



CO-CHAIR'S 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, 24 May 2021

INTRODUCTION

1. The Meeting was Co-Chaired by Mr. Garry Ibrahim, Director-General, Department of ASEAN, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam and Dr. Lauren Bain, Assistant Secretary of the ASEAN and Regional Architecture Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia. The Meeting was attended by representatives from all ARF Participants, except the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and Papua New Guinea. Representatives of the ASEAN Secretariat were also in attendance. The List of Delegates appears as **ANNEX 1**.

AGENDA ITEM 1: OPENING REMARKS BY CO-CHAIRS

2. In their Opening Remarks, the Co-Chairs were pleased to note that cooperation in the ARF continues to progress despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Co-Chairs further noted that the ARF plays an important role in maintaining peace and stability in the region and in addressing common security challenges. In this regard, the Co-Chairs underlined the importance of maintaining dialogue and cooperation in the ARF to promote an open, secure, prosperous, inclusive and resilient region, with ASEAN at its centre. Moving forward, the Co-Chairs expressed hope regarding ARF Participants' commitment in furthering cooperation and implementation of activities in the ARF to enhance confidence building measures and preventive diplomacy efforts.

AGENDA ITEM 2: ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

AGENDA ITEM 3: BUSINESS ARRANGEMENTS

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

AGENDA ITEM 4: REPORT ON THE ARF DEFENCE OFFICIALS' DIALOGUE

5. The Meeting noted that the ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue (DOD), Co-Chaired by Brunei Darussalam and Australia on 20 May 2021, exchanged views on emerging technologies and its impact on defence and security, particularly exploring the general applications of emerging technologies in defence establishments as well as its challenges and best practices. The DOD noted that emerging technologies presented new opportunities as well as risks and challenges, specifically on the development of critical technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, 5G and green technologies. To minimise risk, the DOD noted there may be merit in pursuing the development of frameworks between private and public spheres, as well as to build defence networks to ensure transparency and peaceful use of technologies. Recognising the importance of ASEAN centrality in the regional security architecture, the DOD reiterated the importance of enhancing multilateral cooperation and dialogue in an effort to address challenges in the region.

6. The DOD further noted the need to enhance the synergies and avoid duplication of efforts between existing defence mechanisms such as the ARF and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM)/ADMM-Plus, as stipulated in the ARF Ha Noi Action Plan II (2020-2025). Moving forward and in an effort to enhance defence sector's contribution in the ARF, the DOD agreed to institutionalise a standing agenda item in future ARF DODs, on the developments of other regional defence cooperation such as the ADMM/ADMM-Plus as well as any other initiatives that could be shared to promote confidence building and exchange of best practices.

AGENDA ITEM 5: REPORTS AND PREPARATIONS OF THE ARF INTER-SESSIONAL MEETINGS, PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ARF WORK PLANS AND OTHER MEETINGS

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

7. The Meeting noted that the 7th ARF Open-Ended Study Group on Confidence Building Measures to Reduce the Risk of Conflict Stemming from the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (OESG) and the 3rd ARF ISM on ICTs

Security, co-chaired by Malaysia, Singapore and Japan, were held back-to-back on 27 and 28 April 2021 via Video Conference. It was noted that there had been an increase in information security threats and misuse of ICTs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, such as ransomware attacks on critical infrastructure and denial of service attacks on medical and vaccine research development institutes. In this context, the importance of strengthening confidence building measures and cooperation in the ICT sphere was reiterated.

8. With regard to the implementation of the ARF Work Plan on Security of and in the Use of ICTs, the Meeting was pleased to note that ARF Participants continue to propose confidence building measures initiatives and encouraged ARF Participants to continue actively participating in the activities and initiatives. On the issue of the Co-Chairmanship of the ISM on ICTs Security for the next cycle, the meeting took note of the proposed rotational arrangements between Indonesia, Australia, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Russia for the next three Inter-Sessional Years (ISY). The Co-Chairs progress report appears as **ANNEX 4**.

