



## **CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM**

2 July 2013

Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam

---

1. The 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was held in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, on 2 July 2013. The Meeting was chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Brunei Darussalam.
2. The Meeting was attended by the Foreign Ministers and Representatives of all ARF participants. The Secretary-General of ASEAN was also in attendance. The list of delegates appears as **ANNEX 1**.
3. The Ministers welcomed the launching of the "*ASEAN Regional Forum at Twenty: Promoting Peace and Security in the Asia-Pacific – A Commemorative Publication for the 20<sup>th</sup> ARF*". In this connection, the Ministers expressed appreciation to Brunei Darussalam and China for their efforts in initiating and co-editing the publication to mark this significant milestone.
4. The Ministers reiterated the importance of the ARF as a primary forum for dialogue and cooperation on political and security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. They reaffirmed their support for ASEAN as the main driving force of the ARF, as well as acknowledged the crucial contribution the ARF plays in the evolving regional security architecture.
5. The Ministers encouraged the continued cooperation and contribution of all the ARF participants in taking the ARF process forward to the next stage of its evolution at a pace comfortable to all. In this regard, they underscored the need to continue implementing the Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement 2020 and all other current work plans in a consistent and comprehensive manner. The Ministers also emphasized the importance of implementing the Preventive Diplomacy Work Plan, which aims to move the ARF process forward from Stage I to Stage II on the basis of consensus, through action-oriented cooperation and activities, while continuing confidence-building measures.

## **Highlights of Discussions on Regional and International Issues**

6. The Ministers noted the outcomes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Summit which was convened on 24-25 April 2013 in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam. Reflecting the theme 'Our People, Our Future Together', the Summit emphasized on the role of the people in ASEAN's community building efforts under the three pillars, namely ASEAN Political-Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Social-Cultural Community, with the aim of realizing the ASEAN Community by 2015, as well as the future of ASEAN beyond 2015.
7. The Ministers welcomed the progress of the ARF, and while continuing to strengthen confidence building, encouraged the ARF to undertake more preventive diplomacy activities consistent with the principles in the 'ARF Concept and Principles of Preventive Diplomacy' and 'ARF Preventive Diplomacy Work Plan'. In this connection, the Ministers welcomed the proposal on preventive diplomacy training, which would provide opportunities for the ARF to consider ways to strengthen preventive diplomacy training in the region. The Ministers reaffirmed that the ARF should continue to serve as a platform for its participants to deal with security challenges through dialogue and cooperation while upholding the principles of peaceful settlement of disputes and mutual respect.
8. The Ministers acknowledged the importance of enhancing cooperation in other regional security mechanisms. In this context, they looked forward to the convening of the Second ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM-Plus) on 29 August 2013 in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam. The Ministers noted the outcomes of the 7<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) on 6-7 May 2013 and the ADMM-Plus Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief and Military Medicine Exercise (ADMM-Plus HADR & MM Ex) on 17-20 June 2013. The Ministers also noted on the upcoming ADMM-Plus EWG for Counter Terrorism Exercise (CTX) on 9-13 September 2013 and Maritime Security Field Training Exercise (FTX) on 29 September – 1 October 2013.
9. The Ministers reiterated the importance of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) as a code of conduct for growing inter-state relations. In this regard, they welcomed the accession of Norway to the TAC.
10. The Ministers underlined the importance of peace, security and stability in the Korean Peninsula. Most Ministers encouraged the DPRK to comply fully with its obligations to all relevant UNSC Resolutions and to its commitments under the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. To this end, Ministers reiterated their support for all efforts to bring about the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. Most Ministers reaffirmed their commitments to fully implement all the relevant UNSC Resolutions. The Ministers also emphasized the importance of addressing the issues of humanitarian concerns of the international community. The Ministers further encouraged exploring all possibility of engaging in a peaceful dialogue which would lead to the creation of an atmosphere of trust and confidence among the concerned parties.

