



CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY REPORT

ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM INTER-SESSIONAL SUPPORT GROUP MEETING ON CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES AND PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY (ARF ISG ON CBMs AND PD)

Video Conference, 2 July 2020

INTRODUCTION

1. Due to the severe challenges and disruption caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Meeting was held from Ha Noi, Viet Nam, on 2 July 2020 in the hybrid format of video conference and in-person meeting. The Meeting was Co-Chaired by Mr. Vu Ho, Director-General of ASEAN Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, and Mr. Brett Blackshaw, Director of Multilateral Affairs, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Department of State, the United States of America. The Meeting was attended by representatives from all ARF Participants except Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka. Representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat also attended the Video Conference. The List of Delegates appears as **ANNEX 1**.

AGENDA ITEM 1: OPENING REMARKS BY CHAIRMAN

2. In his opening remarks, Mr. Vu Ho expressed his appreciation towards all ARF Participants for participating in the Meeting amidst the constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and welcomed Brunei Darussalam as the incoming Chair of the ARF. Reiterating the importance of the ARF in contributing to the region's peace and stability, he underlined the need to ensure that cooperation in the ARF continues to move forward. In this respect, he recalled that, on behalf of ASEAN, Viet Nam as the current ARF Chair has proposed several provisional measures since March 2020 to ensure the continuity of the work of the ARF.

3. Ambassador Atul Keshap, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Department of State, the United States of America, delivered the U.S.' opening remarks and extended his appreciation to Viet Nam on its leadership during the ARF Inter-Sessional Year 2019-2020 and to all ARF

Participants for the efforts in ensuring that the work of the ARF continued to progress in the face of current challenges. He reiterated the role of the ARF in promoting mutual trust and cooperation in the region and underscored the need to strengthen the ARF process through, among others, the effective implementation of all its Work Plans. Moving forward, he expressed hope for further cooperation in the ARF and underlined the need to ensure that officials at various levels were equipped with the necessary skills to address the increasingly complex challenges in the region and that resources such as the Experts and Eminent Persons Group and civil society organisations could be utilised throughout the ARF appropriately.

AGENDA ITEM 2: ADOPTION OF AGENDA

4. The Meeting adopted the Agenda, which appears as **ANNEX 2**.

AGENDA ITEM 3: BUSINESS ARRANGEMENTS

5. The Meeting noted the Administrative Arrangements which appears as **ANNEX 3**.

AGENDA ITEM 4: REPORT OF THE ARF DEFENCE OFFICIALS' DIALOGUE (ARF DOD)

6. The Meeting noted the Co-Chairs' briefing on the outcomes of the ARF DOD held via video conference on 1 July 2020, wherein the ARF DOD exchanged views and shared best practices on the topic of Military Medicine and Practical Cooperation in Responding to Pandemic Outbreaks. It was noted that the ARF DOD discussed the contribution of defence establishments in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic and the role of the military in supporting civilian health authorities as part of the whole-of-government approach. The Dialogue also noted that stronger civil-military coordination, tactical emergency preparedness efforts as well as timely information sharing could contribute to mitigation efforts and prevention of future large-scale outbreaks.

7. The Meeting noted that the ARF DOD also discussed the agenda of the 17th ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC) scheduled to be held on 8 July 2020 via Video Conference. The Meeting noted that Viet Nam, as the ARF DOD Co-Chair, had put forth several concrete proposals to enhance the linkage between the ARF and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) and to strengthen the role of defence cooperation within the ARF. It was noted that the proposals entailed: (i) the

empowering of the ARF DOD and ASPC in consolidating the ARF's defence and security cooperation activities to be reported to the ARF Ministers; (ii) considering the possibility of combining practical activities of the ARF and the ADMM-Plus such as the ARF Disaster Relief Exercise (DiREx) and the exercises of the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (EWG on HADR); and (iii) enhancing sharing of information on defence cooperation between the ASPC and the ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting Plus (ADSOM-Plus). Taking into account that the ARF was a mechanism under the auspices of the Foreign Affairs, the Meeting further noted that the Chair of the ASPC would present these proposals at the upcoming ARF Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) on 21 July 2020 for their consideration.

