

ARF Workshop on Enhancing Regional Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation

I. Introduction:

The Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement, which was adopted in 2010, envisaged the ARF as a regional forum for maritime security issues that promotes and enhances maritime domain awareness and develops concrete and effective regional responses to maritime security challenges.

In pursuance of this vision, the ARF Foreign Ministers adopted in July 2016 the ARF Ministerial Statement on Enhancing Cooperation among Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies, which aims to, among others, promote trust and confidence and strengthen the capacity of and coordination among ARF participating countries in addressing common maritime security challenges. This Statement came out reflecting the ARF common perception of the need to maintain law and order and combat crime at sea, whereby the front-line role of maritime law enforcement agencies should be further strengthened.

Over the past years, some ARF participating countries have entered into bilateral maritime law enforcement cooperation arrangements with one another. These arrangements cover equipment and infrastructure support, human resource development and training, monitoring and surveillance capacity building, as well as inter-operable law enforcement activities. While these bilateral efforts have benefited the concerned parties, further opportunities exist for region-wide coordinated efforts that serve our common interest of ensuring that the Asia-Pacific region is safe for the exercise of freedom of navigation and overflight and unimpeded lawful commerce, in accordance with international law. Through forging cooperation among maritime law enforcement agencies, ARF participating countries would also strengthen existing confidence building measures, reduce the risks of misunderstandings and miscalculations, and explore innovative ways to promote preventive measures at sea, especially in the context of growing maritime challenges.

II. Objectives:

Following the adoption of the ARF Ministerial Statement on Enhancing Cooperation among Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies, Viet Nam, Australia and the EU will co-organize a two-day ARF Workshop on this topic. The main objectives of the event are:

- To take stock of existing maritime law enforcement cooperation in the region;

- To share experiences and best practices in implementing international instruments on safety of navigation and managing incidents at sea, including dealing with non-traditional security threats at sea;
- To discuss/identify the principles, scope and possible measures to promote maritime law enforcement cooperation among ARF participating countries in response to the needs of individual countries as well as the region as a whole; and
- To promote synergies with other regional efforts such as those under the EAS framework and other multilateral regional fora including HACGAM and ReCAAP.

III. Participants:

All ARF participating countries are invited to send representatives from relevant ministries/agencies overseeing foreign affairs, law enforcement, coast guard, maritime transport, and other related areas to the Workshop. Participants are encouraged to present their views/ideas on relevant topics of choice. Regional and international experts will be invited as speakers.

IV. Outcomes:

The outcomes and recommendations of the Workshop will be reported to the ARF SOM Leaders and Foreign Ministers.

V. Administrative Arrangements:

Viet Nam, Australia and the European Union will co-host the Workshop. Other ARF participating countries are encouraged to join as co-sponsors.

The Workshop will be held in either Q4/2017 or Q1/2018 in a coastal city of Viet Nam.

The co-hosts will provide venues, luncheons and light refreshments during the course of the event. Participants are responsible for their own travels, accommodations and other incidental costs./.