



CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY REPORT

13th ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM EXPERTS AND EMINENT PERSONS MEETING

Chiba, Japan, 26-27 February 2019

INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to the decision of the 25th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held in Singapore on 4 August 2018, the 13th ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) Meeting was held in Chiba, Japan, on 26-27 February 2019.
2. The Meeting was co-chaired by Ambassador Wai Lwin Than, EEP of Myanmar and Dr. Masashi Nishihara, EEP of Japan. The Meeting was attended by EEPs and representatives of all ARF Participants, with the exception of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, and Timor Leste. Representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat were also present. The list of delegates appears as **ANNEX 1**.

AGENDA ITEM 1: THE CO-CHAIRS' WELCOMING REMARKS

3. The Co-Chairs welcomed participants to the Meeting and recalled the important role of the EEPs in strengthening the ARF's objective to promote Confidence Building Measures, Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution (CBMs, PD and CR) in the region. Recognising the broad range and complexities of the security challenges faced by the region, the Co-Chairs underscored that the Meeting would serve as a useful platform for dialogue to discuss issues on regional and international security issues of common concern. The Co-Chairs commended the active participation of the ARF EEPs Working Group in producing the Report of the ARF EEPs Working Group on Confidence Building Measures, Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution in the Asia Pacific Region and looked forward to the findings and recommendations of the Working Group.
4. The Meeting considered and adopted the Agenda of the Meeting, which appears as **ANNEX 2**.

AGENDA ITEM 2: OPENING ADDRESS

5. In his keynote address, H.E. Kansuke Nagaoka, Ambassador in charge of Policy Planning and International Security Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, highlighted the rising importance of the Indo-Pacific in regional architecture and noted that sustaining peace and stability in the region is a common interest of the international community. In this regard, he underlined a close cooperative relationship of 45 years between Japan and ASEAN through a number of cooperation and projects, and emphasised that a more developed and prosperous ASEAN would be crucial in achieving stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. He further informed the Meeting that Japan will continue to enhance cooperation with ASEAN countries and others 1) to ensure that the freedom of navigation and the rule of law spread and take root, 2) to enhance that connectivity through the development of quality infrastructure in accordance with international standards, and 3) to provide capacity building assistance in the field of maritime security.

6. Noting the increasingly complex security challenges faced by the region, H.E. Nagaoka stressed that it is imperative for the ARF to play a more proactive role in promoting regional security through dialogue and cooperation concerning the security and political issues of common interest. He further commended the ARF's success in strengthening confidence among its Participants and in developing an effective framework to promote concrete cooperation. He also commended the ARF EEPs for contributing to the discussion in the ARF, in particular through recommendations concerning preventive diplomacy. He concluded his remarks by extending his heartfelt welcome to the Participants to the first ARF EEPs Meeting held in Japan, and looked forward to the fruitful discussions and contributions to further promote peace and security in the region.

AGENDA ITEM 3: REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ARF WORK PLAN ON PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY

3.1. Update on the ARF Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy

7. The ASEAN Secretariat briefed the Meeting on the current implementation of the ARF Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy (PD), including the convening of two PD workshops in the inter-sessional year 2018-2019, namely the ARF Workshop on Preventive Diplomacy: Skills and Tools towards Effective Peacebuilding held in Nay Pyi Taw in September 2018 and the ARF Workshop on Preventive Diplomacy: New Ideas and New Approaches held in Nanjing in November 2018. The Meeting also noted that an ARF Workshop focusing on Preventive Diplomacy and Early Warning: Linkages for Conflict Resolution is scheduled to be held in Dili in April 2019. The Meeting took note that at present, 4 out of 11 action lines in the ARF Work Plan on PD have yet to be implemented. In this regard, the Meeting exchanged views on the

way forward to implement the remaining action lines and noted that there may be a need to strengthen cooperation and communication between the EEPs and the respective ARF Focal Points in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs). The Meeting also deliberated on the ARF Annual Security Outlook (ASO) and was pleased to note that 22 ARF Participants contributed to the publication of the 2018 ARF ASO, which is the highest number of contributions since its first publication in 2000. On this note, the Meeting reiterated the view that the EEPs could perhaps add value to the contributions and noted that requests for involvement in the formulation of contributions to the ARF ASO should be conveyed through their respective MFAs.

