Defence Cooperation in the ASEAN Regional Forum

Introduction

1. Participation of defence officials in formal track 1 ASEAN cooperation was one of the recommendations of the first two ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-sessional Support Group Meetings on Confidence-Building Measures (ARF ISG on CBMs) in Tokyo and Jakarta in January and April 1996, respectively. The first two meetings of the ARF ISG on CBMs recommended, among others, 1) the ARF Senior Officials’ Meeting (SOM) is open to defence representatives; 2) defence representatives are encouraged to participate in inter-sessional activities; and 3) ARF participants are encouraged to conduct exchanges among national defence colleges and to convene a meeting of heads of national defence colleges or equivalent institutions. These recommendations were submitted to the ARF SOM and endorsed by the ARF Ministers at the 3rd ARF in Jakarta in 1996.

2. At the sidelines of the ARF SOM in Langkawi in 1997, the ARF defence officials attended an informal gathering at lunch. Subsequently, the Ministers at the 4th ARF in Subang Jaya in 1997 also welcomed the offer of the Philippines to host a meeting of the heads of national defense college or equivalent institutions in October 1997. The 1st ARF Heads of Defence Universities/Colleges/Institutions Meeting was held in Manila on 7-8 October 1997, hosted by National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP). The ARF HDUCIM has been held annually since then under different themes. The Terms of Reference (TOR) of the HDUCIM was developed and adopted in the 10th HDUCIM in 2006. The HDUCIM gives the opportunity for senior leadership of defense universities, colleges and institutions from the ARF participating countries to discuss regional security issues, ways to conduct research and educational exchanges and to build network among the defense institutions.

3. At the 5th ARF in Manila in July 1998, the Ministers encouraged the active participation of defense and military officials at appropriate levels in all relevant ARF activities. At the 8th ARF in Hanoi in July 2001, the Ministers agreed to endorse the recommendation by the ARF SOM that Defence Officials Luncheon be included as a regular feature of the ARF ISG on CBMs. Recognising the value of the defence officials' participation, the ARF SOM in Bandar Seri Begawan in 2002 endorsed the Concept Paper on Defence Dialogue in the ARF, prepared by Singapore. In the same occasion, the ARF Defence/Military Officials Lunch and Meeting was held on 16 May 2002 at the Empire Hotel and Country Club, Brunei Darussalam. The Meeting was chaired by Pengiran Dato Paduka Osman Patra, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalam. Subsequently, the meeting among defence and military officials attending the 9th ARF was also held on 30 July 2002 at the sidelines of the Ministerial Meeting. Since then, the ARF Defence Officials Dialogue (ARF DOD) has regularly been held back-to-back with the ARF ISG on CBMs – later renamed as ARF Inter-sessional Support Group Meeting on Confidence-Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy (ISG on CBMs and PD) – ARF SOM and the Ministerial Meeting of the ARF in the format of lunch and half-a-day meeting. In 2004, the ARF DOD recommended to the ARF SOM that
the Dialogue be extended to a one-day meeting to allow more time for discussion. The first one-day meeting of the ARF DOD was held in Helsinki in 2007.

4. In view of taking the discussion of the DOD to a higher level, the ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC), which was originally proposed by China, has been convened since 2004. The ASPC is convened annually on the day before the ARF SOM. The participation of the ASPC is in principle at the level of Vice Minister of Defence. However, in practice, many ARF participants are represented by the same defence officials in both the DOD and ASPC.

5. Upon the recommendation of the ASEAN High Level Task Force (HLTF) on Strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat and Reviewing the ASEAN Organs, the 23rd ARF agreed to reduce the frequency of the ARF DOD meetings from three to two per year.

A. Highlights of the 1st – 19th ARF Heads of Defence Universities, Colleges and Institutions Meeting (HDUCIM)

6. **1st ARF HDUCIM, Manila, 7-8 October 1997**
   a. Agreed to enhance regional cooperation on security education and welcomed specific proposals on this initiative.
   b. Exchanged views on regional security arrangements and the emerging Asia-Pacific security environment.
   c. Agreed to continue cooperation on security education and research among defence colleges. Further meetings of heads of defence colleges and similar institutions would be valuable and that a follow-up meeting in the near future is most welcomed.

7. **2nd ARF HDUCIM, Seoul, 8-10 September 1998**
   [Summary Report not available on file nor on ARFNet]

8. **3rd ARF HDUCIM, Ulaan Baatar, 22-24 September 1999**
   [Summary Report not available on file nor on ARFNet]

9. **4th ARF HDUCIM, Beijing, 6-8 September 2000**
   [Summary Report not available on file nor on ARFNet]

10. **5th ARF HDUCIM, Tokyo, 28-31 August 2001**
    [Summary Report not available on file nor on ARFNet]

11. **6th ARF HDUCIM, Moscow, 16-20 September 2002**
    [Summary Report not available on file nor on ARFNet]

12. **7th ARF HDUCIM, New Delhi, 15-17 October 2003**
    The main themes of the Meeting were “Role of the Armed Forces in providing assistance to Civil Administration to meet humanitarian requirements in times of
a) disasters such as earthquakes, floods and cyclones; b) drought and famines; c) search and rescue missions both on land and at sea; and d) environmental hazards such as bush fires and oil slicks” and “Training and coordination required between the Civil Administration and the Armed Forces to effectively counter these challenges with speed”. A supplementary theme related to UN Peacekeeping Operations was also included.

13. 8th ARF HDUCIM, Singapore, 1-3 September 2004
a. The main theme of the Meeting was “Enhancing Strategic and Security Studies to Meet the Challenges of the 21st Century” with sub-theme of “Security Challenges in the 21st Century: Regional/National Perspectives”.
b. The Meeting produced an Exchange of Publications from ARF defence universities, colleges and institutions as well as a Directory of Experts to facilitate the organisation of futures seminars and conferences.

14. 9th ARF HDUCIM, Ha Noi, 10-13 October 2005
The Meeting discussed the following themes:
- The security situation in the region, the trend to peace, stability and development in Asia-Pacific, the perspective and cooperation in the first decades of the 21st century.
- The role of the armed forces in handling non-traditional security and overcoming natural disasters and infectious diseases.
- The relations and achievements of cooperation among ARF defence universities, colleges, and institutions.

