



SUMMARY REPORT

ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM SENIOR OFFICIALS' MEETING (ARF SOM)

Manila, 24 May 2017

INTRODUCTION

1. The ASEAN Regional Forum Senior Officials' Meeting (ARF SOM) was held in Manila on 24 May 2017. H.E. Ma. Hellen De La Vega, Director General and Acting SOM Leader of the Philippines, Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines chaired the Meeting.

2. The Meeting was attended by representatives of all ARF participating countries and the ASEAN Secretariat. The list of delegates appears as **ANNEX 1**.

AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF AGENDA

3. The Meeting adopted the Provisional Agenda, which appears as **ANNEX 2**.

AGENDA ITEM 2: BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT

4. The Meeting adopted the Tentative Programme of Activities, which appears as **ANNEX 3**.

AGENDA ITEM 3: REPORT OF THE ARF DEFENCE OFFICIALS' DIALOGUE

5. The Meeting noted the briefing on the outcomes of the ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue (ARF DOD), which was Co-Chaired by Philippines and Canada and convened in Ottawa on 10 May 2017. The Meeting noted that the Dialogue exchanged views on the various challenges faced by the region which focused on three main topics including maritime domain awareness (MDA), peacekeeping and peace support operations as well as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) efforts. The Dialogue underscored that there is a need to enhance MDA and promote partnership

and cooperation in this area. The Meeting also noted that Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines will launch the Trilateral Sulu Sea Patrol in mid-June 2017. With regard to peacekeeping and peace support operations, the Dialogue reiterated the need to take stock of existing platforms and avoid duplication of efforts. The need to enhance civil-military coordination in HADR operations was also highlighted. The Dialogue further discussed the issue of a possible streamlining of activities between the ARF and other ASEAN-led mechanisms. The Co-Chair's Report appears as **ANNEX 4**.

AGENDA ITEM 4: REPORT OF THE ARF INTER-SESSIONAL SUPPORT GROUP MEETING ON CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES AND PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY (ISG ON CBMS AND PD), 11-12 MAY 2017, CANADA

6. The Meeting noted the outcomes of the ARF ISG on CBMs and PD which was Co-Chaired by the Philippines and Canada. The Meeting noted that fourteen new CBMs and PD initiatives were considered and that Co-Chairs for the ARF Inter-Sessional Meetings on Maritime Security, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (NPD) and Disaster Relief have been identified. The ARF ISG on CBMs and PD further noted that Co-Chairs for the Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crimes (ISM on CTTC) as well as the ARF Disaster Relief Exercise (DiREx) have yet to be identified and that the frequency of convening the DiREx would need to be further considered. The Meeting also discussed the progress of the draft ARF Statement on Cooperation to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and the draft ARF Statement on Enhancing Cooperation in Addressing and Countering the Drug Problem. Further, it was noted that the Meeting agreed to further discuss the proposal to establish an ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on the Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ISM on ICTs Security) within the ARF. The Meeting took note that the next ARF ISG on CBMs and PD will be Co-Chaired by Singapore and New Zealand in 2018. The Co-Chairs' Summary Report appears as **ANNEX 5**.

AGENDA ITEM 5: REVIEW OF ARF CBMS AND PD MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES FOR INTER-SESSIONAL YEAR 2016-2017

5.1. Review of ARF CBMs and PD Activities

5.1.1. 9th ARF ISM on Maritime Security, Japan, 7-9 February 2017

7. The Meeting noted the outcomes of the 9th ARF ISM on MS co-chaired by Philippines, Japan and the United States. It was highlighted that increasing illegal activities including piracy, armed robbery, IUU fishing as well as the degradation of the

marine environment continue to pose serious challenges in maintaining open and stable seas. On this note, the Meeting noted that there is a need to enhance regional and international cooperation based on the regional ownership and responsibility as well as compliance with international law including UNCLOS, and to enhance cooperation among maritime law enforcement agencies and relevant authorities. The Co-Chairs' Summary Report appears as **ANNEX 6**.

