

**^SUMMARY REPORT
THE THIRTEENTH ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM SECURITY POLICY
CONFERENCE
LUANG PRABANG, LAO PDR, 6 MAY 2016**

1. The Thirteenth ARF Security Policy Conference (13th ASPC) was convened in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR on 6 May 2016. The Conference was chaired by MG Onesy Senesouk, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Defence and ADSOM Leader of Lao PDR.
2. Representatives of the Ministry of Defence from 22 out of 27 ARF participants attended the Conference. Representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat were also present. The List of Participants appears as **ANNEX 1**.

AGENDA ITEM 1: OPENING REMARKS

3. In his opening remarks, MG Onesy Senesouk expressed his sympathies and condolences to the victims and families of the recent tragedies in Japan, India, and Russia which caused great loss of life. He noted that the 13th ASPC was held in the midst of dynamic changes in the region, which had resulted in both opportunities and challenges. While the region is relatively stable and the economy is growing, the threats from natural disasters, transnational crime, drug trafficking, terrorism, and the expanding activities of the Islamic State (IS) have directly impacted the stability and development of the region. He emphasised that no single country could address these challenges alone, and that cooperation was essential. In addition to the non-traditional security issues, he viewed that concerns over the security situation in the Korean Peninsula and the South China Sea remain and therefore, should be resolved through peaceful dialogue. He looked forward to the active contributions from all participants to the discussions. His opening remarks appear as **ANNEX 2**.

AGENDA ITEM 2: ADOPTION OF AGENDA

4. The Conference adopted the Provisional Agenda which appears as **ANNEX 3**.

AGENDA ITEM 3: EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES

5. The Conference viewed that the Asia Pacific region has enjoyed stability and prosperity with the rise of Asia as a major engine for global economic growth in the 21st century. However, although there are favorable conditions promoting regional stability and security, the region still faces a

- myriad of traditional and non-traditional security challenges. The Conference underscored that countries and militaries in the region should increase their engagements and commitment to military and defence cooperation on such challenges as terrorism, human trafficking, drug trafficking, migrant smuggling, piracy, cyber security, humanitarian disasters, climate change, environmental degradation, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).
6. The Conference recognised that natural disasters continue to affect the region, and that no single country can manage disasters alone. The Conference noted that international cooperation on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) is continuously developing and emphasised that civil-military cooperation on HADR should continue to be strengthened including in future HADR exercises under the ambit of the ARF and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus). Participants were encouraged to strengthen their HADR capabilities to prepare for future disasters and to minimise the adverse effects.
 7. The Conference recalled the recent terrorist attacks in Jakarta, Istanbul, Paris, Brussels, and other parts of the world which highlighted the serious threat of terrorism and foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) to regional security and stability. The Conference recognised the dangerous impact of the IS which evolved from a local issue to a regional and even global issue including through its use of the internet to disseminate their violent views and recruit more adherents to their cause. The Conference viewed that fighting terrorism requires a multi-pronged and concerted effort as such that bilateral and multilateral cooperation is crucial in this regard. The Conference reaffirmed support for the effort to promote the movement of moderates, which is an important initiative of ASEAN, and the activities carried out in the ARF Work Plan for Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime. The Conference noted that some participants have been addressing homegrown radicalism as a root cause for terrorism and introduced national programmes to counter extremist messaging. The Dialogue commented on the connection between the IS and the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Syria and also noted the outcomes of recent military actions in Syria which had significantly curtailed the power and influence of terrorist groups.
 8. The Conference was of the view that maritime security continues to be an issue of concern since many countries in the region are heavily dependent on sea lanes. In this regard, the Conference emphasised that the territorial disputes in the South China Sea should be resolved peacefully. Some participants emphasised that the disputing parties should refrain from the militarisation of features in the South China Sea and other actions which may escalate tensions. The Conference also called for the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in

- the South China Sea (DOC), the early conclusion of Code of Conduct in South China Sea (COC), and the promotion of joint activities based on early harvest approach to build mutual confidence and trust. The Conference noted that ASEAN and China have reached a new level of consultations at 16th Joint Working Group on the DOC in Manila in March 2016.
9. The Conference noted grave concerns expressed by some ARF participants over the DPRK's recent nuclear test and missile launches in violation of multiple United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions and the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks that threaten the peace and security of the Korean Peninsula and beyond. Many participants called for the DPRK to refrain from further provocative actions and for the resumption of credible and authentic negotiations under the Six-Party Talks as well as the inter-Korean talks. Many participants expressed their support for UNSC Resolution 2270 but stressed that the implementation of the Resolution should not impact the livelihood of the people of the DPRK. In addition, there was concern expressed by the DPRK over the intention to deploy a missile defence system over the Peninsula which could further destabilise the region.
 10. The Conference acknowledged the recent progress of practical defence and military cooperation under the ADMM-Plus framework. The Conference welcomed the conduct of ADMM-Plus Maritime Security and Counter-Terrorism Exercise in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore on 2-9 May 2016 and noted the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Military Medicine (ACMM) in April 2016; as well as the endorsement of the ADMM Logistics Support Framework and Terms of Reference (TOR) for the ASEAN Militaries' Ready Group (AMRG). The Conference also took note of the ongoing progress in the development of the ADMM Direct Communication Link (DCL) as a means for ASEAN Defence Ministries to communicate with each other, particularly related to maritime security, in order to reduce misunderstanding and promote quick response to emergency situations. Likewise, the ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR has been at the forefront of military-to-military cooperation on disaster relief and recovery. The Conference noted the development of the draft standard operating procedure (SOP) on multi-national coordination centre (MNCC), which is intended to support the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER). In addition, the ADMM and ADMM-Plus are considering the establishment of an EWG on Cyber Security which would promote practical and effective cooperation among the ADMM-Plus countries to enhance capacity in protecting the region's cyberspace and address challenges to cyber security.

