

**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE
ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM SENIOR OFFICIALS
9 May 2008
Singapore**

1 The Meeting of the ARF Senior Officials (ARF SOM) was held in Singapore on 9 May 2008. All ARF participating countries and the Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN were present. The list of delegates appears as **ANNEX 1**. The Meeting was chaired by Mr Peter Ho, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Singapore.

**AGENDA ITEM 1 & 2: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND
BUSINESS ARRANGEMENTS**

2. The Meeting considered and adopted the Agenda and Programme of Activities which appear as **ANNEX 2** and **ANNEX 3** respectively.

**AGENDA ITEM 3: BRIEFING ON THE OUTCOME OF THE ARF
DEFENCE OFFICIALS DIALOGUE (DOD)
AND THE ARF SECURITY POLICY
CONFERENCE (ASPC)**

3. The Chair of the ARF Defence Officials Dialogue (DOD), BG Gary Ang, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Defence, Republic of Singapore, briefed the Meeting on the outcome of the ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue (DOD) held on 7 May 2008, as well as the ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC) held on 8 May 2008. Both reports appear as **ANNEX 4** and **ANNEX 5** respectively.

**AGENDA ITEM 4: EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON REGIONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, AND ON NON-
TRADITIONAL SECURITY ISSUES**

AGENDA ITEM 4A: NORTHEAST ASIA

4. Malaysia, ROK, the United States and the DPRK led discussions on the security situation in Northeast Asia. The countries affirmed that a nuclear-free Korean peninsula was crucial to the maintenance of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, and in this context they underlined the importance of progress in the Six-Party Talks. Some countries further urged the DPRK to address the humanitarian concerns of the international community. The Meeting expressed hope that all the Six Parties would abide by the obligations set out under the 13 February 2007 Agreement.

5. The Meeting agreed that stability in the relations among the northeast Asian countries play a critical role in the promotion of peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. In this regard, they welcomed the positive trends in relations, reflected in the recent high level visits of ROK's President Lee Myung-bak and Chinese President Hu Jintao to Japan, and the ROK-DPRK summit in October 2007 among others.

AGENDA ITEM 4B: REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE

6. India, Indonesia, Thailand and New Zealand were the lead discussants for this agenda item. They stressed the importance of an outward looking and inclusive regional architecture, which will facilitate ASEAN community building, and contribute to the maintenance of peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region. Noting the proliferation of fora in the region, the Meeting recognised that all these processes should be complementary. Nonetheless, given that other fora are also increasingly looking at security related issues, the Meeting agreed that the ARF needed to revitalise and adjust itself, through undertaking concrete cooperation, in order to distinguish itself and remain the premier security fora in the Asia-Pacific region. Indonesia's intervention on this agenda item appears as **ANNEX 6**.

AGENDA ITEM 4C: NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY ISSUES

7. Australia, China, Laos, and Viet Nam were the lead discussants for this agenda item. They discussed the non-traditional security threats confronting the region, including avian influenza, human and drugs trafficking, counter terrorism, WMD proliferation, environmental degradation, maritime security, and disaster relief. One issue which is increasingly becoming a crucial concern is the problem of food security given the rising food prices. These issues could have the potential to create acute security problems - particularly for countries whose institutions are already fragile. Given the wide range of issues involved, the Meeting agreed on the need for the ARF to strengthen its efforts and carefully consider how to focus practically on those issues most relevant to its mandate, capabilities and membership. These challenges could not be dealt with by any single country or fora alone. The Meeting also recognised the need to concentrate its activities on promoting deeper cooperation on focused areas.

AGENDA ITEM 4D: OTHER MATTERS

8. The Meeting expressed its deepest condolences to the people of Myanmar on the humanitarian disaster caused by Cyclone Nargis. The Meeting noted that the situation remains very difficult, and the Myanmar authorities were doing their best to deal with it. The Meeting noted that many ARF participating countries have offered substantial assistance to Myanmar, and were prepared to do more. In this regard, the ARF participating countries stressed the importance of urgently speeding up the arrangements to receive and deploy aid, material and relief personnel to the stricken areas. There were also suggestions that a

coordinating mechanism be established to work with the international community and aid agencies, to assess the damages and needs in the affected areas, as well as facilitate in-country distribution of humanitarian assistance, and entry and deployment of rescue and medical personnel and equipment. The Statement issued by the ARF SOM Chair appears here as **ANNEX 7**.