5.1.2. 9th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ISM on NPD), New Zealand, 8-9 March 2017

8. The Meeting took note of the outcomes of the 9th ARF ISM on NPD co-chaired by Malaysia, Canada and New Zealand. Topics discussed at the 9th ARF ISM on NPD include updates on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, international mechanisms to prevent and counter proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), biological and chemical WMD and developments in the Nuclear Security Summit process. It was also noted that the ARF Work Plan on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament was reviewed and that the ISM provides a valuable opportunity for countries to exchange views and strengthen cooperation in this area. The Co-Chairs' Summary Report appears as **ANNEX 7**.

5.1.3. Outcome of the 16th ARF ISM on Disaster Relief (ISM on DR), Thailand, 2-3 April 2017

9. The Meeting was briefed on the key outcomes of the 16th ARF ISM on DR co-chaired by Thailand and ROK. The 16th ARF ISM on DR shared experiences on disaster preparedness, responses, recovery and relief at the national, regional and international level. On prevention, the Meeting emphasised the need to conduct risk assessment for disaster prevention., while underscoring the importance of cooperation in utilising technological advancement. On response and recovery, the Meeting observed that disaster response should be as local as possible, and as international as necessary upon request of affected States. Furthermore, the Meeting underscored the importance of international partnerships to further strengthen cooperation and to increase synergies between the various international frameworks on disaster relief and mitigation, including the Sendai Framework and the Bangkok Principles. The need to align the ARF Work Plan on DR 2015-2017 and the AADMER Work Programme 2016-2020 as well as the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management was also emphasised. In addition, the Meeting noted that the next ARF ISM on DR will be held in Seoul in 2018. The Co-Chairs' Summary Report appears as **ANNEX 8**.

5.1.4. 15th ARF ISM on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CTTC), Semarang, Indonesia, 6-7 April 2017

10. The Meeting took note of the outcomes of the 15th ARF ISM on CTTC co-chaired by Indonesia and India. Recognising the complex and changing nature of terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism, the Meeting underscored the need to

strengthen cooperation and build capacities to prevent and counter these threats. Noting the nexus between maritime activities and crimes at sea, the Meeting was of the view that close coordination between the ARF ISM on CTTC and the ARF ISM on MS need to be strengthened. The Meeting also noted that the ARF Work Plan on CTTC will be updated for the 2018-2020 implementation period. The Co-Chairs' Summary Report appears as **ANNEX 9**.

AGENDA ITEM 6: CONSIDERATION AND ENDORSEMENT OF ARF CBMS AND PD INITIATIVES

6.1. List of Track 1 Activities for the Inter-Sessional Year 2017-2018

11. The Meeting noted the draft List of Track 1 Activities for the Inter-Sessional Year 2017-2018 which appears as **ANNEX 10**.

12. The Meeting also took note of New Zealand's intention to Co-Chair the ARF Project on PD: Skills for ASEAN toward Effective Peacebuilding with the United States, Timor-Leste's and ROK's interest to Co-Chair the ARF Workshop on Peacekeeping Operations: Cooperation in capacity building and developing partnership with the UN with Viet Nam.

6.2. Implementation of ARF Work Plans

6.2.1. ARF Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy

13. The Meeting was updated on the activities implemented under the Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy in the inter-sessional year 2016-2017 and noted that the ARF Work Plan on PD is a living document. To this end, the Meeting encouraged ARF participants to provide suggestions and comments to update the Work Plan.

6.2.2. ARF Work Plan on CTTC 2015-2017

14. The Meeting took note of the activities under the ARF Work Plan on CTTC that have been implemented in the inter-sessional year 2016-2017 and further noted that several activities have also been proposed to be implemented in the next inter-sessional year. The Meeting also noted that several other areas of cooperation set out in the Hanoi Plan of Action have yet to be addressed and as such may need to be included in the 2018-2020 ARF Work Plan on CTTC. On this note, the Meeting took note the suggestion to consider including activities on countering financing of terrorism and addressing returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) in the next Work Plan. In addition, the Meeting was also informed of India's intention to conduct a Workshop on Drug Trafficking, of which the Concept Note will be circulated in due course.

6.2.3. ARF Work Plan on Security of and in the Use of Information and

Communications Technologies

15. The Meeting observed that more efforts are required in the implementation of the Work Plan on ICTs including the establishment of an open-ended Study Group on Confidence Building Measures to reduce the risk of conflict stemming from the use of ICTs. To this end, the Meeting noted the suggestion to include ICTs experts in future discussions.

