

ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM STATEMENT ON PROMOTION OF INTER-CIVILIZATION DIALOGUE

The Chairman of the ASEAN Regional Forum, on behalf of its participants, issues the following statement:

Acknowledging that the world continues to face both opportunities and challenges for promoting sustainable peace and security, as well as harmony and understanding among the people,

Cognizant of the significance of inter-civilization dialogue encompassing interfaith and inter-cultural interaction as well as efforts to promote respect, understanding and tolerance among people of all religions, beliefs and cultures as an important part of ARF efforts to promote peace and security,

Reaffirming that terrorism cannot and should not be associated or identified with any specific religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group,

Recalling their obligation as provided for in the Charter of the United Nations to refrain from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the Charter, and *underlining* the necessity of respecting human rights in resolving conflicts,

Recognizing the significant contribution of efforts to enhance dialogue and understanding among the people of different faiths, cultures and civilizations, and *recalling* in this regard relevant UN Resolutions calling for international efforts to enhance dialogue and broaden understanding among and within civilizations,

Underscoring the importance of various international forums aimed at advancing inter-civilization, inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue,

Believing that dialogue among cultures and civilizations as one of the important means for resolving problems and conflicts, as well as countering the threat of terrorism, is conducive to maintaining peace, stability and prosperity in the Asia Pacific region and the world;

ARF participants:

Strongly condemn terrorism in all forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes including terrorist actions committed under the pretext of religion, as it constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security;

Support the work undertaken by the ARF participating states and completed work of the ARF such as a recent Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM-CTTC) which focused on Inter-Civilization Dialogue as well as the UN to promote inter-civilization dialogue, with an aim to implementing such global frameworks as the “Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations” and its Programme of Action adopted by the UN General Assembly and initiated by the UNESCO as a lead agency, the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy;

Welcome the report of the High-Level Group of the “Alliance of Civilizations” established by UN Secretary General, which seeks to establish a paradigm of mutual respect between civilizations by building a comprehensive coalition able to avert any

further deterioration of relations between societies and nations that could threaten international stability;

Support efforts aimed at addressing the conditions that may be conducive to the spread of terrorism, and efforts made on the basis of consolidating principles of peace and tolerance as well as of the rule of law and respect of human rights;

Consider it vital to intensify the role and involvement of government and parliamentary bodies, as well as non-governmental, religious and other public organizations in enhancing inter-cultural and interfaith understanding;

Will encourage the international community to take practical steps directed at improving inter-civilization, inter-cultural and interfaith cooperation, including identifying and implementing activities in order to address common challenges threatening shared values, universal human rights and achievements of human society in various fields, and to explore the establishment of principles to facilitate meaningful interaction between cultures based on mutual respect for one another's traditions;

Work to expand, where appropriate, channels of information exchange among the ARF participants with a view to sharing national experiences in promoting respect, understanding and tolerance among cultures and faiths in the interests of peace, security, human rights and prosperity of Asia Pacific nations.