

# **THE 9<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE ARF EXPERTS AND EMINENT PERSONS**

12-13 March 2015  
Helsinki, Finland

**Co-Chairs' Summary Report of  
the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum  
Experts and Eminent Persons**



**ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM**



Promoting peace and security through dialogue and cooperation in the Asia Pacific

**CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY REPORT  
THE NINTH MEETING OF THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM  
EXPERTS AND EMINENT PERSONS  
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**INTRODUCTION**

1. Pursuant to the decision of the 21<sup>st</sup> Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held in Nay Pyi Taw on 10 August 2014, the Ninth Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) was held in Helsinki, Finland, from 12-13 March 2015. The Meeting was co-chaired by Ambassador Barry Desker, EEP of Singapore, and Ambassador Esko Hamilo, EEP of the European Union.
2. The Meeting was attended by EEPs and representatives from ARF Participants except the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Representatives from the ARF Unit of the ASEAN Secretariat were also present. The list of delegates is attached as **ANNEX 1**.

**OPENING SESSION**

3. H.E. Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, delivered the opening remarks. He observed that Europe has followed closely the process of regional integration in Asia-Pacific. Integration at the very end has to serve the needs of the region. He referred to the growing ties between Europe and Asia not only in the area of trade but also in issues of common security concerns and emphasised the need to build regional structures as a cornerstone of global governance. He reaffirmed the view of the European Union on the ARF as a long-standing institution for security and dialogue in the Asia Pacific region. The ARF also aims at increasing mutual confidence through CBMs and PD. Such regional cooperation is a vital element for peace and prosperity. He recalled that Helsinki was the birthplace of the OSCE and the Helsinki Final Act which laid the groundwork for future cooperation in Europe and noted that the OSCE was a reference point during the establishment of the ARF. He highlighted the fact that the EU is a model of CBMs. He touched on peace mediation which is a cost-effective tool in PD and useful in all phases of conflicts. The ultimate goal is to enhance the capacity for mediation. He also looked into the role of women in mediation and underscored the need to increase the number of female mediators as well as involve more local women in conflict resolution areas. He informed the Meeting that Finland and Turkey have launched "Friends of Mediation" group at the UN with 48 members. The latest UNGA resolution proposed by the group in July 2014 focused on the role of regional organisations in peace and mediation efforts. He stressed that the process of mediation can be adverse but the end result is always preferable and beneficial for all parties involved. He expressed confidence that the Meeting would come up with important recommendations on moving the ARF process forward. His opening remarks are attached as **ANNEX 2**.

4. Ambassador Esko Hamilo recalled the opening remarks of H.E. Mr. Erkki Tuomioja and reiterated that while there will be difficulties in developing preventive diplomacy mechanisms, ARF EEPs should not be discouraged in helping to move the process along. He recalled the suggestion made during the previous ARF EEPs Meeting to establish an East China Sea group but which was not accepted by the ARF Track I. He encouraged the EEPs to continue providing inputs and proposals for the ARF Track I for their consideration.
5. Ambassador Barry Desker welcomed all participants to the 9<sup>th</sup> ARF EEPs Meeting and outlined the objectives of the Meeting. He recalled the role of the ARF EEPs as the “think-tank” of the ARF and underscored that even though not all of the EEPs’ proposals are accepted or followed through, the EEPs should remain committed to this role to improve the ARF process in the long run.
6. The Meeting adopted the Agenda and Programme which appear as **ANNEX 3**.

### **SESSION 1 – Opportunities and Challenges for PD in the Asia Pacific**

7. Indonesia, United States and Vietnam were the lead discussants in this session. The session aimed to set the stage for preventive diplomacy in the region and look at the implementation of preventive diplomacy measures as well as discuss the difficulties encountered therein.
8. The Meeting observed that the Asia Pacific region is becoming the new focal point of major power relations and that even though conflict has largely been avoided, there is currently no regional mechanism for dispute settlement and conflict resolution. The Meeting noted the trust deficit which has weakened the capacity for peaceful dialogue and the need for a balanced approach. The Meeting emphasised that ASEAN must continue to play the central role and pursue a balanced diplomacy between the key players in the region. In this aspect, the Meeting recalled former Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa’s proposal for an Indo-Pacific Treaty as a binding legal agreement which would prevent conflict between all countries in the region through mutual partnership. The lingering question is whether ASEAN is capable of playing the central role in this grand proposal.
9. The Meeting reiterated that the region is not new to preventive diplomacy measures and recalled the recommendations of the 8<sup>th</sup> ARF EEPs Meeting in Kuala Lumpur to recognise and support preventive diplomacy activities in the region even though they are not done under the framework of ASEAN or the ARF. The Meeting noted that ARF participants have not only successfully conducted preventive diplomacy measures but also confidence-building measures (CBMs) and even conflict resolution. All these success stories should be recognised by the ARF appropriately.
10. The Meeting recalled the results of the 2008 Joint Study on Preventive Diplomacy conducted by the RSIS and Pacific Forum CSIS and noted the recommendation for the ARF to look into implementing the recommendations of the study instead of attempting to reinvent the wheel. The Meeting supported the suggestion for the study to be distributed openly, including through the ARF website.