11. The Ministers underscored the importance of maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea and noted the ASEAN Statement on the Six-Point Principles on the South China Sea. The Ministers stressed the importance of peaceful settlement of disputes through friendly consultations and negotiations by sovereign states directly concerned in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Ministers welcomed the collective commitments of ASEAN Member States and China to fully and effectively implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), including the Guidelines for the Implementation of the DOC and to work towards the adoption of a code of conduct in the South China Sea (COC) on the basis of consensus. In this regard, the Ministers appreciated the continued ASEAN-China consultations and dialogue for mutual trust, confidence and cooperation, and the convening of the 8th Meeting of ASEAN-China Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the DOC on 29 May 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Ministers were encouraged with the convening of the 6th ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Meeting on the Implementation of the DOC and the 9th Meeting of the Joint Working Group on the implementation of the DOC to be hosted by China in September 2013 during which all parties will have official consultations on the code of conduct. The Ministers noted that steps will be taken to establish an Eminent Persons and Experts Group (EPEG) and/or other mechanisms to provide support to such consultations.
12. The Ministers supported the international cooperative efforts in non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful use of nuclear energy. They underlined the importance of preserving the Southeast Asia region as a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and free of all other weapons of mass destruction as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty. The Ministers welcomed ASEAN's adoption of the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty (2013-2017). The Ministers noted the E3+3 (China, France, Germany, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States of America and the European Union High Representative) efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear issues. The Ministers also noted Japan's initiative on nuclear disarmament as one of the co-chairs of the next ISM on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament.
13. The Ministers welcomed the recent elections in Pakistan as a historic victory for the democratic life of the country. The Ministers further welcomed the new government's early prioritization of furthering peace and stability in the region. The Ministers reflected that enhanced regional political and economic relations and the stability they can bring are potentially significant sources of economic growth and are drivers for improved security in that region.
14. The Ministers discussed non-traditional security threats and challenges, such as natural disasters, terrorism, trafficking of illicit drugs, people smuggling, trafficking in persons, cyber security and piracy. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of intensifying cooperation, including through information-sharing and capacity-building, to address these challenges. In introducing new areas of cooperation, the Ministers noted interest among ARF participants to explore space security.

15. The Ministers expressed condolences to the families of victims of natural disasters that occurred recently, including the tornado that hit Oklahoma City in the United States of America and the flashflood in the Uttarakhand Himalayan region in India. These events serve as a reminder of the nature of disasters and the critical importance of disaster preparedness and response. On this note, the Ministers encouraged for the ARF to continue enhance cooperation and coordination on humanitarian assistance and disaster management between concerned stakeholders, both civilian and military. They also commended all participants who supported and contributed to the successful organisation of the ARF Disaster Relief Exercise 2013, co-chaired by Thailand and the Republic of Korea (ROK) in Cha-am Phetchaburi Province, Thailand.
16. Several participants raised deep concerns over the situation in Syria as a threat to regional stability and security and called upon an immediate cessation of violence in all its forms and a political solution through full implementation of the 2012 Geneva Communiqué.
17. The Ministers welcomed the steps taken by Fiji towards holding elections in 2014. Some participants urged continued engagement between Fiji and the Pacific Island Forum, the Commonwealth and the United Nations to support a credible election that is accepted by the people of Fiji and the international community.

#### **Review of Activities of the Current Inter-Sessional Year (2012- 2013)**

18. The Ministers noted with satisfaction ARF's contribution in promoting dialogue and security cooperation, particularly through the implementation of ARF Track 1 activities during the inter-sessional year 2012-2013. They commended the work of the ARF Senior Officials' Meeting (ARF SOM) on 24 May 2013 in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam and the ARF Inter-sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy (ISG on CBMs and PD) co-chaired by Brunei Darussalam and China in Bandar Seri Begawan on 27-28 November 2012 and Beijing on 27-28 April 2013. The Ministers endorsed the recommendations contained in the reports appearing as **ANNEX 2, 3 and 4** respectively.
19. The Ministers appreciated the contributions made by the defence officials and emphasized the importance of defence and security cooperation in the ARF process. The Ministers were pleased with the high-level interaction among the ARF defence officials and encouraged them to continue to improve synergies between the ARF and the ADMM-Plus, with a view of submitting recommendations for consideration of the Ministers in the future. In this connection, the Ministers recalled the Discussion Paper on Improving Synergies, as noted at the 19<sup>th</sup> ARF, and which provides some practical suggestions on strengthening communication and information exchange between the ARF and the ADMM-Plus. The Ministers noted the reports of the Sixteenth ARF Heads of Defence Universities/Colleges/Institutions Meeting (ARF HDUCIM), the Defence Officials' Dialogue and the Tenth ASEAN Regional Forum Security Policy Conference (ASPC). These reports appear as **ANNEX 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9**.

