

**SUMMARY REPORT
THE TWELFTH ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM SECURITY POLICY
CONFERENCE
KUCHING, MALAYSIA, 9 JUNE 2015**

1. The Twelfth ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC) was convened in Kuching, Malaysia on 9 June 2015. The Conference was chaired by Mrs. Suriani binti Ahmad, Deputy Secretary General (Policy), Ministry of Defence of Malaysia.

2. Representatives from the Ministries of Defence of all ARF participants except Bangladesh, Mongolia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka attended the Conference. Representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat were also present. The List of Participants appears as **ANNEX 1**.

AGENDA ITEM 1: OPENING REMARKS

3. In her opening remarks, Mrs. Suriani binti Ahmad welcomed all delegates to Sarawak and commended on the success of the ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue (ARF DOD) in Kuching on 8 June 2015. She also expressed condolences to the victims of earthquake in Nepal, the recent cruise ship accident in China and the earthquake in Mt. Kinabalu, Sabah. She underlined that the ASPC has been meaningful for the ARF in promoting confidence-building and practical cooperation. Her opening remarks appear as **ANNEX 2**.

AGENDA ITEM 2: ADOPTION OF AGENDA

4. The Conference adopted the Provisional Agenda which appears as **ANNEX 3**.

AGENDA ITEM 3: EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY SITUATION

5. At the outset, the Conference expressed condolence to the victims of the unforeseen disasters of the cruise ship accident in Yang Tse River in China and the earthquake in Mt. Kinabalu in Sabah.

6. The Conference was of the view that peace and harmony in the Asia Pacific region are the results of trust and confidence as well as the promotion of defence preventive diplomacy. The Conference assessed that the impact of economic growth of countries in the region have led to strategic interdependence, which could affect the strategic completion in the fields of economy and security. The Conference assessed the evolution of threats to security to affect the security of human beings as such that new approaches to security should be developed.

7. The Conference exchanged views on the traditional and non-traditional security challenges. Among the non-traditional security issues discussed were natural disasters, aeronautical security, space security, cyber security, climate change, communicable diseases, trafficking of illicit drugs, illegal migration, trafficking of human beings and the rise of violent extremist groups. The Conference recognised the threat of overlapping territorial claims, escalating tensions in the disputed areas and proliferation of nuclear weapons as the traditional security concerns shared by countries in the region. The Conference also noted assessment on the prevailing major powers rivalry in the region, particularly the strengthening of the United States' presence in Asia and the rise of China.

8. The Conference expressed concern over the growing threat of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and its influence and linkages across the globe. The Conference viewed that cooperation to counter the threat of ISIS should be coordinated across all countries in the region through close sharing of intelligence and, at the national level, efforts should be improved to prevent the dissemination of and to create more awareness among the society on ISIS' wrongful ideology. Some participants reiterated their commitments in preventing former fighters of ISIS who are returning from the field from developing any basis in their home countries or recruiting their fellow citizens to join ISIS.

9. The Conference noted concerns expressed by several participants on the developments in the Korean Peninsula. The Conference was updated on ongoing efforts to create a conducive environment for trust-building and peaceful engagement between the DPRK and the ROK including through large-scale economic cooperation projects such as the "Vision Korea" project. The Conference noted the view that a favourable environment for peace could be created through the strengthening of inter-Korean relationship rather than dependence on external assistance. The Conference reiterated the appeal for all countries concerned to return to the Six-Party Talks and deliberate on the peaceful solution. The Conference encouraged all ARF participants to support these efforts.

10. Some participants expressed views on the recent developments in the security situation in the South China Sea. The issues of land reclamation activities, militarisation of outposts in the South China Sea, freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea were mentioned in the discussion. Some participants called for the end of the land reclamation activities, intensification of efforts towards the early conclusion of the Code of Conduct (COC) and clarification of claims of all concerned countries. The Conference encouraged all parties involved in these disputes to work towards peaceful settlement of the dispute through diplomatic means.

11. The Conference highlighted the plight of migrants in the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean Sea and discussed the means to provide humanitarian assistance to the migrants and to prevent the smugglers and traffickers from continuing their criminal operations.

12. The Conference discussed the existing ASEAN-led initiatives in response to the regional security concerns. To address the threats from the natural disasters, the Conference noted the adoption of the ASEAN Militaries Ready Group to Respond to Disaster by the 9th ADMM in Langkawi on 16 March 2015, and the ARF Disaster Relief Exercise (ARF DiREx) 2015 that was successfully concluded in Kedah, Malaysia on 24-28 May 2015. The Conference noted the progress of the development of the Direct Communication Link in the ADMM process that will be launched at the ADMM Retreat in Malaysia in November 2015. The Conference also welcomed upcoming ADMM-Plus practical exercises, namely, the ADMM-Plus Maritime Security and Counter-Terrorism Exercise in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore on 2-12 May 2016 and the ADMM-Plus HADR/Military Medicine Field Training Exercise (FTX) and Command Post Exercise in Thailand in September 2016.