11. The Meeting recalled the suggestion for ARF EEPs to play the role of an early warning system, including through analysing the ARF Annual Security Outlook (ARF ASO). The Meeting also exchanged views on whether election monitoring is considered a preventive diplomacy mechanism. Some participants considered that election monitoring is somewhere between CBMs and PD but is certainly helpful in building and promoting transparency.
12. The Meeting noted the observation that the principle of “a pace comfortable to all” is in reality “a pace comfortable to the slowest among all”. In this regard, some participants commented that this principle has guided ASEAN’s efforts throughout the years and, although progress might be slow, the eventual outcomes would be acceptable to all.
13. The Meeting underscored that on the eve of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ARF EEPs Meeting, the EEPs should offer more concrete proposals to be implemented by the ARF Track I. In this regard, the Meeting recalled the main priority areas stated in the ARF Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy and noted several accomplishments in the area of maritime security over the past year, namely the adoption of the Code of Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) during the Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS) in April 2014 consisting of the chiefs of navies from ARF participants, and the China-US Memorandum of Understanding on the Rules of Behaviour for Safety of Air and Maritime Encounters in November 2014. There was also ongoing work to establish a further agreement on encounters between military aircraft expected to be completed this year. The Meeting noted the proposal to establish a group among the EEPs to follow through on previously agreed recommendations and for the EEPs to volunteer as policy consultants between countries that are attempting to build bridges. The Meeting also noted the observation that preventive diplomacy can also be applicable to other areas not traditionally considered for preventive diplomacy such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR).
14. The Meeting noted the fact that the ARF is not the only multilateral security mechanism in the region; there are the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), etc. The Meeting noted Russia’s proposal for a dialogue on new security architecture in Asia Pacific within the EAS framework which was reciprocated by China, India and Indonesia. The EEPs may consider creating linkages between these efforts and the ARF.
15. The Meeting exchanged views on the role and mandate of the EEPs. Participants referred to the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the ARF EEPs which stipulates that the EEPs may provide non-binding views and recommendations to the ARF upon request. Some participants emphasised that the EEPs should closely adhere to the ToR while others offered a less restrictive interpretation of the EEPs’ mandate. On this note, the Meeting recalled the 21<sup>st</sup> ARF Chairman’s Statement where the Ministers noted the need to further develop the existing EEP system.

16. The Meeting welcomed the convening of the ARF Track 1.5 Preventive Diplomacy Symposium, co-chaired by Thailand, New Zealand and the United States, which is scheduled for June 2015.

## **SESSION 2 – Taking Stock and Prospects for Enhancing the ARF Work Plan**

17. The ASEAN Secretariat, China and ROK were the lead discussants in this session. The session aimed at looking at the ARF Work Plan on PD and reviewing the outcome of the recommendations of previous EEP Meetings, especially the 8<sup>th</sup> EEP Meeting.
18. The Meeting noted the assessment of the implementation of the ARF Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy since its adoption in 2011 and noted the outcomes of the series of ARF PD trainings which have been conducted in the past year. The Meeting welcomed the recommendations on the way forward, including the implementation of the Concept Paper on Moving towards Preventive Diplomacy in conjunction with the Work Plan and to develop short, medium and long-term PD training programmes.
19. The Meeting noted the proposal for the ARF EEPs to create a working group on the objectives and ingredients of a cooperative security order for the Asia-Pacific region. The working group would be co-chaired by the EEPs from Malaysia, Canada and China and would be open to EEPs interested in participating. The proposal is attached as **ANNEX 4**. Participants exchanged views on the proposal, including on how the proposal was different from the ARF Track I-initiated ARF Study on Preventive Diplomacy co-chaired by Singapore and the US in 2010, whether such a proposal would be in line the EEP ToR, and if it would be duplicating similar, earlier efforts such as CSCAP studies. The proposal's co-chairs agreed to refine the proposal further to address the reservations expressed by several participants before tabling it for consideration again.

## **SESSION 3 – Peace Mediation and National Dialogues**

20. The Meeting noted the video presentation on the definition, scope and techniques of mediation as prepared by the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI).
21. The Meeting noted the briefing by the EU on the outcomes of the ARF Seminar on Preventive Diplomacy and Mediation Training which was held in Bandar Seri Begawan on 7-10 October 2014. The Training was aimed at increasing learning, sharing and understanding in preventive diplomacy and mediation. Several recommendations on the way forward were highlighted, such as involving more local expertise in conflict and mediation. The briefing appears as **ANNEX 5**.
22. The Meeting exchanged views on whether the ARF, with its local knowledge and experience, is best suited for peace mediation and whether ARF EEPs have a role to play in mediation. The Meeting recalled the suggestion for the EEPs to include more eminent persons as a means to enhance the credibility of the ARF EEPs in performing mediation.

