



BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

2021



ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM
ANNUAL SECURITY OUTLOOK

2021



We Care. We Prepare. We Prosper.

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FOREWORD

The world is facing unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 outbreak. The pandemic has revealed that the source of security threats can be unconventional, and their effects, grave and persistent. In response, Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship this year, including its work under the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), has focused on caring for people, preparing for future challenges and ensuring peace and stability for all to prosper in the region and beyond.

Amidst the background of the global pandemic, traditional peace and security issues remain prevalent, with many continuing to be of concern to the region and its people. ARF Participants continue to cooperate and collaborate in constructive discussions to tackle these threats.

The ARF, founded in 1994, has earned a place in the regional and global architecture as an open and inclusive mechanism for discussions on peace and security. Now, over two decades later, the ARF continues to foster dialogue, trust and mutual confidence amongst its participants.

An ongoing initiative of the ARF has been the publication of its Annual Security Outlook. By fostering mutual confidence, promoting practical cooperation, enhancing transparency, ARF Participants have been able to build a security community that recognises the importance of peace and security to all.

It is my privilege, as Chair of the 28th ARF, to present to you this year's Annual Security Outlook.

By working together, we can fulfil Brunei Darussalam's vision for a region that is caring, sharing and prosperous.



Dato Erywan Penin Yusof
Minister of Foreign Affairs II
Chair of the 28th ASEAN Regional Forum
Brunei Darussalam

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2021 ARF Annual Security Outlook (ARF ASO) compiles the voluntary submissions of 24 ARF Participants. Over the years, the length of the ARF ASO and the number of contributions it receives has steadily increased. This has been a testament to the success of the ARF and the ARF ASO in creating a space for an open, inclusive and transparent sharing of views on issues of peace and security.

There have been two key events that have shaped the security environment in 2021. First, since late 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic - a non-traditional security threat - has been the main destabiliser socially, politically and economically across the world. Almost all contributions acknowledged the effects of the global pandemic and discussed its impact on traditional security threats. Second, the observations on the challenges posed by technological advancements were prevalent – ARF Participants recognised the consequences and ramifications that these advancements will have on the peace and security of its neighbours and the entire region.

Many of the contributions to the 2021 ARF ASO have noted the challenges of maintaining peace and security in an increasingly dynamic geopolitical environment. As COVID-19 and climate change demonstrate, non-traditional security threats now occupy a space in the minds of policymakers that in previous years would have exclusively been filled by traditional threats. Transnational crime, an old phenomenon, is being facilitated by the rapid development of technology, to take the form of new and challenging cybercrime threats. All this means that cooperation at the local, national, regional and international levels will be increasingly important for policymakers.

The ARF continues to be a key pillar in the regional architecture for peace and security. ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as the ARF, ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) and the East Asian Summit (EAS) continue to be at the centre of the regional order for peace and security.

The ARF ASO is a reflection of the healthy levels of cooperation, mutual trust, and confidence-building since the creation of these mechanisms. ARF Participants have shared their views on the peace and security of the region for all those interested, in the hopes that the security challenges for our region – and potentially also their solutions – can be found through the peaceful means of cooperation and dialogue.

AUSTRALIA

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, Australia's vision for the Indo-Pacific remains one of an open, inclusive and resilient region, underpinned by rules, norms and respect for sovereignty. ASEAN and its members are at the heart of this vision.

That is why Australia is committed to ASEAN-led architecture, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and East Asia Summit (EAS). With its well-established program of activities, focused on confidence building measures and a growing preventive diplomacy agenda, it helps to manage tensions, set norms of acceptable behaviour and bolster regional resilience. Australia is also working to deepen our support for the ASEAN-led architecture more broadly. For example, in 2020, Australia and ASEAN agreed to upgrade our leaders' meetings to annual summits, marking a new chapter in our Strategic Partnership.

Australia is committed to the principles outlined in the landmark 2019 ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, including openness, transparency, inclusivity, good governance, and respect for sovereignty and international law. We are also committed to the practical implementation of the Outlook, including through our cooperation on maritime, connectivity, sustainable development and economic investments.

The COVID-19 pandemic has entrenched existing geopolitical divisions globally and in the Indo-Pacific, accelerating existing trends. Australia and its partners face increasing 'grey-zone' challenges including cyber-attacks, coercion, and disinformation campaigns. The region is confronting heightened tensions and greater pressure on rules and norms. Australia will work with partners to preserve the rules-based order that has underpinned decades of stability and prosperity in the region. It is in our collective interest for a region where states cooperate to address shared challenges through transparent rules, norms and institutions, and where disputes are resolved peacefully, consistent with international law. Open, rules-based markets and regional economic integration will be important for a sustainable recovery from the pandemic.

a) Health security and strategic risks arising from COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacted an immense health and economic toll on the Indo-Pacific. An effective health response to the pandemic and a sustainable pathway to recovery is a key focus for Australia – our future is tied to the region's stability, security and prosperity. That is why Australia has committed AUD\$500 million in economic, development and security measures to support Southeast Asia's recovery from COVID-19, in addition to our existing development assistance budget.

Facilitating access to safe and effective vaccines will be critical to the region's recovery. To this end, Australia has committed AUD\$523.2 million over three years to support the Pacific and Southeast Asia to access and deliver safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines. Australia has

committed an additional AUD\$100 million to support delivery of and access to COVID-19 vaccines in Southeast Asia through the Quad vaccine partnership announced by Quad leaders on 13 March 2021. Our AUD\$130 million commitment to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment Facility will also support vaccination coverage in 92 countries, including in Southeast Asia.

b) Countering Violent Extremism

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the regional counter-terrorism landscape has been mixed. It has increased the vulnerability to violent extremism of at-risk individuals and groups in some countries due to increased distrust of government, economic hardship and racial and religious scapegoating. COVID-19 has created vulnerabilities which have the potential to be exploited by violent extremist groups, including through increased online activity. Australia is working with regional countries to limit the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on our countering violent extremism (CVE) cooperation, and will continue our support for the strengthening of government and civil society capability and the building of resilience to violent extremism.

c) Myanmar and Rakhine State

Australia remains gravely concerned about the situation in Myanmar, including its worrying implications for regional security and stability and its impact on our vision for an open, inclusive and resilient Indo-Pacific. Since the coup on 1 February 2021, the situation in Myanmar has deteriorated rapidly with a significant number of deaths, injuries, and arbitrary arrests. Australia calls on the Myanmar regime to refrain from violence, release all those arbitrarily detained and return Myanmar to the path of democratic transition. Australia continues to work with ASEAN and other international partners to support a regional solution to the crisis.

We welcome the five points of consensus on the situation in Myanmar, and urge their implementation as soon as possible: immediate cessation of violence; commencement of constructive dialogue among all parties concerned; a special envoy of the ASEAN Chair who will facilitate mediation of the dialogue process, with the assistance of the ASEAN Secretary-General; ASEAN provision of humanitarian assistance through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre); and a visit by the Special Envoy and delegation to meet all parties concerned.

It is important that the international community retain a strong focus on the plight of the Rohingya, whose situation continues to represent a major humanitarian crisis. Australia has provided over AUD\$345 million in humanitarian assistance to address the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh and Myanmar, and other humanitarian crises in Myanmar, since August 2017.

International efforts to pursue accountability for atrocities committed in Myanmar against both the Rohingya and other ethnic groups, and more broadly, have become more important than ever. Australia has consistently called for accountability for human rights violations and abuses, including serious international crimes. Australia recognises that long-term resolution of the crises in Myanmar will be born of regional cooperation and we welcome ASEAN's efforts and leadership in this regard.

d) South China Sea

Australia has a substantial interest in the maintenance of peace and stability, freedom of navigation and overflight, unimpeded trade, and adherence to international law (particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; UNCLOS), in the South China Sea. There are no inside or outside parties when it comes to this crucial international waterway. We all have an interest in the stability of the South China Sea and the rules and norms that govern it.

Australia notes with concern recent destabilising actions which could provoke escalation and threaten the stability of the South China Sea. These have included: the dangerous or coercive use of coast guard vessels and 'maritime militia'; ongoing militarisation of disputed features; and efforts to disrupt other countries' resource exploitation activities. We continue to urge all parties to take meaningful steps to ease tensions and build trust. All claims in the South China Sea should be made and resolved in accordance with international law, particularly UNCLOS. Where claims have already been subject to binding legal judgments, the parties have an obligation to abide by them.

We note ongoing negotiations regarding a Code of Conduct for the South China Sea. It is important that any code: does not prejudice the interests of third parties or the rights of states under international law, particularly UNLCOS; reinforces existing inclusive regional architecture; and strengthens states' commitments to cease actions that would complicate or escalate South China Sea disputes, notably the militarisation of disputed features.

e) Korean Peninsula

The DPRK remains intent on developing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles in defiance of the will of the international community. Kim Jong Un explicitly affirmed this in January at the 8th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea. It was evidenced by the unveiling of a number of new ballistic missile systems at military parades in October 2020 and in January. And was demonstrated on 25 March when the DPRK launched two short-range ballistic missiles, in what was a clear violation of UN Security Council resolutions.

The DPRK's behaviour poses a grave threat to regional security and a serious challenge to international non-proliferation efforts. Australia joins with many other nations in seeking permanent peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, which can only be achieved through dialogue. We continue to call on the DRPK to cease all provocations and make a sustained commitment to meaningful talks with the United States and the Republic of Korea. Australia remains committed to strictly enforcing sanctions against the DPRK until it takes clear steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation. We have deployed military assets on multiple occasions to monitor and deter shipments of sanctioned goods. We also supplement UNSC sanctions with our own autonomous sanctions against the DPRK. Effective sanctions enforcement require a global effort.

f) Middle East

Australia has an ongoing interest in a stable and secure Middle East and recognises the unique political challenges that plague the region, as well as the ongoing implications of COVID-19. In Iraq, Australia's engagement has expanded from training and supporting the Iraqi Security Forces to a focus on providing humanitarian and counter-terrorism assistance. After a decade

of conflict, Syria remains a key centre for regional instability, with a deepening economic and humanitarian crisis providing fertile ground for extremist groups. Australia remains committed to an inclusive political resolution to the conflict. Although territorially defeated, Da'esh continues to pose a potential threat, and Australia continues to engage closely with partners in the Global Coalition to Defeat Da'esh. The humanitarian situation in Yemen remains dire, and Australia encourages all parties to the conflict to engage constructively in peace talks.

We share the international community's concerns about Iran's problematic behaviour, including missile development, increased uranium enrichment and regional interference. Australia supports the non-proliferation aims of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and is hopeful Iran will return to compliance with the JCPOA. Australia remains committed to a two-state solution in which Israel and a future Palestinian state coexist – in peace and security – within internationally-recognised borders. A return to direct peace negotiations is critical, and Australia will continue to call on both Israel and the Palestinians to refrain from unilateral actions that undermine the prospects of a lasting peace settlement.

2. National Security and Defence Policy

Overview of national security and defence policy

Australia released a Defence Strategic Update in 2020, in response to the rapid changes in our strategic environment since the release of the 2016 Defence White Paper. The 2020 Defence Strategic Update makes clear the Indo-Pacific region is in the midst of the most consequential strategic realignment since the Second World War, driven by trends such as military modernisation, growing strategic competition, technological disruption.

