



**CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF
THE 22ND ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM
KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, 6 AUGUST 2015**

“OUR PEOPLE, OUR COMMUNITY, OUR VISION”

The Twenty-Second Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 6 August 2015. The Meeting was chaired by the Honourable Dato' Sri Anifah Hj. Aman, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia.

2. The Meeting was attended by the Foreign Ministers and Representatives of all ARF participants. The Secretary-General of ASEAN was also in attendance. The list of delegates appears as **ANNEX 1**.

Overview of the ARF Process

3. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the ARF as the primary forum to foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interests and concerns in the Asia-Pacific region.

4. The Ministers also acknowledged the vital role of the ARF in the evolving regional security architecture. In this regard, the Ministers emphasised the importance of ensuring that the ARF process, with ASEAN at its core, continues to be relevant in light of the on-going discussion on regional architecture.

5. The Ministers underlined the need to make the ARF more efficient and effective in providing a meaningful contribution to address the increasingly complex regional traditional and non-traditional security challenges. Towards this end, the Ministers underscored the need to ensure comprehensive implementation of the Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement, as well as all other current work plans under the respective priority areas to support the ARF's confidence building efforts.

6. The Ministers recognised that the ARF has made significant progress in the evolution of the ARF's three-stage process from Stage 1: promotion of Confidence Building Measures to Stage 2: development of Preventive Diplomacy and in time, Stage 3: Conflict Resolution. In particular, the Ministers welcomed the advancement of the ARF process towards the phase of Preventive Diplomacy in parallel with the strengthening of confidence building measures.

7. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to implement the Preventive Diplomacy Work Plan and undertake activities consistent with the ARF Concept and

Principles of Preventive Diplomacy. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the growing number of initiatives aimed at building regional preventive diplomacy capacities with the view to creating a pool of experts that appreciate the uniqueness of this region. The Ministers recognised the diversity of the Asia-Pacific countries and their different security concerns. In this regard, the Ministers emphasised that all ARF participants should work together to explore ways to implement preventive diplomacy that would contribute towards the maintenance of peace and security of the region consistent with the ARF Work Plan of Preventive Diplomacy as adopted by the Ministers.

Highlights of Discussions on Regional and International Issues

8. The Ministers noted the outcome of the 26th ASEAN Summit convened in Kuala Lumpur and Langkawi on 26 and 27 April 2015. The Summit with the theme “Our People, Our Community, Our Vision” had highlighted the significant progress in the implementation of the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community 2009-2015 as well as in developing the ASEAN Community’s Post-2015 Vision and its Attendant Documents for 2016-2025. The Ministers also noted the ASEAN Leaders’ adoption of three documents namely: the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on a People-Oriented, People-Centred ASEAN; the Langkawi Declaration on the Global Movement of Moderates; and the Declaration on Institutionalising the Resilience of ASEAN and its Communities and Peoples to Disasters and Climate Change.

9. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in the Southeast Asia (TAC) as a key code of conduct governing inter-state relations and recognised its significance as a foundation for the promotion of peace and stability in the region. The Ministers underscored the importance of a regional security architecture that is comprehensive, open, inclusive, transparent and sustainable as well as creates opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation.

10. The Ministers recognised the significance of the year 2015, which marks the 70th anniversary of the end of the World War II and the establishment of the United Nations (UN). The Ministers stressed the importance of maintaining international peace and security with the UN as its core, abiding by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter as well as universally recognised norms and principles of international law.

11. The Ministers reiterated the importance of strengthening the international cooperative efforts in nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and peaceful use of nuclear energy. In this regard, the Ministers of the State Parties to the NPT regretted that consensus was not achieved on a final document at the 2015 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conference. The Ministers of the State Parties to the NPT reaffirmed their commitment to the NPT and the importance of a regional dialogue in the implementation of the commitments and undertakings from the past Review Conferences. The Ministers recognised that transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) and progress on global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation can play a role in improving the security environment of the Asia-Pacific region. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of preserving the Southeast Asia region as a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and free of all other weapons of mass destruction as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty or Bangkok

Treaty. The Ministers expressed support for the implementation of the Treaty as an effective instrument in promoting and strengthening nuclear non-proliferation, called upon all members of the international community to respect and safeguard the purpose and objectives of the SEANWFZ and noted the on-going efforts of States Parties and the Nuclear Weapon States to resolve outstanding issues, pertaining to the signing and ratification of the Protocol to that Treaty.

12. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of maintaining peace, security and stability, respect for international law, unimpeded lawful commerce, freedom of navigation and over-flight, including in the South China Sea. The Meeting discussed matters relating to the South China Sea and took note of the serious concerns expressed by some Ministers over the recent and on-going developments in the area, including land reclamation which have resulted in the erosion of trust and confidence amongst parties, and may undermine peace, security and stability in the South China Sea. The Ministers called on all parties to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities, and avoid actions that would complicate or escalate tension. The Meeting stressed the importance of resolving disputes through peaceful means, in accordance with international law including 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Ministers noted the commitment of ASEAN Member States and China to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China (DOC) in its entirety. The Meeting welcomed the recent agreement between ASEAN Member States and China to proceed to the next stage of consultations towards the establishment of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) and looked forward to the expeditious establishment of the COC.

13. The Ministers underlined the importance of peace, security and stability in the Korean Peninsula and emphasised the need to manage the dispute peacefully. The Ministers reiterated calls to de-escalate tension and refrain from taking any counter-productive moves. Most Ministers called on the DPRK to comply fully with its obligations to all relevant UNSC Resolutions. They further emphasised on the need for parties to fulfil commitments under the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. The Ministers encouraged all efforts to have constructive engagement, including under the ambit of ARF, towards the resumption of the Six-Party Talks that would pave the way for the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. The Ministers also supported the reunification of the two Koreas including through the continuation of the inter-Korean talks and cooperation and reiterated the importance of addressing humanitarian concerns.

14. The Ministers condemned the violent and barbaric acts of the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and called for concerted efforts to counter this threat. The Ministers reiterated their strong support and commitment to implementing UNSC Resolutions 2170, 2178 and 2199 and recalled the issuance of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Statement on the Violence and Brutality Committed by Extremist Organisations in Iraq and Syria on 28 January 2015. Efforts must be increased to counter violent extremism by collaborating closely with stakeholders and strengthening intelligence and security cooperation. The Ministers fully supported the Langkawi Declaration on the Global Movement of Moderates, adopted at the 26th ASEAN Summit on 27 April 2015.

15. The Ministers supported efforts to address the humanitarian crisis caused by the irregular movement of people in South, Southeast Asia and the Mediterranean. The Ministers commended the on-going work of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. The Ministers expressed appreciation for the trilateral meeting held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 20 May 2015 between Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia and the Special Meeting on Irregular Migration in the Indian Ocean on 29 May 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand which discussed the plight of the irregular migrants in the Indian Ocean and developed recommendations for cooperation to save the lives of migrants, address root causes, and develop responses to address irregular maritime migration. In this regard, the Ministers underlined the importance of on-going dialogues to address the complex and multi-dimensional issues related to irregular migration. The Ministers also welcomed the outcomes of the Emergency ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (EAMMTC) held in Putrajaya, Malaysia on 2 July 2015 concerning Irregular Movement of Persons in Southeast Asia and further supported the establishment of a voluntary trust fund to support the humanitarian and relief efforts involved in dealing with challenges resulting from irregular movement of persons in Southeast Asia.

16. The Ministers welcomed the historic agreement reached in Vienna on 14 July 2015 on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between the E3/EU+3 (China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) and the Islamic Republic of Iran which would ensure that Iran's nuclear program is exclusively peaceful. The JCPOA signifies a shift in how diplomatic efforts can bring an end to a 13-year old stand off on Iran's nuclear program. The Ministers urged all parties to fulfil their respective obligations and implement the agreement in good faith and expeditiously. The Ministers called on the international community to support the implementation of this Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action which can positively contribute to regional and international peace and security.

17. The Ministers emphasised the need for the international community to continue the support and assistance to the Government of Afghanistan. The Ministers expressed support for the peace and reconciliation efforts undertaken and led by the Government of Afghanistan. The Ministers highlighted the importance of continued humanitarian and development assistance as the government continues to implement its reform programme.

