

An Excerpt from Co-Chairmen's Summary Report of the
ARF Experts' Group Meeting (EGM) on Transnational Crime

[30-31 October 2000, Seoul, Republic of Korea]

Small Arms (16 - 20 / 20)

16. The Meeting recognized that illicit trafficking in small arms poses a danger to the well-being of citizens, economic and social development, and regional security. In their deliberations, the experts took account of both global and regional initiatives developed to combat the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of and trafficking in small arms. It was agreed that any initiative must take into account the specific regional characteristics of the problem.

17. A number of measures were suggested to deal with illicit trafficking, such as information exchanges on best practices and national legislation and improved cooperation among law enforcement agencies. Most experts expressed support for the early completion of the negotiations in Vienna on the Firearms Protocol. Some experts suggested that the ARF could play a role in the implementation of the protocol at the regional level.

18. Many experts expressed the view that states have the right to procure small arms and light weapons in order to fulfill their legitimate defense and security needs. In order to prevent the illicit trade in small arms, experts suggested that states should ensure that all transfers are conducted responsibly. In addition, a number of experts raised the possibility that the ARF countries exchange information concerning the illicit transfer of small arms.

19. The 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons In All Its Aspects was viewed in the Meeting as the main forum for international action to deal with this problem. In this context, the ARF countries were encouraged to play an active role in the 2001 process. The Meeting also took note of the Canada/Japan/Cambodia co-sponsored "Seminar on Conventional Arms Transfers" scheduled for February 2001, which will include discussions on small arms.

20. Australia circulated a working paper on "Possible ASEAN Regional Forum Actions on Small Arms." In particular, it suggested that the ARF consider developing a statement or declaration as a contribution to the 2001 UN Conference. Some experts supported this proposal while there was the view that it would require further study.