Australian defence planning will therefore focus on the Indo-Pacific. Our strategic objectives are to deploy our military and other aspects of Australia's national power to shape our strategic environment, deter actions against our interests and, when required, respond appropriately, including with credible military force if necessary.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Australia has witnessed actors increasingly using 'grey-zone' tactics such as foreign interference, cyber-attacks, economic coercion and disinformation campaigns to seek to further their geopolitical interests. We have also seen 'grey-zone' tactics deployed to attempt to resolve disputed territorial claims. Australia opposes these methods, and continues to work closely with allies and partners to pursue a peaceful, open and stable region where differences are resolved in accordance with international law and without coercion. Australia is committed to countering the spread of misinformation and disinformation which fosters division, undermines effective public health responses and threatens social cohesion. Australia continues to work with a range of international partners to combat disinformation by promoting accurate, transparent and timely information from credible sources.

Australia is committed to a peaceful, inclusive, and resilient region of sovereign states, and places ASEAN centrality and support for the rules-based order at the core of our agenda. Australia's 2020 Vision for Defence Engagement with ASEAN outlines this commitment, and our areas of focus. These include reinforcing regional resilience, enhancing prosperity, and upholding the primacy of international law as the means to resolve disputes. We will continue to foster the cooperative relations we have enjoyed over many decades.

Significant investment underpins our defence policy, including AUD\$270 billion over the coming decade on new and upgraded Defence capabilities. This will enhance Australia's ability to contribute to the region's peace and stability. In November 2020 Australia announced an AUD\$104 million package of security initiatives for Southeast Asia. These reinforce our commitment to working closely with our partners to address shared security challenges.

Data contributions to ARF Arms Register

Australia reports data on its military expenditure to the UN in accordance with the UN Standardised Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures, which can be accessed at: <https://unoda-milex.s3.amazonaws.com/Public/v1/reports/2018-MilEx-Australia-ST-E.pdf>.

Detail on the total number of personnel in the Australian Defence Force is published in the Department of Defence Annual Reports, available at: <https://www.defence.gov.au/AnnualReports/>.

3. National Contributions to Promote Regional Peace and Security

i. Counter Terrorism

Australia works closely with our ARF partners to counter terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms, including through the Intersessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM-CTTC), and offers practical assistance where possible. This engagement is complemented by bilateral and multilateral efforts, which have continued in virtual formats in light of ongoing COVID-19 travel restrictions. Australia looks forward to inaugurating an ASEAN-Australia Dialogue on Counter Terrorism, as envisaged in the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) + Australia Workplan.

As Co-Chairs of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF) CVE Working Group, Australia and Indonesia have hosted a range of activities virtually to share best practice and develop capacity of GCTF members and other stakeholders to counter violent extremism. This has included a virtual workshop focused on Southeast Asia to share experiences, exchange good practices and further promote the GCTF Zurich London Policy Toolkit on P/CVE and Terrorism Online. Australia remains active in the UN, including on the UN Global CT Strategy and continues to partner with the Southeast Asian Network of Civil Society Organisations, and work to develop civil society organisations' capacity to partner more effectively with regional governments and the private sector on CVE.

ii. Non-Proliferation, Counter-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

Australia contributes actively to practical global and regional non-proliferation and counter-proliferation efforts. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We continue to work closely with ARF partners to implement the 2010 NPT Action Plan and to advocate for nuclear risk reduction measures. This includes through Australia's strong involvement in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and continued engagement in the ARF ISM on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and the Asia-Pacific Safeguards Network. With COVID-19 continuing to delay the convening of the NPT Review Conference, we welcome the efforts of

President-designate Zlauvinen and his Bureau to commence the conference at the earliest opportunity, and look forward to engaging constructively with States Parties, including on strengthening the treaty review process. In November 2020, Australia co-chaired with the Philippines the inaugural ARF Nuclear Risk Reduction Workshop. The virtual workshop provided a useful forum to draw ARF members into a dedicated discussion on steps to reduce the risk of nuclear weapons use. Australia has also consistently advocated for a comprehensive and permanent ban on nuclear test explosions and spearheaded the adoption of the resolution to establish the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO) in 1996. Australia hosts the third largest number of facilities in the CTBT's International Monitoring System network to monitor the globe for explosive nuclear testing.

Australia is firmly committed to biological and chemical weapons controls and actively promotes universal adherence to the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions. In this regard, Australia engages with partners to strengthen implementation of these conventions, including through our role as a Vice Chair of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and strong advocacy at the 25th Conference of the States Parties in April 2021. Australia welcomes the OPCW Conference of States Parties' decision in response to Syria's continued use and possession of chemical weapons as an important step in reinforcing the international norm against chemical weapons use. As Permanent Chair of the Australia Group we work with others to harmonise export licensing measures to ensure exports do not contribute to the development of chemical or biological weapons. Australia Group control lists and Guidelines are seen as the benchmark for international best practice chemical and biological export controls. Australia is a strong supporter of effective and responsible regulation of trade in conventional weapons and encourages all States to sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty. Australia engages consistently to promote diverse voices in non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, and disarmament in wide array of international forums including as co-chair of the Friends of Women in Nuclear in Vienna.

iii. Transnational Crime (People Smuggling and Human Trafficking; Transnational, Serious and Organised Crime; Illicit drugs)

1) Transnational, Serious and Organised Crime

Transnational, serious and organised crime (TSOC) remains a serious threat to our region, undermining countries' sovereignty by subverting border security processes and fuelling corruption. TSOC groups weaken regional economies by generating untaxed profit and unfairly competing with legitimate businesses. Despite being global in nature, the destructive consequences of TSOC infiltrate our communities by causing grave health impacts, environmental degradation and violence.

COVID-19 has highlighted the agility of criminal enterprises, and brought new challenges to the fore, including greater vulnerabilities for our citizens due to increased online activity, and new distribution methods for illicit goods, given disruption to traditional supply chains. COVID-19 continues to impact the ability of TSOC groups to move illicit proceeds out of Australia as a result of quarantine arrangements and restrictions on travel. Closure of Australian casinos and legitimate businesses, and a reluctance to deal with physical cash, have further impacted the supply and demand for funds and the ability to move criminal proceeds. The extent of exploitation by TSOC

groups, including money laundering organisations, of crypto-assets as alternative money laundering mechanisms remains a potential threat.

Guided by its National Strategy to Fight Transnational, Serious and Organised Crime, Australia's cross-cutting measures to counter TSOC span prevention, disruption, investigation, prosecution and asset recovery. Australia works closely with regional and international partners to address collective security challenges by sharing information, and providing technical assistance, including through activities delivered under the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime and the ASEAN Plus Australia Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime. Australia considers coordinated international efforts, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to be crucial in preventing and combatting TSOC activity within the region.

Our commitment to combating transnational crime in the region has been bolstered by the commencement of the Mekong-Australia Partnership on Transnational Crime (MAP-TNC). This AUD\$30 million development program (2021-2029) will address a range of regional transnational and serious organised crime challenges.

2) People Smuggling and Human Trafficking

Australia remains concerned that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities that can be exploited by people smugglers and traffickers. Additionally, technology can enable the exploitation of vulnerable people.

Australia continues to play a leading role in our region to manage irregular migration and combat people smuggling and human trafficking, including as Co-Chair, with Indonesia, of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (Bali Process). In 2020, a virtual Policy Experts Gathering of the Bali Process Taskforce on Planning and Preparedness was held to discuss the unprecedented border management challenges created by COVID-19 in addressing trafficking and people smuggling. A virtual Ad Hoc Group Senior Officials' Meeting was held in October and a meeting of the Trafficking in Persons Working Group in November. The Bali Process Government and Business Forum convened online consultations on the finance and fisheries sectors. The Bali Process Regional Support Office continued to deliver practical support to members through online and in-person activities.

Australia's humanitarian resettlement program, together with its border protection policies, aim to provide safe and legal migration pathways to those in need, and to discourage people from falling prey to people smugglers. The size of the Humanitarian Program will be 13,750 places in 2021-22. Australia continues to offer one of the largest resettlement programs on both an absolute and per capita basis.

The ASEAN-Australia Counter-Trafficking program (ASEAN-ACT), announced at the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in March 2018, is a 10-year AUD\$80 million investment building on Australia's 15 years of partnership with ASEAN Member States to counter human trafficking in the region. ASEAN-ACT works with and through various ASEAN bodies to ensure ASEAN member states have effective justice systems that provide for the just punishment of traffickers and protection of victims' rights. Activities

under the Indo Pacific Justice and Security Program 2017-2021, and Australia's National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020-2025 also helped strengthen law and justice responses in the region.

Australia also continues to support coordinated global action through Alliance 8.7 – a coalition of governments, UN agencies, business and civil society to accelerate progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 on forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour. Australia also continues to support the Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking to disseminate their Blueprint for Mobilizing Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking.

3) Illicit Drugs

The global illicit drug trade presents a significant threat to the stability and security of the region. This illicit trade fuels corruption, undermines regional economies and has devastating social and health impacts. Crystal methamphetamine (ice) and its precursors are a key focus for Australia, though other drugs such as cocaine and synthetic opioids remain a concern.

Australia's national efforts to counter illicit drugs comprise law enforcement and border protection activities to reduce supply, balanced with demand and harm reduction initiatives, such as education and treatment support.

Australian Government agencies work closely with regional and international counterparts to prevent and disrupt the manufacture and trafficking of illicit drugs in the region, including through joint operations, intelligence sharing, and capacity building. Australia supports multilateral efforts to combat cross-border trafficking of illicit drugs and their precursors, including by supporting international bodies such as the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Narcotics Control Board.

Australia will continue to work with regional partners on matters relating to illicit drugs.

4) Cyber Security including cyber crime

The frequency, type and sophistication of cyber threats to Australia and the region are evolving. Throughout 2020-2021, Australia has worked in collaboration with international partners to address COVID-19 related cyber threats, including scams, phishing and ransomware activity.

In 2021, Australia released the Cyber and Critical Technology International Engagement Strategy, and announced an additional AUD\$37.5 million to continue our regional outreach and support through Australia's Cyber and Critical Tech Cooperation Program.

Australia's Cyber and Critical Tech Cooperation Program helps to build the capacity in our region to harness the opportunities of cyberspace and critical technology, while mitigating the risks. Australia will continue to deliver activities that focus on: promoting the framework for responsible state behaviour in cyberspace; cyber security and

incident response capabilities; promoting best practice use of technology for economic, sustainable and inclusive development; advocating and protecting human rights online; and also tech standards, telecommunications, and general cyber and tech resilience.

Australia continues to encourage others to publish and share their own International Engagement strategies on cyber and critical technology to promote transparency, predictability and stability, especially in our region.

Australia is committed to multilateral cooperation in support of an open rules-based order, and to help address global challenges. This involves progress to enhance strategic awareness and discussion of cyber issues in our region, including through the ARF Intersessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ISM-ICT Security) and the Open-Ended Study Group to reduce the risk of conflict stemming from the use of ICTs.

It is essential we work together to defend a rules-based order online, just as we do offline. All countries have a duty to ensure their activities online are consistent with their international obligations. Australia proudly played an active role negotiating the March 2021 consensus report of the UNGA First Committee Open Ended Working Group - agreed by all 193 UN member states - a universal commitment to a rules-based cyberspace. advocates for a framework of peace and stability in cyberspace, underpinned by four key principles:

- existing international law applies to cyberspace;
- agreed voluntary non-binding norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace to complement international law and promote predictability and stability;
- confidence building measures prevent misunderstandings and increase trust and stability; and
- targeted capacity building enhances the ability of countries to respond to the challenges and embrace the opportunities of increased connectivity.