23. The Meeting observed that the ARF as an institution might find it difficult to conduct effective mediation. However, individual ARF participants might have more success in doing so.
24. The Meeting noted the observation that certain disputes or conflicts are burdened with narratives that are often long-standing and deeply rooted in history. In this regard, a potential role for the EEPs is to revisit these narratives and provide a new set of eyes to view and perhaps shift the narratives to facilitate the mediation process.

## **SESSION 4 – Breakout Groups**

### **Group 1 – East China Sea**

25. Mr. Paul Evans, EEP of Canada, facilitated the discussions in Group 1 on the East China Sea.
26. The group reviewed the aftermath of its proposal at the 8th meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 2014 from an EEP Fact Finding Mission to visit the three capitals most closely involved in East China Sea issues. While the proposal was not found acceptable by some of the governments most directly concerned, the group continues to have an abiding interest in developments in and around the East China Sea from the perspective of preventive diplomacy.
27. In defining the geographical range of the issue there was discussion about two definitions of the "East China Sea" region.
28. The situation has improved considerably in the past year. The tension thermometer has dropped from what one participant described as 90 degrees to 60 degrees and another from 60 degrees to 30 degrees. The key development was the meeting between President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Abe in Beijing in November, the Four-Point Principled Agreement, and the creation of a bilateral process for high level maritime consultation and expert groups discussion on maritime liaison mechanism involving multiple agencies and departments in both countries.
29. The members of the group applauded these constructive steps in bilateral PD but recognised that the temperature could rise again quickly if continued progress is not made or if an inadvertent military incident occurs. It was noted that despite the better management of maritime incidents, there remain serious concerns about the potential for mishaps on the sea and in the air due to the increased level of interactions among parties. It is essential that principles, dialogue and intentions be translated into firm agreements and practice to further de-escalate tensions on a sustainable basis.
30. Building on these positive developments, the group recommended two additional measures be considered.
  - a. that the ARF encourages China and Japan to jointly sponsor workshops, bilateral and regional, track 1, 1.5 or 2 on a variety of subjects related to

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, Search and Rescue, and Environmental Protection. All of these areas have been the subject of constructive work by ISG sessions in recent months and are appropriate for further development at a sub-regional level where political will exists.

b. that the ARF encourages Japan, China and other parties directly interested in East China Sea matters to convene a workshop on the functions, principles and mechanisms of Air Defence Identification Zones in the region. This should supplement efforts underway at the International Civil Aviation Organization and focus directly on the East China Sea, this time also including the Korean and Japanese zone of overlap.

## **Group 2 – Korean Peninsula**

31. Tan Sri Jawhar Hassan, EEP of Malaysia, facilitated the discussions in Group 2 on the Korean Peninsula.
32. The meeting noted that there was no DPRK representation at the session, which was unfortunate.
33. The following suggestions were made during the meeting although not without scepticism and reservations expressed by some participants.
  - a. The United Nations should consider adopting a declaration, stating that the UN command will be dissolved, without impinging on the US/ROK military structures existing in the ROK. This could be followed by a wide-ranging international conference on peace in the Korean peninsula. A key objective should be a guaranteed peace treaty between DPRK and ROK that would replace the 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement.
  - b. The long-standing conflict situation on the Korean peninsula could benefit from third-party peace mediation conducted by a credible and neutral party of high standing acceptable to both the DPRK and the ROK. The third party would not be from the parties directly involved in the conflict. Third party mediation would proceed alongside other initiatives already in place such as the Six Party Talks.
  - c. The ARF should continue to reiterate the requirement for the DPRK to fully abide by all UNSC resolutions, in particular resolutions pertaining to denuclearisation and the prohibition of missile tests.
  - d. The ARF should play a more proactive role in persuading the DPRK to participate in all ARF meetings and facilitating informal talks between the DPRK and the ROK on the sidelines of ARF meetings.
  - e. Indonesia's invitation to the DPRK to participate in the commemoration of the 60th anniversary celebrations of the Bandung Conference in late April would be another measure that could help encourage Pyongyang to engage more comfortably in international forums.
  - f. All parties should make unilateral efforts to defuse tensions and refrain from actions and activities that may be deemed provocative by the other side and undermine conditions conducive for dialogue and cooperation.