3.2. Review of the Recommendations of the 12th ARF EEPs Meeting

8. Viet Nam briefed the Meeting on the outcome of the 12th ARF EEPs Meeting held in Hanoi, Viet Nam, on 6 – 7 March 2018, which made the following recommendations: (i) for the ARF Ministers to take forward the findings recommended in the final report of the EEPs Working Group on ARF Initiatives on Promoting Cyber Security; (ii) for the Co-Chairs of the EEPs or other representatives of the EEPs to attend the Track I meetings in order to understand the issues of interest to Track I participants and contribute more effectively to the process; and (iii) for the establishment of an EEP Working Group on Reviewing Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy in the Asia Pacific Region.

9. Viet Nam reported that the above recommendations had drawn good attention from the ARF officials, reflected through the briefings on the outcomes of the 12th ARF EEPs done at the ARF Inter-Sessional Support Group Meeting on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy (ISG on CBMs and PD) in May 2018 in Auckland and at the ARF Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) in June 2018 in Singapore. The Meeting was also pleased to note that on behalf of the Co-Chairs of the 12th ARF EEPs Meeting, Mr. Ralph Cossa, ARF EEP of the United States, briefed the first ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ARF ISM on ICTs Security) in April 2018 in Kuala Lumpur, on the Final Report of the Working Group on ARF Initiatives in Promoting Cyber Security. Further, at the 25th ARF held in August 2018 in Singapore, the ARF Ministers noted the recommendations of the 12th EEPs Meeting and welcomed the contribution of the EEPs to the ARF's work in confidence building and preventive diplomacy.

10. With regard to the third recommendation of the 12th ARF EEPs Meeting, the Meeting commended the establishment of an EEPs Working Group on Reviewing Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy in August 2018.

AGENDA ITEM 4: REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES, PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION

11. The Head of the ARF EEPs Working Group on Confidence Building Measures, Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution in the Asia Pacific Region, Mohamed Jawhar Hassan, and Drafting Team Members Ralph Cossa and Paul Evans, presented the final draft of the Working Group Report to the Meeting. They outlined several aspects of the Report that includes: 1) the progress made by the ARF in implementing CBMs, PD and CR measures, 2) CBM, PD and CR measures implemented by countries outside the framework of the ARF, 3) lessons and implications for the role of the ARF, 4), the contributions of the ARF EEPs, and 5) Recommendations.

12. The Meeting exchanged views on the findings and recommendations outlined in the draft Report. It noted that while the ARF had thus far succeeded in providing a platform for dialogue and contributed to CBMs, it faced difficulties in advancing beyond the CBM phase to the PD and CR phases. PD and CR were instead being done by the countries concerned outside the framework of the ARF. In this regard the Working Group proposed and the Meeting noted that while the ARF continues to pursue CBM, PD and CR efforts, it should embrace wider security cooperation, expanding the present objectives of the ARF beyond CBM/PD/CR to embrace comprehensive security cooperation. This would entail expanding the mission of the ARF, which is presently stated as “a forum for open dialogue and consultation on regional political and security issues, to discuss and reconcile the differing views between ARF participants in order to reduce the risk to security”, to add “and to promote cooperation in the diverse fields of comprehensive security”.

13. The Working Group also proposed to further examine the role of EEPs, whose options to be considered are: (i) to expand the mission and work of the EEPs from PD to security cooperation and convene as at present annually; (ii) to convene the EEPs only as when deemed necessary; and (iii) to dissolve the EEP process and rely instead on other bodies such as CSCAP, NADI, ASEAN ISIS and ASEAN-IPR for research support.

14. The Meeting adopted the final report and agreed that it be submitted to the 26th ARF through the ARF ISG on CBMs and PD and the ARF SOM together with the recommendations of the 13th ARF EEP Meeting. The final Report of the Working Group appears as **ANNEX 3**.

