Briefings**

18. The Meeting noted Australia's briefing on the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ANNEX 9). Japan also briefed on the latter's involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq.

### **Review and Consideration of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and Preventive Diplomacy**

#### List of ARF Track I Activities for the Inter-Sessional Year 2008-2009

- a. ARF Workshop on Stabilization and Reconstruction Issues, Bangkok, 10-12 September 2008 [co-chairs: Thailand, US]
- b. ARF Inter-Sessional Support Group Meeting on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy (ISG on CBMs and PD), Singapore, 8-10 October 2008 [co-chairs: Singapore, ROK]
- c. 3<sup>rd</sup> ARF EEPs Meeting, Beijing, 13-15 October 2008 [co-chairs: China, Vietnam]
- d. 12<sup>th</sup> ARF Heads of Defense/Universities/Colleges/Institutions Meeting (HDUCIM), Islamabad, 21-23 October 2008 [Pakistan]
- e. ARF Conference on Terrorism and the Internet, Indonesia, 6-8 November 2008 [co-chairs: Australia, Indonesia]
- f. Follow-up event to the Chennai Maritime Security Training Programme, India, 17-22 November 2008 [India]
- g. 8<sup>th</sup> ARF ISM on Disaster Relief (ISM on DR), Banda Aceh, 5-6 December 2008 [co-chairs: Indonesia, EU]

- h. ARF Workshop on Anti-Money Laundering, Kuala Lumpur, 2008 [co-chairs: Malaysia, tbc]
- i. Inaugural ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security, in Surabaya/Medan, 12-13 February 2009 [co-chairs: Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand]
- j. ARF Seminar on Measures to enhance Maritime Security, TBA, first half of 2009 [co-chairs: EU, Indonesia]
- k. ARF Inter-Sessional Support Group Meeting on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy (ISG on CBMs and PD), ROK, April 2009 [co-chairs: ROK, Singapore]
- l. Peacekeeping Course for ARF Member Countries, New Delhi, 18-22 May 2009 [co-chairs: India, tbc]
- m. ARF Seminar on International Security Implications of Climate-related events and trends, TBA, first part of 2009 [co-chairs: EU, Cambodia]
- n. ARF Workshop on Laboratory Bio-Safety and Bio-Security, TBA, first half 2009 [co-chairs: US, tbc]
- o. 7<sup>th</sup> ARF ISM on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CTTC), Viet Nam, first half of 2009 [co-chairs: Bangladesh, ROK, Viet Nam]
- p. ARF Seminar on Laws and Regulations on Disaster Relief Cooperation, Beijing, first half of 2009 [co-chairs: China, tbc]
- q. ARF Senior Officials' Meeting, Thailand, first half of 2009 [Thailand]
- r. 16<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Regional Forum, Thailand, first half of 2009 [Thailand]
- s. Inaugural Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, TBA, first half of 2009 [co-chairs: US, China, Singapore]

- t. ARF Voluntary Demonstration of Response on Disaster Relief, the Philippines, 2009 [co-chairs: US, Philippines]
- u. ARF Seminar on the Law of the Sea Convention, the Philippines, TBA [co-chairs: Philippines, EU]
- v. 3<sup>rd</sup> ARF Peacekeeping Experts' Meeting, TBA [co-chairs: Japan, tbc]

### **Briefing on the Outcome of the ARF Defence Dialogue (DD)**

19. Brigadier-General Gary Ang, Deputy Secretary (Policy), Ministry of Defence of Singapore, briefed the Meeting on the outcome of the ARF ISG on CBMs and PD Defence Dialogue, which took place on 8 October 2008. The Dialogue was co-chaired by Choi Ik-Bong, Ministry of National Defence, Republic of Korea. The DD discussed the transnational threat of terrorism and reiterated the importance of increased cooperation in peacekeeping. ARF Members shared views on current challenges being faced by ARF defence establishments and discussed how they can add further value to the ARF process in the future. Attached as **ANNEX 10** is the Co-Chairs' Summary report of the DD.

### **Future Direction of ARF**

#### **Follow-up from the 15<sup>th</sup> ARF**

20. The Meeting took note of the substantive discussion on disaster cooperation at the 15th ARF, where consensus was forged that more needed to be done in disaster management and relief among ARF member countries. ARF Members agreed that the ARF Review Paper was a document which allowed the ARF member countries to undertake a comprehensive review of the ARF's achievements and processes, identified challenges within the ARF, and provided some important recommendations on how the ARF should move forward.