### **Group 3 – Election Monitoring**

34. Ambassador Marciano da Silva from Timor-Leste facilitated the discussions in Group 3 on election monitoring.
35. The Group suggested that the ARF consider establishing an election monitoring team amongst the EEP which would be ready to take part in elections upon invitation from the respective ARF participant. The Group also discussed the need for capacity-building activities on election monitoring.
36. The Group discussed the background of the ARF Election Monitoring Mission to Timor-Leste in 2012, which some ARF EEPs participated in, and emphasised that any election monitoring mission should be based upon the invitation of the respective ARF participant and should be a voluntary process.

### **SESSION 5 – Reports by Breakout Groups**

37. The Meeting took note of the briefings by the facilitators on the outcomes of the Breakout Groups.
38. The Meeting discussed the suggestion for the ARF to develop an election monitoring capacities and capabilities programme in the event that an ARF participant submits an invitation for election monitors to participate.

### **SESSION 6 – Recommendations/Vision Statement/Role of the EEPs**

39. Cambodia, Japan and India were the lead discussants in this session. The session focused on recommendations that the EEPs may wish to make in moving the ARF process forward.
40. Singapore tabled a draft paper aimed at implementing the ARF Vision Statement forward in the coming years. In light of the multiple overlapping areas between the ARF and other multilateral institutions, e.g. ADMM-Plus, EAS and APEC, greater coordination between these institutions was needed so as to minimise overlaps. The paper also noted that there was a need for the ARF to strengthen itself in terms of its organisation through the following ways: 1) to transform itself from an exchange of views forum into a problem-solving institution through the initiation of concrete and practical activities that could strengthen cooperative security in the Asia-Pacific; 2) to consider inviting non-ASEAN ARF participants as a Co-Chair of the ARF discussions which would allow these participants a greater stake in the ARF process; 3) the establishment of an ARF Secretariat that is staffed by officials from ASEAN Member States; and 4) the co-location of this secretariat with the APEC secretariat, thus encouraging a symbiotic relationship between both institutions for cooperative regional security and regional economic integration. ASEAN and non-ASEAN ARF participants could also alternate as chairs of the ARF Secretariat. The proposal appears as **ANNEX 6**.
41. The Meeting noted the non-paper by the EEP of Republic of Korea on Improving the ARF EEPs System. The non-paper outlined the achievements as well as the limitations of the ARF EEPs. Several recommendations to enhance the utility and

effectiveness of the ARF EEPs were highlighted, including: 1) the need to revamp the current EEPs selection process; 2) the setting up of an independent secretariat for the ARF EEPs; and 3) the ARF EEPs to consider a joint forum with related fora such as the ADMM-Plus, the SCO and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures (CICA). The non-paper is attached as **ANNEX 7**.

42. The Meeting welcomed the suggestion for the ARF EEPs to compile a lessons learned publication which would serve to highlight the discussions of the EEPs. The Meeting also welcomed the suggestion for the ARF EEPs to establish a separate mailing list and a cyber-hub which would enable the EEPs to coordinate and communicate with each other in between the annual ARF EEPs Meetings.

## **CONCLUDING SESSION**

43. The Co-Chairs provided a recap of the discussions and informed participants that the Co-Chairs' Summary Report would be circulated to all ARF participants and the EEPs in due course.
44. The Co-Chairs informed the Meeting that the next ARF EEPs meeting will be convened in Singapore in 2016.
45. The Meeting expressed appreciation to the Co-Chairs for facilitating a frank and open discussion. The Meeting also thanked the Government of Finland for the excellent arrangements and hospitality extended to all participants.

## **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

46. The following are the key recommendations of the 9<sup>th</sup> ARF EEPs Meeting for the consideration of the ARF:

- a. **The EEPs recommend that a Working Group be established to discuss possible contributions to the implementation of the ARF Vision Statement and the role of the EEPs on the future work to be undertaken by the ARF, also taking into account the study by the ROK and the suggestions on the EEP modalities expressed at the 9th EEP meeting.**
- b. **The EEPs recommend that the existing study on preventive diplomacy be updated and, in particular, the Secretariat be tasked with compiling a list of lessons-learned and best practices on procedures concerning maritime incidents in the region.**
- c. **The EEPs recommend that the suggestions made by the break-out groups on the East China Sea as well as the Korean Peninsula be considered by the ISG/SOM.**
- d. **The EEPs recommend that the EEPs/ARF confirm their readiness for election monitoring in forthcoming elections in the region, provided that there is an invitation by the state concerned at the ARF ISG/SOM.**
- e. **The EEPs recommend that an updated list of the EEPs be circulated by the Secretariat, including email addresses, to all the EEPs. Any updates to the list by ARF participants should be conveyed to the ARF Chair and the ARF Secretariat, with required contact information, for inclusion in the Register of ARF EEPs and for distribution to the EEPs.**