

**EIGHTH ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM INTER-SESSIONAL MEETING  
ON NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT  
PUTRAJAYA, MALAYSIA, 19 - 20 APRIL 2016**

**CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY REPORT**

**Introduction**

1. The 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ARF ISM on NPD) was held in Putrajaya, Malaysia from 19-20 April, 2016. The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Ikram Mohd Ibrahim, Undersecretary, Multilateral Security and International Organizations Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia, Mr. Martin Larose, Director, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Division, Global Affairs Canada and Ms. Deborah Panckhurst, Head of Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, New Zealand.
2. Participants from Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Canada, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russia, Singapore, Thailand, the United States, and Viet Nam participated in the Meeting. Representatives from the Panel of Experts established pursuant to UNSCR 1874, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) were also present. The List of Participants appears as **Annex 1**.

**Welcome Remarks by Co-Chairs**

3. Mr Ikram delivered his opening remarks by welcoming the participants to the Meeting and thanking Canada as well as New Zealand for co-chairing the Meeting with Malaysia. He proceeded by recalling the important developments in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control and related areas since the last ARF ISM on NPD and hoped that the Meeting would have a fruitful discussion based on these and future developments. Mr Ikram also reminded the Meeting on the goals of the ARF ISM, which are reflected in the ARF Work Plan. He hoped that these goals would serve as guidelines to the Meeting in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation; its commitments and obligations. He further took the opportunity to highlight to the Meeting that this year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ICJ Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, an issue that Malaysia holds closely to its heart since Malaysia and several other countries were actively involved during the hearing in The Hague which resulted in the document. On that note, he encouraged the Meeting to also make reference to the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ during the Meeting, where appropriate.
4. Co-Chair from New Zealand, Ms Deborah Panckhurst then took the floor by thanking Malaysia for the hospitality offered. She proceeded by addressing a number of developments in the global disarmament and non-proliferation machinery since the 2015 ISM. She commended the diplomatic efforts taken by the international community to deal with the destruction of chemical weapons in Syria and Iran on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA). Ms Pankhurst

also informed the Meeting that New Zealand planned to circulate the final version of the ARF Work Programme for discussion the following day, and apologized for not circulating it earlier due to some amendments made to the Work Programme.

5. Canadian co-chair Mr Martin Larose began opening remarks by extending his thanks to Malaysia for its hospitality, and further thanked New Zealand for its collaboration as co-chair. He reminded attendees of the importance of continued dialogue among ASEAN Member States and other Regional Forum participants on issues of Disarmament and Non-Proliferation. He further underlined the Meeting's role as a critical venue for the exchange of views on issues of common concern.
6. Mr Paladin from the ASEAN Secretariat was invited by Mr Ikram to update the Meeting on the status of the ARF Work Plan on NPD. The Meeting was informed by Mr Paladin that the ARF Work Plan included amendments proposed since the 2015 ISM, and would be discussed on day-two of the meeting. He further informed participants that ARF ISG agreed that the Work Plan is a living document therefore it will not be submitted for adoption. He recalled that the 2015 ARF ISM NPD Meeting included a discussion on the progress of the Work Plan, and expressed his hopes that a similar session could be arranged this year to review the current draft, with a view to submitting a clean copy in advance of the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting.

#### **Adoption of Agenda**

7. The agenda was considered and adopted without amendments. The agenda appears as **Annex 2**.

#### **Session 1: Session by CSCAP**

(I) Outcome of CSCAP Study Group on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament in the Asia-Pacific

8. The session by CSCAP started off with a briefing on the outcome of CSCAP Study Group on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament in the Asia-Pacific by Mr. Ralph A. Cossa, President, Pacific Forum CSIS and US CSCAP. He informed the Meeting that the second meeting of the CSCAP Study Group on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (NPD) was held in Putrajaya on April 17-18, 2016 and was attended by approximately 40 participants. The group examined recent developments in non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful use of nuclear technology. He then highlighted the key findings of the Study Group which include:
  - (i) shared concern on the current international political climate and some hostile actions, threats and movements that seems to be going the wrong direction and could threaten even the arms control agreements;
  - (ii) concern about the deterioration of relations between Russia and US/Western Europe in general;

