

EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
SITUATION by India

Mr Chairman,

At the outset I would like to echo speakers before me and thank you for the warm welcome, generous hospitality and excellent arrangements for the meeting today.

Mr. Chairman,

We value our membership in the ARF, and see it as an experiment in fashioning a pluralistic, cooperative security order reflective of the diversity of the Asia Pacific region. We consider ASEAN as the driving force of the ARF and believe that the ASEAN way of “dialogue and consensus” should remain ARF’s guiding principles. Participation in the ARF also enables engagement with a broader range of countries beyond ASEAN and contributes to ensuring regional peace and stability.

Despite significant progress in confidence building and traditional security threats remain salient. Non traditional threats are meanwhile on the rise from terrorism, transnational crimes, piracy, smuggling, drug-trafficking, maritime security and proliferation of sensitive items. Terrorism remains a pre-eminent security challenge for all of us. India condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and strongly condemns state sponsored cross border terrorism. Cooperation amongst states in demonstrating a whole of region approach in defeating terrorism should be a priority.

Maritime security is an issue of significant relevance to the growing economies of the region as economic growth of the region remains critically dependent on oceanic connectivity and stable maritime environment. The right of maritime passage and unimpeded commerce in accordance with international law including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea should therefore be priority. Capacity building and coordination to tackle maritime security threats is also essential.

Despite continued challenges to security on the Korean Peninsula and the South China Sea as well as the challenges facing Afghanistan in its security

transition, the overall situation remains stable and conducive to development in Asia. Stable relations among the major powers are an essential ingredient of this progress. In India, we have just elected a new government. The new Government's focus is economic growth, infrastructure development, trade and investment. A sustainable high growth path for Asia's third largest economy is in itself a huge plus for Asian security. A peaceful neighbourhood, in a broader sense of the term i.e. not just South Asian neighbours but also West and Central Asia, South East Asia and China, is an important precondition for such a path.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, ARF could realize its true potential in tackling non-traditional security issues only with the involvement of a broad cross-section of officials and agencies. The closer alignment of the DODs and the ASPC with the main track of meetings would help in synergizing the work of foreign ministry officials and defence officials. I am confident that we would be able to achieve such alignment and further enhance our cooperation on non-traditional security issues to achieve our shared objectives of peace, prosperity, security and stability in the Asia-Pacific.

I thank you for your attention.