AGENDA ITEM 5: REVIEW OF THE ARF CBMs and PD ACTIVITIES

5.1. 3rd ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of ICTs and ARF Work Plan on Security of and in the Use of ICTs

8. Malaysia, Singapore and Japan, as co-chairs of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting (ISM) on Security of and in the Use of ICTs, informed the meeting that the 3rd ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ISM on ICTs Security), could not be convened in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure the continuity of activities under this workstream as well as the implementation of the ARF Work Plan on Security of and in the Use of ICTs, the Meeting noted the Co-Chairs' proposal to extend the tenure of their co-chairmanship until August 2021 and that the 3rd ARF ISM on ICTs Security will be held in the first quarter of 2021. The Co-Chairs further informed the Meeting that two ICTs Security activities have been successfully convened in the Inter-Sessional Year 2019-2020 while the ARF Workshop on Protection of ICT-Enabled Critical Infrastructure, Co-Chaired by Singapore and the EU, will be carried over to the next Inter-Sessional Year and convened at the sidelines of the 3rd ARF ISM on ICTs Security. The Meeting took note of Russia's request for the inclusion of its proposals for new activities in the Inter-Sessional Year 2020-2021, namely the (i) ARF Terminology in the Field of Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies; and (ii) ARF Workshop on Countering the Use of ICTs for Criminal Purposes, into the report of the Co-Chairs of the ARF ISM on ICTs Security. In addition, Indonesia and ROK announced their intention to take up the Co-Chairmanship of this ISM in the next cycle. The Co-Chairs' Report on the ARF ISM on ICTs Security appears as **ANNEX 4**.

5.2. 17th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime and ARF Work Plan for Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime 2019-2021

9. Malaysia, the EU and New Zealand as Co-Chairs of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CTTC), informed the Meeting that the 17th ARF ISM on CTTC, which was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was now scheduled to be held in the first half of 2021. With a view to ensuring effective implementation of the ARF Work Plan on CTTC, the Meeting noted the Co-Chairs' proposals to extend the tenure of their Co-Chairmanship until the Inter-Sessional Year 2022-2023 as well as extending the implementation period of the Work Plan until 2022. The Meeting also took note that three CTTC related activities were unable to be convened in the Inter-Sessional Year 2019-2020 and will be carried over to the next Inter-Sessional Year. The Co-Chairs further informed the Meeting that two new CTTC related activities have been proposed for the Inter-Sessional Year 2020-2021. The Co-chairs' Report on the ARF ISM on CTTC appears as **ANNEX 5**.

10. As the current co-chairmanship term of the ISM on CTTC would only end in 2022, one ARF Participant suggested that the current Co-Chairs raise the issue at a later time. Citing that more time was needed to consider the proposals for new activities, and that new ARF initiatives should be first discussed at the relevant ISM before they were tabled at the ARF ISG and ARF SOM, the ARF Participant also said that the ARF should focus on the yet to be implemented activities instead of proposing new activities. The Meeting noted and supported the effort of the ARF Chair and ASEAN in proposing a set of provisional measures earlier this year to ensure the continuity of the ARF's operations amid the COVID-19 pandemic, including through the activation and application of an expedited approval procedure by the ARF SOM. The proposed provisional measures appears as **ANNEX 6**.

5.3. 12th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security and ARF Work Plan on Maritime Security 2018-2020

11. The Meeting noted that the 12th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ISM-MS), which was scheduled to be held in 2020, had been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Meeting further noted that four maritime security activities were successfully convened in the Inter-Sessional Year 2019-2020, namely: (i) 3rd ARF Workshop on Ferry Safety, held in Guangzhou, China, on 12-13 November 2019; (ii) 2nd ARF Workshop on Implementing UNCLOS and other International Instruments to Address Emerging Maritime Issues, held in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, on 13-14 November 2019; (iii) 2nd ARF Workshop on International Cooperation on Maritime Domain Awareness, held in Tokyo, Japan, on 20 February 2020; and (iv) The ARF Workshop on Dispute Resolution and Law of the Sea, held in Dili, Timor Leste, on 27-28 February 2020. Viet Nam, Australia and the EU as Co-Chairs of the ARF ISM on Maritime Security informed the Meeting that two activities will be carried forward to

the next Inter-Sessional Year and that thus far, four new maritime security related activities have been put forth for implementation in the Inter-Sessional Year 2020-2021. To ensure the continuity of maritime security related activities and the implementation of the ARF Work Plan on Maritime Security, the Meeting took note of the Co-Chairs' proposal to extend the period of their co-chairmanship and the implementation period of the Work Plan until 2021. On the new proposed activities, some ARF Participants suggested that more time was needed to further deliberate and provide input/comments to the proposals. The Meeting further noted that several ARF Participants have expressed their interest to co-chair the next cycle of the ISM on Maritime Security, including one jointly from Indonesia, India and the United States, and the second from China. The Co-chairs' Report on the ARF ISM on MS appears as **ANNEX 7**.