- (iii) concern about the growing rift between Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) and Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS), a marked distinction between NNWS and umbrella states as well as the terminology on self-declared Nuclear Weapon States;
  - (iv) the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran is seen as a significant milestone, demonstrating the value of perseverance and multilateral diplomacy;
  - (v) the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit was considered successful in raising the level of awareness and understanding on nuclear security, despite the absence of the Russian Federation;
  - (vi) discussions on DPRK, including discussions to promote the continuation of dialogue and the Six-Party Talks, UN Security Council Resolution 2270, and DPRK preconditions for denuclearization discussions;
  - (vii) review of the ARF Work Plan on Nonproliferation and Disarmament leads to suggestion by the group that ASEAN as the “driver” of the ARF, should consider expanding its Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ) into a WMD-free zone and/or a Reprocessing and Enrichment-Free Zone; and
  - (viii) discussions on the ARF workshops and the importance of disarmament education.
9. CSCAP looks forward to the next CSCAP NPD meeting with ARF ISM which will be held in New Zealand next year.

(II) Contemporary Nuclear Environment

10. Dr. Manpreet Sethi, from CSCAP India began the presentation by assessing the state of affairs in the contemporary nuclear environment. She further quoted a report by the former UN Secretary General from the year 2005 and noted that after 10 years, the international community remains mired in similar debates, inhibiting greater progress in the sphere of disarmament. The presentation proceeded by identifying two major roadblocks, the desirability of disarmament and the feasibility of a Nuclear Weapons Free World. Three approaches were suggested to move towards disarmament i.e. by progressively reducing numbers, by arriving at a Nuclear Weapons Conventions and by changing mind-sets to spur attitudinal changes regarding strategic doctrines. She concluded her presentation by reminding the members that countries need to step into the Nuclear Weapon Free World with eyes wide open and that the responsibility to make intelligent, informed choices is upon them. She further suggested that CSCAP can assist through workshops and seminars in the form of debates between the NWS and NNWS.

**(III) SEANWFZ and Disarmament**

11. Mr. Carl Baker from US CSCAP delivered his presentation by outlining the purpose of SEANWFZ in the APSC Blueprint 2025, where it plays an important part in preserving the region free from WMD and contributing to disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. SEANWFZ also supports established regional Nuclear Weapons Free Zones and promotes disarmament and non-proliferation of WMD while enhancing ASEAN's capacity to address the release of hazardous substances/agents. These elements are important and form the basis for SEANWFZ being used as a vehicle towards disarmament. He also highlighted how ASEAN, as a credible institution among the NNWS, can deal with the NWS and work towards achieving disarmament. He pointed out that dialogue between NWS and NNWS is critical to the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons. He further suggested ways for ASEAN to build its credibility by demonstrating commitment to the Plan of Action and to build relations with IAEA, CTBTO, and other Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (South Pacific, Latin America, Africa, Central Asia, Mongolia). Mr. Carl Baker also proposed arms control and legal remedies as two approaches which can be taken towards disarmament.
12. Malaysia took the floor to inform the Meeting that ASEAN is currently in the negotiating process with the Nuclear Weapons States to accede to the Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty. Malaysia informed the Meeting that it is vital that the Nuclear Weapons States to accede to the Protocol without reservations. The Meeting was further informed that ASEAN has invited experts from UNODA and also from New Zealand to share their views during the next SEANWFZ Working Group meeting, in assisting ASEAN to find a way forward on this longstanding issue.
13. A number of countries delivered their remarks on the presentations and pointed out that the discussions and presentations should also emphasize the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the negotiation of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). The countries also agreed that the NWS and the NNWS need to cooperate in order to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation.