AGENDA ITEM 5: REGIONAL SECURITY ISSUES

5.1. Trend of Major Power Relations

15. The Meeting noted a number of changes in major power relations and their possible impacts upon global relations including the growing changes in the US-China relations and their implications for countries within and outside the region. The Meeting

noted that should the trend continue, there could be an impact on the global system. The meeting hoped that China and the US could manage differences through dialogue and negotiations and strengthen cooperation and mutual trust, which would contribute to global peace and stability.

16. The Meeting was of the view that with the strategic nature of the region and its great potential, there is a great need to ensure prosperity and development in the region. The uncertain trend in the geopolitical landscape including but not limited to major power rivalries, could jeopardize regional stability. Thus, the Meeting agreed that cooperation and collaboration are imperative to build trust and confidence as well as to avoid the implication of “me-first” policy. It was highlighted that while every country has its legitimate interests to pursue, those interests should not generate negative impact to other countries and to the region. The importance of cooperation to address security challenges and promote security through close economic cooperation was also stressed.

5.2. Challenges of Nuclear Issues to Regional Peace

17. In light of the 2019 DPRK-US Summit held on 27-28 February 2019 in Hanoi, Viet Nam, the Meeting deliberated on the possible outcomes of the Summit. Some participants were of the view that both parties may have differing views on what constitutes denuclearization and that the focus of discussion in Hanoi would likely be on the issue of denuclearization, UNSC sanctions imposed on the DPRK and a declaration to end the Korean War. The Meeting also noted the significant development on the issue of the Korean Peninsula since the first DPRK-US Summit in Singapore.

5.3. Internal Security Issues

18. The Meeting viewed that non-traditional security challenges continue to be a persistent challenge in the region and deliberated on a number of issues such as human trafficking, terrorism and extremism, cyber-crimes, which are transnational rather than internal issues. It was stressed that collective effort is needed to address these common concerns and challenges and that the ARF has a significant role in enhancing cooperation to address these challenges. A proposal was made to include more deliberation on the topic of women, peace and security in future EEPs’ Meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 6: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

19. The Meeting noted a number of PD activities that have been implemented thus far and stressed the importance of conducting more PD activities in accordance with

the ARF Vision Statement and the Ha Noi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement. The Meeting considered a number of challenges faced by the ARF Participants in the implementation of preventive diplomacy including in keeping track of all PD activities. Many, PD activities have been conducted by individual ARF participants but none has been organized or implemented within the ARF framework.

AGENDA ITEM 7: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 13TH ARF EEPs MEETING

20. The Meeting deliberated on the recommendations of the 13th EEPs Meeting based on the discussion of the previous one and a half days. The EEPs agreed to adopt the Report of the ARF EEPs Working Group on Confidence Building Measures, Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution in the Asia Pacific Region and to submit its findings to the ARF Ministers through the ARF ISG on CBMs and PD and the ARF SOM.

21. The following are the key recommendations of the 13th ARF EEPs Meeting:

- On the occasion of its 25th Anniversary, in order to take the ARF forward and remain relevant, renew and refresh the ARF and consider embracing a wider and more inclusive security cooperation, while continuing to focus on Confidence Building Measures, Preventive Diplomacy, and Conflict Resolution (CBM/PD/CR).
- Establish another Virtual Working Group fully accountable to the EEPs Meeting to further examine and make recommendations regarding the EEPs' future focus, role and relevance as well as to prepare recommendations for a review of the ARF EEPs' Terms of Reference (TOR) and its Guidelines of the Operations.

AGENDA ITEM 8: CONCLUDING SESSION

8.1. The Co-Chairs' Summary Report

22. The Meeting noted that the Co-Chairs' Summary Report and its recommendations would subsequently be presented to the ARF SOM through the ARF ISG on CBMs and PD, before being tabled at the 26th ARF in August 2019.

8.2. Dates and Venue of the 14th ARF EEPs Meeting

23. The Meeting noted that the 14th Meeting of the ARF EEPs is scheduled to be held in February 2020 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar and will be co-chaired by Myanmar and a non-ASEAN ARF Participant (to be determined).

The Co-Chairs' Closing Remarks

24. The Co-Chairs thanked all participants for the candid discussion and active participation in the Meeting. The Meeting expressed appreciation to the Co-Chairs for their excellent and effective co-chairmanship. The Meeting also thanked the Government of Japan for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements extended to all participants.