18. The Ministers reiterated calls for a comprehensive, just and sustainable solution towards peace in the Middle East. The Ministers also stressed the urgent need for all parties to work towards a resumption of the direct negotiations between the parties and to pursue a two-state solution with a Palestinian state and Israel living side-by-side in peace and security with their neighbours. The Ministers urged for the early resumption of negotiations on the Middle East Peace Process.

19. The Ministers expressed their concern over the continuing situation in Ukraine. The Meeting called on all sides to fully implement the Minsk agreements including the Package of Measures for their implementation signed on 12 February 2015 in Minsk and reiterated that resolution of the situation in eastern regions of

Ukraine can only be achieved through a peaceful settlement to the current crisis. The Ministers emphasised that adherence to the United Nations Charter, including the obligation to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, is of paramount importance in maintaining international peace and security.

20. The Ministers welcomed the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba and the re-opening of diplomatic missions in their respective countries on 20 July 2015. The Ministers believed that this positive move would be mutually beneficial to the peoples of both countries as well as contribute to peace, security, and stability and enhance cooperation in the region.

21. The Ministers reiterated the support to the government of Iraq in its efforts to achieve national reconciliation and underscored the key role of the reconciliation process for the achievement of a lasting peace, security and stability in the Republic of Iraq. The Ministers expressed their deep concern on the on-going violence and the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Syria. The Ministers supported the efforts aimed at promoting a political and diplomatic settlement of the crisis in Syria on the basis of the Geneva Final Communiqué of the 30 June 2012.

Review of Activities of the Current Inter-Sessional Year (2014-2015)

22. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the contribution of the ARF as an effective multilateral platform to foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interests and concerns in the Asia-Pacific region through the implementation of ARF Track 1 activities for the inter-sessional year of 2014/2015. The Ministers commended the work of the ARF Senior Officials' Meeting (ARF SOM) held in Kuching, Sarawak on 10 June 2015 and the Meetings of ARF Inter-sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy (ARF ISG on CBMs and PD) co-chaired by Malaysia and Japan that were held in Melaka, Malaysia on 2-3 December 2014 and in Tokyo, Japan on 8 May 2015. The Ministers noted the reports and endorsed the recommendations made in the reports which appear as **ANNEX 2, ANNEX 3 and ANNEX 4.**

23. The Ministers welcomed the contributions made by the defence officials and emphasised the importance of defence and security cooperation in the ARF process. The Ministers appreciated the increased engagement among the defence officials in streamlining and improving the synergies between ARF and other regional mechanisms such as the ASEAN Defence Minister's Meeting (ADMM) and the ADMM-Plus. The Ministers expressed continued support to defence officials' role in the ARF process through the ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue (DOD), ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC) and the ARF Heads of Defence Universities/Colleges/Institutions Meeting (HDUCIM). In this regard, the Ministers noted the reports of the recent ARF DOD, the 12th ASPC and the 18th HDUCIM, which appear as **ANNEX 5, ANNEX 6 AND ANNEX 7.**

24. In line with the Nay Pyi Taw Declaration on Strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat and Reviewing the ASEAN Organs and with the view to streamline the work of the ARF, the Ministers decided to conduct a trial run of convening one ARF ISG on CBMs and PD in the inter-sessional year 2015/2016 and for the frequency of

the ARF DOD to be reduced from three (3) to two (2) beginning from the inter-sessional year 2015/2016 to further strengthen the ARF process.

25. The Ministers welcomed the results of the:

- 14th ARF ISM on Disaster Relief (ISM on DR), co-chaired by Myanmar, China and Japan, in Tokyo, Japan on 12 and 13 February 2015;
- 9th ARF Experts and Eminent Persons Meeting (EEPs), co-chaired by Singapore and the European Union, in Helsinki, Finland from 11-13 March 2015.
- 13th ARF ISM on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CTTC), co-chaired by Thailand and China, in Nanning, China on 14 and 15 May 2015;
- 7th ARF ISM on Maritime Security (ISM on MS), co-chaired by The Philippines, Japan and the United States, in Honolulu, Hawaii from 30 March-2 April 2015; and
- 7th ARF ISM on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ISM on NPD), co-chaired by Malaysia, Canada, New Zealand, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 15 and 16 June 2015.

