

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT
THE NINTH MEETING OF THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM
BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, 31 JULY 2002



1. The Ninth Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was held in Bandar Seri Begawan on 31 July 2002. The Meeting was chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalam.
2. The Meeting was attended by the Foreign Ministers of ARF participating countries or their representatives. The Secretary-General of ASEAN was also present. The list of delegates appears as ANNEX A.
3. A meeting among defence and military officials attending the 9th ARF was also held on 30 July 2002.

Overview of the ARF process

4. The Ministers expressed satisfaction that the ARF, as the main cooperative security forum in the Asia Pacific Region, continues to make significant progress in addressing regional security concerns, implementing confidence building measures and initiating exploratory work on preventive diplomacy (PD). They were of the view that the ARF process has further strengthened dialogue and understanding amongst its participants which represents an important contribution to regional peace and stability, especially, in light of the evolving security situation.
5. The Ministers reiterated that the ARF should continue to progress at a pace comfortable to all and maintained the importance of decision-making by consensus and on the basis of non-interference into one another's internal affairs. The Ministers expressed continued support for ASEAN's role as the primary driving force of the ARF and further encouraged the contribution of all ARF participants in moving the ARF process forward.
6. The Ministers - emphasised the importance of the active participation of defence and military officials as well as the engagement of other security officials in strengthening the ARF process. The Ministers welcomed the initiative to create more opportunities for these officials to interact as they are essential to the confidence building process in the ARF and have proven to be constructive and useful in the exchange of views on issues of common

interest. They were also informed by the ARF Chairman on the outcome of the defence/military officials meeting on 30 July 2002.

7. In recalling the decision of the 8th ARF in July 2001, on the adoption of the paper on the "Enhanced Role of the ARF Chair", the Ministers welcomed Brunei Darussalam's good offices and co-ordination role in between ARF meetings, particularly, in issuing a statement on behalf of ARF participants on the tragic events of 11 September 2001 in the United States and facilitating the immediate convening of two workshops on "Financial Measures against Terrorism" and "Prevention of Terrorism" this year. They also expressed appreciation to Brunei Darussalam for its wide consultations and outreach with participants on ARF matters as well as with Track II institutions and other international organisations.

8. The Ministers appreciated the first compilation of the ARF Register of Experts/Eminent Persons (EEPs) by the ARF Chair circulated to ARF participants. They further encouraged the submission of nominations of experts/eminents persons on a voluntary basis to the ARF Chair.

9. The Ministers recalled the adoption of the "Paper on Concept and Principles of Preventive Diplomacy" as a snapshot of the state of current discussion on PD at the 8th ARF in July 2001 and regarded it as a major achievement in the evolution of the ARF. They noted deliberations on PD by officials and looked forward to further progress in future discussions. In broadening understanding on PD, the Ministers were of the view that inputs from Track I and Track II activities could be useful for future discussions on the subject.

10. The Ministers acknowledged the circulation of the third volume of the ARF Annual Security Outlook (ASO) compiled without editing by the ARF Chair. They welcomed its non-classified release and expressed the view that the submission of the ASO represented an important contribution in promoting transparency and confidence among ARF participants. They encouraged the continued submission of inputs for the next volume of the ASO for circulation at the next inter-sessional year.

Highlight of Issues Discussed

11. The Ministers reviewed the overall security environment of the Asia Pacific and were encouraged by significant developments especially positive signs of recovery and growth in the global economy. They were also encouraged by greater interaction and exchanges among countries in the region especially between the major powers. They were of the view that whilst the security situation remained stable, the region continued to face uncertainties and

challenges such as the sustainability of the economic recovery process and the threats of terrorism. The Ministers reiterated the importance of addressing security issues in a comprehensive manner.

12. In assessing regional and international security developments, the Ministers believed that the terrorist acts of 11 September 2001 in the United States had a tremendous impact on the overall security environment. The Ministers recalled the Statement of October 2001 issued by the ARF Chair on behalf of ARF participants and emphasised the need for the ARF to find ways and means to cooperate further in the fight against terrorism. In this regard, they recognised the importance of adding value to the collective and concerted global campaign against terrorism. The Ministers reaffirmed the principles outlined in the relevant UNSC Resolutions related to the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorist Acts and expressed satisfaction that all participants had submitted their reports in compliance with UNSC Resolution 1373. They encouraged early accession to or ratification of relevant international Conventions and Protocols relating to terrorism.