5.4. 12th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and the ARF Work Plan on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

12. The Co-Chairs of the 12th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ISM on NPD), Indonesia, Japan and ROK, updated the Meeting on the progress of cooperation under the ARF ISM on NPD. The Meeting noted that the 12th ISM on NPD, which was scheduled to be held in 2020 has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In view of ensuring continuity of the implementation of the ARF Work Plan on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, the Co-Chairs proposed to extend the term of their co-chairmanship until 2021. With regard to the activities of this ISM in the Inter-Sessional Year 2019-2020, the Meeting noted that the ARF High-Level Symposium on the Nuclear Security Capacity Building in the Asia-Pacific Region was held in Beijing, China on 20-22 November 2019. The Meeting further took note that two activities intended to be convened in the current Inter-Sessional Year including the 12th ARF ISM on NPD, will be carried over to the next Inter-Sessional Year. The Co-Chairs further informed the Meeting that two new activities on NPD have been proposed for implementation in the Inter-Sessional Year 2020-2021, as reflected in the Co-chairs' Report on the ARF ISM on NPD which appears as **ANNEX 8**.

5.5. 19th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief and the ARF Work Plan on Disaster Relief

13. The Meeting noted that the 19th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ISM on DR), Co-Chaired by Lao PDR, Canada and China, has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In an effort to continue effective implementation of the ARF Work Plan on Disaster Relief, the Meeting noted the proposal made by the Co-Chairs to extend the tenure of their co-chairmanship until 2022. The Meeting also noted that two disaster relief activities had been successfully convened in the current Inter-Sessional Year while one remaining activity will be

carried forward to the next Inter-Sessional Year. The Meeting further noted that one new activity, namely the ARF Enhancement Training on USAR Capacity Building and Comprehensive USAR Drill was proposed to be convened in the Inter-Sessional Year 2020-2021. The Co-chairs' Report on the ARF ISM on DR appears as **ANNEX 9**.

5.6. 14th ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) Meeting

14. The Meeting noted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 14th ARF EEPs Meeting, co-chaired by Myanmar and China, has been postponed. The Meeting also took note of the proposal made by the Co-Chairs to extend the tenure of their co-chairmanship by one year and to convene the 14th ARF EEPs in the Inter-Sessional Year 2020-2021.

5.7. 23rd ARF Heads of Defence Universities/Colleges/Institutions Meeting (HDUCIM) (Singapore, 11-14 November 2019)

15. The Meeting took note of the outcomes of the 23rd ARF HDUCIM, Co-Chaired by Singapore and Pakistan, which was convened under the main theme "Military Education to Enhance Confidence Building, Leadership Development and Opportunities for Cooperation". The Meeting noted that discussion at the 23rd ARF HDUCIM focused on the topics of: (i) Leadership in the Age of Disruption; (ii) Innovations in Curricula and Pedagogy; and (iii) Opportunities for Learning Collaboration to strengthen mutual trust and confidence.

5.8. 17th ARF Security Policy Conference

16. Viet Nam briefed the Meeting on the preparations for the upcoming 17th ASPC which is scheduled to be held in a hybrid manner on 8 July 2020. The Meeting noted that the 17th ASPC would be focusing on the issues of strengthening linkages between the ARF and the ADMM-Plus as well as to exchange views on international and regional defence and security issues of common interest.

5.9. 8th ARF Peacekeeping Experts' Meeting

17. The Meeting took note that the 8th ARF Peacekeeping Experts' Meeting could not be convened in the current Inter-Sessional Year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and that Indonesia and Japan, as Co-Chairs of the 8th ARF Peacekeeping Experts' Meeting, intended to convene the Meeting in the next Inter-Sessional Year.

AGENDA ITEM 6: CONSIDERATION of CBMs AND PD INITIATIVES**6.1. Proposed ARF Statements for the 27th ARF****6.1.1. ARF Ministerial Statement on Enhancing Cooperation to Prevent and Combat Infectious Disease Outbreaks**

18. Viet Nam and New Zealand as co-sponsors of the draft Statement briefed the Meeting that the Statement aimed to reaffirm the commitment to enhance regional and international cooperation to respond to major infectious disease outbreaks as well as to mitigate their adverse impacts. The co-sponsors shared that the draft Statement, has been circulated to the ARF Participants for input and comments and would be recirculated for consideration before the ARF SOM.