Furthermore, Australia is committed to deterring and countering malicious cyber activity. The International Cyber and Critical Technology Engagement Strategy sets out Australia's statement of principles on cyber deterrence and the framework with which Australia delivers on these principles. Coordinated international responses are needed to effectively shape behaviour and deter malicious cyber activity. Australia will continue to work with partners to strengthen global responses to unacceptable behaviour in cyberspace. Recently, Australia has offered to co-sponsor with Indonesia a workshop on implementing the eleven agreed voluntary and non-binding norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace.

Australia continues to look for opportunities to support international efforts to combat cybercrime, building on its leadership of the landmark 2019 UN General Assembly Resolution 74/174 'Countering Child Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse Online'. The resolution urges States to take stronger measures to address child sexual exploitation and abuse online, including by strengthening domestic legislation, resourcing law enforcement, increasing awareness and education, and disrupting distribution of online material.

As co-sponsors of the ARF Points of Contact Directory on ICT Security (ICT Security Directory) confidence building measure, Australia and Malaysia's recently conducted a basic connectivity test of all nominated working-level contacts in the ICT Security Directory. At the ISM-ICT Security in April, Australia and Malaysia announced an intention to conduct a further connectivity test of senior-level contacts – the first test of this level for the POC Directory.

5) Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Australia responded rapidly and effectively to requests for humanitarian assistance in 2020 in the Indo-Pacific Region, including in Southeast Asian nations. COVID-19 has required that we adapt the way we respond to crises, for example through the development of COVID-19 safe protocols to allow the safe delivery of humanitarian supplies. Regional cooperation and preparedness remains essential to ensure coordinated international assistance that effectively augments nationally-led responses. Australia has supported the AHA Centre since 2010. On 25 April 2021, Australia's Foreign Minister Senator the Hon. Marise Payne announced Australia will provide an additional AUD\$5 million to the AHA Centre to provide humanitarian assistance in Myanmar.

Australia continues to provide technical assistance in disaster preparedness through the deployment of Australian disaster management specialists to government and humanitarian agencies in the ASEAN region (Australia Assists Program). To help reduce disaster risk, Australia is providing AUD\$9 million over three years (2020-22) to the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) to accelerate implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in the Asia-Pacific region. Australia will co-host, with UNDRR, the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction during the second half of 2022. The Conference brings together countries to share progress and accelerate action towards implementation of the Sendai Framework. The 2022 Conference will serve as a critical juncture to set the course towards a more resilient Asia-Pacific, with a fundamental transformation required to meet the Sendai Framework targets by 2030. The Conference, previously scheduled to take place in June 2020, was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

6) Maritime Security

As a maritime nation, Australia is committed to comprehensive maritime security engagement in the Indo-Pacific. We work closely with regional partners and through international forums to enhance maritime security and promote habits of cooperation in the region. Australia was pleased to partner with Vietnam and the European Union as co-chairs of the ARF Maritime Work Stream (2018-2021). We have co-hosted seven workshops since 2018 on issues including dispute resolution, Law of the Sea, regional maritime law enforcement cooperation and maritime security. Most recently, we co-hosted the ARF ISM on Maritime Security (April 2021). We look forward to co-hosting additional workshops in 2021, particularly on maritime law enforcement cooperation with the European Union and Vietnam, and with India and Indonesia on Law of the Sea and fisheries.

Australia has worked closely with partners to support to successful regional effort to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea, including through the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia. As a member of the Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM), Australia supports HACGAM initiatives to bolster regional civil maritime security by promoting greater agency-to-agency cooperation and promoting information sharing to achieve mutual outcomes. While Australia was unable to host HACGAM 2020 in Darwin due to COVID restrictions, Australia looks forward to supporting Vietnam as HACGAM host in 2021.

Australia is also working with regional partners to respond to maritime security challenges. These include initiatives to improve maritime domain awareness; combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; disrupt maritime transnational crime threats; and respond to marine environmental challenges. Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced in November 2020 that Australia will invest AUD\$65 million to further support regional maritime states develop their marine resources sustainably and address challenges, including through enhanced training, technical advice and cooperation.

4. Role of the ARF

ASEAN centrality underpins Australia's engagement in the region and Australia remains committed to continuing its longstanding active engagement with ASEAN regional security architecture, including the ARF and the EAS. As the region's longest-established forum for security dialogue and cooperation, we consider the ARF an important mechanism for constructive dialogue and practical, working-level cooperation on regional security challenges.

Australia values the opportunity to contribute to the ARF agenda. In recent years as co-chair of the Maritime Security work stream. We will continue to show leadership in the region by co-chairing the ISM on ICT Security with Indonesia, ROK and Russia over the next three years. Following a number of years of advocacy from Australia, the ARF will progress consideration to establish an online working group to discuss guidelines for maritime law enforcement agency encounters.

Our defence engagement in the ARF supports integrated approaches to many of the complex regional security challenges outlined above, including maritime security, counter-terrorism, counter-proliferation and humanitarian and disaster relief. We are committed to remaining a leading strategic, economic and development partner for ASEAN and its members. We will continue to work through the EAS, ARF and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) to promote peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific.

BANGLADESH

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

The world is presently in a flux with emerging new challenges causing nations to re-evaluate their alignments and alliances while searching for new ones to help them counter these new ones. Parallel to traditional security threats, the world increasingly appears to be preoccupied by non-traditional challenges including food security, water security, energy security, cyber security, climate security and most recently the unprecedented challenge of the global COVID 19 pandemic.

Like all global players, Bangladesh is also faced with a multitude of challenges: 2021 is a historically significant year for this country – it is celebrating the Birth Centenary of its founding Father, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Golden Jubilee of its Independence. The country has come a long way since it picked the pieces of a war-ravaged land and started its journey as a sovereign and independent country, inspired by the dream of Bangabandhu for a “*Sonar Bangla*”- Golden Bengal. The dream is within the reach of the people of this country since in February 2021, it received confirmation from the UN for the second time in a row, that it successfully fulfilled all the criteria for graduating from an LDC into a Middle-Income Country. This remarkable achievement has been due to the able and dynamic stewardship of the country by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who steered the course of inclusive and sustainable economic growth over the past decade. The country remains on course to becoming a developed economy by 2041 despite conventional and unconventional security threats and challenging global environment.

Bangladesh’s guiding foreign policy principle “*Friendship with All, Malice to None*” was enunciated by her founding Father and is enshrined in her Constitution. Bangladesh puts special effort on maintaining balanced, friendly and harmonious relations with all nations of the world, following Non-Alignment as a guiding paradigm. Securing her national interests, preserving her territorial integrity and promoting sustainable socio-economic well-being are the basic security challenges for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh would like to emphasize on the following:

a) Geopolitical and geostrategic location advantage

Bangladesh is uniquely located as the link between two of the most vibrant economic regions of the world, Southeast Asia and South Asia and seeks to promote itself as a hub of road, rail, riverine, maritime and air connectivity for the landlocked countries/regions of South Asia to the outside world as well as to the continental countries of Southeast Asia. Bangladesh strongly believes that fully harnessing the potentials of the Bay of Bengal and smooth and seamless connectivity could help to transform the condition of the region that hosts some of the highest numbers of people below the poverty line, which would help to counter the overall security situation of the entire region.

b) Digitalization and Cyber Security

Bangladesh has identified digitalization as a means of transforming the society and for achieving its target of sustainable economic development. The *Digital Bangla* concept envisions delivering of every service to the people's doorsteps through digital platform. Bangladesh is also aware of the need to ensure Cyber Security and has enacted Digital security Act 2018 and established a Digital Security Agency to ensure Cyber security.

c) Terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism

Terrorism and violence spawned through its tentacles are the major threats to global peace and development. Bangladesh has implemented the policy of *"Zero Tolerance"* to terrorism and has enacted laws and taken effective action against all forms of terrorism, to ensure national as well as international peace and security.

d) Peacekeeping and Peace building

Bangladesh is an active, leading and proud partner of UN Peacekeeping and Peace Building activities. Bangladesh remains committed to remain fully engaged in this process which she firmly believes to be an integral element in the maintenance of global security. Bangladeshi peacekeepers, including women contingents, have been serving with acclaim in some of the most challenging locations around the world.

e) General and complete Disarmament

Commitment to complete Disarmament is an important pillar of the foreign policy of Bangladesh and this is enshrined in the Constitution of Bangladesh. Bangladesh is the signatory to most of major international treaties and agreements of Disarmament and remains actively engaged in the UN disarmament process.

f) Climate Change

Global Warming and the impact of Climate Change has emerged as one of the major challenges of the world today. Countries like Bangladesh are becoming the worst victims of Climate Change, but the country has not remained passive, and rather has taken some notable initiatives to minimize and mitigate the impact of climate change on the country. Bangladesh has also achieved remarkable success in disaster preparedness and disaster management though the country is increasingly witnessing unpredictable weather patterns and multiple and increasingly intense natural disasters resulting from the effects of global warming.

g) Rohingya issue

The issue of Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals has become one of the major security challenges for Bangladesh. Bangladesh has been sheltering 1.1 million forcibly displaced Rohingyas from the Rakhine province of Myanmar on humanitarian grounds since 2017. This has placed a huge burden on the economy, ecology and social security of Bangladesh. Bangladesh feels that unless the Rohingyas are repatriated back to Myanmar and prolong their stay in Bangladesh, this will have major security implications for not only Bangladesh, but the entire region.

h) The COVID 19 pandemic

The Asia-Pacific region is presently the most dynamic region in the world in terms of economic growth. The center of the world's economic gravity is shifting towards the region. The main challenge for the ARF is to sustain and maintain peace and stability for continued prosperity of the region. However, the COVID 19 pandemic has emerged as a huge challenge for this sustained economic growth. Every economic activity has been impacted by the measures taken by the countries to contain the spread of the Corona virus. Bangladesh, with its 160 million population, was quite successful in containing the first wave of the virus. By adopting a prudent policy of *"balancing lives and livelihoods"*, she managed to achieve GDP growth of 5.2% in the fiscal year 2019-20 and expects the economy to rebound this year. Bangladesh believes it is time to create an ARF Fund to support in economies recovering from the impact of the pandemic. Bangladesh also firmly believes that vaccines should be made available as a global good for the benefit of all mankind since the pandemic has shown us that no one will be safe till everyone is safe.

2. National Security and Defence Policy

Bangladesh concept of national security is deeply rooted in its long struggle for justice, equality, sovereignty and emancipation and the nine-month long war of liberation in 1971. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman steered the course of the nation till Bangladesh achieved ultimate victory on 16 December 1971 with his inspiring dream of 'Sonar Bangla' (Golden Bangladesh), obliterating inequality, injustices, and oppression. Coupled with the vision of Father of the nation, his enduring legacy and the geo-strategic location of Bangladesh, we have framed National Security policy keeping global, regional and national imperatives in mind. The term 'National Security' for Bangladesh implies a condition where all security imperatives relating to politics, military, economic, sociological, technology, environment, legal, education, demography, health, food, water, energy and ethical aspects of Bangladesh would guarantee pursuit of happiness, political stability, economic freedom, religious freedom, ethnic and communal harmony, equality, equity and above all capability of defending the country from external and internal traditional and non-traditional security threats. One of the major instruments of ensuring national security by the Government is the Armed Forces. Generally, Defense policy governs the role of the Armed Forces in facing the upcoming internal and external traditional security challenges.

