

**ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM
ANNUAL SECURITY OUTLOOK 2016**

CANADA

I. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

Greater economic integration in the Asia-Pacific is creating prosperity and new opportunities for development but also challenges to the region's security as potential shifts in the dynamics of power may contribute to conflict. The use of confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy, based on strengthened cooperation, dialogue and a commitment to human rights are essential to prosperity and stability. As an Asia-Pacific country with extensive and expanding commercial relationships within the region, Canada is invested in the region's peace, security and prosperity.

In 2017, Canada will celebrate its 40th anniversary as an ASEAN Dialogue Partner. This is an important milestone to reflect on our past cooperation and an opportunity to further strengthen the Canada-ASEAN partnership in support of regional peace and security priorities. Central to that partnership is Canada's commitment to further strengthening its engagement within the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), as well as with our partners.

The ARF plays an important role in facilitating political-security cooperation by providing opportunities for security dialogue and collaboration among practitioners, experts and policy makers. The ARF's role complements that of other regional fora such as the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Plus (ADMM+). Together these forums are essential in addressing the broad range of traditional and non-traditional security threats and challenges facing the region, including: the risk of inter-state conflict; terrorism; nuclear proliferation and instability, irregular migration; human trafficking; drugs and organized crime; cyber security; piracy; maritime boundary disputes; and, humanitarian crises.

The resolution of intra-state conflicts, given ARF's non-interference in the internal affairs of states, is generally addressed through nation- and state-building measures, improving institution-building within ASEAN, and stabilizing the distribution of power.

Korean Peninsula

North Korea continues to violate a number of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions, and its provocative behaviour poses a threat to both regional and international peace and security. Its continued flouting of international obligations must be met with a firm and determined response within the ARF and from the wider international audience.

Canada has in place comprehensive economic sanctions against North Korea and supports imposing additional sanctions. In March 2016, Canada co-sponsored UNSC Resolution 2270, which demonstrated the unequivocal resolve of the international community to halt North Korea's reckless and illegitimate pursuit of nuclear weapons. Canada is now taking the necessary steps to implement into our domestic law the new elements of the UNSC's sanctions against North Korea.

Coordinated international pressure will be needed to compel North Korea to abandon its current course and to resume dialogue aimed at achieving a peaceful diplomatic and political solution. Canada is committed to working with ARF members and the broader international community to ensure effective and coordinated implementation of sanctions against North Korea. Canada calls on North Korea to resume adherence to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, respect its comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and to fulfill its commitments under the Six Party Talks.

Terrorism

All ARF members have a stake in the fight against terrorism. The brutal murder of two Canadians in Spring 2016 by the terrorist network Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, as well as the death of a Canadian in January 2016 in a terrorist attack in Jakarta, are a sad reminder of the impact of violent extremism.

Kidnapping for ransom is a significant source of terrorist funding, fueling violence and instability. Paying ransoms perpetuates the actions of these groups, encouraging terrorists to put new victims and their loved ones through similar ordeals. Canada does not and will not pay ransom, either directly or indirectly, to terrorists, and the international community must be united around this approach.

The surge of Southeast Asian fighters travelling to the Middle East has reinvigorated regional extremist groups and is a concern for all ARF members. Canada will continue to work with ARF members to address the threat of foreign fighters, including supporting regional efforts to detect, deter and interdict fighters at source, destination and transit points.

Addressing the underlying conditions conducive to violent extremism and terrorism is essential to combatting the expansion of terrorist movements. Canada is committed to international efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism and we continue to contribute to the degradation and defeat ISIL at its core in Iraq and Syria, actively participating in military and non-military efforts.

South China Sea:

With an estimated US \$5 trillion worth of the world's trade passing through the South China Sea, the growing tensions have the potential to have disruptive effects on the global economy and undermine regional peace and security. Canada opposes the use of coercion and is concerned that current actions risk exacerbating negative and potentially irreversible consequences for all countries involved and may jeopardize navigation, overflight, maritime security and international trade.

We strongly support efforts to seek the peaceful management or resolution of disputes in accordance with international law. Canada also continues to call for de-escalation of any activities that could destabilize the region. Increased tensions can lead to misinterpretation or accidents that undermine the promotion of regional trust and security.