## **ARF Shepherds on Disaster Relief**

21. Indonesia briefed the Meeting on the work of the Shepherds Group on Disaster Relief. The Shepherd Group was one of the recommendations tabled in the Co-Chairs' Summary Report of the ARF Workshop on civil Military Cooperation held in the Philippines, September 2005. The purpose of the Shepherd Group was to invite volunteer countries to coordinate the implementation of the recommendations of various ARF Meetings on Disaster Relief. ARF Members of the open-ended ARF Shepherd Group met regularly at the sidelines of the existing ARF meetings. The Meeting commended the work of the Shepherds Group on Disaster Relief. Although the Shepherds Group functioned as an informal grouping, the Meeting agreed that it had played a significant role in the coordination of various recommendations in ARF meetings in disaster relief. The Meeting noted Indonesia's suggestion that the other ISMs consider convening Shepherds Groups.

## **AHA Centre**

22. Indonesia briefed the Meeting on the work of the AHA Centre, which operates under the ambit of the National Disaster Management Coordinating Board of Indonesia. The Presentation on the AHA Centre appears as **ANNEX 11**. The interim AHA Centre is projected to be completed by December 2008. Funding for the facilities in the interim AHA Centre would be provided by the Indonesian government and other donors. The AHA Centre would serve as the nerve centre to gather, monitor, analyse and disseminate information regarding disaster situations in the region through and to national focal points, and where necessary, related UN agencies and international organisations. It would also serve to facilitate joint emergency response during disaster situations, and compile the post-emergency deployment report. The Meeting encouraged the AHA Centre to participate in future ARF activities, especially on projects on disaster cooperation. Although the AHA Centre was presently an ASEAN initiative, it was conceivable in the future that the AHA Centre could also cooperate with other ARF member countries.

## **ARF Strategic Guidance on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response**

23. Australia briefed the Meeting on the ARF Strategic Guidance for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response. The Strategic Guidance appears at **ANNEX 12**. Australia proposed to convene the first meeting of a Working Group comprised initially of the Disaster Relief Shepherd Group, which would also be open to other interested ARF Members, the day prior to the 2008 ARF ISM on Disaster Relief in Bandah Aceh. The Meeting supported the Strategic Guidance through continued training and exercises.

## **Voluntary Demonstration of Response Exercise**

24. Philippines reported to the Meeting that preparations for the Voluntary Demonstration of Response (VDR) Exercise were currently underway. The Presentation on the VDR Exercise is attached at **ANNEX 13**. The VDR Exercise will be a civilian-led, military-supported event. The exercise would be hosted by Philippines, and co-chaired by the US in Luzon, Philippines, from 4-8 May 2009. The Meeting took a positive view of the upcoming VDR Exercise as it is aligned with the ARF's move towards more concrete and practical cooperation. Philippines notified the Meeting that formal invitations to participate in the VDR would be sent to ARF Members by 1 November 2008. ARF Members were requested to begin inter-agency discussions and coordination in home countries of the level and extent of participation.

25. Thailand informed the meeting about the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) in Bangkok and offered the ADPC as a possible training centre for ARF Members in the area of disaster management.

## **ARF Vision Statement**

26. Led by Thailand, the Meeting considered the Thailand's Work Plan and Non-Paper on developing the ARF Vision Statement (**ANNEX 14**). The Meeting agreed that the drafting of the ARF Vision Statement was an important endeavour for all ARF Members and as stakeholders of the ARF, they should all contribute to its development. The Vision Statement would set out the ARF's vision of a peaceful and stable Asia-Pacific region, the ARF's purposes, functions and direction up to the year 2020. Developing a

clear Vision Statement would be vital to ensuring ARF's place in the evolving regional security architecture, and help to differentiate the ARF from other regional and international organisations.

27. The Meeting came to the conclusion that the Vision Statement should be a strategic, forward-looking, and enduring document. The Vision Statement could contain key fundamentals of the ARF which had contributed to peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific Region, as well as what the ARF Members envisioned as the future direction and development of the ARF. In this regard, Thailand circulated the Proposed Work Plan on Developing an ARF Vision Statement and the Non-Paper on Developing an ARF Vision Statement: Compilation of Ideas from ARF Documents and Recommendations from Track II Entities.

28. The Meeting agreed with the timeline of the Work Plan. Following preliminary discussions at the ISG on CBMs and PD, all ARF Members were requested to submit their written comments and ideas on the ARF Vision Statement to the Thai ARF Chair by the last week of October 2008.

29. On the basis of the written comments received, a tentative outline of elements to be included in the Vision Statement will be circulated to ARF Members by mid-November 2008 for further comment. The Third Meeting of the ARF EEPs to be held in Beijing on 13-15 November 2008 as well as CSCAP may be encouraged to discuss and propose ideas for the ARF Vision Statement. A first draft of the Vision Statement would be circulated to ARF Members by the end of December 2008.

30. Following receipt of comments from ARF Members, a revised draft ARF Vision Statement would be circulated. There would be detailed discussions on the revised draft ARF Vision Statement at the 2<sup>nd</sup> ISG on CBM and PD in the Republic of Korea in April 2009. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> ISG, the draft will be revised and ultimately considered by the ARF SOM in May 2009 for approval. The draft ARF Vision Statement would then be submitted to the 16<sup>th</sup> ARF in July for endorsement.