9. Some countries expressed concern over the situation in Afghanistan. The Meeting underlined its continued support for the efforts to foster stability, good governance and reconstruction in Afghanistan and welcomed members' efforts to bring stability and security to Afghanistan. Apart from Afghanistan, some participants also expressed concern over the Iran nuclear issue, and stressed the importance for Iran to abide by its UN Security Council obligations and to cooperate fully with the IAEA. Timor Leste provided an update on developments in Timor Leste, and informed that President Jose Ramos Horta, had recovered from the assassination attacks. Timor Leste's intervention appears as **ANNEX 8**.

10. The Meeting took note of the Philippines' briefing on the developments in the South China Sea and the importance of intensifying efforts to implement the ASEAN-China Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea signed in 2002. The Philippines expressed hope for the eventual adoption of a Regional Code of Conduct as envisioned in the DOC.

AGENDA ITEM 5: REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF CBMS AND PD

AGENDA ITEM 5A: REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES HELD IN THE INTER-SESSIONAL YEAR 2007/2008

11. The Meeting considered and adopted the reports of the ARF activities conducted in the inter-sessional year 2007/2008. These include:

- ARF Round Table Discussion on Stocktaking of Maritime Security Issues, Jakarta, Indonesia, 23-24 August 2007
- ARF Desk Top Exercise on the Disaster Relief Planning Conference, Darwin, Australia, 4-7 September 2007
- ARF Seminar on Narcotics Control, Xian City, China, 19-21 September 2007
- 11th ARF Heads of Defense Universities/Colleges/Institutions, Australia, 9-11 October 2007
- 7th ARF Inter-sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ISM on DR), Helsinki, Finland, 11-12 October 2007 (**ANNEX 9**)
- ARF Inter-sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy (ISG on CBMs and PD), Bandar Seri Begawan, November 1-3 November 2007
- 4th ARF Seminar on Cyber Terrorism, Busan, ROK, 16-19 October 2007

- ARF Workshop on “Management and Security of Stockpiles of Small Arms and Light Weapons including their ammunition”, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 13-14 December 2007
- ARF ISM-CTTC, Semarang, Indonesia, 21-22 February 2008 (**ANNEX 10**)
- 2nd ARF Peacekeeping Experts’ Meeting, Singapore, 5-7 March 2008
- ARF Workshop on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy in Asia and Europe, Berlin, Germany, 12-14 March 2008
- ARF Maritime Security Training Programme, Chennai, India, 24-29 March 2008
- ARF Inter-sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy (ISG on CBMs and PD), Ottawa, Canada, 3-4 April 2008 (**ANNEX 11**)
- ARF Seminar on Anti-Personal Landmines, Penang, Malaysia, 8-10 April 2008 (**ANNEX 12**)
- 2nd ARF Seminar on Energy Security, Singapore, 15-17 April 2008 (**ANNEX 13**)
- ARF Desk Top Exercise on Disaster Relief, Jakarta, Indonesia, 1-2 May 2008 (**ANNEX 14**)

AGENDA ITEM 5A: DRAFT ARF STATEMENT PROMOTING COLLABORATION ON THE PREVENTION OF DIVERSION OF PRECURSORS INTO ILLICIT DRUG MANUFACTURE

12. Pursuant to the recommendation made at the ARF Seminar on Narcotics Control held in Xi-An, China from 19-21 September 2007, Australia tabled a draft ARF Statement Promoting Collaboration on the Prevention of Diversion of Precursors into Illicit Drug Manufacture (**ANNEX 15**). The ARF participating countries agreed to submit comments to Australia, in time for the Statement to be adopted at the 15th ARF in Singapore.