13. The Ministers noted the holding of the Workshop on "Financial Measures Against Terrorism", 24-26 March 2002 in Honolulu, co-chaired by Malaysia and the United States, and the Workshop on "Prevention of Terrorism", 17-19 April 2002 in Bangkok, co-chaired by Thailand and Australia. They expressed appreciation to these countries and, in this regard, welcomed the "ARF Statement on Measures Against Terrorist Financing" issued by the Chairman on behalf of all participants and agreed to review its implementation. The Statement appears as **ANNEX B**. They also endorsed the recommendations put forward by the Bangkok Workshop.

14. The Ministers welcomed, in particular, the establishment of an Inter-sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC) and noted a Concept Paper submitted by the United States and Malaysia would serve as a good basis for the work of the new ISM. They were of the view that enhanced cooperation against terrorism would further strengthen the ARF. The Ministers expressed appreciation to the United States and Malaysia as Co-Chairmen of the ISM on CT-TC in the next inter-sessional year. The Concept Paper appears as **ANNEX C**. They also noted: the efforts by participants to promote cooperation to combat terrorism within the framework of the ARF, including the submission of Concept Papers on ARF Dossier on Counter-Terrorism Measures by Japan and on Cyber Terrorism by the Republic of Korea.

15. The Ministers pledged their commitment to strengthen bilateral, regional and international cooperation in combating terrorism comprehensively to make the

region a safer place for all. They commended regional and international efforts against terrorism, in particular: the Declaration by APEC Economic Leaders of October 2001 in Shanghai; the 7th ASEAN Summit Declaration of November 2001 on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism in Bandar Seri Begawan; the Declaration by the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation; the ASEAN+3 Leaders' commitment to work together against terrorism at the 5th ASEAN + 3 Summit 2001 and the Almaty Act and the Declaration on Eliminating Terrorism and Promoting Dialogue among Civilisation issued at the 1st Summit Meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA).

16. The Ministers welcomed the adoption of the Work Programme on Terrorism by the Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Terrorism in Kuala Lumpur and the signing of the Agreement on Information Exchange and the Establishment of Communication Procedures among Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines on 7 May 2002. They further welcomed Cambodia's accession to the Agreement on 30 July 2002. They noted the recent meeting of the 22nd ASEANAPOL on 28-30 May 2002 in Phnom Penh, to devise ways of working together in their fight against terrorism.

17. The Ministers noted that further collaboration was needed to support capacity building, in particular to enhance participants' capability to counter terrorism especially in areas such as legal assistance, financial measures, and practical law enforcement cooperation. Ministers were of the view that the management of the consequences of a terrorist attack was a possible area for future ARF activity/work and recommended that this be given further consideration at the next ARF Inter-sessional Meeting.

18. The Ministers emphasised that stable and constructive relations between major powers were key to regional and global peace and security. They welcomed increased cooperation, dialogue and exchanges of visits at the highest level among Leaders in the region.

19. The Ministers expressed concern over the recent naval clash in the Yellow Sea/West Sea which had heightened tensions in the Korean Peninsula. They noted, however, the latest moves towards the easing of tensions and the resumption of dialogue. They stressed the need to ensure the prevention of the recurrence of such an incident in the future and underlined the importance of promoting Confidence Building Measures. The Ministers expressed the hope that genuine progress would be made for the mutual confidence building between North and South Korea and the enhancement of North and South reconciliation and cooperation. In that regard, they highlighted the importance of the smooth implementation of the 15 June North-

South Joint Declaration and the follow-up measures agreed upon during the visit to Pyongyang by the Presidential Envoy of the ROK last April. They also emphasized the importance of the holding of a second Inter-Korean Summit. The Ministers reiterated the importance of the full implementation of the 1994 Agreed Framework including the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation (KEDO) project. The Ministers hoped that prospects for dialogue between the DPRK and the United States would improve. They also welcomed the Red Cross Talks between the DPRK and Japan and encouraged further dialogue.

20. The Ministers exchanged views on the situation in the South China Sea and noted that the adoption of a code of conduct in the South China Sea would further promote peace and stability in the region. In this regard, they noted the agreement of ASEAN member countries in respect of ASEAN's new approach as reflected in the Joint Communique of the 35th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting. They welcomed ASEAN's resolve to work closely with China on this matter. The Ministers welcomed the parties continued commitment to exercise self-restraint and to the peaceful settlement of disputes in the South China Sea in conformity with recognised principles of international law including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

21. The Ministers welcomed the outcome of the 7th ASEAN Summit, 5th ASEAN + 3 and ASEAN + 1 Summits on 5-6 November 2001 in Bandar Seri Begawan. They commended efforts at economic reform, integration and cooperation in the region. These included ASEAN's commitment to further accelerate its economic integration, embarking on far reaching economic cooperation, bridging the development gap in ASEAN, measures pursued via APEC and bilateral free trade agreements, consistent with the goals of the Doha Development Agenda. The Ministers also welcomed the commitment amongst Heads of State/Government of ASEAN, the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea in building a closer East Asian partnership to further contribute to regional peace, stability and prosperity. The Ministers further welcomed the upcoming 1st ASEAN + India Summit to be held in Phnom Penh in November 2002.

