

# **Second ARF Workshop on Enhancing Regional Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation**

## **Background**

Vietnam, Australia and the European Union convened the first ARF Workshop on Enhancing Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation in Nha Trang, Vietnam on 18-19 January 2018. The workshop was a practical step toward implementing the 2016 ARF Ministerial Statement on Enhancing Cooperation among Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies (MLEA). It also helped further establish the ARF as a regional forum for maritime security issues that promotes and enhances maritime domain awareness, and develops concrete and effective regional responses to maritime security challenges, as envisaged by the Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement.

The workshop found that MLEA cooperation among ARF participants remains underdeveloped. It identified strong opportunities to build confidence and trust by strengthening regional capacity and coordination to address common maritime challenges such as weapons and drugs smuggling, piracy and armed robbery against ships and other maritime crimes, IUU fishing, and environmental offences. The workshop concluded that greater MLEA cooperation would enhance good order at sea and contribute to regional peace, security and stability.

The meeting also noted some of the challenges to enhanced MLEA cooperation, such as differing institutional arrangements, lack of effective communication and consultation mechanisms, poor inter-agency coordination, and existing maritime and territorial disputes. It recommended several actions to address these issues. Participants also agreed on the strong need to continue discussions on these issues through the ARF framework.

## **Objectives**

Vietnam, Australia and the European Union will convene a second workshop on Enhancing Regional MLEA Cooperation in the 2018-2019 inter-sessional year to build on the discussions and outcomes of the Nha Trang workshop. The workshop will provide an opportunity for ARF members to share best practices, exchange views on regional maritime security challenges, identify potential areas for cooperation and discuss approaches to mitigating risks associated with incidents at sea occurring between MLEA vessels and aircraft.

In accordance with the ARF Vision Statement, agreed by ARF Foreign Ministers in 2009, which called on the ARF to “maintain comprehensive approaches to regional security issues, as appropriate, including developing codes of conduct, guidelines, common operating procedures and best practices”, a key focus of the workshop will be to advance the implementation of the recommendations from the ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEP) Working Group on Preventing and Managing Incidents at Sea.

**Participants**

All ARF members are invited to send representatives from ministries/agencies overseeing foreign affairs, law enforcement, coast guards, maritime transport and other relevant issues. Participants with MLEA operational and policy responsibilities are strongly encouraged to attend. ARF Track 2 representatives with expertise in maritime law enforcement issues are also invited. Participants will be encouraged to present their views/ideas on relevant topics.

**Reporting**

The outcomes and recommendations of the Workshop will be reported to the ARF ISM on MS, SOM and Foreign Ministers.

**Administrative Arrangements**

Vietnam, Australia and the European Union will co-host the workshop. The date and venue will be communicated to ARF members via the ASEAN Secretariat in due course.

The co-chairs will cover the costs of meeting facilities, including meals as scheduled in the program. All other costs of participation (transportation between hotel and airport, airfares, hotel accommodation, incidentals, etc.) will be the responsibility of participants.