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

9. New Zealand, on behalf of Malaysia and the European Union (EU) as the Co-Chairs of the ARF ISM on CTTC, updated the Meeting on the outcomes of the 17th ARF ISM on CTTC held on 22 April 2021 via Video Conference. The Meeting noted that the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) was invited to brief the 17th ARF ISM on CTTC on its regional threat assessments and emerging criminal activity trends during the COVID-19 pandemic. The importance of protecting against the rise of fake vaccine networks was discussed as a priority. The 17th ARF ISM on CTTC noted updates on various ASEAN-led mechanisms and deliberated on new proposals of activities for the next ISY in the four priority areas of the ARF Work Plan on CTTC 2019-2021 – illicit drugs; chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) matters; preventing and countering violent extremism and trafficking in persons. The 17th ARF ISM on CTTC also took note of the draft Joint Statement on Promoting the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda at the ARF proposed by Brunei Darussalam, which received co-sponsorship interests from Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand and the United States (US).

10. The Meeting noted that due to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 17th ARF ISM on CTTC agreed to extend the implementation period of the ARF Work Plan on CTTC until 2022 and that ARF Participants were encouraged to express their interest in co-leading the following priority areas of the ARF Work Plan on CTTC: illicit drugs; CBRN; and trafficking in persons. The Meeting further noted that the proposal for extension of the current Co-Chairmanship tenure until 2023,

would be tabled again at the 18th ARF ISM on CTTC in 2022 to ensure conformity with the processes and procedures of the ARF.

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

11. The Meeting noted the outcomes of the 12th ARF ISM on MS held via Video Conference on 29 April 2021, co-chaired by Viet Nam, Australia and the EU. The 12th ARF ISM on MS confirmed broad support for international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, exchanged views on maritime security and noted that various activities under the ARF Work Plan on MS have been convened including on topics such as ferry safety, maritime domain awareness, and maritime law enforcement cooperation, among others. The Meeting further noted that in the current ISY, one activity had been successfully implemented and two activities were scheduled to be held in the next couple of weeks, whilst three activities would be carried forward to the next ISY. In support of the implementation of the next ARF Work Plan on MS, it was noted that three new proposals for activities in the next ISY were deliberated and that discussions on previous proposals would be continued.

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

12. The Meeting noted that the 12th ARF ISM on NPD, co-chaired by Indonesia, Japan and ROK, was scheduled to be convened on 3-4 June 2021 via Video Conference. The Meeting was pleased to note that activities under the ARF Work Plan on NPD continued to be implemented despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Meeting underlined that a new set of Co-Chairs for the next term were needed and took note of Sri Lanka's interest to co-chair the ARF ISM on NPD for the next cycle. The Co-Chairs' progress report appears as **ANNEX 5**.

5.5. 19th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ISM on DR) and the ARF Work Plan on Disaster Relief 2018-2020

13. The Meeting took note of the discussions held at the 19th ARF ISM on DR, co-chaired by Lao PDR, Canada and China on 19 May 2021. The 19th ARF ISM on DR exchanged views and shared best practices on new measures taken by respective disaster management agencies on epidemic response, disaster risk monitoring, early warning as well as ways to improve regional mechanisms on humanitarian relief coordination and restoration efforts. On the implementation progress of the ARF Work Plan on Disaster Relief for the 2018-2020 cycle, it was noted that several activities had been successfully convened. The Meeting further noted that a draft ARF Work Plan on Disaster Relief for the 2021-2023 cycle had been developed and will be submitted to the ARF SOM for endorsement and subsequent approval of the 28th ARF.

In addition, Sri Lanka informed the Meeting of its intention to put forth a proposal on disaster preparedness response for the next ISY and that the concept paper would be submitted in due course.