11. The Conference acknowledged the ARF's ongoing commitment to non-proliferation and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery through the work of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. Some participants expressed support for the prevention of nuclear and fissile materials from falling into the hands of terrorist actors.
12. The Conference discussed the recent problems emerging from the effects of climate change and the El Niño phenomenon which is causing water scarcity and threatening the agriculture sector in the region. Other issues such as migration, trafficking in person and people smuggling were also raised in the discussion. The Conference noted the suggestion for the ARF to explore possible cooperation in these areas.
13. The Conference welcomed the establishment of the ASEAN Community and commended the success of ASEAN and its mechanisms, including the ARF and the ADMM-Plus, in fostering cooperation to address the security challenges facing the region. Some participants observed that multilateral platforms such as the ARF and the ADMM-Plus should be used to enhance dialogue and cooperation among its members and not as an avenue for competition among major powers.

AGENDA ITEM 4: CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES: CHALLENGES AND BEST PRACTICES

14. The Conference acknowledged that ASEAN-led security mechanisms, namely the ARF and the ADMM-Plus, have made significant progress in fostering regional defence and military cooperation. However, some participants observed that defence officials' views and ideas into the wider ARF is still limited. 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 Conference noted the suggestions for the ARF DOD to provide more suggestions and inputs to the ARF on these practical activities and for more defence representatives in ARF activities. The Conference also took note of the suggestion for ASEAN-led security mechanisms to be reviewed from time to time in order to maintain their relevance in the ever-changing regional dynamics, direct involvement of subject matter experts in the planning phase of ARF activities, and the contribution of defence officials to the ARF Annual Security Outlook (ARF ASO) as a confidence building measure.
15. The Conference underscored that mutual trust and confidence building are the cornerstone of peace and security. The Conference acknowledged the ARF's stature as one of the primary fora in the region which promote peace and stability through inclusive dialogue. The ARF has seen a

- gradual move from the confidence-building measures (CBMs) stage to the preventive diplomacy (PD) stage. The Conference 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. In this respect, the Conference took note of several proposals to further advance CBMs, namely: 1) to take the new concept of security based on common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security as guidance and work to promote mutual trusts between countries; 2) to manage differences and crises in a proper manner and handle disputes through peaceful negotiation and consultation; 3) to promote practical cooperation in the region and enhance mutual trust through cooperation; 4) to create binding cooperative networks to resolve difference and reduce mistrust; and 5) to publish defence white papers regularly and periodically. The Conference also noted the suggestion for the region to develop an equal and indivisible security architecture which takes into account states' interest; respect for partnership; exception of any attempts to strengthen one's security at the expense of others; and the non-use of force.
16. The Conference reiterated that the misuse of cyberspace could undermine trust between states, and that CBMs on cyber security should be a priority for ARF participants. For a highly connected society, disruption of information and communication technologies (ICTs) could severely affect its livelihood, and CBMs could pave the way for states to agree on norms of responsible behaviour in cyberspace. The Conference noted some approaches to CBMs in the cyber domain, including establishing transparency by exchanging information on national organisations, doctrine and strategies; establishing a directory of cyber points of contact; agreeing on mechanisms and procedures for consultation and communication during crises; and developing of cyber norms through capacity building activities.
 17. The Conference reiterated that CBMs constitute a set of actions by states to, among others, prevent conflicts and the escalation of conflicts, break deadlocks in negotiations, and help to establish conducive atmosphere for discussions. However, some participants stressed that CBMs cannot do much without sufficient political will since CBMs are but the means and not the ends. The Conference took note of the view that the success of the ARF depends entirely on its participants, and called for all ARF participants to renew their commitment to the ARF to create a more robust, substantive, proactive and action-oriented ARF.
 18. The Conference recognised that CBMs are sometimes difficult to conduct due to the lack of human resources with experience and expertise on CBMs; differences in socio-cultural backgrounds and economic gaps between states; and the fact that some cooperative mechanisms tend to focus on quantity rather than quality. On this note, the Conference

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.

19. Australia, Cambodia, China, European Union, Indonesia, Malaysia, Russia, United States, Viet Nam, and Lao PDR presented their views to the Conference.

AGENDA ITEM 5: OTHER MATTERS

20. There were no discussions under this agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM 6: CLOSING REMARKS

21. In his closing remarks, MG Onesy Senesouk expressed appreciation and gratitude to all participants of the 13th ASPC for the frank and cordial contributions to the discussions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

22. The Conference thanked the Government of Lao PDR for the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality made for the Conference.

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