6.2.4. ARF Work Plan on Disaster Relief 2015-2017

16. The Meeting noted the implementation of the 2015-2017 ARF Work Plan on Disaster Relief and that the Work Plan is currently being developed for the next implementation period, which is envisaged to be further deliberated at the next ARF ISM on DR in ROK in 2018. The Meeting noted that synergy between the ARF and other mechanisms on disaster relief such as the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) and the ADMM-Plus Experts Working Group on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) will continue to be strengthened and encouraged all ARF Participants to provide their comments and inputs for the development of the Work Plan for the next cycle.

6.2.5. ARF Work Plan on Maritime Security 2015-2017

17. The Meeting was updated on the progress of implementation of the Work Plan and noted that the priority areas identified in the 2015-2017 Work Plan remain valid and encouraged the upcoming Co-Chairs to continue including these topics in the next Work Plan.

6.2.6. ARF Work Plan on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

18. The Meeting noted that the Work Plan is a living document and that while no major changes on its core priority areas were recommended, the Work Plan has been updated to reflect successful completion of past activities in the priority area of non-proliferation. On the priority area of disarmament, the Work Plan was updated to reflect the deletion on the reference to the 4th ARF Workshop on Space Security and inclusion of capacity building workshop for ARF participants interested in ratifying the comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty. The updated Work Plan appears as **ANNEX 11**.

6.3. Co-Chairs of ARF Meetings and Activities for the Next Inter-Sessional Year

19. The Meeting noted that Vietnam, Australia and the EU will co-chair the ARF ISM on Maritime Security for 2018-2020 and that the 10th ARF ISM on MS will be hosted by Australia in 2018, while the 11th ARF ISM on MS will be hosted by Vietnam in 2019 and the EU will host the 12th ARF ISM on MS in 2020.

20. The Meeting was further informed that the 12th ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) Meeting will be Co-Chaired by Vietnam and Japan in February 2018 in Vietnam. In addition, the Meeting noted that the next ARF ISG on CBMs and PD will be Co-Chaired by Singapore and New Zealand, Thailand and ROK will continue to Co-Chair the ARF ISM on DR and that Indonesia, Japan and ROK will Co-Chair the ARF ISM on NPD for 2018-2020.

6.3.1. 16th ARF ISM on CTTC

21. The Meeting noted that further internal consultations to determine the next co-chairs of the ARF ISM on CTTC may be needed.

6.3.2. 21st ARF Heads of Defence Universities/Colleges/Institutions Meeting (HDUCIM)

22. The Meeting took note that the 21st HDUCIM is scheduled to be held in September 2017 under the theme “Defense Diplomacy Through Education and Research: Building Confidence, Enhancing Engagement”. The main objectives of the 21st HDUCIM are to examine the evolving regional security landscape of the Asia-Pacific, to discuss education and research as components of defence diplomacy, and to exchange views on cooperation among defence universities, colleges and institutions. It was further noted that the Philippines is currently in the process of consultations with a non-ASEAN ARF country to co-chair this meeting.

6.3.3. ARF Disaster Relief Exercise (DiREx) 2018

23. The Meeting noted that the ARF DiREx is intended to be convened on a biennial basis to strengthen civil-military coordination in HADR. Taking into consideration the magnitude of the exercise and since there has been no expression of interest to co-chair the ARF DiREx in the past couple of years, the Meeting noted the Chair’s suggestion to convene the exercise once in every three or five years to provide ample planning time.

AGENDA ITEM 7: STRENGTHENING THE ARF PROCESS AND FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE ARF

7.1. Update on the Implementation of the Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement

24. The Meeting noted that the overall implementation rate of the POA now stands at 58.1%, with forty-three action lines implemented while thirty-one action lines are still pending. Further, it was noted that 70% of Section I on ARF Priority Areas have been implemented, while implementation of Section II on CBMs and PD stands at 55% and Section III on Institutional Enhancement stands at 27%. The Meeting noted the

suggestion to review and update the POA to move forward with its implementation. It was further recommended that emphasis should be placed on action lines that have yet to be implemented and for all ARF participants to continue working together to realise the ARF Vision Statement by 2020. The Matrix of Status of Implementation of the Hanoi POA appears as **ANNEX 12**.