The spill-over effect of global and regional security threats has a substantial impact on our national security. Although Bangladeshis are renowned for their resilience, the persistent natural and human-made disasters emanating from within and beyond the border are substantially affecting the security of the citizen. The dense population, shrinking land space, and scarce resources are continually posing a threat to the people and society. The influx of over a million forcefully displaced Myanmar nationals has compounded the threat to our national security in recent years. Millions of Bangladeshi expatriates working abroad in one of the most conflict-prone areas like the Middle-East is also a matter of great concern. The effect of international terrorism, violent extremism, radicalization, trans-border crime, illegal migration, human, drug, illicit arms and fake currency trafficking and cybercrimes are also threats to our security. Many of these threats are emanating from outside the country over which we have minimal control. Our society is increasingly connected through the internet and digital networks, exposing us to manifold threats and challenges for which we may not be prepared or have the resources to combat. The new technology has created many

opportunities as well as vulnerabilities and has created a digital divide. With the increasing geo-strategic importance, Bangladesh is becoming a gateway for connectivity to the greater Asian region via the Bay of Bengal. It is therefore imperative for the people and the Government of Bangladesh to remain prepared and take informed decisions to avert potential security threats.

Overview of Defense Policy

Bangladesh with its unique linguistic, cultural and ethnic legacy and a strong attachment to cultural heritage, has contributed to a set of distinctive national values including democracy, nationalism, socialism, and secularism. The fundamental objectives of the state, as enshrined in the Constitution, are to realize through democratic process a society free from exploitation in which the rule of law, fundamental human rights and freedom, equality and justice, political, economic and social rights will be secured for all citizens. Bangladesh pursues her key national interest by ensuring security through securing its people, resources, land, waters, airspace, and core national values. It also pursues friendly and balanced relationship with all countries, security arrangements through bi-lateral and multi-lateral partnership with global, regional and sub-regional countries or organizations. Bangladesh follows a global approach, which strengthens its diplomatic linkages in an international community committed to the maintenance of global peace, environmental protection, human rights, and the security responsibilities as enshrined in the United Nations (UN) Charter.

Defense diplomacy, deterrence and defeating hostile design form three pillars of Bangladesh's defense policy. Keeping in view Bangladesh's national interest and commitment to global peace and stability, the defense policy aims at protecting country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, socio-political stability, economic prosperity, environmental protection, global and regional peace and stability etc. These are addressed through a comprehensive security mechanism in order to accelerate national progression and well-being of the people of the country. Bangladesh pursues to attain the capability of meeting all domestic and trans-national non-traditional threats and ability to incorporate all paramilitary and auxiliary forces alongside the demographic depth during crisis or war. Bangladesh defense policy further focuses on compliance of all treaties and obligations undertaken by the Government concerning international peace and security, reduction of means of war and disarmament, and adhere to national security policy in congruent with foreign policy, "Friendship to all, Malice to none".

3. National Contributions to Promote Regional Peace and Security

i. Countering Terrorism And Violent Extremism

Terrorism and violent extremism are major challenges to the global peace and development. Like many other countries of the world, Bangladesh has also been facing the challenge of terrorism and violent extremism, and facing a tendency of rise of extremism within its territory. The Government has taken the strongest possible measures to control extremism and keep Bangladesh free from militancy. Bangladesh maintains a policy of 'zero tolerance' towards all forms of terrorism including financing of terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism - both nationally and internationally. As a matter of principle, Bangladesh does not allow its territory to be used by any terrorist individual, group or entity against any state or people. Bangladesh also continues to advocate for adhering to the relevant human rights and humanitarian

principles in counter-terrorism efforts. Government is strengthening and bringing Bangladesh's anti-terrorism and related legislative regime in line with the UN and International Counter Terrorism Initiatives. Some of the relevant laws are:

- a) Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009
- b) Anti-Terrorism Rules, 2013
- c) Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012
- d) The Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act, 2012
- e) The Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Rule, 2013
- f) The Extradition Act, 1974
- g) Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006
- h) Special Powers Act, 1974
- i) The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012
- j) Children Act, 2013

In addition to the accession to international convention and protocols, Bangladesh is actively engaged with Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC)/Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) pursuant to UNSCR 1373, Sanction Monitoring Committee, and Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF).

ii. Cyber Security

The Government of Bangladesh has enacted a holistic law for combating the growing menace of cybercrime in the form of Digital Security Act 2018. This law has taken note of the attack on the financial institutions using internet and attacks on institutions and individuals using microwave, laser devices etc. globally and has included safety measures to curb such crimes. The government has established a Digital Security Agency to coordinate with the local and international institutions for reducing the risk of digital crimes. The national digital Security Council has been formed. The digital Security Council comprises of all national stake holders.

iii. Contribution to UN Peacekeeping and Peace building

1) Bangladesh in UN Peacekeeping

Bangladesh is highly dedicated and stands committed to the principles laid down in the United Nations Charter, namely 'peaceful settlement of international disputes and maintenance of global peace and security'. The vow for establishing peace and security by Bangladeshi peacekeepers emanates from the principles enshrined in the Constitution of Bangladesh. The Preamble to the Constitution reads ".... We may prosper in freedom and may make our full contribution towards international peace and co-operation in keeping with the progressive aspirations of mankind." Bangladesh has always been responding promptly to the United Nations' call for strengthening world peace and stability by contributing its troops for peacekeeping.

The journey of Bangladeshi peacekeepers attiring the Blue Helmet began in 1988 by sending 15 observers to Iraq-Iran military observer mission (UNIIMOG). Bangladesh Police joined in the following year (1989). Till date, out of total 69 peace missions since 1948, Bangladesh has successfully completed 55 Peace Keeping Operations in around 40 countries where 176,669 peacekeepers took part. Currently, Bangladesh is the

leading troop and police contributing country (TPCC) with a total of 6,742 peacekeepers deployed in 8 missions.

2) Preparedness of Bangladesh for UNPKO

Bangladesh resolutely reiterates its firm commitment to undertake any UN assignment for global peace and stability in future. Preparedness of Bangladesh for UNPKO can be defined as following:

- a. **Pledges made by Bangladesh:** To meet the UN requirement, Bangladesh has pledged 26 components to UN “Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System”. In addition, USA has proposed announcing a joint U.S.-Bangladesh smart pledge of an operational-level Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) in partnership with Bangladesh where Bangladesh would perform in operating role and the United States in a capacity-building role. Bangladesh has agreed to the proposal and a declaration was made in UN peacekeeping Defense Ministerial-2019 in this regard.
- b. **Preparedness in Terms of Training:** Bangladesh fulfils its solemn obligations by providing mission specific training to contingents and individual officers. In order to match the current and future challenges of UN Peacekeeping operations, new modalities have been adopted for pre-deployment preparation and training. The military contingents undergo training in Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) once nominated for any UN assignment. All the members are trained based on mission specific scenarios under the close supervision of the contingent and formation commander. Various manoeuvre exercises, simulation exercises, situation exercises, heavy and small arms firing are organized to improve the ground performance of the peacekeepers.
- c. **Preparedness in Terms of Equipment:** Bangladesh is equipping the deployable contingents with new technology to meet the UN current and emerging requirements. To ensure the security and protection of peacekeepers, Bangladesh has recently deployed 32 X Mine Resistance Ambush Protected (MRAP) Vehicles in MINUSMA, Mali at its own cost and arrangement. In addition, 50 more MRAPs are in the process of procurement which will be deployed in different missions. To meet the upcoming requirement, Bangladesh is in the process of procuring new equipment like night flying capable helicopters, C-130J aircraft etc. Besides, Bangladesh is in the way of provisioning drone with night vision equipment to obtain early warning to avert threat/enemy action.

3) Increase of Female Peacekeepers in UN Peacekeeping Operations

Bangladesh has taken all possible measures to reach the target set by UN of 16% female Staff Officer/Military Observer in UN Peacekeeping Operations. Bangladesh requires deploying 22 Female Officers as SO/UNMO. Bangladesh Armed Forces have already deployed 18 Female Officers. At present 03 Female Officers are in the process of deployment and subsequently more will be sent to meet the UN needs. Bangladesh deployed female officers as Contingent Commander of military and police contingents in UNOCI, Ivory Coast; MINUSTAH, Haiti; MINUSCA, Central African Republic and MONUSCO, DR Congo. Presently contingent commander of BANMED-5, MINUSCA is

female and continuing her 2nd tenure as contingent commander. It is worth mentioning that Bangladesh has deployed two female helicopter pilots in DR Congo for the first time.

- a. Community Female Engagement Team:** As part of Community Engagement Team Bangladesh Armed Forces has already deployed 2 officers and 20 from other ranks as female engagement team with Infantry Battalion in MONUSCO, DR Congo in February 2019. The efforts will remain in vogue to incorporate the female engagement team with other contingents also.
- b. Women Peace and Security Chief of Defense Network (WCN):** Bangladesh is the founding executive member of Women Peace and Security Chief of Defense Network (WCN) along with the UK and Canada.

4) Current Deployment

The peacekeepers of Bangladesh had been almost everywhere and are committed to remain so in the days to come. Till date, out of total 69 peace missions since 1948, Bangladesh has successfully completed 55 Peace Keeping Operations around 40 countries where 176,669 (as of 29 May 2021) peacekeepers have taken part. Now, Bangladesh is the leading troops contributing country with a total of 6742 peacekeepers deployed in 8 missions.

5) Achievements of Bangladesh in UN Peacekeeping Operations

Bangladesh's contribution to the UN Peacekeeping is a story of glory and success. Today Bangladesh can hold its head high in the global arena because the Bangladeshi uniformed personnel have earned the gratitude of millions around the world. The footprints of Bangladeshi peacekeepers are now evident in almost all the troubled areas of the world. Bangladesh has always been at the forefront during any crisis of UN related to deployment of troops and had remarkable achievements in most of the UN assignment. The contributions of Bangladeshi Peacekeepers to UNPKO are hailed and clearly marked by UN Secretary Generals and many heads of the state of the host countries. In this context, President of Liberia, Her Excellency Ms Ellen Sirleaf, also conveyed her thankful gratitude to the Bangladeshi peacekeepers for their contributions and commented, "Bangladeshi contingent has gone beyond its protection mandate and helped to build up the manpower capacity of the country."

6) Bangladesh's Efforts in Peace Building

Peace building in countries emerging from conflict is a huge, complex undertaking as it happens in an insecure, politically fragile and, therefore, challenging environment. There is always a challenge to match the crucial response time with the availability of experienced civilian workforce to be deployed for peace building missions.

Bangladesh achieved skill and capacity to perform the peace building operations in post-war situation in developing countries in light of its experience of rebuilding a nation after the liberation war under the leadership of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and of the development of democratic process

in 90s. Bangladesh has also settled its position in terms of socio-economic development. Moreover, Bangladeshi peacekeepers, through their active participation in different peacekeeping missions and working with civil administration at home, have displayed the most common functional and occupational skills of rosters that serve multilateral peace operations, i.e. human rights, rule of law, humanitarian affairs, election administration, communications, information technology, human resources and training, medical support, security and logistics supply and procurement.

Moreover, personnel from Bangladesh Armed Forces and Bangladesh Police have experiences of working at home in a number of development activities, including infrastructure, disaster management, national biometric ID card project, national machine readable passport project, housing projects for homeless people, firefighting, restoration of social services, emergency water supply, food distribution, raising and training of armed forces and Para-military forces, building educational institutions and construction of institutions for special children. With such experiences, retired military and police personnel and civilian personnel of Bangladesh can be key players in peace building capacities. This is a ready force that is accustomed to UN environment and can be easily trained to suit the requirement of the mission.

a. Bangladesh and UN Peace building Commission

Bangladesh has been a strong advocate of peace building at the UN. It has been a founding member of the Peace building Commission (PBC). From its inception, Bangladesh has been a member and an active policy maker, contributing to its evolution. Bangladesh has led the NAM caucus in PBC in 2010 and 2011 and did the best to mobilize the contribution of the global South to UN peace building strategic and policy making work. Bangladesh was elected the Chair of the Commission in 2012 as recognition of its commitment to the global peace. Despite the constraints as an LDC, Bangladesh continued to demonstrate its commitment to the Peace building Fund with its annual contributions.