The reports of these meetings appear as **ANNEX 8, ANNEX 9, ANNEX 10, ANNEX 11, and ANNEX 12.**

26. The Ministers welcomed the conduct of the ARF Disaster Relief Exercises 2015 (ARF DiREx 2015), co-chaired by China and Malaysia, held in Kedah and Perlis, Malaysia from 24-28 May 2015. The ARF DiREx contributed towards strengthening civilian-military coordination and supported the effective implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) at the strategic level through a Table Top Exercise (TTX) and at the tactical and operational level through the Field Training Exercise (FTX). The Ministers noted that the exercises had highlighted the critical role to be played by the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) as the operational arm of AADMER in coordinating ASEAN's collective response. The Co-Chairs' Summary Report appears as **ANNEX 13.**

27. The Ministers also noted with satisfaction, the following ARF Track 1 Activities which were successfully conducted in the inter-sessional year 2014-2015 and encouraged officials to implement appropriate outcomes and recommendations:

- ARF Workshop on Bio-Preparedness and Disaster Response, co-chaired by The Philippines and the United States, in Manila, The Philippines, from 26-28 August 2014;
- Initial Planning Conference (IPC) of the ARF DiREx 2015, co-chaired by Malaysia and China in Kedah, Malaysia from 9-11 September 2014;
- 18th ARF Heads of Defence Universities/Colleges/Institutions Meeting, co-chaired by Myanmar and Republic of Korea, in Seoul, Republic of Korea from 22-25 September 2014;
- ARF Preventive Diplomacy and Mediation Training Event and Regional Lessons Learned Workshop, co-chaired by Brunei Darussalam and

- European Union, in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam from 7-10 October 2014;
- ARF Training Course on Preventive Diplomacy, co-chaired by Thailand, China, New Zealand and the United States, in Beijing and Nanjing, China from 13-19 October 2014;
 - 2nd ARF Workshop on Space Security, co-chaired by Indonesia, Japan and the United States, in Tokyo, Japan on 9 and 10 October 2014;
 - ARF Workshop on Earthquake Relief and Emergency Response, co-chaired by Malaysia and China, in Beijing and Kunming, China from 23-27 November 2014;
 - ARF Seminar on Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) Security, co-chaired by Indonesia and China, in Beijing, China from 7-9 December 2014;
 - Final Planning Conference (FPC) of the ARF DiREx 2015, co-chaired by Malaysia and China, in Kedah, Malaysia from 3-5 February 2015;
 - ARF Workshop on Enhancing Regional Cooperation to Address Challenges Posed by Illicit Drugs, co-chaired by Thailand and New Zealand, in Bangkok, Thailand on 11 and 12 February 2015;
 - ARF Workshop on Precursor Chemicals and Synthetic Drugs, co-chaired by Thailand and Canada, in Bangkok, Thailand on 12 and 13 February 2015;
 - ARF Seminar on Counter-Piracy and Armed Robbery in Asia, co-chaired by Malaysia and Japan, in Tokyo, Japan on 3 and 4 March 2015;
 - ARF Workshop on Security, Stability and International Migration in the ASEAN Region, co-chaired by Myanmar and the United States, in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 10 and 11 May 2015;
 - ARF Workshop on Counter Radicalisation, co-chaired by Malaysia and Japan in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 25 and 26 March 2015;
 - ARF Workshop on Combating Wildlife Trafficking in Asia, co-chaired by Malaysia and the United States, in Sabah, Malaysia, from 30 March and 1 April 2015;
 - ARF Workshop on Multi-Year Strategic Exercise Planning, co-chaired by Malaysia, Australia and the United States, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 9 and 10 April 2015;
 - ARF Track 1.5 Symposium on Preventive Diplomacy, co-chaired by Thailand, New Zealand and the United States, in Bangkok, Thailand on 1 and 2 July 2015; and
 - ARF Workshop on Cyber Security Capacity Building, co-chaired by Malaysia and China, in Beijing, China from 28-30 July 2015.

Programme of Work for the next Inter-Sessional Year (2015-2016)

28. The Ministers reaffirmed the commitment to continue strengthening efforts for confidence building measures while at the same time continue to promote preventive diplomacy. The Ministers underlined the importance of exploring preventive diplomacy suited to the region based on agreed ARF PD principles as enshrined in the ARF Concept and Principles of Preventive Diplomacy adopted in 2001.