7.2. Recommendations by ARF Experts and Eminent Persons

25. The Meeting took note of the recommendations of the ARF EEPs which was convened in Canberra on 28 February – 1 March 2017. It was noted that the EEPs recommended to consider the findings of the working group on Preventing and Managing Maritime Incidents, to recognise the growing dangers of cyber-attacks and establish an on-line EEP working group on CBMs and voluntary cyber points of contact directory as well as adopt the report of the working group on Preventing and Managing Maritime Incidents. The Co-Chairs' Summary Record of the 11th ARF EEPs appears as **ANNEX**

7.3. Establishment of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies

26. Japan briefed the Meeting on the proposed establishment of the ISM on ICTs and highlighted the importance of strengthening cooperation on ICTs under the ARF framework in the face of increasing cyber threats. Recognising the need to enhance cooperation and coordination in addressing cyber threats, the Meeting further deliberated on the proposal and expressed general support of the initiative. The views were expressed that practical discussion between ICTs experts should first be held in the form of a study group and that the ARF could consider utilising already existing mechanisms such as the ARF ISM on CTTC to discuss this issue.

27. The Meeting noted ASEAN Secretariat's clarification that while there is no established procedure for the establishment of ISMs, proposals for the establishment of the ARF ISM on Maritime Security, Disaster Relief, NPD, and CTTC were first considered as Ministers recognised the importance of the topic. The proposals were then tabled at the ARF ISG on CBMs and PD prior to the deliberation of the ARF SOM and subsequently, adoption by Ministers. Consistent with this practice, there was no requirement to convene preparatory meetings prior to the establishment of an ISM. However, such a meeting might be useful in order to find consensus.

28. The Meeting agreed that the proposal should be further consulted and all ARF participants are encouraged to provide inputs and comments to the concept paper prior to the 24th ARF in August 2017. Japan and Malaysia's Concept Paper appears as **ANNEX 14**.

AGENDA ITEM 8: UPDATE ON THE ARF WORK PLANS

8.1. ARF Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy

29. Singapore and New Zealand informed the Meeting that the co-chairs are in the process of consultations to update the ARF Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy, which will be tabled at the next ARF ISG on CBMs and PD in Wellington in 2018.

8.2. ARF Work Plan on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime 2018-2020

30. This agenda item has been previously discussed in combination with agenda item 6.2.2.

8.3. ARF Work Plan on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies

31. This agenda item has been previously discussed in combination with agenda item 6.2.3.

8.4. ARF Work Plan on Disaster Relief 2017-2019

32. This agenda item has been previously discussed in combination with agenda item 6.2.4.

8.5. ARF Work Plan on Maritime Security 2017-2019

33. Viet Nam, Australia and the European Union as the upcoming Co-Chairs of the ARF ISM on MS informed the Meeting that the Work Plan will continue to include priority areas outlined in the 2015-2017 Work Plan with a special focus on port security, border management, maritime domain awareness and protection of marine environment biodiversity. The upcoming Co-Chairs also looked forward for ARF participants to provide their comments and inputs.

8.6. ARF Work Plan on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament 2017-2019

34. Indonesia, ROK and Japan as upcoming Co-Chairs for the next cycle of the ARF ISM on NPD informed the Meeting that the Work Plan will continue to be updated to support the realisation of the ARF Vision Statement by 2020. Japan also expressed its readiness to host the ARF ISM on NPD in 2020 whilst ROK expressed interest to host the 10th ARF ISM on NPD in 2018.

AGENDA ITEM 9: EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

The Meeting expressed grave concern over recent developments in the Korean Peninsula including the recent launch of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and reaffirmed the objective to achieve denuclearization and importance of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula to preserve peace and stability in the region. Most of the ARF members urged the DPRK to refrain from provocative actions, including the testing of nuclear and ballistic missiles, and fully comply with the relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. The Meeting took note of the importance of allowing for the resumption of dialogue under the right circumstances and peaceful resolution of the tensions in the Korean Peninsula. One ARF participant expressed growing concerns over military activity in the region.