6.1.2. ARF Statement on the Treatment of Children Recruited and Associated with Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups

19. Indonesia briefed the Meeting on the status of the draft Statement which called for stronger cooperation to address the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, including by preventing the radicalisation and recruitment of children. In this context, the Meeting noted that the EU and New Zealand would co-sponsor the Statement alongside Indonesia. Taking into account the concerns raised by one ARF Participant regarding the use of “violent extremist group” in the draft, the Meeting noted that the draft Statement will be recirculated for further input and comments prior to the ARF SOM.

6.1.3. ARF Statement on Maintaining Security in Digital Economy

20. The Meeting noted China’s briefing on the draft Statement which aimed to, amongst others, underline the need to promote ICTs security cooperation and enhance capacity building in order to better cope with digital security challenges, facilitate the development of digital economy, and inject new momentum to international social and economic development. While noting the importance of the topic, some ARF Participants were of the view that the issue of digital was not under the mandate of the ARF and there was a need to amend certain terms in the draft. Taking into consideration the views expressed, the Meeting noted that further input and comments to the draft would be provided to the proponent prior to the ARF SOM. The Meeting also noted that proponent is currently seeking a co-sponsor from ASEAN Member States.

6.1.4. ARF Ministerial Statement on Countering Money-Laundering and Financing of Terrorism

21. The Meeting noted the EU’s briefing on the draft Statement which aimed to reaffirm the commitment to address the threat of terrorism and, emphasised on the

need of an integrated approach to countering the financing of terrorism and money laundering. The updated draft would be circulated to all ARF Participants for further input and comments. The Meeting also noted that proponent is currently seeking a co-sponsor from ASEAN Member States.

6.2. Track-1 Activities for the Inter-Sessional Year 2020-2021

22. Viet Nam informed the Meeting that the draft List of Track 1 Activities for the Inter-Sessional Year 2020-2021, which comprised of activities carried forward from the current Inter-Sessional Year as well as newly proposed activities, have been developed and included in the Document Kit of the Meeting circulated to all ARF Participants. In view of moving forward and ensuring the success of the ARF SOM, the Chair encouraged all proponents to achieve consensus and finalise their respective proposals prior to the ARF SOM and to submit updates on the status of their proposals to the Chair copying the ARF Unit by 15 July 2020. Meanwhile, ARF Participants were invited to convey comments and input to the contents of each proposal directly to the respective proponents. Recalling the practice in the ARF, the Chair further shared that in the event of no consensus and/or no confirmation of co-chairmanship, the activity will be withdrawn from the List to be submitted to the ARF Ministers. Upon the request by the Chair, the ARF Unit provided clarification that in line with the Improving ARF Working Methods paper adopted by the 16th ARF in 2009, the ARF Chair had circulated a letter on 23 March 2020, outlining a set of provisional measures for submission of new proposals including the application of an expedited approval process. In this context and taking into consideration the unpredictability brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chair urged ARF Participants to exercise utmost flexibility to ensure that cooperation in the ARF could continue moving forward in such an unprecedented period.

AGENDA ITEM 7: CO-CHAIRS OF ARF MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT INTER-SESSIONAL YEAR

7.1. ARF ISG on CBMs and PD and ARF DOD

23. Brunei Darussalam as the incoming ARF Chair informed the Meeting that due to the current uncertainties, the schedule and format for the ARF ISG on CBMs and PD and the ARF DOD in the Inter-Sessional Year 2020-2021 would be shared in due course.

7.2. ARF Disaster Relief Exercise (DiREx)

24. Taking into consideration that the ARF DiREx has not been convened since 2015, the Meeting took note of the EU's indication of interest to potentially convene the next ARF DiREx. To ease the potential burden of co-chairing such a large-scale

exercise, the Meeting also noted the suggestion to consider combining the ARF DiREx with the exercises under the ambit of the ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR.

