

## ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY WORK PLAN

### Introduction

1 The ASEAN Regional Forum's (ARF) founding document, the 1995 *ARF Concept Paper*, identified a three-stage process for ARF to develop a more predictable and constructive pattern of relations for the Asia-Pacific. It was agreed that ARF would progress from Stage I - Promotion of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs); through Stage II - Development of Preventive Diplomacy Mechanisms; and ultimately Stage III - Development of Conflict Resolution Mechanisms. Noting ARF's success in implementing CBMs, the 8th ARF in July 2001 judged that the time was right to begin a discussion on preventive diplomacy. At the 8th ARF, Ministers adopted the paper *ARF Concept and Principles of Preventive Diplomacy*.

2 The 14th ARF in August 2007 welcomed the the Track II *Study of Best Practices and Lessons Learnt by Selected International and Regional Organisations in Preventive Diplomacy* (the PD Study). At the 16th ARF in July 2009, Ministers mandated officials to begin development of an ARF Preventive Diplomacy Work Plan by drawing on the PD Study and other relevant ARF documents. The 16th ARF also tasked the ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) to provide their views on the elements of such a Work Plan. The 4th Meeting of the ARF EEPs met in December 2009 and prepared a paper entitled *Draft Elements of a Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy*. This ARF *Preventive Diplomacy Work Plan* has been prepared taking into account the above discussions and papers.

### Objectives

- 3 The objectives of the Preventive Diplomacy Work Plan are as follows:
- To establish appropriate preventive diplomacy mechanisms for the ARF;
  - To move the ARF process forward from Stage 1 - Confidence Building Measures to Stage 2 - Preventive Diplomacy, while recognising and retaining confidence building measures; and
  - To increase the capacity and capabilities of the ARF and its participating countries in the area of preventive diplomacy.

## Definition

4 ARF's agreed definition of preventive diplomacy is contained in para 7 of the 2001 paper, *ARF Concept and Principles of Preventive Diplomacy*.

*"Preventive diplomacy is consensual diplomatic and political action taken by sovereign states with the consent of all directly involved parties:*

- *To help prevent disputes and conflicts from arising between States that could potentially pose a threat to regional peace and stability;*
- *To help prevent such disputes and conflicts from escalating into armed confrontation; and*
- *To help minimise the impact of such disputes and conflicts on the region."*

## Principles

5 Preventive diplomacy mechanisms in the ARF should be applied subject to the following principles:

- It is based on consultation and consensus.
- The application of existing CBMs and the development of new CBMs should be continued.
- A step-by-step approach should be adopted in the development of preventive diplomacy mechanisms.
- The application of preventive diplomacy mechanisms should be non coercive, voluntary and subject to the consent of all parties directly involved in a particular dispute.

## Work Plan

- Encourage ARF participating countries to contribute to ARF's Annual Security Outlook
- Continue to implement and enhance CBMs.
- Strengthen concrete cooperation in the ARF priority areas of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime,

## Maritime Security, Non-proliferation and Disarmament, and Peacekeeping.

- Develop standardised formats and reporting criteria for CBMs.
- Partner with relevant organisations for preventive diplomacy capacity building programmes and training.
- Conduct workshops and training programmes for ARF participating countries on preventive diplomacy.
- Strengthen the ARF Unit in the ASEAN Secretariat by providing it with the necessary manpower, expertise and resources to support and monitor ARF activities.
- Utilise CSCAP and ASEAN-ISIS as expert consultative bodies for monitoring and identifying potential regional flashpoints.
- In the longer term, consider the establishment of a Regional Risk Reduction Center to monitor regional trends.
- Develop the following optional and voluntary preventive diplomacy mechanisms that could be utilised by ARF participating countries involved in potential disputes, such as:
  - Good offices
  - Mediation
  - Arbitration
  - Declare the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC)<sup>1</sup> as the ARF's formal dispute resolution mechanism.

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