

**Advanced Maritime Security Training Programme
for ARF Member States
Chennai, India, 17-22 November 2008**

Maritime security has been one of the main issues discussed in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). At the 10th ARF Meeting held in 2003 the Ministers acknowledged the importance of addressing maritime security issues and adopted the ARF Statement on Cooperation against Piracy and Other Threats to Maritime Security.

The 14th ARF welcomed the continued focus and dialogue on the issue of maritime security and reaffirmed the importance of addressing the issue within a cooperative framework. The Ministers looked forward to concrete and practical activities on maritime security in future. With a view to add to the capacity building efforts in the region to tackle the issue of security and safety of sealanes, the External Affairs Minister of India announced during the 14th ARF that India would be designing and conducting a training module on maritime security specifically for the ARF Member States. Consequently, a basic Maritime Security Training Programme was conducted in Chennai during 24-29 March 2008.

Building on the success of the basic training module, an Advanced Maritime Security Training Programme for ARF Member States was organised by Government of India from 17-22 November 2008. The Programme was conducted by the Indian Coast Guard, the nodal agency to deal with maritime security, and coordinated by the Ministry of External Affairs. The event took place in Chennai, situated on the Bay of Bengal.

Twenty participants from ten countries attended the advanced training programme. The countries that participated were, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Republic of Korea, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste and Vietnam. The list of participants is enclosed.

The training programme was aimed at disseminating important aspects of marine security to middle-level officers. It covered the themes of search and rescue, smuggling, piracy, hijacking and armed robbery, port security and ship security, confiscation and repatriation of ships, fishing rights including fishing by foreign vessels, drug trafficking and narco-terrorism. A visit to the Indian Coast Guard's Maritime Security Coordination Center (MRCC) was also organised. The highlight of the programme was "Day at Sea" demonstration off the Chennai coast on 21st November. Eight ships and three helicopters of Indian Coast Guard took part in the event.

The active participation from the Member States resulted in exchange of views and sharing of practical experience and expertise, furthering the objective of maritime security cooperation between ARF Member States.