As the Chair of PBC in 2012, Bangladesh organized the first ever Summit level meeting of the Commission in New York on the sideline of 67th UNGA session. The meeting, chaired by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, mobilized support of global political leadership towards incorporation of a peace building perspective in the mandates of the peacekeeping operations to ensure longer-term peace building and sustainable development. As Chair, Bangladesh has also played imperative role in crafting peace building policies with focus on the principle of national ownership, capacity building, women empowerment, predictable funding, development activities, basic health and education, youth employment, etc. Bangladesh's experience as peacekeeper before the establishment of PBC made her realize that women could bring qualitative change in establishing peace in post conflict countries. Bangladesh thus became a pioneer in the adoption on Security Council 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

b. Bangladesh Peace building Centre

After assuming office in 2018, the current Government, led by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, decided to establish a Peace building Center in Bangladesh to

institutionalize and visualize the international peace and security as an integral part of the foreign policy of Bangladesh.

It was assumed earlier that Bangladesh could play constructive and far reaching role after the peacekeeping operations in Africa or other countries in post-war situation where Bangladesh could contribute in forming and strengthening the democratic institutions, managing participatory democratic election, in policy formulation and administrative reform, women empowerment, safety of human rights, enhancement of agricultural production, confirmation of food security, achieving capacity to fight with climate change, in reducing social stratification, widening the private sector, political and social rehabilitation of the people under conflict, in ensuring security and justice. Through these constructive engagements, Bangladesh could brighten its image in international peace development, and could developed its relation with concerned countries in terms of political, diplomatic and economic relations. This Centre would further help to form a skilled, experienced and quick deployable civil workforce. It may be mentioned here that as there is no such specialized center in South or South East Asia, hence this Centre could eventually be a regional focal center in the future.

In continuation to this effort, Bangladesh, of late, has established the Peace building Centre in Dhaka, second of its kind in Asia, to develop a recognized platform for conducting necessary training and research aiming at specialized capacity building for the civilians for a range of peace building activities including electoral management, administrative, judicial and security sector reform, human rights promotion and protection, disaster management, women's empowerment and socio-economic development, among others. Initially, the activities of this Centre would be conducted from Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS).

iv. Disarmament

Bangladesh's commitment to general and complete disarmament is anchored in its Constitution and remains a fundamental pursuit of its foreign policy objectives. Bangladesh has always pledged conclusive, determined and irrevocable commitment to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons by signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), including the Additional Protocol, Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), bilateral agreement with the IAEA on safeguards as well as bilateral agreements on nuclear cooperation with the Government of most of the 'nuclear power' countries. Bangladesh strongly considers disarmament as an instrument for enhancing international security. Since becoming a member of the UN, Bangladesh has always been playing an active role in UN's disarmament diplomacy. As a member of the UN Security Council for two terms during 1979-1980 and 2000-2001, Bangladesh was particularly active and visible in international disarmament efforts, reaffirming its strong commitment to the adherence of international disarmament norms, treaties and instruments.

Bangladesh appreciates the mutual cooperation between the IAEA and the Government of Bangladesh concerning the application of nuclear technology in the research and development activities in different areas of the economy. Presently, the application of nuclear technology in the field of agricultural development and diagnosis and treatment of many diseases including cancer is contributing to the overall economic development and well-being of the people of Bangladesh. Bangladesh actively participates in the work of the General

Assembly First Committee which debates disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control, and international security issues, recommending resolutions and decisions for adoption by the plenary session of the UNGA. In the First Committee, Bangladesh cosponsors a number of resolutions that promote disarmament and non-proliferation and advance global peace and security.

Bangladesh is a State Party to almost all the major disarmament treaties including NPT, CTBT, CWC, CCW, BTWC, APMBT, etc. Bangladesh, as the first South Asian country, signed and ratified the CTBT. Inspired by the same commitment, Bangladesh also signed and ratified the "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction" and the "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction" as the first South Asian country.

v. **Climate Change**

Climate change is a global phenomenon that goes beyond national borders. It is an issue that needs to be addressed through collective efforts and innovative solutions not only at the national level but also in the local and regional level. The Paris Agreement calls for a coordinated and combined effort in local and regional level to ensure effective climate action in a sustainable manner. On the other hand, the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has brought greater negative impact on livelihoods of the people as well as economy of Bangladesh. During COVID 19, Bangladesh has experienced severe flood due to the climate change. Heavy monsoon rains in upstream regions continue to cause flooding in 30 districts in the north, north-east and south-east of the country, affecting 5.4 million people. Flooding has damaged houses, dykes and embankments, water sources, hygiene facilities, and has severely impacted livelihoods, especially in the agricultural sector.

Bangladesh believes that the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement is a collective responsibility for shared prosperity. Climate finance is a key to this end. However, financing mechanism like the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) are severely under resourced. All countries must work hard to set a new collective quantified goal from a floor of US\$ 100 billion per year, including transparency of climate finance. All sorts of climate financing should be need-based. Developed countries need to come forward to provide accessible, adequate and predictable climate finance to the developing countries as agreed upon by them in Paris. LDCs and the climate vulnerable countries should receive particular attention in this regard.

1) **Initiatives taken for addressing climate change in Bangladesh**

In the face of such grave scenario, Bangladesh is putting greater efforts to meet the adaptation needs of the local vulnerable communities with its limited resources. To enhance climate resilience, Bangladesh has taken the following adaptation and mitigation activities:

- a. **Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP):** At the national level, Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) was formulated in 2009. This is one of the most credible initiatives of any developing countries to address climate change in a comprehensive manner for 10 year

programme, built on six thematic areas namely (1) Food security, Social Protection and Health, (2) Comprehensive Disaster Management, (3) Infrastructure, (4) Research and Knowledge Management, (5) Mitigation and Low-carbon Development, and (6) Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening. Recently, the Government has revised and updated BCCSAP to be more focused and action-oriented, the updated Strategy and Action Plan is expected to be published soon.

b. **Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF):** The government has established Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF) in the fiscal year 2009-2010. Bangladesh is the first country to set up its own Climate Change Trust Fund from its own resources. As of August 2020, the Government has allocated nearly \$443 million (3752 crore BDT) to BCCTF since 2009. So far, BCCTF has funded over 789 projects of which 375 have already been implemented. In Bangladesh's context, Adaptation is our priority but Mitigation is also taken into consideration to reduce the rate of carbon emission. Achievement of BCCT under mitigation and adaptation are below:

c. **In Adaptation Sector:**

- 1) 16.4 kilometers of coastal sea dyke have been constructed and 11,415 cyclone resilient houses built.
- 2) 8 schools cum cyclone shelter have been constructed at the coastal area.
- 3) 352.12 kilometers of embankments have been constructed and 161.23 kilometers of river bank protective works completed.
- 4) 872.186 kilometers of canals have been excavated/re-excavated including regulators/Sluice Gates, and 82 Water Control Infrastructures have been erected.
- 5) 12400 square meter rubber dam have been built.
- 6) 1719 meters of Protective Walls have been erected.
- 7) 236.991 kilometers of RCC roads have been constructed.
- 8) 11 km culverts have been constructed.
- 9) 263.471 kilometers of sewerage have been built.
- 10) 4184 deep tube wells, 30 pond-sand-fillers and 50 mobile water treatment plants have been installed.
- 11) 1061 water sources and 1050 rain water reservoirs have been established.
- 12) In four Upazila, Agro-met stations for early weather forecasting have been set up.
- 13) 4500 metric ton of stress tolerant seeds have been produced and distributed among the selected beneficiaries.
- 14) Stress tolerant crop varieties like BINA Rice-7, BINA Ground Nut-1, 2 as well as BRRI Rice-40, 41, 47 have been introduced.
- 15) 12000 floating vegetable beds in 210 villages are in pipeline while 50% have already been completed.
- 16) 166 kilometers of drainage have been constructed in the urban areas to reduce water logging.
- 17) A community radio station has been set up for educating vulnerable communities on issues related to health and agriculture.

d. In Mitigation Sector:

- 1) 144.2 million trees have been planted and 5121 hectares of forest land have been brought under afforestation.
 - 2) 12,813 biogas plants have been installed.
 - 3) 9,28000 improved cook-stoves have been distributed among the beneficiaries.
 - 4) 17,145 solar home systems have been installed in the remote off-grid areas and two solar irrigation pumps have been installed.
 - 5) 1188 solar street light have been installed at pourashavas.
 - 6) 17 Waste Management Plants have been established at different areas.
- 2) **NAP Formulation:** The Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MOEFCC) has already initiated the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Formulation Projects, with USD 2.55 million financed by Green Climate Fund (GCF) (Implementation support provided by UNDP).
 - 3) **Nationally Determined Contribution:** Bangladesh has prepared and submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in September 2015. Bangladesh NDC includes both adaptation and mitigation initiatives in the country. As an unconditional contribution, Bangladesh will reduce its GHG emissions in the power, transport, and industry sectors by 12 MtCO₂e by 2030 or 5% below BAU emissions while reducing additional 24 MtCO₂e by 2030 or 10% below BAU emissions as a conditional contribution for those sectors.
 - 4) **NDC Implementation Roadmap and Action Plan:** To implement activities under the Bangladesh NDC, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has prepared Roadmap and Action Plan for implementing Bangladesh NDC in Transport, Power and Industry sectors in 2018.
 - 5) **Review and update of NDC:** As per the commitment to the Paris Agreement, Bangladesh has launched a Project to review and update the Paris Agreement with the support of UNDP. If found feasible, Bangladesh will strive to enhance her unconditional and conditional contribution in Bangladesh NDC.
 - 6) **Clean Development Mechanism:** Bangladesh is also involved in the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Like larger polluting countries, Bangladesh could not harness much from the CDM process but Bangladesh doesn't want to miss the Article 6 opportunities to reduce Green House Gases.
 - 7) **Joint Crediting Mechanism:** Bangladesh has a bilateral mechanism called Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) with Japan for transferring energy-efficient technology which provides up to 50% grants. So far, 4 (four) projects have been completed and 2 (Two) more projects have been initiated.
 - 8) **Climate Technology Centre & Network:** Bangladesh is also involved in the Climate Technology Centre & Network (CTCN) under the UNFCCC Technology Mechanism for technology transfer. The Department of Environment is the National Designated Entity (NDE) of the CTCN. As a NDE, Department of Environment (DoE) is working closely with

the relevant government agencies and organizations to assess and identify their technical adaptation and mitigation needs for tackling climate change. Nevertheless, it is a slow process where the resources are not adequate for taking necessary actions.

9) Adaptation Fund (AF) Supported Adaptation Project: The Department of Environment under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has taken a project on Adaptation Initiative for Climate Vulnerable Offshore Small Islands and Riverine Char Lands in Bangladesh for improving livelihoods through the financial support of Adaptation Fund.