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

14. The Meeting noted that Myanmar and China would be co-chairing the 14th ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) Meeting tentatively on 5-6 July 2021 via Video Conference and that further information would be circulated in due course. The Meeting also noted that an ASEAN Member State would need to be identified to co-chair the 15th ARF EEPs in the next ISY alongside China. The ASEAN Secretariat confirmed there was no procedural issue with a reduced (1 day), virtual format.

5.7. 18th ARF Security Policy Conference

15. The Meeting noted that the 18th ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC) was scheduled to be held on 27 May 2021. Brunei Darussalam as Chair of the 18th ASPC, informed the Meeting that the agenda of the 18th ASPC would focus on exchange of views on defence and security issues of common concerns. The Meeting also noted that towards ensuring the ASPC remains a broad and inclusive platform, the ASPC welcomes the attendance of other participants including diplomatic officials and defence institutions and personnel.

5.8. ARF Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy

16. The Meeting was pleased to note that implementation of the ARF Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy continued to progress through the convening of various activities and initiatives. Activities convened in the current ISY included the ARF Workshop series on Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Mitigation in December 2020, the ARF Open-Ended Study Group on Inclusive Processes for Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution in May 2021, as well as the proposed development of an ARF Framework on Inclusivity and an Inclusivity Highlights Compilation book, and an ARF Workshop on Women, Peace and Security in March 2021. The Meeting also noted that the second part of the Workshop on Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Mitigation: Study Tour would be convened in July 2021. Meanwhile, the third part of the series: Simulation, which would focus on reviewing the foundational principles of the ARF Ha Noi Plan of Action (HPOA) and essential skills of preventive diplomacy to include stakeholder engagement, early warning response and dispute resolution mechanism, would be carried forward to the ISY 2021-2022.

17. To further strengthen preventive diplomacy cooperation in the ARF, the Meeting noted that a proposal for an ARF Workshop on Preventive Diplomacy Tools to Address Transnational Organised Crime for implementation in the next ISY had been put forth for consideration. An opinion was expressed that preventive diplomacy which is

instrumental in relations between sovereign states is hardly applicable to combating criminal activities that are under purview of national judicial and law enforcement authorities. Moving forward, the Meeting noted that the ARF Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy, adopted in 2011, was a living document and that there was merit in considering revisiting the Work Plan in the future.

AGENDA ITEM 6: CONSIDERATION OF CBMs AND PD INITIATIVES

6.1. Proposed ARF Statements for the 28th ARF

6.1.1. Joint Statement to Promote the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda at the ARF

18. Brunei Darussalam briefed the Meeting on the proposed draft Joint Statement to Promote the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Agenda at the ARF, which aims to enhance the role of youth in promoting peace and security in the region as well as strengthen their resilience to challenges. The Meeting noted that Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and the US had expressed interest in co-sponsoring the Joint Statement and that the ROK was also considering co-sponsorship. The Meeting also took note of Canada's written intervention which indicated their interest in co-sponsoring the Joint Statement. The Meeting expressed general support towards the draft and noted that comments and input to the draft would continue to be considered prior to submission to the 28th ARF. It was suggested that the original draft Joint Statement developed by ASEAN be used as a basis for discussions.

6.1.2. ARF Statement on Preventing and Combating Cybercrime

19. The Meeting noted China's briefing on the proposed draft Statement which aims to reaffirm the ARF's commitment to strengthen cooperation to prevent and combat cybercrime. The Meeting expressed general support towards the Statement and noted that China was currently seeking co-sponsorship for the Statement, which is aimed to be submitted to the 28th ARF.

6.2. Track I Activities for the Inter-Sessional Year 2021-2022

20. The Meeting noted that the draft List of ARF Track I Activities for the ISY 2021-2022 which appear as **ANNEX 6**, include several activities carried forward from the current ISY as well as new proposed activities and initiatives. Recognising the importance of maintaining momentum and in support of moving the ARF process forward, ARF Participants were encouraged to utilise online mechanisms to implement these activities, where appropriate. Taking into consideration that comments and input on several proposals were still being deliberated, the ARF Chair announced that the

finalised proposals should be submitted by 28 July 2021. The Chair underlined that in accordance with the Guide to ARF Processes, Procedures, Practices and Protocol, only activities with complete co-chairmanship/co-sponsorship and consensus would be included in the List of ARF Track 1 Activities to be submitted for Ministers' approval.