We continue to urge that China and ASEAN members make concerted efforts to implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and agree to a Code of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.

A copy of Canada's July 21, 2016, statement on the South China Sea is available on-line at: <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1102379&tp=1>

II. National Security and Defence Policy

a. Overview of national security and defence policy

Canada is committed to strengthening peace and security and to enhancing our defence relations and engagement in the Asia-Pacific region. From our commitment of resources towards humanitarian and relief efforts and our support for capacity building projects, to our participation in regional military exercises and high-level defence forums and our efforts to enhance Canada's bilateral defence relations with key regional partners, Canada has taken a number of steps in recent years to strengthen defence relations and cooperation with our partners in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Department of National Defence (DND) Military Training and Cooperation Program (MTCP) supports cooperative training and military professional development projects across the region that enhance interoperability, expand and reinforce Canadian bilateral defence relations, and promote Canadian

democratic principles, the rule of law and the protection of human rights. In 2015-16, DND contributed approximately CAD\$4 million in support of MTCP activities in Asia-Pacific and trained 260 personnel. Looking ahead, DND will continue using MTCP to build and reinforce partnerships with Asia-Pacific countries and to support Canada's engagement objectives across the region.

Over the last decade the strategic context in which DND and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) operates has shifted, in some ways significantly. Like our ARF partners, Canada is facing a range of new challenges, from the rise of terrorism in ungoverned spaces, to the expanded use of hybrid tactics in conflict, to new opportunities and vulnerabilities associated with the space and cyber domains. To ensure that DND and the CAF have the tools needed to confront new threats and challenges in the years ahead, Canada has committed to releasing a new defence policy in early 2017.

At the core of our defence policy renewal is a commitment to engage Canadians, experts, allies and partners, and Parliamentarians in an open and transparent review process. This renewal will help set future direction and priorities, and ensure that Canada's military is equipped, trained, and prepared to confront new threats and challenges in the years ahead.

National security and defence policies must be complementary in a complex security landscape in which threats transcend national borders. Cooperation with partners on shared threats is crucial to the security and well-being of populations and citizens.

Canada has developed and implemented *Building Resilience Against Terrorism: Canada's Counter-terrorism Strategy (2012)*, which sets out how the Government of Canada organizes its efforts to prevent, detect, deny and respond to the threat of terrorism, and provides a framework to guide future efforts. The *Strategy* has a focus on building resilient communities that challenge and reject the ideas and values associated with violent extremism and work together to mitigate the impacts of a terrorist attack.

Recognizing that Canadians continue to embrace the many advantages that cyberspace offers, Canada's Cyber Security Strategy provides a roadmap to comprehensively address cyber security risks and tackle cybercrime. It also provides the basis as for our engagement with international partners on shared cyber security concerns. The development and implementation of multilateral initiatives aimed at fighting cybercrime help to ensure that the internet remains free and open.

b. Data contribution to ARF Arms Register

In keeping with the important advances in promoting transparency in conventional arms, including through the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNCAR) and the instrument of Standardized Reporting on Military Matters, which includes transparency on military expenditures, Canada supports the sharing of information about national security and defence programs and policies. Information on Canada's military expenditure return is available on-line at: <http://www.un-arm.org/MilEx/CountryProfile.aspx?CountryId=35>

III. National Contributions to Regional Security

a. Counterterrorism

The global terrorist threat is diverse and complex. It demands a comprehensive and coordinated international response based on common goals, values and institutions. It also demands a response that is consistent with international legal obligations, including international human rights and humanitarian law. Canada's multi-pronged approach to counter violent extremism and terrorism includes diplomacy, intelligence, security and law enforcement, customs and immigration, transportation, justice and finance expertise.

Canada is of the view that global counter-terrorism efforts must put more emphasis on preventing and countering the spread of violent extremism, rather than only reacting to the actions of terrorists. The UN

Secretary-General is seeking to drive forward the international community through his *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*. Canada supports this initiative both domestically and internationally.