10) Initiatives on Renewable: *a. Solar Power:* Around 5.8 million solar home systems (SHSs) have been installed across the country meaning that almost 18 million beneficiaries are getting solar electricity which is around 11% of the total population of Bangladesh. *b. Improved Cook Stoves:* In order to reduce emissions from biomass burning, over 3.5 million Improved Cook Stoves (ICSs) have already been distributed to rural households in the country. Additionally, Forest Department under Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has been implementing climate change adaptation activities in vulnerable coastal and offshore communities:

- So far Bangladesh has created 200,000 hectares of coastal plantations as shelter belt to protect coastal lives and resources from tidal surges and calamities. Bangladesh has the potential to create another 68,000 (approx.) hectares of mangrove plantation in coastal region (Coastal plantation Suitability Study, 2016) which will be helpful to address the mitigation of climate change adaptation.
- Bangladeshis also successfully managing 601,700 ha Sundarbans Mangrove Forest which is playing vital role to save the lives and resources from extreme natural calamities like cyclone or super cyclone.
- Due to lack of water flow from the upstream in winter saline water intrusion increases the coastal soil salinity. Bangladesh is coping soil salinity problems by raising dikes or changing planting times in coastal areas to adapt soil salinity problems to establish plantations.
- Bangladesh is creating resilient forests in hill region to protect forest dependent communities and habitats of important forest biodiversity.
- In such a scenario with rapid Global deforestation, Bangladesh has shown net tree cover increase/enhancement from the year 2000 to 2014. We assessed 22% of country area is under tree cover in 2014. Tree plantation has become a social movement in last three decades. We believe to achieve 24% tree cover by 2021.
- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has taken initiative to increase tree cover 25% by 2030 to comply with the target of SDG by 2030.
- To protect biodiversity, terrestrial protected area coverage will be increased to 4% by 2030. The current coverage is 3.06%.
- Bangladesh submitted Forest Reference Level to UNFCCC to deal mitigation opportunities in forestry sector for improving ecosystems resilience to climate change for livelihoods of the most vulnerable people along its ongoing adaptation efforts.
- Bangladesh has drafted Bangladesh National REDD+ strategy for reducing emission and enhances carbon stocks.

To achieve effective and long lasting benefits of climate action taken at the local level, we believe that adequate financial, technological and capacity building supports are needed for scaling up adaptation and efforts in developing countries particularly for the LDCs. Strengthening regional cooperation on climate issues is also important to bring benefits for all.

vi. Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the most disaster-prone and climate change affected countries in the world. Every year, small and medium scale disasters affect a high number of people. High population density, poverty, illiteracy and lack of adequate infrastructure contribute to high vulnerability.

Moreover, international observers anticipate Bangladesh to be further adversely affected by climate change in the form of melting of Himalayan glaciers, global warming, rising sea level, reduction of cultivable land and greater water scarcity. Climate change has triggered an increase of severe floods in Bangladesh in the last decade, caused both by local rainfall and flow from the upstream Indian Himalayan regions. The number of cyclones making landfall and associated storms surges also have increased substantially in recent years. Overall, climate change both feeds on and accentuates inequalities in the country. According to the INFORM Report 2019, Bangladesh is ranked 22 out of 191 countries with a high INFORM Index for Risk Management which indicates that the risk of humanitarian crisis and disasters that would overwhelm national response capacity is high.

It includes risk reduction strategies and establishing response mechanisms at regional and national levels. Moreover, Bangladesh has signed the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) which required proper monitoring and reporting coordination as well for making required progress.

The main strategy for disaster risk management in Bangladesh consists in the engagement of communities through volunteerism to disseminate early warning messages and massive evacuation orders, to construct emergency shelters, construction and maintenance of embankments and to keep safety net allocation for emergency response. The GoB has cash for works mechanisms, a programme for resilient housing, road/culvert construction and training for risk reduction. The large number of non-government agencies and BDRCS are supporting the GoB disaster risk reduction efforts. Moreover, humanitarian assistance under the national disaster management system relies largely on safety net provisions. Disaster affected people are simply added to the list of the people qualified for receiving safety net supports. Although disasters occur recurrently every year, annual budget does not include allocations for humanitarian assistance. Since 2012, Bangladesh has successfully engaged with the international humanitarian community on disaster preparedness and response through the Humanitarian Coordination Task Team (HCTT) that the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief co-leads together with the United Nations. Bangladesh has also coordinated the process of review of Bangladesh's legal preparedness led by IFRC as per international best practices.

vii. Rohingya Issue

Bangladesh hosts around 1.1 million Rohingya displaced from Myanmar. The Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took a bold decision to temporarily shelter the huge number of persecuted Rohingya only out of humanitarian consideration. It is an honour to register that with the help of international community, we have successfully handled the humanitarian emergency without any single casualty and now been efficiently managing all sorts of humanitarian assistance including shelter, food, health, water and sanitation. For this we have sacrificed 6800 acre of forest land, a huge loss of biodiversity and wildlife. Bangladesh is not in a position to shoulder the burden for an indefinite period. It is essential to adequately address the root causes and core concerns of the Rohingya for safe and sustainable repatriation. Creation of conducive condition for voluntary return is intricately related to political, security, economic and social factors. Restoration of normalcy, elimination of systematic discrimination and marginalization, and reconciliation among ethnic groups are important, in addition to ensuring adequate physical infrastructure and livelihood opportunities. Bangladesh must not be punished for the unprecedented generosity shown to the persecuted people. Huge Rohingya population entails enormous pressure on our economy, environment, security and social fabric of the area concerned. Prolonged stay of such a huge number of people with unattended grievances and basic rights poses tremendous security threat for the entire region. These people must return to their country with safety, dignity and rights at the earliest possible and reintegrate into the Myanmar society.

Besides bilateral efforts, Bangladesh continued her full engagement with international communities to solve Rohingya crisis. Given the complexity and immensity of the crisis, Bangladesh also preferred to seek international support in its endeavor to resolve the crisis in a durable manner. International community needs to make Myanmar understand the multifarious implications of a prolonged crisis.

viii. Bangladesh Position on DPRK

Bangladesh as a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NNPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), strongly supports all international measures for establishing nuclear free zone the Korean Peninsula. Our unequivocal commitment to full implementation of the CTBT as well as the NNPT in all their aspects emanates from our Constitutional obligations to a general and complete disarmament. Accordingly, Bangladesh has voiced her concerns after the repeated unilateral actions by DPR Korea defying the provision of UNSC resolutions first on 12 December 2012 by the rocket launch and second on 12 February 2013 by the third nuclear test. Bangladesh strongly believes that such unilateral acts undermine nuclear non-proliferation, both horizontally and vertically, and constitutes a major threat against maintaining the peace and stability of that region in specific and of the globe in general, and thereby calls upon all parties concerned to exhibit restraint and responsibility.

ix. South China Sea

Bangladesh attaches great importance to the maintenance of peace and stability, maritime security, freedom of navigation and over flight, for international trade and economic cooperation. Bangladesh believes in peaceful settlement of all international disputes through dialogues, negotiations and universally recognized principles of international law, including

the 1982 UN Convention of the Law of the Sea. Bangladesh respects the principles contained in the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea signed on 4 November 2002. Bangladesh deeply appreciates that all parties concerned have reaffirmed their respect for and commitment to the freedom of navigation in and over flight above the South China Sea.

4. Role in the ARF

Keeping in view the objectives of ARF and the criteria for participation, Bangladesh first expressed her interest to join this Forum as early as 1998. Bangladesh became a member of the ARF in 2006. Since then, Bangladesh has been playing an active role in ARF and participating in various meetings and events of the ARF. Bangladesh is strongly committed to the guiding principles of the Forum, most notable, peace and disarmament. One of the largest troop contributor countries, Bangladesh has received international recognition and acclaim in peacekeeping and peace building. In the ASEAN region, Bangladeshi peacekeepers were deployed in UN missions in Timor Leste and Cambodia. From the very beginning, Bangladesh continues to catalyze the process of regional cooperation in South Asia and beyond. Given her geo-strategic location, Bangladesh is ideally placed to link the countries of South Asia with South East Asia and traditionally has had very close links with most of the ASEAN countries. These contacts have further been reinforced through her membership in the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). Bangladesh has undertaken massive infrastructure development to upgrade its roads, rails, river ways, ports, bridges, airports, riverine ports and sea ports for connecting the landlocked regions of South Asia and South East Asia and East Asia. Bangladesh has a clear stake in the security and prosperity of South East Asia. This ranges from conventional security issues to the emerging threats like trafficking in persons, drugs and arms. Bangladesh opposes terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and fully supports the ARF in its efforts to combat this menace. Additionally, as one of the fastest growing economies of the world, even during the COVID 19 pandemic, Bangladesh has the potential to be a strong economic and trading partner for the ASEAN region and for the ARF countries.

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

The Asia-Pacific region is characterised by its diversity in its geographical, political and socio-economic aspects. The global economic environment already experiencing a downturn since 2019, prospects among the developing Asian countries appear bleak in light of the colossal economic impact of the current health crisis, the COVID-19 outbreak.

According to the Asian Development Outlook 2021 (ADO 2021) projection, Asia remains resilient, amid divergent recovery paths. Stifled by domestic lockdowns and a global recession, consumption and investment dragged down output in most economies. Developing Asia is projected to grow by 7.3% in 2021, higher than normal due to the comparison with a weak 2020. Growth is expected to moderate to 5.3% in 2022. The growth trend will not be uniform across the region. The main risks to the outlook are new virus outbreaks or delays in vaccine procurement and administration. Prolonged unemployment and disrupted education caused by the pandemic is expected to have long-term consequences as well.

The unravelling of COVID-19 and variants has placed socio-economic pressures around the globe. The uncertainty in the current world economic crisis due to the pandemic is also expected to increase budgetary pressures on governments especially as countries prioritise efforts on the recovery phase of COVID-19. Particularly, defence and security may be affected as constraints on government spending grows.

Meanwhile, the ongoing changes in the geopolitical and geo-economic landscapes have brought a wide range of security challenges. The evolving regional architecture, and new power dynamics require all countries to maintain a delicate balance of protecting national interests while ensuring international peace and stability.

While lingering traditional security issues remain, the region has also seen growing non-traditional security challenges that are increasingly complex, cutting across different sectors, threatening progress, as well as the well-being and livelihood of its people. Underlying this, technological advancements and rapid information flow, especially through social media, and influences of non-state actors, have also contributed to the evolving and emerging security issues in cyberspace.

There is a growing concern on the global reach of terrorism and the spread of violent and extremist influence in societies. The COVID-19 pandemic has also transformed extremist and terrorist activities worldwide. Strict imposition of pandemic mitigation measures, such as border closures and strict lockdowns, have partially immobilised terrorist groups, who often seek cooperation from other regional organisations to conduct their physical operations. Regardless, continued clashes between terrorist groups with enforcement agencies, arrests of suspected individuals and the persistence of localised terror attacks on critical infrastructures and civilians, demonstrate that global and regional terror threats continue to persist.

Furthermore, the use of the cyber domain for terrorism-related activities has become much more evident with the advent of technological and digital platforms for personal and

professional service. Terrorists have increasingly turned to various social and digital media to radicalise, recruit and increase their influence. Further, soliciting digital financial means such as cryptocurrency and fundraising have also been used to finance and coordinate attacks. Thus, these current developments point to the need for further cross-cutting cooperation, including addressing cyber threats and crimes.