**Session 2: Proliferation Security Initiative**

14. Canada delivered an introductory presentation outlining the PSI's complementarity with UNSCR 1540, and conveying views on the PSI's institutional development in the context of Canada's chairing of the Critical Capabilities and Practices (CCP) Review Team in 2016-2017. Canada underlined the important role of PSI in strengthening interdiction capacity, and, diffusing critical proliferation security norms and standards of practice. Canada further outlined its aim to strengthen the CCP effort by enhancing its responsiveness, and increasing the Review Team's role in the coordination of events and activities occurring within the PSI context.

(I) Exercise Maru - New Zealand

15. New Zealand updated the meeting on Exercise Maru, which it hosted in 2015. New Zealand provided an overview of the PSI exercise itself, and the Asia Pacific Exercise Rotation (APER) writ large. New Zealand stated as there are no annual meetings among PSI participants, these PSI exercises serves two functions, namely: to build PSI participants' capability to cooperate effectively, and to build contacts and share best practices. New Zealand explained that the APER is a series of PSI Exercises which members take turn to host and that Singapore will organize the 2016 exercise.
16. Exercise Maru included table top exercises which emphasized the 4 elements of the PSI Critical Capabilities & Practices (CCP): (1) prohibiting proliferation related conduct, (2) inspection and identification, (3) seizure and disposition and (4) rapid decision making.

(II) Exercise Deep Sabre - Singapore

17. Singapore informed the meeting that they will be hosting Exercise Deep Sabre 2016 (XDS16) on 26 - 30 September 2016. Singapore has been a member of the Operational Experts Group (OEG) which plays an essential role as the PSI's steering committee. Singapore previously hosted two PSI exercises in 2005 and 2009. Singapore noted that these Exercises are an important mechanism to adapt to the changing proliferation landscape, and share best practices to address these threats. Singapore also expressed the view that multilateral initiatives such as the PSI help to foster and promote regional cooperation in a tangible and concrete way to deal with the shared challenge of WMD proliferation. XDS16 is Singapore's third PSI Exercise and their first under APER. Exercise Deep Sabre 2016's broad objectives are to encourage coordinated efforts to counter proliferation, build regional PSI capacity by facilitating discussions and convey strong and clear signals to would be proliferators.

**Session 3: Compliance with International Obligations on Non-Proliferation**(I) Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to UNSC Resolution 1874

18. Ms Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt from the Panel of Experts (PoE) started by noting that the DPRK sanctions regime were not meant to punish the people of North Korea but to convince the country to return to the negotiating table to agree to verifiable denuclearisation, refrain from missile and nuclear testing, to prevent the transfer of items that can contribute to WMD program. She further underlined that UN sanctions are not intended to have adverse effect on humanitarian situation for DPRK's civilian population and the UN is prepared to lift, modify or strengthen sanctions depending on DPRK's conduct.

(II) Japan

19. Japan noted that the ASEAN region is now enjoying very rapid economic development that requires us to enhance our vigilance and review national legal frameworks to ensure compliance. Japan repeatedly and strongly asked DPRK

to fully comply with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and refrain from any provocations including nuclear tests and Ballistic Missile launches. Japan noted it conducts an Asian Export Control Seminar to help spread awareness and build capacity among regional states in the enforcement and implementation of relevant UN sanctions.

(III) United States

20. The United States underlined the significance of UNSCR 2270, noting that it provides unprecedented tools with which to impede DPRK's effort to sustain its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. This includes denying it access to critical commodities and technologies and further restricting its export of military-related material. These exports are needed to generate the hard currency it requires to continue its illicit activities, as South East Asia is home to major shipping, travel and financial hubs that the DPRK has continued to exploit. The US further conveyed that this Resolution would send an unambiguous and unyielding message to the DPRK regime.
21. The US reiterated that the purpose of UNSCR 2270 is not to inflict hardship on the people of North Korea, but noted that the Resolution was developed based on the conclusion that the regime has consistently prioritized its nuclear and ballistic missiles over the lives of its own people. Despite this trend, the US noted that it remains open to authentic and credible negotiations to bring the DPRK into compliance with relevant Security Council Resolutions..
22. Following the US presentation, the DPRK's representative from the Institute of Disarmament and Peace intervened. He stated that the ASEAN Regional Forum is operating against its mission and principles when it allows itself to be used as a forum to attack the DPRK. He further stated that there was no need for the DPRK to attend the forum and to listen to the "illegal and unfounded" discussions against the DPRK.