Canada takes a multi-faceted approach to prevent violent extremism domestically and is currently working to establish an Office for community outreach and countering radicalization to violence. This Office will provide leadership on Canada's response to radicalization to violence, coordinate domestic and international initiatives, and support community outreach and research. Canada is also working to raise awareness of the various drivers and forms of radicalization to violence; equipping prevention practitioners with the tools and knowledge required to identify and respond to radicalization to violence; enhancing engagement with the public to strengthen the resilience of individuals and communities against all forms of radicalization to violence; and, sharing good practices and lessons learned in early intervention programming.

The security of the Asia-Pacific region is inextricably linked to that of ARF partner countries, and Canada is committed to working with those partners to counter terrorist activity.

Southeast Asia therefore continues to be a priority region for Canada's Counter-Terrorism Capacity Building Program (CTCBP). Since 2005, the CTCBP has provided counter-terrorism training, equipment, and technical legal assistance to ARF members so that they can prevent and respond to terrorist activity. Significant CTCBP investments are being made in Law Enforcement and Military Intelligence (LEMI), Countering the Financing of Terrorism (CFT), Countering Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IED), and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). Since 2014, the CTCBP has contributed over CAD\$5 million to projects seeking to build community resilience and counter violent extremism abroad, with a specific focus on reducing recruitment and helping countries reintegrate former terrorist fighters.

The CTCBP supports the delivery of a multiyear C-IED training program for Indonesia and the Philippines, with implementation to continue until 2017. This project builds on the longstanding work of the CTCBP in Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE) incident management. The CTCBP has trained approximately 4,000 first responders in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines on Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) incident response, as well as in the area of Chemical and Explosive Systems Exploitation. As a result, local trainers in those countries can now independently deliver this training.

In 2014, Canada provided additional funding of CAD\$14 million to address the region's security concerns and to enhance the ASEAN connectivity agenda. This additional funding supported CTCBP programming, including efforts to mitigate biological and nuclear threats, disrupt illicit flows while protecting legitimate trade, combat human smuggling activities, improve regional cyber-security tools, and work with ASEAN partners to address the "foreign fighter" phenomenon and radicalization.

Law enforcement and military assistance programming is also an area of focus for the CTCBP in Southeast Asia. The Royal Canadian Military Police (RCMP) placement project at the Indonesia-based Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation enabled extensive training throughout the region, building the skills of more than 900 law enforcement officers from throughout the region. The CTCBP currently has four ongoing projects at the Centre.

Multilaterally, the CTCBP also has a number of initiatives that include INTERPOL Special Notices training, as well as investigation, forensic collection skills building, and identifying and tracking foreign fighters moving to conflict areas. In addition, the CTCBP funds a multi-year port security project in the Philippines through INTERPOL. Canada is also supporting the cyber security work of the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation in Singapore.

In the area of anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism, Canada is working with both the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) and the World Bank. CTCBP projects aim to strengthen the legislative frameworks of beneficiary countries, strengthen the supervisory capacity of financial sector supervisors and increase the capacity of law enforcement agents to strengthen money laundering and terrorism financing investigation, prosecution, and conviction.

Aviation security also remains a priority for Canada given the direct air links to the region. Through the CTCBP, Canada continues to support global aviation projects with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Canada works actively within a number of international arenas addressing new and emerging challenges and developing best practices and international standards to combat terrorism. These include the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC); the G7; the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), where Canada co-chairs with Algeria the Sahel Region Capacity-Building Working Group; the Organization of American States (OAS), where Canada chaired the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism from 2014-2015; the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); and the United Nations. Canada also has strong bilateral relationships with a number of key partners to address critical issues related to terrorism.

b. Non-proliferation, Counter-proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament (NACD)

Canada is committed to a step-by-step process towards non-proliferation and disarmament, including the eventual elimination of all nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as the effective control of their means of delivery. Canada is an active State Party to all major international NACD treaties, notably the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The NPT is the only international treaty that prohibits the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and includes a commitment from the five nuclear-weapon States to nuclear disarmament. Canada supports the effective implementation and improvement of the NPT and considers each of its three main pillars – non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy – as equally important, interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

Canada is also committed to supporting the implementation of the Action Plan agreed to at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, particularly in collaboration with Australia, Japan, the Philippines and other members of the cross-regional Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI).