Extreme and irregular weather patterns, increased storm surges, and sea-level rise will exacerbate disaster-prone areas and strain the urban population. Natural disasters have been a recurrent challenge in the Asia Pacific region. It experiences more disasters from floods, severe storms, droughts, tsunamis to earthquakes than any other region. With current trajectories, according to the World Wildlife Fund and studies conducted by the United Nations Environment Programme and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, by 2100, 350 million people will be exposed to severe drought, 46 million will be vulnerable to sea-level rise and 1 billion people will be prone to heat waves every five years. Natural disasters and climate-induced events will carry permanent ramifications to the people's socio-economic livelihood. This would call for a more robust integrated national disaster response for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

At the same time, the potential threat of nuclear power and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continues. The progress of the peace effort in the Korean Peninsula remains a challenge. The momentum that brought positive prospect in the Korean Peninsula with the two Summits between the US and DPRK, as well as closer interactions between the ROK and DPRK seems to have irrevocably lost, which has prompted North Korea to ratchet up tensions with the demolition of inter-Korean liaison office at Kaesong and growing missile proliferation and tests. This development highlights the unstable relations among the countries involved that could threaten peace and security in the regional environment. In support of the diplomatic efforts in the Peninsula, the region is carefully and closely observing the situation not to escalate it into further tensions and acknowledge the importance of bringing about complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the Peninsula.

The fluidity of existing security issues and the diversity of the region reiterate the need for multilateral approaches to address challenges affecting the region. The momentum of cooperation between and among countries in various multilateral mechanisms and levels of participation have continued to endure in the region. This has been reflected by efforts and initiatives in countering transnational security threats in ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), ADMM-Plus, and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). The impacts of non-traditional and traditional security challenges alike also underscore the need for a holistic approach with wider involvement from all sectors and levels of society.

Brunei Darussalam values the open and outward-looking regional security architecture as it brings regional and international friends and partners to build confidence, deepen understanding and address common security challenges. ASEAN-related platforms, in particular, are key to Brunei Darussalam, as the ASEAN Member States are placed front and centre to contribute in shaping the region's future.

2. National Security and Defence Policy

a) Overview of national security and defence policy

In support of the national development agenda in the National Vision 2035, Brunei Darussalam places importance on a whole of nation approach in providing assurances to the well-being of its people and the interests of the nation. The National Vision 2035 laid out three goals for Brunei Darussalam. Firstly, to be known for its educated, highly skilled and accomplished people and secondly, a country that has high quality of life of among the top 10 in the world. Lastly, a dynamic and sustainable economy with income per capita among the world top 10's.

In line with this, Brunei Darussalam's defence policy has remained consistent in ensuring its efforts are comprehensive, robust and integrated to protect and promote the nation's peace and stability. Brunei Darussalam's defence strategy supports the national development agenda towards achieving one of the nation's objectives of upholding sovereignty and stability. This underlines three core priorities: deterrence and response, defence diplomacy and holistic defence.

In this regard, Brunei Darussalam continues to develop strong and credible armed forces, in providing military capabilities with high levels of readiness and preparedness to meet various security challenges. As well as this, Brunei Darussalam is committed to maintaining strong bilateral and multilateral engagements with defence establishments and armed forces around the world. The holistic defence involves coordination and collaboration amongst local agencies to support each other's capabilities in the maintenance of peace and security and thus, contribute towards providing a positive enabling environment for the nation's political and economic progress and development.

b) Defence expenditure

For the fiscal year 2021/2022, the Ministry of Defence of Brunei Darussalam's defence budget is BND610,170,920.00 (approximately USD458,775,128 @1.33), which marks an increase of 0.68 percent from the previous financial year.

3. National Contributions to Promote Regional Peace and Security

Brunei Darussalam remains steadfast and is cognizant of the importance of cooperation and engagements in the region to protect its interests and play its part as a responsible member of the international community. Its participation in various multilateral regional platforms, including the ARF, ADMM and ADMM-Plus, as well as the ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Meeting (ACDFM), presents opportunities for Brunei Darussalam to continue to engage constructively in dialogue and work together on common security challenges.

The ADMM and ADMM-Plus have provided added value to strengthen Brunei Darussalam's defence and military capacity and capability development. With a view to contribute to regional security, Brunei Darussalam initiated three proposals of cooperation during its ADMM Chairmanship in 2013, which have progressed at various stages. As Brunei Darussalam undertakes the Chairmanship of 2021, the ADMM has also embarked on Stocktaking exercise on the ADMM and ADMM-Plus with a view to deliver a Strategy for the future of ADMM and

most continue to strengthen its ADMM initiatives in 2013 as contribution towards the ASEAN Community through the ASEAN Political-Security Community Pillar.

One of which is the ADMM Logistics Support Framework (LSF), intending to strengthen logistics cooperation that will enable the military forces in the ASEAN region to address non-traditional security challenges, including but not limited to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), Search and Rescue (SAR), Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) and anti-piracy in a coordinated and effective manner. Upon the validation and verification of LSF in a Table-Top Exercise (TTX) by all ASEAN Member States in January 2016, the LSF was endorsed by the ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting (ADSOM). In moving forward, Brunei Darussalam looks to integrating further with other ADMM initiatives such as the ASEAN Military Ready Group (AMRG) and the possibility of further expanding in the ADMM-Plus EWGs.

In recognising the importance of developing an ASEAN early warning system to prevent the occurrence and/or escalation of conflicts, the ADMM has adopted the concept of establishing and maintaining the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI). ADI sets to provide a permanent, rapid, reliable and confidential means by which any two ASEAN Defence Ministers may communicate with each other at mutual decisions in handling incidences or emergency situations. This communication platform aims to prevent or defuse misunderstandings and misinterpretations, therefore preventing escalation and promoting quick response cooperation in emergency situations.

The ADI is launched in phases. The first phase, which is in the form of an IP-based mechanism, was launched on 24 October 2017, after the ADMM-Plus Meeting in Clark, Pampanga, Philippines. ASEAN Member States conducted an ADI Exercise on 21 February 2019 to successfully test the functionality of the system and operationalise the SOP itself. The second phase is currently under deliberation among the ASEAN Member States co-chaired together by Brunei Darussalam and the Philippines. The concept paper to expand the initiative to Plus countries has also been agreed by the ADSOM in April 2019. This is anticipated to further promote open communications among the member states, and enhance regional and wider confidence and security building measure. In June 2021, during the 15th ADMM, the ASEAN Defence Ministers have agreed to adopt the Concept Paper on Enhancing the Usage of ADI as Defence Communications Architecture in the ADMM Process. The Concept Paper will further provide the policy and technical parameters for Phase 2 of the ADI. The next phase will see the expansion of user case and include a routine exchange of information.

Underlying the practical cooperation, Brunei Darussalam views interactions among its defence and military officials as an important aspect to ensure enduring relations among ASEAN's future leaders. The essence of the ASEAN Defence Interaction Programme (ADIP) is in building trust and understanding and develop mutual respect and instil the habit of mutual cooperation. Thus far, Brunei Darussalam initiated one activity under the programme in 2014, and another was taken up in 2018 by Malaysia. Towards ensuring the continued engagements under the ADIP, the revised Concept Paper on the ASEAN Defence Interaction Programme (ADIP) was approved in the 15th ADMM in June 2021. The revised Concept Paper intends to make the ADIP more sustainable while also fulfilling its intended purposes of strengthening regional unity and identity among ASEAN defence establishments through respect for diversity, equality and mutual understanding.

Within the ADMM-Plus, Brunei Darussalam is strongly encouraged by the progress of the seven ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups in the areas of HADR, Military Medicine (MM), Maritime Security, Counter-Terrorism, Peacekeeping Operations, Humanitarian Mine Action and Cyber Security. Brunei Darussalam is fully committed and supportive of ADMM-Plus endeavours and has worked alongside the Plus partners. This includes hosting the inaugural multinational ADMM-Plus HADR and MM Exercise in 2013 together with China, Vietnam, Singapore, and Japan. Brunei Darussalam also co-chaired the EWG on Maritime Security with New Zealand from 2014 to 2017, culminating into the ADMM-Plus Maritime Security and Counter-Terrorism Exercise that took place in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore, and a Maritime Security Field Training Exercise in New Zealand.

As for the new cycle of co-chairmanship of EWGs (2021-2024), Brunei Darussalam works closely with Australia as co-chairs of the EWG on Military Medicine. In line with Brunei Darussalam's Chairmanship theme of "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper", the EWG on MM will undertake a Project-based Community Medical Deployment (PCMD) that will be conducted in 2023. Based on a civil-military engagement concepts, this cycle of the EWG on MM aims to provide healthcare in a selected underprivileged community in the short term and to provide training to improve the community's self-reliance and sustainability in the long term.

The works of the EWGs have garnered understanding, promoted capacity building and interoperability in all member states. More importantly, these have contributed towards deeper trust and fostering stronger military-to-military relations among the armed forces of the ADMM-Plus. Further to this, the practical cooperation in the EWGs contributes to ASEAN's collective response to addressing non-traditional security challenges. Particularly on HADR, there have been increasing integration of HADR in the broader ASEAN disaster response mechanism with efforts for closer coordination between military and civilian responders.

Brunei Darussalam also continues to support and participate in the various initiatives related to regional defence cooperation, including in the Information Fusion Centre (IFC), Changi Regional Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Coordination Centre (RHCC) and the ASEAN Center for Military Medicine (ACMM).

a) Peacekeeping and peace monitoring initiatives

Brunei Darussalam also remains committed to participating in peacekeeping and peace support operations. Since 2008, the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) has been involved in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), in which a total of 345 RBAF personnel have been deployed to UNIFIL, and embedded under the Malaysian Armed Forces. The first contingent of the RBAF in 2008 comprised five (05) personnel and has increased over the years, totalling thirty (30) personnel in 2021. Throughout the thirteen years of RBAF's involvement in the UNIFIL, six female members of the RBAF served in the peacekeeping operations.

It has also deployed personnel for the International Monitoring Team (IMT) since 2004, and in the 2020-2021 peacekeeping mission, there are eight (08) RBAF personnel and one (01) Royal Brunei Police Force. Further to this, Brunei Darussalam also contributes to the Mindanao peace process as a member of the Independent Decommissioning Board (IDB) alongside Turkey and Norway since 2014. Four (04) RBAF officers are currently serving in the IDB Verification, Monitoring and Assistance Team (IDB VMAT) in Mindanao, Philippines.

At the operational theatre level, such initiatives provide exposure and knowledge in operation in conflict environments for the personnel involved. The interactions and engagements of RBAF with its foreign counterparts and organisations further contribute to Brunei Darussalam's defence diplomacy. At the same time, these initiatives showcase the RBAF image as a professional force that can contribute meaningfully. For Brunei Darussalam, this also reflects significant support towards regional and global efforts to bring about peace and stability.

b) Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

In Brunei Darussalam, the Natural Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) is an important agency that the government has entrusted to shoulder the responsibility to manage disasters. The Centre ensures the safety and well-being of the people by looking at all aspects of disaster management ranging from prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery through policies, strategies and practices. It also acts as a leading government agency to coordinate the multi-agencies effort in any events that requires relief operation. This is where government agencies, private sectors and volunteers from NGOs cooperate and coordinate their efforts in pooling and distributing all the necessities required by the affected population. Besides that, NDMC also initiates interaction and engagement through its various community outreach across the four districts to create awareness and collect localised knowledge as part of its preventive efforts. This is also to ensure the local community can prepare themselves and evade any foreseeable disasters through early management.