20. The Ministers welcomed the outcomes of the:

- 11th ISM on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime co-chaired by Vietnam and Australia held on 4-5 March 2013 in Hanoi, Vietnam;
- 12th ISM on Disaster Relief co-chaired by Indonesia and Australia held on 12-13 March 2013 in Padang, Indonesia;
- 5th ISM on Maritime Security co-chaired by Indonesia, ROK and the United States held on 18-19 April 2013 in Seoul, ROK; and
- 5th ISM on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament co-chaired by the Philippines, Japan and Australia held on 4-5 June 2013 in Manila, the Philippines.

The reports of these meetings appear as **ANNEX 10, 11, 12 and 13** respectively.

21. The Ministers were pleased that the Co-Chairs of the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups (EWGs) were invited to the relevant ARF Inter-Sessional Meetings (ISMs). With the purpose of improving synergy between the ARF and ADMM-Plus, the Ministers agreed for the ARF to continue to invite the Co-Chairs of the ADMM-Plus EWG to the relevant ARF ISM.

22. The Ministers welcomed the convening of the ARF Disaster Relief Exercise 2013 (ARF DiREx) in Cha-am, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand on 7-11 May 2013, co-chaired by Thailand and ROK. They noted the ARF DiREx 2013 After Action Review Report and agreed with the recommendation for the ARF to enhance coordination and build synergy in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief activities with other regional arrangements, such as the EAS and ADMM-Plus. The Ministers also noted that the next ARF DiREx would be in 2015. The Ministers welcomed the offer by China to co-chair the ARF DiREx in 2015 and encouraged for an ASEAN Member State to co-chair the exercise. The report of the ARF DiREx 2013 appears as **ANNEX 14**.

23. The Ministers noted the outcomes of the following workshops and seminars, which were successfully held in the inter-sessional year 2012-2013:

- 5<sup>th</sup> ARF Peacekeeping Experts' Meeting, Ulaanbaatar, 27-28 August 2012 (co-chaired by Indonesia and Mongolia);
- 4<sup>th</sup> ARF Workshop on Preparedness and Recovery to a Biological Event, Manila, 5-7 September 2012 (co-chaired by the Philippines, Australia and the United States of America);
- ARF Workshop on Cyber Incident Response, Singapore, 6-7 September 2012 (co-chaired by Singapore and Australia);
- ARF Seminar on Confidence-Building Measures in Cyberspace, Seoul, 11-12 September 2012 (co-chaired by Malaysia and the ROK);
- ARF Workshop on Space Security, Hoi An, 6-7 December 2012 (co-chaired by Vietnam and Australia);
- ARF Workshop on Ship Profiling, Kuala Lumpur, 15-16 April 2013 (co-chaired by Brunei, Malaysia and New Zealand);

- 7<sup>th</sup> ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) Meeting, Honolulu, 9-10 May 2013 (co-chaired by Malaysia and the United States of America); and
- 2<sup>nd</sup> ARF CBM Seminar on Implementation of UNSCR 1540, Bangkok, 14-15 May 2013 (co-chaired by Thailand and the United States of America).

24. The Ministers approved the Best Practices for Preparedness and Response to a Biological Event as a reference paper for ARF participants to develop their own national guidelines on biological event preparedness and response system.

**Programme of Work for the Inter-Sessional Year (2013-2014)**

25. The Ministers reiterated that confidence building measures and preventive diplomacy should be mutually reinforcing and implemented in parallel. In this regard, the Ministers endorsed the “Concept Paper on Moving towards Preventive Diplomacy” as a guideline for ARF participants to comfortably conduct preventive diplomacy, consistent with the ARF Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy, as adopted by Ministers in 2011. The Ministers also underlined the importance of exploring preventive diplomacy suited to the region based on agreed ARF PD principles as enshrined in the ARF Concept and Principles of Preventive Diplomacy adopted in 2001. The Concept Paper appears as **ANNEX 15**.
26. The Ministers welcomed Myanmar and the European Union (EU) to co-chair the ARF ISG on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy (CBMs and PD) and the adjoining Defence Officials’ Dialogue (DOD) in the next inter-sessional year. The Ministers noted that the first meeting of the ARF ISG on CBMs and PD for the inter-sessional year (2013-2014) will be held in the second half of 2013 and the second meeting will be held in the first half of 2014.
27. The Ministers agreed that the ARF ISM on Disaster Relief, on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime, on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and on Maritime Security will continue in the next inter-sessional year. In this connection, Ministers welcomed Myanmar, China and Japan to co-chair the 13<sup>th</sup> ISM on Disaster Relief; Indonesia and New Zealand to co-chair the 12<sup>th</sup> ISM on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime; the Philippines, Australia and Japan to continue co-chairing the 6<sup>th</sup> ISM on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament; and Indonesia, ROK and the United States of America to continue co-chairing the 6<sup>th</sup> ISM on Maritime Security in the next inter-sessional year.
28. The Ministers agreed for the ARF Work Plan on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime to be updated in the upcoming cycle year; and for it to be considered by the ARF ISM on CTTC, ISG on CBMs and PD, SOM and subsequently the 21<sup>st</sup> ARF.
29. The Ministers reaffirmed the procedure that all proposed ARF activities, work plans and papers should first be discussed at the ISG/ISM level and agreed to by the ARF SOM. The List of ARF Track I Activities for the next inter-sessional year (July 2013-July 2014) that has been approved by Ministers appears as **ANNEX 16**.

