

ASEAN Regional Forum Vision Statement

We, the Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Participants, gather today on 23 July 2009 in Phuket, Thailand to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the ARF after its establishment in Bangkok in 1994. Representing Participants located in or with a key stake in the wide expanse of the Asia-Pacific, we chart a Vision for ARF by 2020 and its place in the region to ensure that our peoples can thrive and prosper in a safe, peaceful and harmonious environment. In so doing, we reaffirm our commitments to the principles that have guided our cooperation well over the past 15 years.

Building a Region of Peace, Friendship and Prosperity

1. We see the ARF as a central pillar in the evolving regional security architecture. Taking into account other regional arrangements, fora and cooperative frameworks that have emerged over the years, it is vital for the ARF to significantly contribute to the changing political landscape and evolving regional security architecture and make further efforts to raise its effectiveness.
2. We envision the Asia-Pacific as a region of lasting peace, stability, friendship and prosperity where States and organizations, both within and outside the region, work in a spirit of mutual trust, appreciation and respect to overcome security threats and challenges and prevent escalation of potential conflicts with a view to creating an environment conducive to sustainable development, social progress and improved quality of life for all peoples in the region.
3. We envision a region where States, institutions and other relevant organizations actively cooperate in promoting a culture of peace, tolerance, mutual understanding, respect and dialogue amongst peoples, cultures, religions and civilizations through the sharing and shaping of norms and values.

Guiding Approaches

4. We reaffirm ASEAN's role as the primary driving force in the ARF process. Noting the ASEAN Charter, we are committed to realizing enhanced synergies between the ASEAN Political-Security Community and the ARF. We also pledge close consultations with and the participation, support and cooperation of all ARF Participants in moving forward the ARF process.
5. We commit to move the ARF at a pace comfortable to all Participants in its evolution from the stage of confidence-building measures to the development of preventive diplomacy, while bearing in mind the ultimate stage where we can elaborate approaches to conflict resolution.
6. We envision the accession by all ARF participants to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) which contributes further to

the region's long-term peace and stability and testifies to the deeper trust and higher level of cooperation between and among ARF Participants. We recognize the importance of fully adhering to the purposes and principles of the TAC.

Enhancing Cooperation for Action

7. Taking into account the principles and approaches mentioned above, including the UN and ASEAN Charters, we pledge to cultivate and nurture amongst the ARF Participants a habit of constructive dialogue, cooperation and greater transparency on political and security issues of common interest and concern and, as much as possible, to reconcile any differing views among us in order to address and reduce threats to regional peace and security, as follows:

- Strengthen ARF's role in raising awareness on security challenges and intensifying confidence building and cooperation.
- Develop preventive diplomacy in priority areas that directly affect our peoples and that are insurmountable through our individual actions alone, namely those pertaining to non-traditional, transboundary and inter-state security challenges including working towards mutually acceptable early warning mechanisms.
- Make the ARF an action-oriented mechanism that develops concrete and effective responses to the common challenges confronting the Asia-Pacific region, such as terrorism and transnational crime, disaster relief, maritime security and non-proliferation and disarmament, and those that may arise in the future.
- Maintain comprehensive approaches to regional security issues, as appropriate, including developing codes of conduct, guidelines, common standard operating procedures and best practices along with standby arrangements, effective interoperable collective responses and enhanced capability including through joint exercises in specific areas of activity agreeable to all Participants.
- Encourage greater participation in ARF activities by a broad spectrum of agencies and officials including defense and security.
- Develop feasible preventive diplomacy capabilities through, amongst others, norm-building and enhanced channels of communication.
- Promote the role of the ARF Chair including enhancing the Friends of the ARF Chair mechanism that, with the consent of the ARF Participants involved, can help address situations of common concern. The Secretary-General of ASEAN could also serve as a point of first contact in cases of emergency or crisis.

- Develop more advanced institutional features for ARF which could include the development of stronger secretariat support by providing necessary resources to the ARF Unit.

Building Partnerships for Comprehensive Security

8. We envision the ARF developing fruitful partnerships and networks of cooperation amongst various security organizations and fora in the Asia-Pacific region and other regions as well as with international organizations with a view to creating feasible synergies between them on issues of common concerns.

9. We believe that Track II organizations, including the ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs), ASEAN ISIS and CSCAP, and with the consensus of ARF Participants, relevant accredited civil society groups can provide useful ideas and policy inputs and help raise public awareness of the ARF.

Implementation

To fulfill our Vision, we will develop a plan of action and undertake a regular review of its implementation.