AGENDA ITEM 5B: LIST OF ACTIVITIES TO BE HELD IN THE INTER-SESSIONAL YEAR 2008/2009

13 The Meeting considered and adopted the list of activities (**ANNEX 16**) proposed to be held in the inter-sessional year 2008/2009:

- ARF Seminar on Stabilization and Reconstruction Issues, Bangkok, 10-12 September 2008 (Co-Chairs: Thailand, US) (**ANNEX 17**)
- 12th ARF Heads of Defense/Universities/Colleges/Institutions Meeting (HDUCIM), Islamabad, 21-23 October 2008 (Pakistan)
- 3rd ARF EEPs Meeting, Beijing, 29-31 October 2008 (Co-Chairs: China, tbc) (**ANNEX 18**)
- ARF Inter-Sessional Support Group Meeting on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy (ISG on CBMs and PD), Singapore, 8-10 October 2008 (Co-Chairs: Singapore, ROK)

- 8th ARF ISM on Disaster Relief (ISM on DR), Banda Aceh, mid December 2008 (Co-Chairs: Indonesia, EU) (**ANNEX 19**)
- ARF Conference on Terrorism and the Internet, Indonesia, second half of 2008 (Co-Chairs: Indonesia, Australia) (**ANNEX 20**)
- ARF Seminar on Climate Change and International Security, TBA, second half of 2008 (Co-Chairs: EU, tbc) (**ANNEX 21**)
- ARF Seminar on Maritime Security, TBA, second half of 2008 (Co-Chairs: EU, tbc) (**ANNEX 22**)
- ARF Workshop on Anti-Money Laundering, Kuala Lumpur, 2008 (Co-Chairs: Malaysia, tbc)
- Peacekeeping Course for ARF Member Countries, Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK) of the United Service Institution of India (USI), 2008 (Co-Chairs: India, tbc) (**ANNEX 23**)
- ARF Inter-Sessional Support Group Meeting on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy (ISG on CBMs and PD), ROK, first half of 2009 (Co-Chairs: ROK, Singapore)
- ARF Workshop on Laboratory Bio-Safety and Bio-Security, TBA, fall 2008 or spring 2009 (Co-Chairs: US, tbc) (**ANNEX 24**)
- 7th ARF ISM on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CTTC), Viet Nam, first half of 2009 ((Co-Chairs: Viet Nam, ROK)
- ARF Seminar on Laws and Regulations on Disaster Relief Cooperation, Beijing, first half of 2009 (Co-Chairs: China, tbc) (**ANNEX 25**)
- ARF Senior Officials' Meeting, Thailand, first half of 2009 (Thailand)
- 16th ASEAN Regional Forum, Thailand, first half of 2009 (Thailand)
- Inaugural Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, TBA, first half of 2009 (Co-Chairs: US, China, Singapore)
- Inaugural Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security, TBA, first half of 2009 (Co-Chairs: Indonesia, tbc)*
- ARF Multinational Operational Exercise in Disaster Relief, the Philippines, 2009 (Co-Chairs: US, Philippines)
- Follow-up event to the Chennai Maritime Security Training Programme, India, 2009 (India) (**ANNEX 26**)
- ARF Seminar on the Law of the Sea Convention, the Philippines, TBA (Co-Chairs: Philippines, EU)
- 3rd ARF Peacekeeping Experts' Meeting, TBA (Co-chairs: Japan, tba)

14. The Meeting noted the briefing by Japan on its proposal to develop a Best Practices Reference Paper for Peace-Building over the next two years, and agreed that the Paper can be deliberated at future ARF Peacekeeping Experts Meeting. The concept paper circulated by Japan appears as (**ANNEX 27**).

* Pending Ministerial approval on the Concept Paper.

AGENDA ITEM 5BI: ARF ISM ON NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT

15. The United States circulated a revised concept paper on the establishment of an ARF ISM on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (**ANNEX 28**). Most participants expressed widespread support for the proposal. Pakistan suggested some amendments to the paper and the Meeting agreed that all comments to the proposal should be submitted to the US as soon as possible, and stressed the importance of finalising the paper in time for approval at the 15th ARF. The Meeting also noted that United States, China, and Singapore will co-chair the first ISM.

AGENDA ITEM 5BI: ARF ISM ON MARITIME SECURITY

16. Indonesia circulated a concept paper on the establishment of an ARF ISM on Maritime Security (**ANNEX 29**). Recognising the importance of maritime security, the Meeting expressed in-principle support for the proposal, and agreed that all comments to the paper should be forwarded to Indonesia as soon as possible in time for submission at the 15th ARF. The Meeting also noted the offer by Indonesia to host the first ISM on Maritime Security.