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

21. The Meeting noted that Cambodia, as the incoming ARF Chair in 2022, would co-chair the ARF ISG on CBMs and PD and ARF DOD with China. The schedule and format of these meetings would be informed in due course.

7.2. ARF ISM on ICTs Security

22. The Meeting noted that following discussions at the 3rd ARF ISM on ICTs Security, Indonesia, Australia, ROK, and Russia were set to co-chair the next cycle of the ARF ISM on ICTs Security. Noting that the Guide to ARF Processes, Procedures, Practices and Protocol stipulates that an ISM is to be co-chaired by a maximum of three countries, the following formulation was proposed by the candidates:

- i. ISY 2021-2022 : Indonesia, Australia, and ROK;
- ii. ISY 2022-2023 : Indonesia, ROK, and Russia; and
- iii. ISY 2023-2024 : Indonesia, Australia, and Russia.

23. Considering the extenuating circumstances, the Meeting noted the necessity for a creative solution and expressed support towards the formulation.

7.3. ARF ISM on MS

24. The Meeting noted that discussions on the next cycle of co-chairmanship were ongoing, facilitated by Viet Nam, Australia and the EU as the current Co-Chairs. The Meeting was informed that there was broad support for the prospect of having a five-year ARF Work Plan on Maritime Security being drafted by the five Co-Chair candidates, namely Cambodia, Indonesia, China, India, and the US. The Meeting also noted that the issue of co-chairmanship sequencing was still being explored and that a conclusion on the matter would ideally be submitted to the ARF SOM.

7.4. ARF ISM on NPD

25. The Meeting noted that the US and Sri Lanka have expressed their interest in co-chairing the next cycle of this ISM and that the issue of co-chairmanship would be

further deliberated at the 12th ARF ISM on NPD, scheduled to be held via Video Conference on 3-4 June 2021.

7.5. ARF Disaster Relief Exercise (DiREx)

26. The Meeting took note that the ARF DiREx was last held in 2015 and that to date, there was yet to be any expressions of interest to co-chair this activity.

7.6. 24th ARF HDUCIM

27. Pakistan and Malaysia informed the Meeting that arrangements for the 24th HDUCIM would be communicated in due course.

7.7. 15th ARF EEPs Meeting

28. The Meeting noted that the 15th ARF EEPs would be co-chaired by China and a yet to be identified ASEAN Member State in 2022. The Meeting further noted that a complete set of co-chairs for the 15th ARF EEPs would need to be identified prior to the 28th ARF.

7.8. 8th ARF Peacekeeping Experts' Meeting

29. Indonesia and Japan as Co-Chairs of the 8th ARF Peacekeeping Experts' Meeting, informed that the Meeting would be deferred to the ISY 2021-2022, with Indonesia planning to host the Meeting towards the end of 2021 or early 2022.

30. The Meeting noted that there have been multiple expressions of interests for the co-chairmanship of several ISMs, which inadvertently created challenges in managing these interests. Whilst the high level of interest was a positive reflection of the ARF Participants' commitment to cooperation, it was also noted that the unprecedented nature of the solutions deviated from the existing processes and procedures of the ARF. To ensure conformity to the ARF Guide, it was underlined that such arrangements were applicable only in this cycle and should not be replicated in the future nor set a new precedent in the ARF. In this respect, the Chair further highlighted the necessity to set in place that an ISM could be co-chaired by a maximum of three countries and that expressions of interest would be considered on a chronological basis. In addition, noting that the composition of Co-Chairs for the ISM on ICT Security for the next cycle changes in every ISY, the ASEAN Secretariat emphasised that the proposed composition should be duly reflected in the Summary Reports of the ARF ISG on CBMs and PD, the ARF Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), the Chairman's Statement of the ARF Ministerial Meeting, as well as in the ARF List of Track 1 Activities in every ISY to avoid future complications.