13. The Conference highlighted the importance for the ARF to formulate common policy decisions on important issues affecting the participants. It was observed that informal engagement of militaries and defence officials in the region would continue to flourish in parallel with the strengthening of trust and confidence among the ARF participants. The ARF defence cooperation should continue under the leadership of ASEAN with more coordination among the ARF participants. It was also underscored that, in order to advance the cooperation in various ASEAN-led mechanisms, synergy and complementarity between the mechanisms to prevent duplication of functions should be maintained. The Conference noted the suggestions that the ARF could serve as a venue for facilitating cooperation between defence and foreign affairs officials to work together on political-security issues, while the ADMM-Plus concentrate on practical cooperation among defence and military establishments.

14. The Conference commented on the role of the ASPC and the ARF DOD in contributing to the overall objectives of the ARF, namely, promotion of confidence-building measures, preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution. The Conference viewed that the ARF should consider ways to promote the effectiveness of the ASPC and the ARF DOD through cooperative activities, particularly in the light of the progress in the ADMM and the ADMM-Plus.

15. The Conference noted the briefings from several ARF participants on the sharing of new national security and defence policies. The Conference also welcomed the outcomes of the 14th Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore on 29-31 May 2015.

16. The Conference welcomed Lao PDR as the next Chair of the ARF in the inter-sessional year 2015-2016 and India to co-chair the ARF DOD back-to-back with the ARF Inter-sessional Support Group Meeting on Confidence-Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy (ISG on CBMs and PD).

17. All ARF participants presented their views on the regional and international security situation.

AGENDA ITEM 4: THE ROLE OF MILITARIES IN FACING NON-TRADITIONAL THREATS

18. The Conference shared the views that securing regional peace and security cannot be done by any country in isolation from others. Cooperation with neighbouring countries is one way to overcome this challenge considering the limited capabilities of the militaries in addressing non-traditional threats. The Conference noted that while militaries are traditionally purposed for war, many militaries have also developed their capabilities to conduct military operations other than war (MOOTW).

19. The Conference exchanged views on the challenges posed by the non-traditional security threats crimes such as illegal fishing, natural and man-made disasters, counter-insurgencies, communicable diseases, financial fraud, space security, cyber security, aeronautical security, maritime piracy and environment security. Participants highlighted the increasing dependence of many countries as well as its peoples on outer space and cyber space and the need to protect critical infrastructure against cyber-attacks. The Conference took note of the “whole-of-government” cyber security strategy which includes cooperation with the private sector.

20. The Conference highlighted several areas in addressing non-traditional security threats in which the expertise and capabilities of military and defence personnel could be utilised. These areas include cyber space and outer space defence, chemical biological radiological and nuclear (CBRN) defence, contingency planning, improving situational awareness, deterring aggression through conducting exercises, deployment of response forces, operational planning, strategy development and command and control, special counter-terrorist and counter-intelligence units, civil protection, border and coastal patrolling and monitoring, and deployment of first responders as well as delivery of first aid supplies to disaster-affected areas.

21. The Conference noted suggestions to enhance the role of the military in addressing non-traditional security threats, namely strengthening experience-sharing among armed forces to learn from each other as well as step up cooperation in specialised areas; carrying out more joint exercises and trainings among armed forces focusing on specific areas such as counter-terrorism,

disaster relief and maritime search and rescue; and strengthening multilateral mechanisms for defence cooperation to address non-traditional threats.

22. Brunei Darussalam, European Union, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, United States and China presented their views to the Conference. The briefing papers appear as **ANNEXES 4-9**.

AGENDA ITEM 5: BRIEFING ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE 9TH ADMM AND OTHER MATTERS

23. Malaysia briefed the Conference on the outcomes of the 9th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) which was convened in Langkawi on 16 March 2015. The 9th ADMM adopted the following documents: 1) Concept Paper on ASEAN Militaries Ready Group on HADR; 2) Guidelines to Respond to the Request for Informal Engagements or Meetings by the ADMM-Plus; and 3) Concept Paper on ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine (ACMM). The briefing appears as **ANNEX 10**.

AGENDA ITEM 6: CLOSING REMARKS

24. In her closing remarks, Mrs. Suriani binti Ahmad summarised the outcomes of the discussion. She expressed her appreciation to the candid exchange of views and perspectives to all ARF participants that contributed to the success of the Conference. She also extended her good wishes to Lao PDR for the future ARF chairmanship. The closing remarks appear as **ANNEX 11**.

25. The Conference commended on the frank and fruitful discussion and thanked the Government of Malaysia for the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality made for the Conference.

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