Controlling access is an important component of an overall strategy to address weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation challenges affecting the Asia-Pacific region and the international community as a whole. Canada supports regional action and cooperation to promote the full implementation of UNSC resolution 1540 by ARF partners. Canada also believes in enhanced cooperation and participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative's (PSI) related information exchange, capacity-building, and practical exercises as a means to disrupt illicit WMD trafficking across the region and to deter proliferation. Canada supports strengthened regional cooperation within the auspices of PSI and continues to encourage ARF partners to endorse the PSI's *Statement of Interdiction Principles*. Canada seeks to expand PSI's capacity to diffuse key proliferation security norms and standards of practice through increased transparency and a greater focus on strategic communications.

Under Canada's leadership, in 2002 the *Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction* (Global Partnership) was launched to help prevent terrorists or states that support them from acquiring or developing WMDs and has grown into a multi-country partner program. With nine ARF members¹ also members of the the Global Partnership, the ARF can play an important role in coordinating efforts to address the threat of WMD proliferation and terrorism.

Canada's Global Partnership Program (GPP) is the main funding mechanism by which Canada supports concrete projects to combat and reduce the threat of CBRN proliferation and terrorism. At the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit Canada announced a further GPP contribution of CAD\$42 million to improve nuclear and radiological security world-wide. That investment will support: efforts to prevent the illicit trafficking of nuclear and radiological material; the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund; enhancing the physical security of nuclear facilities; promoting the security of radioactive sources; improving transportation

¹ The nine ARF members that are also Global Partnership members are: Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russia, and the United States.

security; and other multilateral initiatives. Since 2002, Canada's GPP has spent over CAD\$1.2 billion on threat reduction programming.

Since 2012, Canada's GPP has collaborated specifically with ASEAN member states and the ASEAN Secretariat to further strengthen threat mitigation in the region, and has provided over CAD\$22-million in security-related assistance.

Canada's GPP is contributing CAD\$7-million towards enhanced physical security of nuclear and radiological facilities in ASEAN countries. It has also supported regional training on radiological source security, including support to INTERPOL to establish counter nuclear smuggling teams in ASEAN member countries, as well as to assist with the tracking of cross-border movements of known traffickers of nuclear material

Through the GPP, Canada has collaborated with ASEAN member states on strengthening regional UNSC Resolution 1540 implementation, and contributed over CAD\$7.5-million towards the enhancement of regional capacities for border security and container control measures; the provision of CBRN legislative assistance; and training to first responders. The GPP support for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's (UNODC) Container Control Programme in Malaysia resulted in the seizure of three sea containers bound for Syria containing strategic trade items listed as "household goods".

The GPP also actively cooperates with ASEAN member states to mitigate biological threats in the region and is implementing CAD\$7.1 million in projects which support the ASEAN Plus Three Laboratory Network in strengthening capabilities to deal with emerging and dangerous pathogens in the region and in establishing an early warning and disease surveillance system.

Acknowledging the role of nuclear energy to meet the increasing energy demands of states, Canada supports the peaceful uses of nuclear power in a safe and secure manner, notably through full cooperation with the IAEA. Canada strongly believes that implementation of the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol constitute the new universal safeguards verification standard. Through signing and ratifying the Additional Protocol, ARF members and dialogue partners can support transparency and confidence in the peaceful nature of their nuclear programs. Canada has consistently supported efforts to assist states to build capacity to fully implement the Protocol, and believes that the ARF can also work to promote its universal implementation in Asia-Pacific.

Canada is committed to working with ARF partners to develop practical measures and national instruments to universalize key international NACD treaties, norms, and instruments such as the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, the IAEA safeguards system, the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and other arrangements such as the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, and the Missile Technology Control Regime.

Canada also continues to lead international efforts toward Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) negotiations, which remains a shared priority for both nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Cross-regional groups like the NPTDI, which includes Asia-Pacific countries (Canada, Australia and Japan), are playing an important complementary role by fostering cooperation on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament goals, including with respect to an FMCT and the universalization of the IAEA's Additional Protocol.

Canada supports Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZs) as an important regional approach to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and as a confidence-building measure. Canada, along with its NPTDI partners, welcomes efforts to resolve remaining concerns and reservations regarding certain NWFZs treaties, including the Bangkok Treaty, with a view to securing ratifications of protocols for these agreements by all Nuclear Weapon States.