AGENDA ITEM 8: FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE ARF

8.1. Implementation of the ARF Ha Noi Plan of Action II (2020 – 2025)

31. The ASEAN Secretariat updated the Meeting on the implementation of the ARF Ha Noi Plan of Action II (2020-2025), which was adopted by the 27th ARF in September 2020. The Meeting noted that despite challenges confronted by the region due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, there appeared to be good progress in the implementation of the ARF HPOA II in its first year. At present, the overall implementation rate of the HPOA II (excluding Section IV on Review and Implementation) stands at 11.2%, with 12 action lines implemented and 95 action lines pending.

32. It was observed that ARF participants continued to be active in proposing and implementing activities. In the ISY 2020-2021, 13 new activities in the format of workshops, seminars, training and initiatives were proposed, and 9 were carried forward from the previous ISY, showing positive signs of ARF Participants' interest and commitment in the implementation of the HPOA II. In order for these activities to contribute to building confidence and capacity of the ARF participants, the support and commitment to attend and participate in these activities should be strengthened.

33. The Meeting noted that challenges were encountered in measuring the implementation of the HPOA II, as some action lines were less quantifiable and due to the ambiguity of the action line. Moving forward, the ASEAN Secretariat recommended that ARF Participants may wish to consider providing information and input on the progress of implementation of each section. ARF Participants may also wish to consider implementing several of the more direct action lines, particularly action lines under Section III on Institutional Enhancement. Noting that pending action lines would need to be implemented in the next four years, the Meeting was of the view that it was imperative for the ARF to redouble its efforts. The Meeting also suggested that the practical recommendations should be put forth to the ARF SOM for guidance and consideration. The Executive Summary appears as **ANNEX 7**.

AGENDA ITEM 9: OTHER MATTERS

9.1. ARF Annual Security Outlook

34. Brunei Darussalam updated the Meeting regarding submissions to the 2021 ARF Annual Security Outlook (ASO) and encouraged ARF Participants to submit their contributions to the ARF Chair by 10 June 2021.

9.2. Date of the ARF SOM

35. Brunei Darussalam informed the Meeting that the ARF SOM would be held via Video Conference on 29 June 2021 and that further details would be provided in due course.

AGENDA ITEM 10: CLOSING REMARKS

36. In their Closing Remarks, the Co-Chairs thanked the ARF Participants for their active participation, contribution and support rendered towards the convening of this Meeting. They noted that the ARF's practical work in CBMs and PD had made great strides in furthering cooperation and dialogue on emerging security issues and encouraged all ARF Participants to continue strengthening the ARF's efforts in tackling the various challenges facing the region.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

37. The Meeting expressed gratitude and appreciation to the Co-Chairs for the effective co-chairmanship and excellent arrangements made for the Meeting. The Meeting also commended the fruitful discussion and active participation of all ARF Participants and the ASEAN Secretariat that contributed to the success of the Meeting.

ISSUES TO BE FOLLOWED UP

No.	Key Decision/Issues	Timeline	Follow-up By
1.	Finalise the List of ARF Track I Activities for ISY 2021-2022	Before the 28 th ARF	ARF Chair
2.	Identification of Co-Chairs for the next cycle of the ARF ISM on MS	Before the 28 th ARF	Cambodia, Indonesia, China, India and the US
3.	Finalise the draft and seek an ASEAN Co-Chair for the Joint ARF Statement on Preventing and Combating Cybercrime	Before the 28 th ARF	China
4.	Finalise the draft Joint Statement to Promote the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda at the ARF	Before the 28 th ARF	Brunei Darussalam
5.	Finalise proposals and identify Co-Chairs for proposed activities in the ISY 2021-2022	28 July 2021	Proponents of respective activities

6.	Submission of contributions to the 2021 ARF Annual Security Outlook	By 10 June 2021	ARF Participants
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