7.3. 24th ARF Heads of Defence Universities/Colleges/Institutions Meeting (HDUCIM)

25. Pakistan informed the Meeting that the 24th ARF HDUCIM was tentatively scheduled to be held towards the end of 2020, depending on the COVID-19 pandemic. The Meeting noted that Pakistan was currently seeking an ASEAN Co-Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 8: FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE ARF

8.1. Implementation of the Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement

26. The ARF Unit briefed the Meeting on the status of implementation of the Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement (HPOA). The briefing highlighted that since its adoption in 2010, the overall implementation rate of the HPOA stood at 60.8%, with 45 action lines implemented while 29 action lines remained pending. The Meeting further noted that the implementation rate of Section I on Areas of Cooperation was at 74.5%, Section II on CBMs and PD was at 55%, and Section III on Institutional Enhancement was 27%. Recognising the evolution of the regional security architecture in the past decade, the Meeting noted that cooperation in the ARF also continues to evolve in its efforts to address emerging challenges.

8.2. ARF Ha Noi Plan of Action II (2020-2025)

27. The Chair updated the Meeting that the draft HPOA II had been circulated to all ARF Participants and that drafting sessions would be held on 6 and 9 July 2020. The Chair highlighted the intention to finalise the document prior to the ARF SOM, and requested all ARF Participants to exercise utmost flexibility in the negotiations and encouraged each ARF Participant to assign appropriate representatives to attend the drafting session.

8.3. Guideline to ARF Processes, Procedures, Practices and Protocol

28. The Chair also updated the Meeting that, to reaffirm and clarify the roles, functions and reporting line of all ARF mechanisms as well as to standardise the processes and procedures in the ARF, a Guide to ARF Processes, Procedures, Practices and Protocol was currently being consolidated by ASEAN Member States. The Meeting further took note that the Guide was developed based upon existing ARF documents, including the ARF Concept Paper, Concept Papers of respective ISMs, Improving ARF Working Methods paper, as well as the prevailing practices and

protocols in ASEAN. The Meeting further noted that the Guide would be submitted to the 53rd ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) for approval and will be forwarded to the 27th ARF for notation.

AGENDA ITEM 9: OTHER MATTERS

9.1. ARF Annual Security Outlook

29. Viet Nam updated the Meeting that thus far, the ARF Chair has received submissions from 9 ARF Participants and encouraged remaining ARF Participants to submit their contributions to the ARF Chair by 5 July 2020. The Meeting further noted that the ARF ASO would be issued at the 27th ARF currently scheduled to be held in August 2020.

9.2. Date of the ARF SOM

30. Viet Nam informed the Meeting that the ARF SOM would be held on 21 July 2020 in the hybrid format of video conference and in-person meeting. The Meeting noted that the Invitation Package including the invitation letter and provisional agenda would be circulated in due course.

AGENDA ITEM 10: CLOSING REMARKS BY CO-CHAIRS

31. In their closing remarks, the Co-Chairs expressed their appreciation to the ARF Participants and the ARF Unit for the support and understanding in the convening of the Meeting through video conference. Recalling the objectives of the ARF's establishment as a platform for dialogue to promote mutual trust and confidence among its Participants, the Co-Chairs were pleased to note that the contributions of ARF Participants were a testament of the desire and commitment in moving the ARF process forward.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

32. The Meeting expressed gratitude and appreciation to the Co-Chairs for the effective leadership and to the Government of Viet Nam for the excellent arrangements made for the virtual Meeting.

ISSUES TO BE FOLLOWED UP

| No. | Key Decision/Issues | Timeline | Follow-up By |
|------------|---|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Finalise the List of ARF Track I Activities for the Inter-Sessional Year 2020-2021 | Before the 27 th ARF | ARF Chair |
| 2. | Seek an ASEAN Co-Chair for the 24 th ARF HDUCIM | Before the 27 th ARF | Pakistan |
| 3. | Finalise the proposals for the next Inter-Sessional Year and identify co-chairs of activities | Before the 27 th ARF | Proponents of the respective proposals |
| 4. | Finalise the draft ARF Ministerial Statement on Enhancing Cooperation to Prevent and Combat Infectious Disease | Before the 27 th ARF | Viet Nam |
| 5. | Finalise the draft ARF Statement on the Treatment of Children Recruited and Associated with Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups. | Before the 27 th ARF | Indonesia |
| 6. | Finalise the draft ARF Statement on Maintaining Security in Digital Economy | Before the 27 th ARF | China |
| 7. | Finalise the draft ARF Ministerial Statement on Countering Money-Laundering and Financing of Terrorism | Before the 27 th ARF | EU |
| 8. | Publication of the ARF Annual Security Outlook (ASO) | By the 27 th ARF | ARF Chair |
| 9. | Finalise the draft HPOA II | Before the 27 th ARF | ARF Chair |