15. 10th ARF HDUCIM, Kuala Lumpur, 4-7 September 2006
a. The main theme of the Meeting was “Cooperation in Countering Non-Traditional Threats: Transformation in Academic Curricula and Syllabi” with two sub-themes, namely “Enhancing Cooperation to Counter Terrorism Threats” and “Multilateral Approaches/Cooperation for Effective Response to Natural Disasters”.
b. The Meeting accepted the draft Terms of Reference for ARF Heads of Defence Universities/Colleges/Institutions Meeting (HDUCIM) and agreed to submit the draft to the ARF SOM for formal endorsement and adoption by the Ministers at the 14th ARF in July 2007.

16. 11th ARF HDUCIM, Canberra, 9-11 October 2007
The theme of the Meeting was “The development of curriculum in ARF defence universities, colleges and institutions that deliver the professional military education to enable leaders and officials to most effectively operate in the current complex security environment” with three topics to support the theme, namely:
- Examine what developments are needed in curricula to prepare military officers and defence officials for their roles in dealing with future defence and security challenges;
- Military officers are expected to do so much – can professional military education cope with current and future demands; and
- Examine what constitutes a complex security environment in a regional context.

17. 12th ARF HDUCIM, Islamabad, 21-23 October 2008
   a. The theme of the Meeting was “In contemporary environment, military’s growing involvement in combat and noncombat Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) necessitates reassessment of challenges in order to formulate an effective response strategy” with three topics to support the theme, namely:
      - Is conventional military structure capable of effectively handling operations other than war with present organization and equipment?
      - Human resource will always play the lead role in any such operation. Does MOOTW necessitate changes in existing doctrine and training curricula of our defence institutions?
      - Sharing of operational, training and administrative experiences of member countries with reference to operations other than war.
   b. The Meeting considered the proposal by the Chair to extend the HDUCIM from two to four days to allow more time for presentations and discussions.

18. 13th ARF HDUCIM, Bangkok, 3-6 November 2009
   a. The theme of the Meeting was “The role of the armed forces in maintaining internal security” with three topics to support the theme, namely:
      - Appropriate unit structure and management;
      - Doctrines and codes of conduct; and
      - Supporting laws, orders and regulations.
   b. The Meeting considered and approved the draft Terms of Reference on Information Exchange which was prepared by the Philippines.
   c. The Meeting noted the proposal from India on the establishment of an ARF Institute for International Security. The Meeting agreed for the proposal to be put forward to the ARF Unit for consideration before proceeding with further details.

19. 14th ARF HDUCIM, Washington DC, 6-10 November 2010
   a. The theme of the Meeting was “The Role of Defense Universities, Colleges, and Institutes: More than Military Education” with four topics to support the theme, namely:
      - Defense University Involvement in Long-Term Policy/Strategic Processes;
      - Defense University Involvement in Strategic Operations;
      - Defense Universities working together to meet Challenges: Thinking Conceptually, Strategically, Analytically About New Regional Issues; and
      - Humanitarian Assistance, Disaster Response, and Non-Traditional Security Threats.
   b. The Meeting considered the earlier proposal from India on the establishment of an ARF Institute for International Security Studies and noted the suggestion from the Republic of Korea for the establishment of an ARF Defence University.

20. 15th ARF HDUCIM, Bali, 29 November – 2 December 2011

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The theme of the Meeting was “Enriching and transforming Asian Militaries: Communication, Cooperation, Coordination” with three topics to support the theme, namely:
- Enhancing the ability of professional military educational institutions to develop, deliver and review educational “best practice” through inter-institutional and multinational dialogue, support and cooperation;
- Integrating professional military educational intuitions seamlessly into the overall knowledge architecture of the region – in order to advance knowledge across all sectors of society – by working more closely and harmoniously with civilian institutions in terms of research, development and publication; and
- Positioning professional military educational institutions at the forefront of Asia-Pacific and ASEAN efforts to develop comprehensive strategies for addressing global, regional and local threats to security, stability and prosperity.

21. 16th ARF HDUCIM, Beijing, 4-8 November 2012
The theme of the Meeting was “Education on National Security Strategy in a Changing World” with three topics to support the theme, namely:
- Beyond the Education on Military Sciences;
- Non–Traditional Security and Evolving Roles of the Military; and

22. 17th ARF HDUCIM, Bandar Seri Begawan, 11-14 November 2013
a. The theme of the Meeting was “Cooperation in Research and Academic Curricula on the Contemporary Operating Environment (COE)” with three topics to support the theme, namely:
   - Academic Research and Curriculum Relating to COE;
   - Physical and Other Training Modules Relevant to the COE; and
   - Other Tools and Collaboration Efforts in Addressing the COE.
b. The Meeting produced a point of contacts list which has all the details of the participants for feasible information-sharing in order to promote better networking amongst the participants and as a way forward for future meetings.

23. 18th ARF HDUCIM, Seoul, 22-26 September 2014
a. The theme of the Meeting was “Military Cooperation and the Role of National Defense Universities for Heightened Peace and Trust in the Asia-Pacific Region” with three topics to support the theme, namely:
   - Regional military cooperation and collaborative fields for heightened peace and trust among neighboring nations;
   - The development of educational courses in NDUs and development tasks regarding the advancement of inter-regional peace and trust; and
   - Institutionalizing cooperation and exchange among NDUs for the promotion of regional peace and trust.
b. On the topic of institutionalisation, Brunei Darussalam introduced a draft Concept Paper on strengthening the current process of the ARF HDUCIM with the
objective of enhancing cooperation among NDUs. Participants agreed to submit inputs and feedback to the draft which will be discussed further at the 19th ARF HDUCIM in Myanmar.

24. 19th ARF HDUCIM, Nay Pyi Taw, 1-4 September 2015
   a. The theme of the Meeting was “Enhancing Strategic Cooperation in the Region” with three topics to support the theme, namely:
      - Enhancing cooperation through military education;
      - Regional security cooperation & confidence building; and
      - The role of defence universities, colleges and institutions to meet the challenges.
   b. The Meeting took note of ARF participants’ comments and suggestions to Brunei’s draft Concept Paper on strengthening the current process of the ARF HDUCIM and agreed to discuss the paper further at the 20th ARF HDUCIM in India.