(IV) Republic of Korea

23. South Korea also reiterated the importance of implementing UNSCR 2270 as mentioned by previous speakers. It further stated that the Resolution reflects the firm, united resolve of the international community to put an end to DPRK's WMD program. Republic of Korea commented that comprehensive implementation of relevant resolutions by the international community is crucial to send a clear message to the DPRK. Recent cases of freezing OMM vessel Mu Du Bong and Jin Teng were noted as positive examples in this regard.
24. To conclude, Republic of Korea underscored its strong conviction that a region free of nuclear weapons must begin with the Korean Peninsula. It is clear that the "Business as usual" approach cannot induce the DPRK to give up its nuclear ambition. South Korea also reminded member states of the requirement to submit implementation reports within 90 days of the Resolution's adoption.
25. Australia, India, and New Zealand also took the floor to condemn DPRK's nuclear test while Singapore and the Philippines expressed their concern about the DPRK

- nuclear programme. These countries also informed the meeting on the efforts to comply with UNSCR 2270 and called for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.
26. China stated that they strive for the denuclearization of Korea Peninsula and would like to safeguard the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula through dialogue and consultations. China noted its desire to work with the international community to implement the various UNSCR 2270 in a serious and comprehensive way. China also conveyed that the implementation of the resolution should not affect the humanitarian of the civilian populations in North Korea. China expressed its position that sanctions are not a goal in and of themselves, and that negotiations and consultations are the only way forward.
  27. China also raised a question regarding the session's topic, noting that despite its focus on compliance with International obligations on non-proliferation, each of the four speakers focused only on North Korea's nuclear issue. China stated that it did not have any objection to this discussion, but expressed that other subjects could be considered as well, citing Japan's plutonium stocks as an example.
  28. Canada's co-chair responded to China's remarks, noting that due to time constraints, including the proximity of the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit, organizers were unable to arrange a session on broader non-proliferation issues as was intended. Canada further expressed its intention to include a discussion of broader WMD non-proliferation threats, including biological and chemical weapons, at the 9<sup>th</sup> ISM on NPD.
  29. The United States added that Japan's record on non-proliferation is unquestioned by the international community. They stressed that any effort to paint Japan's peaceful nuclear energy program as comparable to the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile development would be grossly misleading.
  30. Mr Ikram concluded the session by citing the press statement by the Chairman of ASEAN during the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' retreat in Vientiane, Laos: *"ASEAN reiterates its in full support for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner and urged DPRK to comply with all relevant UNSC Resolutions and called on all parties concerned to exert common efforts to maintain peace and security in the said region and create an environment conducive to early resumption of the Six-Party Talks to help pave the way to maintaining and strengthening peace, security and stability in Korean peninsula."*

#### Country Remarks: Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

31. India stated that it remains committed to global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and believe that this goal can be achieved through a step by step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework that is global and non-discriminatory. India noted that it attaches importance to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and is ready to negotiate a treaty at the CD banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in line with their national security interests and on the basis of

CD/1299. India stated that it has an unwavering commitment to global efforts for nuclear non-proliferation and has never been a source of proliferation of sensitive technologies. India expressed that it remains committed to working with the international community to advance common objectives of non-proliferation through strong export controls and membership in multilateral export control regimes.

#### **Session 4: Peaceful Use of Nuclear Technology**

32. Malaysia delivered two presentations entitled “Exploring and promoting the peaceful use of nuclear technology- sharing of national experiences” and “Non-proliferation: implementation of safeguards and export control”. The first presentation outlined Malaysia’s efforts and achievements in the field of peaceful use of nuclear technology, while the second presentation detailed Malaysia’s implementation of safeguards through legal and international obligations. Both presentations can be found in **Annex 3** and **Annex 4**.
33. Malaysia also invited participants to tour the facilities at the Malaysian Nuclear Agency, namely the TRIGA PUSPATI research reactor and the Gamma Greenhouse. Besides showcasing Malaysia’s achievements based on the research conducted at these facilities, it also demonstrated that Malaysia takes the security and safeguard of these facilities seriously.