AGENDA ITEM 6: FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE ARF

AGENDA ITEM 6A: REVIEW OF THE ARF

17. Singapore briefed the meeting on the Paper on the Review of the ARF. The Meeting agreed that the paper was timely and significant, and will help provide a comprehensive stocktake of the ARF's achievements thus far, and chart out its future direction. The Meeting recognised that the paper, which had gone through a series of revisions since it was first tabled at the ARF ISG in Brunei in November 2007, was a result of several months of hard work by the officials and stressed the urgency of finalising the paper in time for the 15th ARF in July. In this regard, Singapore requested that all final comments to the paper should be forwarded to Singapore by the deadline of 31 May 2008. The Paper appears as **ANNEX 30**.

18. On the suggestion in the ARF Review to develop a Vision Statement, some participants recommended that the next ARF ISG to be held in Singapore could further discuss the possible elements in the proposed Vision Statement.

AGENDA ITEM 6B: SINGAPORE DECLARATION ON THE 15TH ARF

19. Singapore briefed the meeting on the draft Singapore Declaration on the 15th ARF. The Meeting agreed that this is a timely document, which will help mark the 15th ARF and underscore our continued commitment to the ARF process.

In this regard, Singapore requested that all final comments to the paper should be forwarded to Singapore by the deadline of 31 May 2008. The draft Declaration appears as **ANNEX 31.**

AGENDA ITEM 6D: ARF WORKING METHODS

20. The Meeting recalled that the European Union had submitted a concept paper on improving ARF Working Methods to expedite the ARF decision making process at the last ARF SOM in Manila in 2007, but the paper was not submitted to the last ARF given the need to study the proposal in greater detail. The Meeting nonetheless affirmed the need to establish an 'expedited' procedure for endorsement of ARF activities, in view of possible urgent situations. In this regard, the Meeting welcomed the proposal by the European Union to task the ARF Unit to develop the practical aspects of the proposal, after the Paper on the Review of the ARF, which had made references to the proposal, has been endorsed by the Ministers at the coming ARF.

AGENDA ITEM 6D: STUDY OF BEST PRACTICES IN PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY

21. The ARF Unit briefed the meeting on the results of the Study of Best Practices in Preventive Diplomacy. The Meeting was informed that following the agreement by ARF participating countries to commence the study, the ARF Unit had commissioned the project to the Pacific Forum-CSIS and the Rajaratnam School of International Studies. The Meeting noted that the Study, which has just been completed, was based on research on preventive diplomacy practised by several international and regional organisations. The Meeting noted that the report was very comprehensive and extensive, and agreed to submit it to the Ministers at the 15th ARF, and to recommend that officials be tasked to examine the feasibility of the recommendations of the study, with a view to submitting an assessment to the 16th ARF. The Executive Summary, overview and full report appear as **ANNEXES 32-34.**

AGENDA ITEM 6E: ARF WORKPLAN ON COUNTER TERRORISM AND TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

22. The United States briefed the meeting on its proposal for an ARF Workplan on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC). The Meeting expressed in-principle support for the proposal, and agreed that all comments on the proposal should be submitted to the United States as soon as possible, so that it can be tabled at the 15th ARF. The Meeting noted that details of the core areas as mentioned in the proposal could thereafter be worked out at the next ARF ISM on CTTC in Viet Nam. Meeting participants were encouraged to begin thinking about specific projects they may wish to submit to the Workplan next inter-

sessional year and their interest in serving as Lead Countries or Co-Sponsors under the Workplan's core areas. The draft Workplan appears as **ANNEX 35**.

AGENDA ITEM 6F: ARF VIRTUAL MEETING OF EXPERTS ON CYBER SECURITY AND CYBER TERRORISM

23. The ROK briefed the meeting on its proposal to establish an ARF Virtual Meeting of Experts on Cyber Security and Cyber Terrorism, following a recommendation made at the 4th ARF Seminar on Cyber Terrorism held in Busan, Korea, in October 2007. The draft Terms of Reference appears as **ANNEX 36**. The Meeting noted that participation in the Meeting will be on a voluntary basis, and the offer made by ROK and the Philippines to lead the group in the first year. As there were no comments to the paper, the Meeting agreed to submit it to the Ministers for consideration at the 15th ARF.