25. 20th ARF HDUCIM, New Delhi, 5-8 October 2016
   a. The Meeting was held under the theme “Transformation of Military Education to Meet the Challenges of 21st Century” with three topics to support the theme, namely:
      - Reinvigorating professional military education to meet contemporary challenges to military leadership;
      - Countering non-traditional threats – new era of defence education; and
      - Education of defence cooperation leading to defence diplomacy for better mutual trust and understanding.
   b. The Meeting took note of the notion of reformulating the HDUCIM as a Track 1.5 activity and acknowledged that the larger membership of the ARF presents a challenge in getting all participants to agree on the direction of the ARF HDUCIM.

B. Highlights of the ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue

26. ARF Defence/Military Officials’ Meeting, Brunei Darussalam, 30 July 2002
   a. Exchanged views on defence and security policy including a discussion on the impact of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the role of defence agencies. Acknowledged that it was important to address the root causes of terrorism and agreed that cooperation should be strengthened at the bilateral and multilateral levels to ensure that joint efforts are effectively implemented.
   b. Recognised the importance of confidence-building measures (CBMs) amongst defence/military officials, including defence exchanges, networking and capacity-building, to support ARF co-operation in the various areas, e.g. transnational crime and disaster relief.
   c. Discussed professional issues such as the impact of the Revolution of Military Affairs (RMA) on militaries and noted that several defence agencies of the ARF participants have established the RMA Departments in their Ministry of Defence.
d. Agreed to recommend to the ARF Ministers the formalization of the ARF Defence/Military Dialogue by holding the meeting amongst defence/security officials back-to-back with the ARF SOM and the ARF Ministerial Meeting.

e. Noted the Concept Paper on Defence Dialogue within the ARF, proposed by Singapore, which was endorsed by the ARF SOM in May 2002.

27. ARF Defence/Military Officials’ Meeting, Phnom Penh, 17 June 2003

a. Exchanged views and experiences on international and regional security, cooperation in various areas such as terrorism, transnational crime, drug trafficking, trafficking in person, arms smuggling, light weapons and small arms control, piracy, disaster relief, peacekeeping, military training and other relevant issues.

b. Agreed to play a more active role in counter-terrorism and promote the interoperability of defence and non-defence operations.

c. Discussed the need for transnational cooperation to promote maritime security through the following: (a) information exchange and capacity building; (b) building on existing anti-piracy frameworks; and (c) integrated multi-dimensional approach to the problem of maritime security involving defense and non-defense authorities.

d. Noted the joint New Zealand-Singapore paper on “ARF Defense Dialogue: Proposed Next Steps”, which was circulated following the 9th ARF in July 2002 in Brunei Darussalam and aimed to build on the earlier Concept Paper on Defence Dialogue within the ARF.

28. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Yogyakarta, 11 May 2004

a. Viewed that non-traditional security issues such as terrorism, transnational crime, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), maritime security and the rise of radical fundamentalism have increasingly become the focus of security policies and cooperation. Agreed on the importance of enhancing cooperation amongst ARF participants in building their capacities to combat terrorism.

b. Exchanged views on national defence and security policies as well as new initiatives such as the Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI) proposed by the United States.

c. Agreed to strengthen cooperation in dealing with terrorism and non-traditional security issues.

d. Discussed China’s draft concept paper on the ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC) and noted the proposal to convene the ASPC back-to-back with the ARF SOM. Also noted the views of ARF participants that the proposed ASPC should complement existing mechanisms and that the existing DOD in its present form should be maintained.

e. Agreed to recommend to the ARF SOM to hold the DOD as a one day meeting.

29. ARF Defence Officials’ Meeting, Jakarta, 1 July 2004

a. Exchanged views and experiences on international and regional security cooperation in various areas such as terrorism, transnational crime, drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, arms smuggling, light weapons and small arms
control, piracy, disaster relief, peacekeeping, military training, seminars/workshops on cbms basis, and other relevant issues
b. Discussed possible areas of cooperation in defence and security among ARF participants.
c. Agreed to include the issue of WMD in the agenda of future DODs, to further explore cooperation in maritime security, terrorism and piracy, and to explore the possibility of non-defence agencies’ involvement in the ARF.

30. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Berlin, 21 February 2005
   a. Exchanged views on the role of the armed forces in disaster relief.
   b. Exchanged views on international and regional security cooperation, specifically in combating terrorism, transnational crime including drug trafficking.
   c. Discussed cooperation in addressing the issue of non-proliferation of WMDs.
   d. Noted that paragraph 6 of the Concept Paper of the ASPC mentioned that the DOD should include an agenda item on issues to be discussed at the ASPC and agreed that the role of armed forces in disaster relief would be a suitable topic at the next ASPC.

31. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Vientiane, 18 May 2005
   a. Exchanged views on international and regional security concerns, including voluntary briefing on the security policy of the ARF participants.
   b. Identified several factors which contribute to the destabilisation of peace and security in the region, namely terrorism, transnational crime, maritime security and piracy, proliferation of WMDs, separatism, natural disasters and energy security.
   c. Agreed that there is a need to play a more active role in dealing with main security issues in the region such as terrorism, transnational crime, maritime security and piracy, proliferation of WMD, separatism, natural disasters and energy security.

32. ARF Defence Officials’ Meeting, Vientiane, 28 July 2005
   a. Exchanged views on international and regional security concerns, including voluntary briefing on the security policy and the role of the defence force in the social economic development.
   b. Discussed defence diplomacy in promoting peace and security.

33. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Honolulu, 17 October 2005
   a. Exchanged views on lessons learned on the role of armed forces in disaster relief and their applicability to consequence management and pandemics.
   b. Exchanged views on international and regional security cooperation, specifically on further developments in enhancing maritime security.
   c. Discussed Malaysia’s proposal to establish an ARF Defence Ministerial Meeting. Participants agreed that the proposal needed to be further discussed in the context of the evolution of the role of defence officials in the ARF, the future development of the ASPC, as well as its relationship to other ARF meetings including the ARF SOM and the ARF Ministerial Meeting.
d. Agreed to table Singapore’s proposal for an ARF Maritime Capacity Building Exercise at the SOM level.

34. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Manila, 1 March 2006
   a. Emphasised discussion on current arrangements between the defence establishments of ARF participants on enhancing border cooperation.
   b. Exchanged views on defence/security sector reforms including on capability upgrade, force restructuring, doctrine development and professional development.

35. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Karambunai, 19 May 2006
   a. Exchanged views on recent developments in combating transnational crime. Agreed that the ARF’s evolutionary approach of CBMs, preventive diplomacy (PD) and conflict resolution could be used in developing responses to transnational crime.
   b. Agreed that efforts in combating transnational crime must involve defence and law enforcement agencies, to develop new regional strategies, to use confidence building measures and preventive diplomacy, the military can have a supportive role in combating transnational crime, to build political strategies based on agreed United Nations principles and existing international laws and to strengthen cooperation among ARF participants.

36. ARF Defence Officials’ Meeting, Kuala Lumpur, 27 July 2006
   Discussed civil-military coordination for humanitarian assistance and proposed to include several elements on civil military coordination on humanitarian assistance in the ARF Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

37. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Helsinki, 28 March 2007
   a. Exchanged views on regional and international issues.
   b. Discussed the issues of multinational peacekeeping and crisis management cooperation and civil-military cooperation and situational awareness/early warning.
   c. Welcomed Australia’s proposal to co-host the ARF Table-Top Disaster Relief Exercise on Disaster Relief with Indonesia in the first half of 2008.

38. ARF Defence Officials' Meeting, Manila, 23 May 2007
   Discussed the challenges and issues in exchanging and sharing information on maritime security. Reiterated the value of timely information sharing among ARF participants in dealing with maritime security issues and the need for greater allocation of resources on training, education and research.

39. ARF Defence Officials’ Meeting, Manila, 1 August 2007
   Exchanged views on the role of armed forces in post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation and emphasised the importance of close cooperation between the military and civilian agencies from the very early stages of planning and operations.
40. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Brunei Darussalam, 31 October 2007  
a. Exchanged views on the roles of armed forces in promoting defence cooperation, diplomacy and engagement in bilateral and multilateral arrangements such as peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR).  
b. Agreed on the need to enhance defence cooperation through exercises, seminars and exchange of information.

41. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Ottawa, 2 April 2008  
a. Discussed the themes of “21st Century Challenges to Defence” and “Strengthening the ARF: How Can Defence Help in the Future?”  
b. Agreed that defence officials could contribute to strengthening the ARF by enhancing defence dialogues and exchanges, placing more emphasis on practical activities and continue to focus on traditional areas of ARF interest. Noted that the measures taken to strengthen ARF should reflect consensus, be as inclusive as possible, and proceed at a pace comfortable for all.

42. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Singapore, 7 May 2008  
Discussed efforts in combating terrorism, maritime security and other non-traditional security issues.

43. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Singapore, 23 July 2008  
a. Discussed challenges to security in the Asia-Pacific and the need to intensify cooperation in HADR and move from dialogue to practical cooperation.  
b. Noted that issues such as energy and food security have begun to adopt a strategic focus, and increasingly the defence establishments of ARF participants might have to deal with the new security challenges even if they were traditionally non-defence issues.

44. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Singapore, 8 October 2008  
a. Exchanged views on regional efforts in countering terrorism and the challenges of modern day peacekeeping and peace support operations.  
b. Noted the adoption of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) Work Plan by the 15th ARF in July 2008 and looked forward to the participation of defence officials in contributing towards the implementation of the Work Plan.

45. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Seoul, 20 April 2009  
a. Exchanged views on military efforts to response to cyber security threats and the military’s roles in addressing transnational security threats.  
b. Acknowledged the importance of continued cooperation and collaboration between armed forces in attempting to address the transnational security threats facing the region and noted that militaries need to promote multinational combined exercises to enhance interoperability.

46. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Phuket, 18 May 2009
a. Underlined the importance of strengthening cooperation and collective measures to cope effectively with non-traditional security threats, namely global economic crisis, food and energy shortages, large-scale natural disasters, transnational crime, terrorism, maritime security, pandemics, proliferation of WMD, environmental degradation, drug trafficking, people smuggling and human trafficking.

b. Underlined the urgent need to address the current global economic crisis as it posed a serious threat to the Asia-Pacific region particularly on its impact on the defence capability in response to non-traditional security threats.

47. ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue, Phuket, 22 July 2009
a. Exchanged views on the themes of “A New Security Paradigm for the Asia-Pacific Countries” and “Recent Counter-Terrorism Experience in the Asia-Pacific”.

b. Recognised that counter-terrorism measures involved both hard and soft powers, including both military and non-military measures. Agreed on the importance of a comprehensive, multi-layered, and long-term response in combating terrorism.

48. ARF Defense Officials' Dialogue, New Delhi, 9 November 2009
a. Discussed the recent challenges in maritime security and shared views and experiences on the role of the armed forces in disaster relief operations as well as promoting effectiveness of defence cooperation amongst ARF participants.

b. Took note of the following recommendations to promote effectiveness in ARF defence cooperation:
   - Continue to build confidence and resolve differences through dialogue.
   - Strengthen cooperation in dealing with non-traditional security issues as they are less sensitive yet emerging challenges to national security.
   - Re-arrange the meeting of ARF DOD to make the Dialogue more effective.

49. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Nha Trang, 18 March 2010
a. Exchanged views on civil-military cooperation and coordination in disaster relief and reviewed the current arrangement of defence meetings in the ARF.

b. Recognised the role of ASPC as the highest platform for defence cooperation in the ARF which has helped expand the scope of participation and discussion and increase the ARF’s defence-related activities.

c. Discussed the re-arrangement of ARF defence meetings to enhance effectiveness of defence and security cooperation and took note of the following recommendations:
   - To further deliberate on the reporting mechanism for the defence tracks and interaction between the DOD and ASPC with the ISG, SOM, the ARF Ministers and other Foreign Ministry-led activities. Specifically, some participants proposed for the Dialogue considered the recommendations for the direct reporting of DOD to ASPC, and ASPC to the ARF Ministers. While at the same time, other participants still considered and proposed to maintain the current mechanism, where all reporting process to the ARF Ministers must be through ARF SOM. The DOD should be ready for providing
relevant inputs for the ARF Track I at request and should have some feedbacks from the Track I process as well.