#### **Session 5: Peaceful Use of Nuclear Technology**

34. Malaysia delivered a final presentation on the “Role of the IAEA in nuclear cooperation”. Malaysia also highlighted the cooperation Malaysia has with the IAEA in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear technology. The presentation can be found in **Annex 5**.
35. Japan stated that it recognised the essential role of the IAEA in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy and international cooperation. Japan underlined the importance of supporting the activities of the secretariat and noted that Japan continues to contribute to the IAEA through the Peaceful Use Initiative and other channels. Japan also underlined the continued importance of strengthening nuclear safety, offering to share its knowledge and lessons learned on accident response and decommissioning based on experiences from the Fukushima Daiichi accident. Japan also noted the importance of the safety standards of the IAEA and a variety of peer review services, and called on participants to use those tools actively.
36. China noted that their energy structures are similar to ASEAN countries, where fossil fuels account for 90% of the nation’s energy consumption. China also noted that dependence on fossil fuel will not bring about sustainable development in the long-run but delivers energy-security in the short term. China therefore stated its willingness to build cooperation with ASEAN countries to cope with climate change and other global issues.

37. Laos shared a brief presentation on its nuclear security situation, its cooperation with the IAEA and EU, its future needs, and expected challenges. Laos commended the group's visit to Malaysian Nuclear Agency and noted its interest in sharing its national experiences regarding the development of peaceful use of nuclear energy with other ARF participants.
38. ROK noted that it is currently the fifth largest producer of nuclear energy, with 24 reactors in total. ROK stated that it has been utilizing the IAEA to ensure that it complies with relevant nuclear security standards and safeguards. ROK also expressed its support for industry engagement on the issue of export controls. ROK also pointed out that the subject of proliferation finance should be highlighted as an issue of growing importance.
39. Malaysia highlighted that it maintains one of the most severe penalties for the violation of export controls under the Strategic Trade Act (STA), employing the death penalty in cases where intent is proven. Malaysia does not view this as a hindrance, but as a means of facilitating trade and complying with international obligations. Malaysia noted that it is also in the final stages of reviewing the STA to further tighten and strengthen this Act. Further, while Malaysia has yet to ratify and accede to certain international treaties and instruments on nuclear safety and security, Malaysia has nonetheless been complying with the provisions of these treaties.
40. The Philippines views the IAEA's technical cooperation programme as a primary vehicle in implementing article IV of the NPT. The Philippines also supported the strengthening of IAEA's safeguards and verification regime to enhance confidence in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The Philippines recognised the critical importance of regional security and welcomed regional networks and initiatives in nuclear safety and nuclear security. The Philippines also recognised the key role of the IAEA in supporting its member states in strengthening their national capacities in this area. The Philippines noted with satisfaction that international cooperation through the IAEA has continued to advance efforts towards improving nuclear safety. It added that efforts to strengthen the nuclear safety regime and to educate the public should be sustained. The Philippines also underlined the importance of signing and ratifying the joint convention on spent fuel management and on the safety of radioactive waste management as part of the strengthening of the global nuclear safety regime.
41. Australia thanked Malaysia for the updates on its export controls, noting that it looked forward to seeing the amendments enacted soon. Australia noted that it has been a strong supporter of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including through consistent provision of voluntary contributions and in-kind expertise to the IAEA technical cooperation programme and regional cooperative agreement. Australia noted that has played a leading role in the region by heading IAEA projects and supporting nuclear cooperation in Asia. Australia further stated that it is leading the world in using proliferation resistant technologies for advanced nuclear techniques such as the production of nuclear medicines.