29. The Ministers welcomed Lao PDR and India as the next Co-Chairs of the ARF ISG on CBMs and PD and ARF DOD in the Inter-Sessional year 2015/2016.

30. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) to further advance the ARF process through their recommendations and feedback. In this regard, the Ministers noted the recommendations made by the ARF EEPs at their 9th Meeting in Helsinki, Finland on 11-13 March 2015. The Ministers welcomed Singapore and Australia as the Co-Chairs of the 10th ARF EEPs Meeting for the inter-sessional year 2015/2016.

31. The Ministers reiterated the importance of continuing to promote Confidence-Building Measures while progressing in implementing Preventive Diplomacy including through Preventive Diplomacy training and were pleased with the range of initiatives proposed in support of the work of the ARF. The Ministers welcomed the progress of discussion on the possible scope of implementation of preventive diplomacy in the region, which has been well elaborated in the recent years.

32. The Ministers reaffirmed that all proposed ARF activities should first be discussed at the ISG/ISM level and endorsed at the ARF SOM before they are brought for the consideration of the ARF Ministers. The Ministers encouraged the respective Co-Chairs of activities to manage the schedule of their respective activities with the view to convene them prior to the ARF SOM. In this regard, the Ministers approved the List of Track 1 Activities for the Inter-Sessional Year 2015/2016 which appears as **ANNEX 14**.

33. The Ministers agreed to adopt:-

- ARF Statement on Strengthening Cooperation on Marine Environmental Protection and Conservation;
- ARF Work Plan on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs);
- ARF Work Plan on Disaster Relief 2015-2017;
- ARF Work Plan on Maritime Security 2015-2017; and
- ARF Work Plan on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime 2015-2017.

Future Direction of the ARF Process

34. The Ministers welcomed Lao PDR as the next Chair of the 23rd ARF, beginning 1 January 2016.

35. The Ministers reiterated the importance of the Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement as the guiding document for the ARF process to move forward towards an 'action-oriented' forum, at a pace comfortable to ARF participants. In this regard, they commended the ARF Unit of the ASEAN Secretariat for its effort in preparing the Matrix of the Status of the Implementation of the POA. The Ministers encouraged stronger commitment of the ARF participants to implement action lines of the POA. The Matrix appears **ANNEX 15**.

36. Recognising the importance of intensifying ties between Track 1 and Track 2 to strengthen the work of the ARF, the Ministers reaffirmed the need to strengthen partnership with Track 2 organisations. The Ministers welcomed the active role played by the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), which had made valuable contributions to the ARF process among others through the publication of CSCAP Security Outlook and various memoranda for the consideration of Track 1 officials.

37. The Ministers encouraged the involvement of ARF EEPs as well as Track 2 Officials at the relevant ARF Meetings / Activities. The Ministers also encouraged the convening of Track 1.5 initiatives, which could serve as an exploratory approach in discussing complex political and security issues in support of the role of the ARF as the primary platform for dialogue and consultation.

38. The Ministers expressed their appreciation to the active role of the ARF EEPs in supporting the progress of the ARF in particular to serve as resource persons to the ARF on issues of relevance to their expertise. In this regard, the Ministers tasked the officials to deliberate on the recommendations submitted by the ARF EEPs with the view to turn them into concrete initiatives for consideration in the next inter-sessional year.

39. The Ministers commended the work of the ARF Unit of the ASEAN Secretariat in supporting the 22nd ARF Chair, Co-Chairs of ISMs and other ARF-endorsed activities. Taking into account the increasing activities under the ARF ambit, the Ministers reiterated their support for strengthening the ARF Unit with necessary resources and manpower, as part of the on-going efforts to strengthen the ASEAN Secretariat itself.

40. The Ministers expressed their commitment to support ARF initiatives and at the same time recognised the need to encourage complementarity between the work of ARF with other ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ADMM-Plus, the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) and the East Asia Summit (EAS). The Ministers tasked the officials to deliberate on practical steps to ensure better coordination and synergy of efforts among the various mechanisms with the view to enhancing complementarity of initiatives, avoid straining of resources and unnecessary duplication of efforts.

41. The Ministers welcomed the publication of ARF Annual Security Outlook (ARF ASO) 2015 and shared the view that it is an essential instrument for the promotion of confidence building and mutual understanding through greater transparency among the ARF participants.