### **Annual Strategic Outlook Standardized Format**

31. The ARF Unit briefed the Meeting on their efforts to develop an Annual Strategic Outlook (ASO) Standardized Format. The paper appears as

**ANNEX 15.** The ARF Unit informed the Meeting that prior to drafting the Standardized Format, inputs would be solicited from the ARF member countries through a questionnaire or survey distributed by the ARF Unit. The meeting welcomed the development of the ASO Standardized Format as a move which would make the ASO a more useful and meaningful document. The inputs from ARF Members on the possible elements should be submitted by December 2008 and a revised draft will be tabled at the ARF ISG in Republic of Korea in April 2009. The final ASO Standardised Format will be sent for endorsement by the 16<sup>th</sup> ARF in July 2009, subject to the discussion at the ARF ISG in the ROK.

### **Improving ARF Working Methods**

32. The ARF Unit led the discussion on Improving ARF Working Methods. The Discussion appears as **ANNEX 16**. The Meeting supported the following recommendations: (a) empowering the SOM to endorse the convening of workshops, trainings and seminars, as well as the continuation of ISMs; (b) expediting clearance procedure for SOM to endorse proposals for activities if the subject matter is urgent; (c) that if any ARF participating member, if seized with a matter that is sudden and poses an unforeseen challenge, could propose an activity to the ARF Chair in writing; (d) issuance of a Press Statement after each ARF activity; (e) following through ARF recommendations by focusing on concrete recommendations and practical cooperation; and (f) convening Ad-hoc ARF activities back-to-back with the relevant ISMs to streamline the number of meetings. The ARF Unit would refine the proposal for further discussion at the ARF ISG in the ROK.

### **ARF Study on Preventive Diplomacy**

33. The Meeting reiterated its support for the Study on Preventive Diplomacy as a timely, comprehensive and thoughtful exercise. The Study appears as **ANNEX 17**. Pursuant to the decision of the 15<sup>th</sup> ARF tasking the Senior Officials to study the recommendations of the Study, Thailand briefed the Meeting on of the way forward on the Study on Preventive Diplomacy, within the context of the ongoing review process of the ARF and noted that some of the recommendations are being developed. The Meeting agreed to present the Study to the 3<sup>rd</sup> ARF Expert and Eminent Persons Group (EEP) in Beijing for comments. CSCAP and other Track II

organisations were also asked to provide further comments and/or inputs to the Study. The Meeting tasked the ARF Unit to prepare a Work Plan on how to implement the recommendations of the PD Study for further discussion.

### **ARF Work Plan on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime**

34. US briefed the Meeting on the implementation of the Work Plan on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC), focusing on the immediate next steps in the implementation of the Work Plan. The Work Plan appears as **ANNEX 18**. The Meeting viewed the Work Plan on CTTC as a positive move in strengthening CTTC cooperation among ARF member countries. The US will update the ARF Members on its development and any potential changes in the text in due course.

### **ARF Virtual Meeting of Experts on Cyber Security and Cyber Terrorism**

35. ROK briefed the Meeting on the Concept Paper for the ARF Virtual Meeting of Experts (VME) on Cyber Security and Cyber Terrorism. The paper appears as **ANNEX 19**. The Meeting recognised that Cyber Security and Cyber Terrorism were emerging global risks and it was now timely for the ARF to take a closer look at the issue. The Meeting expressed strong support for the VME. The Experts network and the ARFNet webpage will be established by November 2008 and the report will be submitted to the ISM on CTTC in Vietnam and the ARF ISG in Republic of Korea. Those ARF Members who wish to participate in the VME were requested to submit application forms by the end of October 2008.

### **Other Matters:**

36. Singapore updated the Meeting on the list of deliverables for the 16<sup>th</sup> ARF, namely:

- **ARF Vision Statement**
- **ARF Strategic Guidance for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief**
- **ARF Disaster Relief Work Plan**

- **Report on VDR Exercise**
- **Follow Up Actions Taken for ARF Review Paper**
- **ASO Template**
- **Update on Improved ARF Working Methods**
- **Follow Up Actions Taken for PD Study**
- **Update on CTTC Work Plan**
- **Virtual Meeting of Experts on Cyber Security and Cyber Terrorism**
- **Report of ISM on Maritime Security**
- **Report of ISM on Disaster Relief**
- **Report of ISM on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament**

37. The Meeting noted the Statement of Accounts of the ARF Fund presented by the ARF Unit which appears as **ANNEX 20**.

38. Republic of Korea informed the Meeting that the next ISG would be held in April 2009. The venue is to be confirmed.

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