35. The Meeting took note of the progress in the development of the Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea. ARF members noted the early harvest measures to reduce tensions among ASEAN Member States and China such as the establishment of the MFA-to-MFA hotline, the adoption of Joint Statement on the Application of Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) in the South China Sea, and more recently the finalisation of the draft Framework of the COC in the South China Sea. The Meeting took note of concerns raised by several members on some developments in the area, including the conduct of activities that raise tensions in the South China Sea. In this regard, the Meeting emphasised the importance of non-militarisation and self-restraint by claimants and all other states, in the conduct of all activities that could further complicate the situation. The Meeting further emphasised the need to ensure peace, security and stability, ensure freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea, and pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. The Meeting noted the commitment of ASEAN and China to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), and looked forward to the early conclusion of an effective and substantive COC.

36. The Meeting extended condolences to the families and victims of the terrorist attack in Manchester, United Kingdom and condemned acts of terrorism in all its forms. Recognising the rising threat of terrorism, violent extremism and xenophobia, it was noted that online and conventional media have often been used as tools of propaganda and recruitment and as such, counter-narrative measures, *inter alia*, through dialogue, promotion of tolerance and respect for diversity and movement of moderates were cited as potential counter-terrorism strategy. Information sharing and intelligence exchange were also mentioned as areas of cooperation which can be further enhanced to address such challenges.

37. The Meeting further highlighted the need to increase CBMs cooperation and strengthen policy and legal frameworks in responding to a number of other emerging security challenges such as terrorism and violent extremism, misuse of cyber space, degradation of marine environment, trafficking of illicit drugs, armed robbery at sea, and human trafficking. On this note, the Meeting was of the view that the ARF continue to play an important role in promoting mutual trust and understanding, which has

contributed to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region. Moving forward, the ARF should be strengthened through constructive dialogue and cooperation, moving towards preventive diplomacy whilst maintaining mutual respect and moving at a pace comfortable to all.

Other issues raised in the exchange were the situation in Afghanistan and Syria, as well as the Iran deal. One participant raised some aspects of the situation in Ukraine.

AGENDA ITEM 10: PREPARATION FOR THE 24TH ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM

10.1. Draft Provisional Agenda of the 24th ARF

38. The Philippines briefed the Meeting on the draft Provisional Agenda of the 24th ARF to be held in Manila on 7 August 2017 which appears as **ANNEX 15**. The Meeting noted that the draft Chairman's Statement will be circulated in due course.

10.2. Tentative Programme of Activities of the 24th ARF

39. The Philippines briefed the Meeting on the Tentative Programme of Activities of the 24th ARF, which appears as **ANNEX 16**. The Meeting was informed that the revised Programme will be circulated in due course.

10.3. Outcomes Documents for the 24th ARF

10.3.1. Draft ARF Statement on Cooperation to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU Fishing)

40. The Meeting noted the update on the draft ARF Statement on Cooperation to Prevent, Deter, Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing co-sponsored by Indonesia, Timor-Leste and the United States. The Meeting expressed general support to the draft Statement which will be further circulated for comments and inputs prior to being submitted to the 24th ARF for consideration. The draft Statement appears as **ANNEX 17**.

10.3.2. Draft ARF Statement on Enhancing Cooperation in Addressing and Countering the Drug Problem

41. The Meeting deliberated on the draft Statement on Enhancing Cooperation in Addressing and Countering the Drug Problem proposed by China and co-sponsored by the Philippines. The Meeting took note of recommendations and suggestions to the draft and agreed to further consult relevant line agencies in the respective capitals and for ARF Participating Countries to provide inputs and comments in due course. The draft Statement appears as **ANNEX 18**.

AGENDA ITEM 11: OTHER MATTERS

42. The Philippines informed the Meeting that thus far, five participants have contributed to the ARF Annual Security Outlook (ARF ASO) 2017 and invited the remaining ARF participants to submit their contributions for compilation and publication by the ARF Chair.

Closing remarks

43. In her closing remarks, H.E. Ma. Hellen De La Vega expressed appreciation for the active participation and cooperation of ARF members which have contributed to the success of the Meeting. The Chair also expressed sympathy to the Government and people of the United Kingdom following the recent terrorist attack in Manchester. The Chair further looked forward to the progress of pending issues during the period leading up to the 24th ARF.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

44. All ARF participants expressed appreciation to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements extended to them. The Meeting also commended the Philippines for its effective chairmanship and for the cordial and fruitful discussion.

