

# CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY REPORT OF THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM SEMINAR ON PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY AND MEDIATION TRAINING

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, 07-10 October 2014**

## INTRODUCTION

1. At the 20<sup>th</sup> ARF in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam in 2013, Ministers adopted the **Concept Paper on moving to Preventive Diplomacy (PD)** and called for greater efforts to ensure the full implementation of the ARF Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy. The concept paper underlined that training activities on PD should be conducted and seen as part of the ARF's gradual move to greater use of Preventive Diplomacy.
2. Brunei Darussalam and the European Union co-hosted the 3-day ARF seminar on preventive diplomacy and mediation training, which was held on 7-10 October 2014 in Bandar Seri Begawan.
3. The training was attended by about 50 to 60 representatives from 22 ARF member states, involving participants from ministries of foreign affairs and defence, as well as representatives from the European Union, the United Nations and ASEAN. A complete list of participants can be found in Annex 1.
4. The training seminar built on the findings of the ARF Roundtable on Training Resources for Preventive Diplomacy held in Wellington, on 20-21 March 2014, co-chaired by Brunei Darussalam, China, New Zealand and the United States. Participants at that roundtable had noted the importance of Preventive Diplomacy training, including on mediation training and agreed on the desirability of training to help build the capacity, skills and capabilities of ARF diplomats in the area of preventive diplomacy and mediation. Consequently, the training seminar co-chaired by Brunei Darussalam and the EU and reviewed current PD training methods and experiences at the national and regional level, as well as conflict prevention and mediation at the international level. The success of the training was ensured by the combination of theoretical elements and practical examples, using case studies of past and on-going international mediation efforts in the region, such as the Aceh and Mindanao Peace Process. The active participation of the diplomats also greatly contributed to its success.

## **Welcoming Remarks**

5. Pengiran Datin Shazainah Pengiran Dato Shariffuddin, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, welcomed participants to the seminar in Brunei Darussalam and highlighted that during the early days of the ARF, it seemed to be a very long way towards preventive diplomacy in practice. However, thanks to the process of confidence-building measures, ARF participants were now comfortable with each other and value the importance of the ARF realising its full potential in confidence building, preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution.
6. Andreas List, EU Coordinator for ASEAN at the EU Delegation in Jakarta, thanked Brunei Darussalam for the hospitality and the readiness to co-chair this important seminar on preventive diplomacy training, taking place also in the framework of the EU-ASEAN Plan of Action (2013-1017). Mr. Andreas List expressed the hope that the first training seminar on preventive diplomacy would pave the way towards more activities on this important area to be held in the ARF framework in the near future.

## **Presentations on PD Training on the regional and international level**

7. The aim of the introductory session was to provide participants with background on the development of preventive diplomacy in the ARF context whilst helping them to place this development in a broader international context recognising the growing value of mediation as a way to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflict. The increased role of multilateral regional organisations in mediation such as the EU was highlighted as well as the cooperation between the UN and regional organisations in this field.
8. Shahrul Anaz Ismail, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalam, gave a brief introduction into the process of preventive diplomacy in the ASEAN Regional Forum and outlined the key elements of the ARF Work Plan on PD, and provided an assessment of how implementation of the Work Plan could be strengthened. Thereafter Mr. Tomas Henning, Mediation Support Team of the European External Action Service, gave a presentation on the development of mediation policies and capacities at the European Union. Ms. Alice Chow, Policy and Mediation Division, United Nations Department of Political Affairs concluded with a presentation on the development of mediation support capacities at the United Nations.

9. These theoretical elements were complemented by in-depth case studies of Aceh and Mindanao. The plenary sessions of high-level experts who had been directly involved in the respective peace process negotiations and implementations encouraged subsequent lively roundtable discussions.

#### **Roundtable Discussion: Key Points**

10. The training seminar provided ample opportunities for ARF participants to exchange views on future options and directions for PD training activities in the ARF. Participants explored the benefits of mediation, facilitation and preventive diplomacy in the region by building on previous successful examples. Participants also discussed ASEAN Member States' support to these peace processes and the importance of the implementation of peace agreements. Participants emphasised the benefits of ARF training linking into existing international and regional institutions already involved in delivering similar trainings, including the UN and other regional or international organisations and to adapt existing training modules to the ARF context.
11. The participants acknowledged the importance of drawing on the expertise and experience from so-called Track 2 processes, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders in any training course, but suggested that the training should be targeted to officials. Participants also noted the offer by His Excellency Pak Bagas Hapsoro, a representative of the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR) that the AIPR could serve as a valuable centre for PD resources for the ARF.

#### **Recommendations for the ARF**

12. The success of the training and the enthusiastic response of the participants were encouraging signals. Participants agreed that the current momentum must be used by ARF members to move towards the increased use of preventive diplomacy and greater practical focus on PD training. Some participants highlighted the importance of capacity building in mediation and its potential to be used as a PD tool in the region. The seminar highlighted that mediation skills are an important ingredient to facilitate preventive diplomacy in the region. For example, the tool of mediation was used successfully in the Aceh peace process. Thus, there was an agreement to follow-up the discussions within the wider ARF. The role of ASEAN and the need to use existing mechanisms such as AIPR arrangements was highlighted, to

contribute to an effective use of PD in the region and to ensure ASEAN centrality in the development of PD.

13. Based on the outcomes of the seminar, several suggestions were made:
  - Build capacities of ARF members on PD and mediation;
  - Facilitate a proper discussion on how ARF PD initiatives could look like in the future;
  - Operationalise the AIPR as an effective mechanism to further develop PD in the region;
  - Design PD trainings with theoretical as well as practical elements, and explore different tools by taking advantage of experts from other organisations such as the UN, EU, etc.
  
14. The training seminar agreed that the ARF should develop PD trainings that are tailored to the Asia Pacific region. Participants welcome the upcoming ARF Training Course on Preventive Diplomacy to be held in Beijing and Nanjing, China from 13-19 October 2014 to further develop understanding, standardised training and capacity-building to ARF members. Participants further agreed to submit the following suggestions and recommendations to the ARF ISG on Preventive Diplomacy and Confidence Building Measures. The ARF ISG should include a standing agenda item covering PD training, to help facilitate discussion on future PD training courses, standing in the tradition of this first successful training.

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