### **Future Direction of the ARF Process**

30. The Ministers welcomed Myanmar and Malaysia as the next Chair and Vice Chair of the 21st ARF, respectively. Their term begins on 1 January 2014.
31. The Ministers reaffirmed that the Hanoi Plan of Action (PoA) to implement the ARF Vision Statement shall move the ARF process forward at a pace comfortable to all participants. They underscored the need for the ARF to become a more 'action-oriented' forum, with deeper engagement in preserving peace, stability and security in the region. They also underlined that the ARF plays a leading role in multilateral cooperation to address common challenges in non-traditional security areas in the region. The Ministers stressed the importance for the Hanoi PoA's implementation to be reviewed annually by the ARF ISG on CBMs and PD and the ARF SOM. The Ministers were satisfied with implementation of the PoA as presented in the Matrix of Status of Implementation of the Hanoi Plan of Action (**ANNEX 17**) and encouraged for future Matrix to highlight areas of the POA requiring further attention by the officials.
32. Given the rapid development of ICT worldwide, the Ministers recognised that the ARF is a good platform to enhance collaborations among ARF participants to effectively mitigate cyber threats and combat cybercrimes. In this regard, the Ministers noted the progress of the development of the ARF work plan related to cyber security. They tasked the officials to further deliberate the elements of the work plan at the next relevant ARF ISM/ARF ISG on CBMs and PD/ARF SOM with a view of finalizing the work plan at the next ARF Ministerial meeting.
33. The Ministers noted the proposed Seminar of Experts on the development of Cyber CBMs in ASEAN Regional Forum and tasked the ARF officials to discuss this matter further at the next ARF ISM/ARF ISG on CBMs and PD/ARF SOM.
34. The Ministers welcomed the active role of the ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (ARF EEPs) in contributing towards the progress of the ARF. The Ministers considered the recommendations presented by the 7<sup>th</sup> ARF EEPs Meeting. In this connection, they tasked the EEPs to assess the ARF progress and also provide recommendations in advancing the overall ARF process, particularly in the implementation of the Preventive Diplomacy activities. The Meeting noted a suggestion for representatives of the ARF EEPs, as experts or resource person to their respective governments, to attend relevant ARF ISMs/ISG. The Ministers welcomed the EU to co-chair the 8<sup>th</sup> ARF EEPs meeting with Malaysia in Malaysia.
35. In stressing the need to further promote transparency among ARF participants, the Ministers welcomed the 2013 ARF Annual Security Outlook (ARF ASO). They shared the view that it is a useful document in promoting confidence, understanding and transparency among ARF participants. The Ministers further noted that the ASEAN Security Outlook is due to be published for the first time this year.

36. The Ministers commended the work of the ARF Unit of the ASEAN Secretariat in supporting the 20<sup>th</sup> ARF Chair, Co-Chairs of ISMs and other ARF endorsed activities. The Ministers noted the Matrix of ARF Decisions and their Status 1994-2013 (**ANNEX 18**). Taking into account the increasing activities under the ARF ambit, the Ministers reiterated their support for strengthening the ARF Unit with necessary resources and manpower, as part of the on-going efforts to strengthen the ASEAN Secretariat itself.
  
37. As means of strengthening the ARF, the Ministers reiterated the importance of enhancing ties between the Track I and Track II, as well as, between the ARF and other relevant regional and international security bodies.

\*\*\*\*\*