22. The Ministers reiterated support-for the territorial integrity and national unity of Indonesia and expressed the view that durable stability, economic prosperity and democratisation would contribute to peace, stability and development in the region.

23. The Ministers recognised the importance of purposes and principles contained in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) as a

basis for the promotion of cooperation, amity and friendship in Southeast Asia and between ASEAN and ARF participants.

24. The Ministers noted the on-going consultations between ASEAN and the Nuclear Weapon States regarding the latter's signing to the Protocol of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). The Ministers reiterated their support to the P5 Joint Statement concerning security assurances for Mongolia and to its nuclear-free status.

25. The Ministers welcomed the independence of East Timor (Lorosae) on 20 May 2002 and reiterated their support for the building of an independent state. In this regard, they emphasised the need for continued assistance from the international community in the reconstruction and development of the Democratic Republic of East Timor (DRET) in all areas. They expressed support for the activities of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNMISET). Ministers also appreciated the Government of Indonesia's support of DRET's independence and the development of strong bilateral relations.

26. The Ministers welcomed the recent developments in Myanmar that signified the important achievements in Myanmar's national reconciliation process, unity and economic progress. The Ministers expressed the hope that the Government of Myanmar would take steps in further consolidating such progress.

27. The Ministers exchanged views on the situation in South Asia and recognized the close link between peace, security and stability in the region and in the rest of the world and noted recent efforts in easing tension between India and Pakistan. The Ministers further called for an immediate end to all terrorist activities in the region as an essential step to de-escalate the situation. While welcoming its commitment to counter terrorism, Ministers earnestly looked to Pakistan to take urgent further steps to implement it. This would constitute an important step towards resumption of dialogue, strengthening of cooperation and resolution of differences through peaceful means to promote regional and international security and stability.

28. Ministers welcomed the signing of the Bougainville Peace Agreement on 31 August 2001 and the subsequent positive steps towards securing peace on Bougainville, including the passage of the necessary legislation through the Papua New Guinea Parliament in March 2002. Ministers welcomed the restoration of democracy in Fiji through the elections held in

August-September 2001 and noted the continuing security challenges facing other Pacific island governments, including Solomon Islands.

29. The Ministers welcomed the convening of the Loya Jirga and the subsequent formation of the Transitional Government of Afghanistan and its efforts towards creating lasting peace in Afghanistan, thus contributing to peace and stability in that region. The Ministers expressed satisfaction on the outcome of the Pledging Conference on the Reconstruction Assistance of Afghanistan in Tokyo this year and called on the international community for the prompt implementation of its support on the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

30 The Ministers noted that preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery directly engages the region's fundamental security interests. Ministers further noted that the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 underlined the importance of participants renewing and fulfilling their individual and collective commitments to multilateral cooperation in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. In the area of conventional arms control, Ministers noted the importance of efforts by ARF participants to implement the UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects such as the regional seminar jointly sponsored by the Philippines and Canada in Manila on 9-10 July 2002.

31. The Ministers noted with satisfaction that preparations were underway for the 2005 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) with the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference held in New York from 3-19 April 2002. The Ministers reaffirmed that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remained the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. They regarded that preserving and strengthening the NPT would be vital to peace and security. They noted the calls at the Preparatory Committee for States to accede to the NPT, the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and to the Additional Protocol to NPT Safeguards Agreement.

32. The Ministers acknowledged that states at the CTBT Conference on 11-13 November 2001 in New York had renewed the commitment to work towards universal ratification of the Treaty and its early entry into force. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance for all states to maintain the existing moratorium on nuclear testing and reiterated the call for all states to work towards the objective of total elimination of nuclear weapons.

33. The Ministers expressed the hope that the re-convened session of the 5th BTWC Review Conference to be held in November 2002 would make progress in efforts to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), especially by agreeing to hold annual meetings of State Parties. They also underlined the importance of ensuring that the First Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in April/May 2003 is a success. They recognised the importance of promoting universality of the CWC and BWC.

Reports of Track I and II Activities for the Current Inter-sessional Year (July 2001-July 2002)

Track I

34. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the successful implementation of Track I and II activities during the current inter-sessional year (July 2001-July 2002). They noted, in particular, the Co-Chairmen's Summary Report of the Meetings of the ARF Inter-sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures (ISG on CBMs), co-chaired by India and Viet Nam, held in New Delhi, India 19-21 December and in Ha Noi, Viet Nam 21-23 April 2002 which appears as **ANNEX D**. The Ministers commended the work of the ISG on CBMs in advancing the ARF process. They endorsed the recommendations contained in the above-mentioned report.