Canada will continue to work actively within the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament to support regional NACD cooperation, including co-chairing session with Malaysia and New Zealand in 2015-2017.

c. Transnational Crime

Canada is committed to working with Asia-Pacific partners, including through the ARF and the Bali Process, to counter threats to governance and stability arising from the activities of transnational organized crime groups in the region, including cybercrime. Frequently linked to organized crime are trafficking networks, including illicit drugs, migrant smuggling, and money laundering, which underscore the transnational dimension of these challenges.

Migrant smuggling is a particular area of concern. Canada works with regional partners to address this issue, often in coordination with global organizations like the UNODC, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and INTERPOL. Since 2011, Canada's Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program's (ACCBP) has provided approximately CAD\$20 million in security capacity building assistance in the region. The majority of this support has focused on strengthening the capacity of authorities to prevent, deter, and respond to human smuggling networks in Southeast Asia. This includes assisting countries in the region to strengthen border security through enhancing the capacity of front line officials to identify fraudulent travel documentation, as well as to improve regional collaboration on border management.

In addition to countering human smuggling, Canada is providing capacity building assistance to mitigate the trafficking of illicit drugs and precursor chemicals in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS).

To further enhance efforts to increase cooperation and compliance with the Financial Action Task Force global standards on anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing and proliferation, in July 2013 Canada became a member of the Steering Group of the Asia-Pacific Group on Money Laundering (of which it has been an active member since 2006).

Canada is working with the ARF and individual members to improve cyber security and combat cybercrime. Communications infrastructure and increased connectivity has advanced knowledge-sharing and wealth creation among Asia-Pacific countries. At the same time, greater reliance on cyberspace among countries in the region can increase vulnerabilities, from which Canada is not immune. Canada encourages countries in the region to take steps to foster dialogue and cooperation to tackle cyber threats and cybercrime through information sharing and capacity building. This will not only create a safer digital environment but also support efforts to maintain an open, safe and accessible Internet.

d. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

The increasing intensity and frequency of natural disasters underscores the importance of strengthening practical cooperation among Asia-Pacific partners on disaster preparedness and response. Canada continues to be an active contributor to humanitarian relief efforts in the region, by providing timely, effective, coordinated and needs-based assistance, and working closely with partners in the region to enhance cooperation and awareness.

Canada was pleased to participate in the first meeting of the Regional Consultative Group (RCG) on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination for Asia-Pacific held in Bangkok, Thailand in December 2015 and considers that the Group represents a valuable forum to share best practices on civilian-military disaster response and to improve predictability and interoperability. Canada looks forward to the next RCG meeting, to be held in the Philippines in the fall of 2016.

In addition to the RCG, Canada has also agreed to join an Advisory Group convened by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA) to develop common humanitarian civil-military coordination standards; Canada believes that establishing such international standards will have a positive impact for disaster response in the region and looks forward to working with ARF members on this important issue.

Moreover, Canada takes an active part in the ARF Inter-Sessional Meetings on Disaster Relief and is looking forward to closer collaboration with the AHA Centre. Canada is considering participating in the next iteration of the ARF Disaster Relief Exercise (DirEX).

In addition to our development efforts, disaster risk reduction is a key component of Canada's advocacy work on humanitarian affairs and disaster response. Canada strongly supports disaster risk reduction measures that aim to enhance resilience to all hazards and reduce vulnerability of individuals, communities and countries, and has advocated for the integration of risk considerations into long-term sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies.

e. Maritime Security

Canada strongly supports continued ARF engagement on maritime security, including with respect to countering WMD proliferation and illicit trafficking. ARF cooperation on maritime security issues will continue to support the region's security and prosperity objectives by ensuring the efficient and secure movement of goods and people through strategic corridors.

Since the identification of maritime security as one of ARF's four key areas, ARF members, including Canada, have developed projects focused on enhanced information sharing and best practices, confidence-building measures based on international and regional legal frameworks, and capacity building support to regional maritime law enforcement agencies. Canada regularly participates in the US-hosted multinational Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises that take place biannually, assuming a substantial leadership role during the last two iterations (2014 and 2016) of the exercise.