- To maintain the principles of consensus, consultation, respecting individual country’s interests and responsiveness to ARF priorities.
- To explore how the DOD could involve relevant experts and other agencies that have similar stakes in the regional security.
- The DOD may convene at their own initiative whenever it is deemed necessary.
- To manage the number of meetings and emphasize more on the quality rather than quantity.
- To consider setting up working groups on specific issues to make the DOD time and cost effective. The working group could sit alongside the main Dialogue.

50. ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue, Ha Noi, 22 July 2010
a. Exchanged views on the role of defence establishments in the regional security architecture and the future direction for ARF defence cooperation and coordination.

b. Viewed that defence dialogue and cooperation should not be separated from each other. Military role in addressing the non-traditional security issues should remain the second priority following their core function in the traditional security.

c. Looked at possible measures to improve coordination and cooperation of ARF defence officials and noted the following recommendations:
   - Inclusion of activity proposals in the DOD agenda by the proponents. The DOD may consider refining certain project proposals which would then be submitted to the diplomatic meetings.
   - Adoption of progressively specific agenda on selected topics which may lead to concrete plans of action in an inter-sessional year.
   - Consideration of the proposals on the rearrangement of the DOD, including through the creation of a framework to provide two-way relationship between the DOD and the ISG and to move the ASPC to be held back-to-back with the ARF Ministerial Meeting.
   - Initial implementation of proposed activities on a bilateral or trilateral basis with a smaller group of ARF participants conducting the activities and the rest of the participants as observers.

51. ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue, Bali, 29 November 2010
a. Exchanged views on civil-military cooperation and coordination in disaster relief, on enhancing the effectiveness of defence and security cooperation and coordination amongst ARF participants, and on the prospects of cooperation in peacekeeping operations.

b. Discussed the following recommendations:
   - Review and rearrange the defence meetings in a more convenient way for adopted initiatives in previous meetings to be pursued in future meetings and gradually implemented in practice.
- Consider establishing a coordination mechanism between the DOD and ASPC meetings with the ISG on CBMs and PD, ARF SOM, ARF Ministerial Meeting and other Foreign Ministry-led activities.
- Focus future activities on cooperation in information sharing, capacity building, and experience and expertise exchange to promote confidence for effective military cooperation based on preserving fundamental ARF principles such as respect for sovereignty and non-interference.
- Consider search and rescue and military medicine as potential areas of future cooperation.

52. ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue, Sydney, 6 April 2011
   a. The Dialogue was briefed by Japan on the aftermath of the 11 March earthquake and tsunami. The lessons learned from the relief operations underscored that practical cooperation among ARF participants must remain central to effective responses to natural disasters.
   b. Exchanged views on the relation between the ARF and the ADMM-Plus, capacity-building in maritime security, prospects for future ARF DOD counter-terrorism cooperation and multilateral peacekeeping operations.
   c. Acknowledged the centrality of ASEAN to both the ARF and ADMM-Plus and the shared security priorities of each forum. The Dialogue identified the importance of improved information-sharing to mitigate policy overlap and recognised the potential for the DOD to act as a conduit between both fora.

53. ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue, Surabaya, 7 June 2011
   a. Discussed issues and challenges in combating piracy/hijacking in the Gulf of Aden and the current challenges in combating terrorism. Participants recognised that non-military threats in recent years are as dangerous as that of military threats. With the shifts in the paradigms of threats, security, and military operations, the Dialogue was of the view that the approaches to security cooperation should be adjusted to meet the new challenges.
   b. The ASEAN Secretariat briefed the Dialogue on ASEAN cooperation in counter-terrorism which began even before the events of 9/11 with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration on Transnational Crime in December 1997. The latest milestone was when the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT), signed on 13 January 2007, entered into force on 28 May 2011.

54. ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue, Phnom Penh, 7 December 2011
   a. Exchanged views on strengthening cooperation on peacekeeping operations and enhancing cooperation on maritime security amongst ARF participants.
   b. Noted the suggestion by some participants to strengthen links and encourage synergy between the ARF, the ADMM-Plus, and the East Asia Summit as one way to avoid overlaps between these mechanisms in the effort toward future practical maritime security initiatives.

55. ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue, Wellington, 7 May 2012
a. Exchanged views on how defence officials might help to implement the ARF Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy, on promoting closer cooperation between the ARF and the ADMM-Plus and the frequency of ARF defence meetings.
b. Agreed that that the ARF DOD was the most appropriate forum to coordinate the sharing of information at the broad strategic level. The ADMM-Plus should continue to focus on practical military-military cooperation while the ARF DOD could continue to provide comprehensive and strategic direction.
c. Agreed that there needs to be a clear conduit of communication between the ARF DODs and ADMM Plus. Mutual attendance at ARF Inter-sessional Meetings and ADMM-Plus Expert Working Group (EWG) meetings was considered as means of initiating this communication.
d. Viewed that that there was an opportunity for a slight reduction in the number of meetings while still providing an adequate opportunity for defence officials to exchange their views. In this regard, the Dialogue recommended that the DOD associated with the ARF Ministerial meetings would be the logical dialogue to be discontinued without having any significant impact on the overall process.

56. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Phnom Penh, 24 May 2012
   a. Exchanged views on enhancing military practical cooperation on HADR, cooperation in peacekeeping operations, and implication of regional security architecture.
   b. Took note of the following recommendations on enhancing cooperation on peacekeeping operations:
      - Strengthen cooperation and exchanges in peacekeeping training.
      - Establish a mechanism for experience sharing through, among others, regional peacekeeping training.
      - Explore possibilities of bilateral and multilateral peacekeeping exercises and conduct peacekeeping exercises when necessary.
   c. Recalled the discussion at the ARF DOD in Wellington on 7 May 2012, some participants suggested that the ASEAN Secretariat could act as a conduit of information-sharing between the ARF DOD and the ADMM-Plus by presenting updates in each forum about the other’s progress.
   d. Noted the proposal by Cambodia to develop an ASEAN Master Plan on Security Connectivity which will link all existing security cooperation mechanisms in the region.

57. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Bandar Seri Begawan, 27 November 2012
   a. Exchanged experiences and lessons learned in participating in multilateral peacekeeping operations and experiences on the role of military forces in counter-terrorism efforts.
   b. Recalling the recommendation of the 8th ASPC in Surabaya in June 2011 for the DOD to act as a conduit between the ARF and the ADMM-Plus, the Dialogue was briefed by Co-Chairs of the ADMM-Plus Experts’ Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations (EWG on PKO) and the EWG on Counter-Terrorism in coordinating multi-lateral cooperation among the ADMM-Plus countries.
58. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Shanghai, 11 April 2013
   a. Discussed the contribution of defence officials to the achievement of the ARF’s objectives. Participants pointed out the need for the ARF to sustain the progresses of the CBMs that have been achieved thus far before moving to PD stage.
   b. Noted the suggestion for the Chair or Co-Chairs of the ARF and ADMM-Plus activities should meet at the sidelines of their respective activities and for the co-chairs of ARF ISMs to be invited to attend the relevant ADMM-Plus Experts’ Working Group (EWG) meetings and vice versa.
   c. Concurred that PD should also be practiced in addressing non-traditional security issues, such as disaster relief, counter-terrorism and transnational crime, maritime security and peacekeeping operations. Participants were of the view that the DOD should continue discussions on the feasible approaches to implement PD in the future.

59. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Bandar Seri Begawan, 22 May 2013
   Discussed the impact of social media on defence and security, including defence policy on the role and use of social media. Participants noted several principles that may be applied in the use of social media by the defence and military personnel, namely transparency, inclusiveness, respect, responsibility, accountability and do-no-harm.

60. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Yangon, 9 December 2013
   a. Exchanged views on defence diplomacy as an interface between defence cooperation and preventive diplomacy which contributes to maintaining security environment, attainment of economic interests, prevention of disputes and conflicts and facilitating response to national emergencies that require international assistance.
   b. Took note of the partnership between some ARF participants in capacity-building projects on comprehensive crisis management. At the regional level, the Dialogue suggested that multilateral defence dialogues and cooperation also contribute to the comprehensive approach to crisis management.
      The Dialogue was briefed on the outcomes of the 2nd ADMM-Plus in Bandar Seri Begawan on 29 August 2013.

61. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Brussels, 8 April 2014
   a. Discussed the issues of maritime security and the role of the military in HADR. The Dialogue was informed on the activities of the ADMM-Plus EWG on Maritime Security and the EWG on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief.
   b. Exchanged views on the complementarity as well as on the need to avoid overlap and duplication between ARF DOD and ADMM-Plus in the area of maritime security and other areas. Notwithstanding differences in mandate and membership, the DOD would welcome greater functional coordination on common issues and further initiatives to that effect in the near future.
   c. Noted the suggestion to invite the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) to the next ARF DOD and
ASPC to brief ARF participants on the role of the AHA Centre and its scope of work.

62. **ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue, Yangon, 7 June 2014**
   Discussed the role of the armed forces in addressing diverse non-traditional security threats facing the region including terrorism, maritime security, piracy, cyber security, trafficking of illicit drugs, arms smuggling, environmental security, disaster relief, armed robbery, energy security, unexploded remnants of war, peacekeeping, search and rescue and human security.

63. **ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue, Melaka, 1 December 2014**
   a. Noted the briefings by the Co-Chairs of the six ADMM-Plus EWGs on the recent developments and activities in their respective areas.
   b. Discussed the recommendations of the ASEAN High Level Task Force (HLTF) on Strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat and Reviewing the ASEAN Organs which called for the streamlining of ARF DOD meetings. The Dialogue viewed that streamlining the ARF DOD should be carefully considered in line with the ongoing efforts to reduce duplication of efforts and promote complementarity with the ADMM-Plus.
   c. Discussed collective cooperation in search and rescue (SAR) and emphasised the need to strengthen regional and international SAR cooperation and coordination, including through increased bilateral engagements and utilisation of practical exercises such as the ARF Disaster Relief Exercise (ARF DiREx) and the ADMM-Plus HADR and Military Medicine (MM) Exercise.

64. **ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue, Tokyo, 7 May 2015**
   a. Recalled the discussions of the previous ARF DOD in Melaka on streamlining the ARF DOD meetings and agreed to reduce the frequency from three to two meetings. However, the timing of the two ARF DOD would be determined only after the ARF ISG on CBMs and PD has conducted its deliberations on this issue.
   b. Viewed that the ARF and the ADMM-Plus have distinct advantages and potentials which should be the focus of activities under each fora. Noted several suggestions to enhance the work of the ARF DOD and to avoid duplication between the ARF and the ADMM-Plus, including:
      - The ARF DOD should initiate concrete programmes and defence-related activities for the endorsement of the ARF SOM.
      - The ARF DOD could look into the outcomes and recommendations of past ADMM-Plus activities in order to develop strategic policy which could then be considered by the ADMM-Plus.
      - The ARF DOD could complement the ADMM-Plus especially in strengthening civil-military coordination and enhancing multi-agency coordination.
      - The ASEAN Chair should play a leadership role in both the ARF and the ADMM-Plus in order to avoid overlaps and to develop constructive communication channels between the fora, particularly in overseeing the development of the ARF and ADMM-Plus agendas.
- The ASEAN Secretariat could also play a significant role in facilitating information-sharing between the ARF and the ADMM-Plus.
- The ARF and the ADMM-Plus should enhance coordination and arrangements particularly on issues of common concern; for example, ARF and ADMM-Plus meetings on similar topics could be convened back-to-back in the same venue.

c. Expressed serious concern over the rapid rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the security risks it poses to countries in the region. Acknowledged that counter-terrorism response must be multi-faceted and cannot be conducted through military solutions alone and emphasised the critical importance of cooperation among countries in the region in combating ISIS as well as other violent extremist groups.

65. ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue, Kuching, 8 June 2015
   a. Exchanged views on the rise of violent extremist groups and the role of the armed forces in countering extremism. Discussed the origins, motives, and root causes of extremism and terrorism and acknowledged that efforts to counter extremism require political commitment of the government at both national and international levels. Noted the suggestion that measures to counter terrorism and extremism should be shared and synchronised among countries in the region in order to keep up with the evolution of extremism and its activities.
   b. Discussed the military roles in peacekeeping operations, the challenges in peacekeeping missions and the future of the peacekeeping. Underscored the importance of trainings for peacekeeping forces and the development of peacekeeping capabilities particularly at the regional level.

66. ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue, New Delhi, 11 April 2016
   a. Exchanged views on the role of the armed forces in ensuring sustainable marine economic development, including through the ensuring of the free flow of marine traffic in the high seas from the threats of piracy and other crimes such as trafficking of arms, people and illegal drugs.
   b. Recognised the role of defence and military in countering terrorism and violent extremism and suggested that the ARF should continue looking at ways to strengthen multilateral defence and military coordination to counter terrorism through the ARF DOD process.

67. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Luang Prabang, 5 May 2016
   a. Emphasised the importance of civil-military cooperation and coordination on HADR which would enable the effective utilisation and distribution of the combined assets and resources.
   b. Exchanged views on regional cyber security challenges and how cyberspace has become a crucial force enabler and multiplier in military affairs. Acknowledged that cyber security should be a whole-of-government endeavour and should also involve the private sector that are directly involved in developing information and communication technologies (ICTs) infrastructure.
c. Noted that the ADMM-Plus has endorsed the establishment of the Experts’ Working Group (EWG) on Cyber Security to be co-chaired by the Philippines and New Zealand.

68. ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, Ottawa, 10 May 2017
   a. Exchanged views on the various challenges faced by the region in addressing maritime security threats, peacekeeping and peace support operations, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.
   b. Discussed the crucial role of maritime domain awareness and the need to promote mutual understanding and maintaining open lines of communications in ensuring maritime security.
   c. Highlighted the need to improve pre-deployment training for peacekeepers and identified pre-deployment training as one potential area for future ARF cooperation in peacekeeping.
   d. Underscored the importance of civil-military coordination in HADR operations and to continue enhancing cooperation in this area.

B. Highlights of the 1st – 13th ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC)

69. 1st ASPC, Beijing, 4-6 November 2004
   a. Highlighted the purpose, principles, modalities and agenda of the ASPC as agreed in the Concept Paper of the ASPC.
   b. Participants provided voluntary briefings on the international and regional security situation and discussed the role of national defence forces in combating non-traditional security threats.

70. 2nd ASPC, Vientiane, 20 May 2005
   a. Exchanged views on the international and regional security situation including on the role of major powers in regional security and its implications, the important role of regional security arrangements such as the ARF in addressing the various threats and challenges, and the situation in the Korean Peninsula.
   b. Discussed the role of the armed forces in disaster relief and consequence management and identified the lessons learned from the 2004 tsunami response.
   c. Agreed on the following recommendations:
      - To continue to exchange of views on disaster preparedness and relief operations, sharing lessons learnt among nations, studying lesions carefully, identifying lessons to enhance ability to manage the results of a disaster;
      - To promote joint capacity building in consequence management, including in having common definitions;
      - To organize seminars to discuss organization for command and control, contribution of facilities/forces and liaison between/transition to civilian relief; and
      - To adhere to the existing UN OSCO guidelines on the use of civilian and military assets in humanitarian assistance to avoid competition, duplication and waste of resources.
71. **3rd ASPC, Karambunai, 18 May 2006**
   Exchanged views on the challenges and need for maritime security cooperation at the bilateral, sub-regional and multilateral basis and the state of UN peacekeeping operations.

72. **4th ASPC, Manila, 24 May 2007**
   a. Exchanged views on international and regional security issues, including the need to enhance existing security cooperation amongst ARF participants to include more frequent military visits and exchanges and better sharing of information, experience and technology, especially those focused on capability development.
   b. Discussed the institutional frameworks and foundations to support the armed forces in dealing with terrorism and other non-traditional security issues.
   c. Shared best practices on the legal frameworks and arrangements on the deployment of peacekeeping and peacebuilding forces.

73. **5th ASPC, Singapore, 8 May 2008**
   a. Exchanged views on the regional defence and security outlook, touching on the evolving strategic landscape and its implications on regional peace and stability.
   b. Noted that the regional security architecture was characterised by overlapping and multi-layered frameworks that serve different roles but complemented one another. Emphasised the importance of the regional security architecture to evolve in an open and inclusive manner which is critical in sustaining regional peace, stability and progress.
   c. Discussed the issue of energy security and challenges to defence establishments.
   d. The Conference was briefed on the outcomes of the 2nd ADMM in Singapore on 13-15 November 2007.

74. **6th ASPC, Phuket, 19 May 2009**
   a. Shared the view that addressing security challenges continued to be the core of defence policies and that effective international coordination and cooperation served as a critical contribution to addressing non-traditional security threats.
   b. Discussed the security implications of the global economic crisis and underlined that countries in the Asia-Pacific need to make wise fiscal choices and operate efficiently while no sacrificing long-term security interests for short-term economic expediency.
   c. The Conference was briefed on the outcomes of the 3rd ADMM in Pattaya on 26 February 2009.

75. **7th ASPC, Da Nang, 19 May 2010**
   a. Exchanged views on the various threats to regional and global stability, especially emerging non-traditional security challenges such as the ongoing economic crisis, maritime security, terrorism, natural disasters, piracy, safety of navigation, illicit drugs and trafficking and smuggling of people.
b. Took note of the following recommendations:
   - Continuously focus on dealing with counter-terrorism with a view to tackling radicalisation;
   - Strengthen the ARF particularly in the areas of disaster relief and maritime security;
   - Reinforce the ARF strategic guidance and encourage the discussion on strategic issues such as objectives and principles in non-traditional security cooperation;
   - Strengthen the ARF in both internal and external relations;
   - Deepen practical cooperation under its framework through personnel training, information sharing, desktop and field exercises in the manner of transparency and in close collaboration between military and civilian agencies;
   - Adhere to the founding principles of ARF such as respect to national sovereignty and non-interference in addressing non-traditional security challenges; and
   - Strengthen the integration of defense agencies, taking into account the recent establishment of the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus).

c. The Conference was briefed on the outcomes of the 4th ADMM in Ha Noi on 10-13 May 2010 and noted the convening of the inaugural ADMM-Plus in October 2010.