35. The Ministers also noted the following activities which took place under the auspices of the ISG on CBMs:

- 35.1 The Second Law of the Armed Conflict Seminar in Bangkok on 7-10 August 2001.
- 35.2 Workshop for Mid-Level ARF Civilian and Defence Officials on Preventive Diplomacy in Brunei on 10-14 September 2001.
- 35.3 Fifth ARF Meeting of Heads of Defence Colleges/Institutions in Tokyo on 28-31 August 2001.
- 35.4 ARF Peacekeeping- Seminar: Best Practices and Lessons Learned in New Delhi on 20-21 March 2002.
- 35.5 ARF Workshop on Financial Measures Against Terrorism in Honolulu on 24-26 March 2002.
- 35.6 ARF Workshop on Prevention of Terrorism in Bangkok on 17-19 April 2002.

36. The Ministers also endorsed the Concept Papers on "A Recording Mechanism of ARF CBMs" and "Defence Dialogue within the ASEAN Regional Forum" prepared by New Zealand and Singapore respectively.

Track II

37. The Ministers took note of the paper submitted by CSCAP entitled "ARF in the 21st Century" and the outcome of the Workshop on Preventive Diplomacy organised by CSCAP and the Institute of International Relations Viet Nam. They welcomed efforts to enhance linkages between Track I and Track II in particular ASEAN-ISIS, CSCAP and other institutions. They expressed the view that inputs from Track II could be further discussed by Track I.

38. The Ministers encouraged ASEAN and Russia to continue their work on the draft Pacific Concord.

Programme of Work for the Next Inter-Sessional Year (July 2002-July 2003)

39. The Ministers agreed that the ISG on CBMs continue their work and welcomed the offer by Laos and New Zealand to co-chair the ISG on CBMs in the next inter-sessional year. Ministers also noted that the next ISG on CBMs would be held in Wellington, New Zealand on 20-22 November 2002. The second meeting of the ISG on CBMs will be held in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 26-28 March 2003.

40. The Ministers endorsed the programme of work for the next inter-sessional year (July 2002-July 2003) as contained in ANNEX E.

Future Direction of the ARF Process

41. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment in further strengthening the ARF as an effective forum for political and security dialogue and cooperation in the evolving security situation in the Asia Pacific region.

42. The Ministers emphasised the importance of the evolutionary approach of the ARF process from confidence building to preventive diplomacy and elaboration of approaches to conflicts. They underscored the ARF process of decision-making by consensus, moving at a pace comfortable to all ARF participants and ASEAN's role as the primary driving force of the ARF process.

43. The Ministers endorsed the recommendations contained in Brunei Darussalam's Paper

on “Stock-taking of the ARF Process” and encouraged their effective implementation. The recommendations appear as **ANNEX F**. They shared the view that enhanced cooperation against terrorism would help further strengthen confidence building in the ARF.

44. The Ministers welcomed the enhanced role of the chair in particular assigning the ASEAN Secretariat to assist the ARF Chairman in coordinating the work of the ARF and in this connection, recalled the roles recommended by the ISG on CBMs. They noted that some of these roles have been carried out and encouraged further implementation. Ministers noted other recommendations contained in the initial Brunei Darussalam paper circulated on 5 May 2002 and a number of participants were of the view that these could be considered in the future. These included an Inter-sessional Group on Weapons of Mass Destruction, an Inter-sessional Group on Preventive Diplomacy and establishment of an early-warning system.

45. While, the ARF process should further consolidate and broaden its work in confidence building measures to promote trust, understanding and cooperation among ARF participants, the Ministers also recognised the importance of making further progress on PD. The Ministers underlined the ARF's work in tackling terrorism represented a milestone in the ARF's development of a preventive role.

46. On the expansion of the ARF, Ministers noted the intention of DRET to join ARF. The Ministers also noted that Pakistan had renewed its application to join the ARF. They welcomed the suggestion that the expansion of the ARF be kept under review.

47. The Ministers expressed satisfaction with the progress in exploring the overlap between CBMs/PD. In strengthening the four CBM/PD overlap measures, namely the enhanced role of the ARF Chair, the ARF Registers of Experts/Eminent Persons, the Annual Security Outlook and voluntary background briefing on regional security issues, they agreed that the ARF further intensifies its work in implementing them as well as further exploring the overlap between CBMs and PD.