Canada views the Western Pacific Naval Symposium's (WPNS) "Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea" (CUES) as a means by which navies may develop mutually rewarding international cooperation and transparency, and provide leadership and broad-based involvement in establishing international standards in relation to the use of the sea. Canada was pleased to be involved in the development of this code.

Operation ARTEMIS is Canada's contribution to Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150), a multinational effort to combat terrorism in the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. It demonstrates Canada's solidarity with partners and allies that are working for peace and security in the maritime environment of the greater Middle East region. In 2015-2016, as part of the CTF-150, Canada participated in the tactical control of 19 frigates, destroyers and patrol craft from different nations, and a new Canadian contingent was recently deployed to Bahrain. Canada will assume command of CTF-150 again in December 2016.

More broadly, Canada is committed to working with international organizations to meet the security challenges of a complex maritime environment and recognizes the importance of broadening international consensus when addressing these challenges. We are actively engaged in a number of international forums, including the International Maritime Organization. Canada is also an active member of the North Pacific Coast Guard Forum – which brings together experts from maritime safety and security agencies in Canada, China, Japan, Korea, Russia, and the United States. The Forum fosters multilateral cooperation and best practices through information sharing on matters related to fisheries enforcement, maritime security, illegal migration, illegal drug trafficking and combined operations.

Civil society and Track II initiatives can also make a useful contribution to developing informed options for regional partners in areas such as regional connectivity and preparedness to address incidents at sea. Canada will continue to support initiatives to organize workshops and seminars in ARF countries on these themes, and will encourage civil society, academics and others to contribute to the discussion by submitting constructive original, and non-zero-sum proposals, that can advance solutions for peaceful resolution.

IV. Role of ARF

The ARF is a key security forum within the Asia-Pacific region and an important component of Canada's engagement in the region's security dialogue. We will continue to engage constructively with our partners to build capacity and ensure that the ARF continues to contribute to security and stability in the region.

Canada has expanded its diplomatic presence across the region and since 2015 has a resident diplomatic presence in all 10 ASEAN member states. Further, Canada's appointment of its first dedicated ASEAN Ambassador in 2016, as well as the expansion of its mission to ASEAN the year before, demonstrates our strong commitment to ASEAN and engagement with the ARF and our partners in the region.

In the 2015-2016 inter-sessional year, Canada continued to participate in and make significant contributions in a wide range of ARF meetings and events. As noted previously, we are co-chairing with Malaysia and New Zealand the 2015-2017 ARF inter-sessional Meetings on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. Furthermore, Canada's on-going contributions for ASEAN regional security and disaster relief programs amount to more than CAD\$37 million.

The regularity of exchange facilitated through the ARF will be increasingly important to sustaining an atmosphere of cooperation in a region of global strategic importance. In this respect, Canada encourages a pragmatic and cooperative approach to ARF's work. By delivering concrete initiatives we can demonstrate the constructive role played by ARF in the Asia-Pacific regional security architecture.

Like many of our partners, Canada believes that it will be important to build on the ARF's existing work in order to bring greater focus to addressing the region's security challenges. As a mature organization and in the spirit of Preventive Diplomacy, the ARF can provide a forum for active discussion of issues and perspectives without jeopardizing the activities and exchanges that members support. The ARF has been most successful in bringing together policy practitioners and experts to address specialized security issues that require interagency cooperation across borders. Its inclusive membership highlights the importance of the Asia-Pacific region and the interconnected nature of the global security environment. As such, future activities should take heed of other relevant regional and global efforts.

The ARF's success as a convener of security dialogue and cooperation among interagency communities of practitioners, experts and policy makers, is complementary to the roles of newer bodies like the East Asia Summit and the ADMM+. These forums offer positive opportunities for complementary regional dialogue and cooperation, in keeping with the spirit of ASEAN-centrality, which Canada continues to support. Canada remains keenly interested in joining the East Asia Summit so that we can better contribute to advancing common approaches to shared security concerns. Canada is also interested in eventual membership in the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM+), once the organization has had more time to consolidate and is ready to consider admitting new members.

Since its inception in 1994, the ARF has become a cornerstone of a burgeoning security community that works together to protect the region's vitality and continued economic growth. Through the consistent efforts of its members, the ARF can continue to grow and evolve, and Canada is committed to playing a positive and constructive role in that evolution