42. India underlined that all states have the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy, noting that countries should comply with all international treaties to which they are parties. India stated that it has been engaged in peaceful uses of nuclear energy in various fields and believes that the IAEA has a crucial role to play in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy. India also attaches great importance to the IAEA's role in reducing proliferation and in strengthening global nuclear security architecture. India also noted that it has contributed to the IAEA's nuclear security fund.
43. Indonesia stated that it has committed to optimizing the use of new and renewable energy resources, potentially including nuclear technology, to secure the energy supply that is needed for sustaining its economic growth. Indonesia will continue to strengthen nuclear coordination on the implementation of an Additional Protocol to the IAEA Safeguards agreement with relevant stakeholders. Indonesia also highlighted its various efforts to strengthen nuclear safety and security, including expanding the network of radiation portal monitors in seaports, performance tests on physical protection systems of nuclear facilities and establishing a Centre of Excellence on nuclear security and emergency preparedness. Indonesia is also strengthening its legal framework on nuclear security by currently developing a draft nuclear security law and has acceded to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts on Nuclear Terrorism and ratified the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and its amendment. Indonesia then updated the meeting that the CPPNM and its amendment will enter into force on May 8, 2016 and called on all states to sign and ratify these critical instruments. Indonesia also acknowledged that while the responsibility for nuclear security, safety and safeguard rests with each individual state, international cooperation is no less important, adding that it looked forward to active collaboration among the member states of ASEAN to intensively promote the implementation of the safety security and safeguards in nuclear energy utilization within the region, as well as future cooperation between IAEA and ASEANTOM.

#### **ARF Work Plan on NPD**

44. New Zealand informed the meeting that the co-chairs have agreed to accept all the amendments that were submitted following the 2015 ISM on NPD, with a small number of exceptions. New Zealand reminded participants that the Work Plan was a living document and that it would be circulated again for further comments, with the intention to have the document prepared for the ASEAN Ministerial meeting in July 2016.
45. The United States informed the meeting that the fourth workshop on space security that the United States and Singapore will be co-hosting will be carried out in the third quarter of 2016. The workshop will continue discussions from previous iterations, and will also focus on transparency, confidence building measures, space security threats, hazards and continued dialogue on transparency. Singapore has then requested that the workshop be mentioned in the Work Plan under project proposals for consideration under priority area 3.

46. The ASEAN Secretariat informed the meeting that the Work Plan would ideally be submitted to the ASEAN SOM for consideration. However, given the short time frame, the Work Plan should at the very least be submitted to the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in July. The details of the Work Plan will be updated at the SOM Meeting in May.

#### **Concluding Remarks by the Co-Chairs**

47. Ms Deborah Panckhurst thanked Malaysia as the meeting's host before commenting on the presentations by CSCAP. She pointed out that it was important to integrate views of non-governmental organizations in what can often be a state-centric dialogue.. She also informed the meeting that New Zealand will be hosting the next ARF ISM NPD in 2017 and will notify members of the meeting once the details have been sorted out.
48. Mr Martin Larose again thanked the co-chairs for their collaboration, noting that this year's ISM had facilitated productive exchanges on issues of shared concern. He further identified a number of areas in which additional efforts are required, including disarmament verification, PSI, and the negotiation of a FMCT. He also expressed Canada's intention to include discussions on the threat of biological and chemical weapons in subsequent ARF meetings. He then invited interested ARF participants to reach out to Canada to explore bilateral cooperation and assistance in the area of WMD non-proliferation.
49. Mr Ikram reminded participants that Japan is considering co-chairing the ARF ISM on NPD for the 2018-2020 cycle, and asked that other interested ARF participants approach the co-chairs or the ASEAN Secretariat to discuss this matter. He also expressed his appreciation to CSCAP for its participation and input, and stated that ARF would continue to work with CSCAP, and other civil society actors pursuant to the ARF ISM NPD agenda. He outlined that there are still many areas where participants can deepen cooperation, including bilaterally, regionally and under various inter-governmental frameworks, adding that Malaysia looks forward to continued collaboration with members of the meeting. He informed the meeting that the co-chairs will endeavour to hold the 9<sup>th</sup> ARF ISM on NPD before the ARF ISG Meeting next year and requested the cooperation of the ASEAN Secretariat to update participating states on the schedule of the ISG in 2017. He concluded by noting that the ARF platform remains an indispensable forum for the discussion of the safety and security of the region.