AGENDA ITEM 6G: PAPER ASSESSING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 2ND ARF EEPs MEETING

24. At the 14th ARF on 2 August 2007, the Ministers requested 'SOM to submit an assessment of the practicability of the recommendations of the 2nd ARF EEPs Meeting in time for the 15th ARF'. The assessment paper on the outcome of the 2nd ARF EEPs Meeting which was held in Manila in February 2007, appears as **ANNEX 37**. The Meeting welcomed the briefing by the ROK and as there were no comments to the paper, the Meeting agreed to submit it to the Ministers for consideration at the 15th ARF.

AGENDA ITEM 6H: ENHANCING LINKAGES BETWEEN TRACK I AND TRACK II, AND BETWEEN THE ARF AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

25. The Meeting noted that since the ARF Ministers' endorsement of the Concept Paper on 'Enhancing Ties between Tracks I and II in the ARF, and between the ARF and other regional and international security organisations', the ARF's engagements with both Track II and external organisations have increased. The Meeting noted the suggestions by Thailand and Brunei on means of enhancing such linkages, including through training programmes with organisations such as the OSCE, and inviting peace keeping and climate change experts from the UN to attend ARF meetings. The expertise of the EEPs, as well as the Track II, could also be tapped in the process of developing the standardised ARF Annual Security Outlook (ASO).

26. The Meeting noted the CSCAP Memorandum on Human Trafficking, the ASEAN-ISIS Paper on Rethinking the ASEAN Regional Forum, as well as the UN Counter Terrorism Committee's letter on the Joint Statement and Plan of Action crafted at the Fifth Special Meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee

with international, regional and subregional organizations on 'Prevention of Terrorist Movement and Effective Border Security', organised by the UN in Nairobi in October 2007, as concrete signs of enhanced interactions. The Meeting agreed that the ISIS Memorandum could be further studied when the ARF develops its vision statement. The Meeting also agreed to submit the CSCAP Memorandum on human trafficking to the 15th ARF, in response to CSCAP's request, and that the details of the Memorandum could be further considered at the next ARF ISM on CTTC. The three papers appear as **ANNEX 38-40**.

AGENDA ITEM 6I: FUTURE PARTICIPATION IN THE ARF

27. Singapore, as ARF Chair, informed the Meeting that the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan had recently written to the Foreign Minister of Singapore to reiterate Kazakhstan's interest in joining the ARF. The Meeting noted that apart from Kazakhstan, there were outstanding applications from the Kyrgyz Republic and Afghanistan. The Meeting reaffirmed the decision at the 13th ARF to maintain the 'flexible moratorium' on ARF membership for the time being, in order to allow the ARF process to consolidate itself.

AGENDA ITEM 7: PREPARATIONS FOR THE 15TH ARF, 24 JULY 2008, SINGAPORE

28. Singapore circulated the provisional agenda and tentative programme for the 15th ARF and related meetings, which will be held from 23-24 July 2008 in Singapore. The agenda and programme appear as **ANNEX 41-42**.

AGENDA ITEM 8: OTHER MATTERS

29. Singapore reminded the Meeting to submit their inputs to the ARF Annual Security Outlook to Singapore by 31 May 2008, so that the ASO could be compiled and distributed to the ARF ministers at the 15th ARF.

30. Singapore informed the ARF participating countries that the ASEAN Vice-Chair would be instituted as the ARF Vice-Chair with effect from the 15th ARF, so that the ARF Vice-Chair as incoming ARF Chair could have sufficient time to prepare for the ARF that it would host. This is necessary as the ARF Chairmanship would be aligned with the Calendar year once the ASEAN Charter is ratified. In this regard, Thailand would be appointed as the first ARF Vice-Chair at the 15th ARF. Thereafter, Thailand would serve as ARF Chair and Vietnam as ARF Vice-Chair from July 2008 – December 2009.

31. The Meeting considered and adopted the report of the ARF Senior Officials Meeting.

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