76. 8th ASPC, Surabaya, 8 June 2011
   a. Discussed the issues of maritime security, the role and contribution of the defence and military sectors in addressing non-traditional security issues and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
   b. Discussed the issue of synergy between the ARF and the ADMM-Plus to avoid duplication of efforts in the areas of HADR, counter-terrorism, maritime security and peacekeeping operations and noted the following recommendations in this regard:
      - The ADMM-Plus should cover practical cooperation and capacity-building while the ARF should focus on broad policy and strategic discussion.
      - The ADMM-Plus should consider the outcomes of discussions within the ARF as references in developing its programmes, while the ARF could utilise the results and recommendations from activities of the ADMM-Plus to develop broad strategic and policy issues in relevant areas.
      - The ASEAN Chair should play a leadership role in avoiding overlaps. The ASEAN Chair should develop constructive communication channels involving members of both fora, particularly in overseeing the development of agendas of the ARF and the ADMM-Plus.
      - A joint Working Group of the ARF and the ADMM-Plus could be established with the task of discussing possible ways to synergise efforts.
      - Both the ARF and the ADMM-Plus should provide opportunities to each other to participate in their respective programmes and activities.
- The ASEAN Secretariat should take advantage of its participation in both fora to play a role in facilitating information sharing between the ARF and the ADMM-Plus.

c. Discussed the linkages between the issues of climate change, food security and energy security and the threats posed by the scarcity of resources as well as the role of the defence sector in addressing these problems. The Conference noted the briefing by the ASEAN Secretariat on ASEAN policy and cooperation in food and energy security.

d. The Conference was briefed on the outcomes of the 5th ADMM in Jakarta on 19 May 2011.

77. 9th ASPC, Phnom Penh, 25 May 2012
a. Exchanged views on international and regional security issues including rising tensions in the South China Sea, the missile launch by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the situation in the Middle East and the positive political developments in Myanmar.

b. Discussed ways and means to enhance cooperation in maritime security, consideration of safety on nuclear security and lessons learned from the termination of civil war.

78. 10th ASPC, Bandar Seri Begawan, 23 May 2013
a. Touched on the issue of the importance of people-to-people interaction among the ARF participants, in particular among the defence and military establishments of the ARF participants.

b. Exchanged views and experiences in enhancing cyber security and acknowledged the importance of developing and strengthening the capacity to protect and defend critical information and communication system (ICT) infrastructure from cyber attacks. The Conference was briefed on the outcomes of the 7th ADMM in Bandar Seri Begawan on 7 May 2013 and the outcomes of the ARF Disaster Relief Exercise (ARF DiREx) 2013 which was conducted in Cha-am, Thailand on 7-11 May 2013.

79. 11th ASPC, Yangon, 8 June 2014
a. Noted the suggestion for the establishment of a security concept in Asia with the core content of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security.

b. Emphasised that defence establishments and armed forces in the region should strengthen communication, address each other’s reasonable concerns, accumulate mutual trust through exchanges, and deepen mutual benefit through cooperation so as to jointly play a constructive role in maintaining regional peace.

80. 12th ASPC, Kuching, 9 June 2015
a. Viewed that the ARF should consider ways to promote the effectiveness of the ASPC and the ARF DOD through cooperative activities, particularly in the light of the progress in the ADMM and the ADMM-Plus. Underscored that synergy and complementarity between the various ASEAN-led mechanisms to prevent duplication of functions should be maintained. Noted the suggestion that the ARF
could serve as a venue for facilitating cooperation between defence and foreign affairs officials to work together on political-security issues while the ADMM-Plus concentrate on practical cooperation among defence and military establishments.

b. Exchanged views on the challenges posed by the non-traditional security threats crimes such as illegal fishing, natural and man-made disasters, counter-insurgencies, communicable diseases, financial fraud, space security, cyber security, aeronautical security, maritime piracy and environment security. Highlighted areas in which the expertise and capabilities of military and defence personnel could be utilised to address these threats.

c. The Conference was briefed on the outcomes of the 9th ADMM in Langkawi on 16 March 2015 and the outcomes of the ARF Disaster Relief Exercise (ARF DiREx) 2015 which was conducted in Kedah, Malaysia on 24-28 May 2015. Noted the progress of the development of the Direct Communication Link in the ADMM process that will be launched at the ADMM Retreat in Malaysia in November 2015.

81. 13th ASPC, Luang Prabang, 6 May 2016

a. Exchanged views on regional and international security issues including addressing traditional and non-traditional security challenges, civil-military cooperation on HADR, efforts in combating terrorism and countering extremist messaging, maritime security, the security situation in the South China Sea and the Korean Peninsula, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, climate change and trafficking in persons.

b. Discussed the challenges and best practices of CBMs and noted the following suggestions:
   - The ARF may consider exploring more practical activities where the defence and military could play their role in promoting civil-military cooperation, for example in the areas of HADR and maritime security.
   - The ARF DOD could provide more suggestions and inputs to the ARF on these practical activities and for more defence representatives to participate in ARF activities.
   - ASEAN-led security mechanisms should be reviewed from time to time in order to maintain their relevance in the ever-changing regional dynamics.
   - Defence officials could contribute to the ARF Annual Security Outlook (ARF ASO) as a confidence-building measure.

c. Reaffirmed that CBMs should continue to be maintained since it would not be possible to move the ARF process forward without the degree of trust among ARF participants. Recognised the need to prioritise human resources development, exchange and share information on a timely and regular basis in order to maximise capability, and emphasise quality over quantity by synergising similar activities and minimising duplication and overstretch of resources in order to alleviate the difficulties in conducting CBMs.

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