While the initial response to disasters and the primary responsibility for the protection of life, property and the environment in emergencies rests with the NDMC, the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) has always served in a supporting role in a multi-agency collaboration along with the Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF), the Fire and Rescue Department (FRD) as well as others in curbing natural calamities. The recent establishment of the Brunei Climate Change Secretariat (BCCS), Ministry of Development, also compliments NDMC's effort by establishing the Brunei National Climate Change Policy document on 25 July 2020, a national policy to combat climate change issues. It has demonstrated its adaptable nature and ability in several domestic natural disaster relief efforts to respond to challenging and complex tasks even at short notice. This arrangement has enabled the RBAF to better contribute to saving lives, alleviate suffering and prevent loss of life or property.

Regionally, the RBAF also assisted in the aftermath of the tsunami in Aceh in 2004 and Typhoon Haiyan in Tacloban, Philippines in 2013. Apart from that, RBAF also delivered assistance to Nepal, where it sent one (01) RBAF medical officer, four (04) RBAF Paramedics and three (03) Gurkha Reserve Unit Personnel to join the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) personnel under RHCC for "Operation Kukri" in support of the HADR efforts after a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck in April 2015.

The rapid response is a result of the maturity of the RBAF in providing assistance in areas hit by natural disasters. RBAF's relief efforts were greatly aided by interoperability, a key component that continues to be emphasised in many of the military cooperation undertaken by Brunei Darussalam with its counterparts, whether it is at bilateral or multilateral level.

In view of this, Brunei Darussalam has actively supported humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts around the region. Through the various ASEAN's platforms and mechanisms, there has been improvements in national disaster-response coordination and capabilities

derived from the sharing of best practices among member states as well as regional cooperation, when required. There has also been better integration and coordination on HADR in the broader ASEAN disaster response mechanism with effort for closer coordination between military and civilian responders.

c) Non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control and disarmament

Being a small nation, Brunei Darussalam sees the importance of adhering to non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control and disarmament effort. Brunei Darussalam is a signatory to various multilateral and global non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control and disarmament agreements, notably those concerning anti-personnel mines and weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Brunei Darussalam will continue its support for non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, as the country believes consensus and universalisation of these instruments are needed to ensure peace and stability, not only for Brunei Darussalam but the world.

Brunei Darussalam illustrates such commitments by participating in confidence building measures and activities, articulating support when needed, submission of reports to ensure transparency, and capacity building through technical assistance and training.

In particular to UNSCR 1540, Brunei Darussalam supported the resolution and continuously updating the UNSCR 1540 matrix to fulfil the implementation of the resolution.

Brunei Darussalam also actively participated in regional effort for non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, such as through ASEAN and ARF, and in the international arena in United Nations and its associating bodies.

4. Role of the ARF

The ARF, as the first Asia-Pacific wide forum on peace and security issues, continues to be an important security dialogue for the region. In line with its stated goals for confidence building, preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution, the ARF complements the work undertaken by the East Asia Summit and the ADMM-Plus. Alongside the official ARF processes, the ARF has also recognised the value of informal layer of exchanges through the ARF-Experts Eminent Persons (ARF EEPs) system that brings together recognised professionals and experts on specific domain issues. It has been envisaged for the EEPs to provide innovative ideas and recommendations on its three stated goals.

Further to this, the ARF-related platforms in the defence sectoral have given way to deepen understanding of the different perspectives on regional security concerns among its members. Both ARF Defence Officials Dialogue (DOD) and ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC) have long provided an avenue for defence and military officials to establish networks, build confidence and promote mutual trust among one another. The ARF Heads of Defence Universities, Colleges and Institutions Meeting (HDUCIM) has been valuable in promoting military education best practices and exchanges of research on security issues.

During Brunei Darussalam's co-chairmanship of the ARF DOD with Australia in May 2021, Brunei Darussalam proposed for the ARF DOD to have an institutionalised agenda on the sharing of developments of other regional defence cooperation such as the ADMM and

ADMM-Plus as well as any other initiatives that could be shared to promote confidence building and exchange of best practices. In line with the Guide to ARF Processes, Procedures, Practical and Protocol as well as the ARF Ha Noi Plan of Action II, the proposal intends to support the promotion of defence and security dialogue as well as practical cooperation to enhance regional peace, security and stability which includes enhancing synergy between ARF and the ADMM-Plus.

These various levels of engagements within the ARF underscore the inclusiveness and ongoing efforts in fostering dialogue and consultations. Brunei Darussalam remains committed to the ARF processes in promoting mutual understanding and working together to address the wide range of regional security challenges. In an increasingly uncertain regional security environment, engagements through dialogue, collaboration and cooperation at bilateral and multilateral levels are crucial to manage future risks in a comprehensive manner.

CAMBODIA

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

Most recently, the countries within our region are witnessing the Major power strategy shift in the Asia-Pacific namely the "**Indo-Pacific Strategy**", "**Belt and Road Initiative**", and "**India's Act East Policy**", which are announced to ensure peace, stability and cooperation in the region. However, it is evident that local politics and the shift in relative strengths of global or regional powers are in fact influencing the rules of international order previously entrenched.

The influence of defence-security issues on international relations has been on the rise. The new revolution in military affairs has been greatly changing the defence and military strategies of all countries. The military power competition around the world could possibly lead to the risk of arms races, especially at sea, and in space. Many major powers have adjusted their military strategies, increased their defence budgets, sped up armed forces modernization, and achieved advancements in weaponry and military technologies. These developments have influenced not only the relations among major powers but also the national defence strategy of all countries.

Against this backdrop, the Asia-Pacific region is making progress in confidence-building through common security cooperation both at bilateral and multilateral level such as ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus, East Asia Summit... etc.

2. National Security and Defence Policy

The Ministry of National Defence of Cambodia has been formulating another strategic document since mid-2017 known as the Defence White Paper 2020 (DWP2020). The main objective of producing another Defence white paper is ideally to respond to evolving and complex national, regional, and global security environments. This upcoming strategic paper is also a comprehensive guideline for the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) to strategically envision its posture in the next 10 years. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 pandemic, the outbreak of this formidable disease has substantially impacted the devising process of the DWP2020. As such, the Ministry of National Defence of Cambodia is committed to finalize the DWP2020 by 2021. This noteworthy strategic document will be renamed as the Defence White Paper 2021.

The ultimate goal of the DWP2021 is to reshape Cambodia's national defence objectives towards 2030 through a carefully defined strategy of safeguarding peace, defending national interests, and strengthening international cooperation and engagement. Cambodia's defence policy intends to promote a stable, secure, and rules-based order approach by pivoting on five key defence priorities which consist of border defence; internal security; military reform; international cooperation and engagement; and military professionalism.

Border defence is still the top defence priority for Cambodia. This consideration is based on several factors. While the process of border demarcation with our neighbouring nations is showing notable progress, we continue to face hurdles in misperception or possibly even tensions that could occur and escalate at any time as experienced in the recent pasts. Overlapping maritime claims are unlikely to be resolved in the near future and Cambodia must remain subtle in avoiding any kind of violent tensions. Cross-border illegal activities are of a concern including narcotics, arms and human trafficking, and other trans-boundary crimes. In

response to these challenges and threats, we believe that the effort of maintaining political and security dialogues through existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms is vital in guaranteeing peaceful, stable, and developed borders with our neighbouring nations.

Over the years, the Royal Government of Cambodia has taken effective measures to repel and counter threats posed to domestic security. The attempt to ravage peace and stability through organized crime known as “Color Revolution” has come about over the past few years. An emergence of both internal and external cybercrimes of any form also poses an unprecedented threat to national cyber security. Thus, the RCAF must not fail in playing a significant and leading role in countering cyber threats in the future. Fortunately, Cambodia, so far has not encountered any threats in the form of international terrorism. Despite this fact, the return of foreign fighters of ISIS in the region, the spread of ideological extremism and radicalism, and the use of sophisticated technology such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and bio-technology have posed grave concerns not only to regional and global security but also to the national security of Cambodia.

Moving beyond our borders, Cambodia is strongly committed to collaborating with our regional and international security partners to safeguard and promote peace, security, and stability of the region. We are firm in our support of existing regional security architectures namely ADMM, ADMM Plus, and ARF among others. We will continue to build strong partnerships with regional nations in the form of human resource development, capacity building, and exchange of expertise.

Over the next 10 years, the RCAF will undertake its reform process aiming at restructuring our defence and military institutions, improving military personnel management and human resource capabilities, simplifying roles and responsibilities, and upgrading our platform which will modernize our land, sea, and air defence capabilities. As a result, this will see the RCAF increasing its participation in exercises and activities within the ASEAN frameworks.

a) Ream Naval Base Modernisation

Cambodia, in adherence to open and rules-based multilateralism, has always demonstrated goodwill to further enhance military cooperation with countries in the region and around the world, based on mutual respect and interests. The development of Ream Naval Base is an integral part of Cambodia’s national plan to strengthen its defence capability; and this is the duty of the Royal Government of Cambodia, just like in the case of other governments around the world. A stronger Royal Cambodian Navy will not only enable Cambodia to exercise more effective control over the security of its maritime zone, but also better contribute to regional peace, stability and security. There is a host of issues that Cambodia’s navy can cooperate with other nations such as piracy, IUU fishing, illicit drug and human trafficking, search and rescue mission.

The continuous baseless accusation related to foreign military presence in the Ream Naval Base seems to suggest that Cambodia is not able to master the exercise of its sovereign right to improve its own defence. Such incessant allegation not only negatively affects trust in the neighbourhood, but also puts Cambodia at risk of being turned into a geopolitical scapegoat.

However, Cambodia is keen to demonstrate its transparency and mastery for all activities in relation to Ream Naval Base development. Cambodia has made a lot of concession when other countries are unable to do the same. We have allowed visits to Ream Naval Base by a number of military representatives which have been regarded as true cooperation through good will and friendship. In addition, we notified relevant parties, through official correspondence and public announcement, that foreign-funded buildings in the base were to be relocated.

However, we find it difficult to accept any further demands that are by nature an intention to search or investigate these areas. Such demands violate our rights and sovereignty and contradict the spirit of maintaining friendship and cooperation.

Cambodia will exercise full independence and sovereignty over the Ream Naval Base in all circumstances. No foreign country will be given exclusive rights in the management of this base nor in other activities in any part of it. As a sovereign and independent nation with full territorial integrity and a legitimate government, Cambodia has full and inalienable right to improve its naval base, port or shipping facilities to meet the need of today in accordance with the Country's Constitution. The Royal Government of Cambodia firmly adheres to the principles of permanent neutrality, non-alignment, and peaceful co-existence, enshrined in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, which strictly forbids any foreign military presence and activity in its territory. Cambodia reserves the rights to receive foreign assistance for self-defense and for maintaining public order and security within its territory.

In relation to Ream Naval Base, Cambodia has and always will continue to welcome any cooperation proposals that are mutually beneficial and without prejudice to the country's national sovereignty. The modernisation of our Naval Base in Ream is not, in any manner or under any circumstances, a security threat to the region, but it is the exercise of our inalienable right in the pursuit of peace, stability, and development.

3. National's Contribution to Regional Security

i. Counterterrorism

Although, the world is fighting Covid-19 pandemic, but terrorism is still the main threat to the security, stability and social both in the region and the world. The National Counter Terrorism Special Forces of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces continue to work proactively to ensure the safe guard of the Cambodian people. Much like every year, the Kingdom of Cambodia continues to dedicate our resources to our capability in preventing terrorism in our soil since the enactment of Counter Terrorism Law in 2007 which created the National Counter Terrorism Committee (NCTC) and the National Head Quarter of Counter Terrorism Special Forces. Ever since, our forces have grown in capability, enable us to be more adaptable to the global threats as well as allowing us to be flexible in our cooperation with regional partners via participation in trainings, workshops, and seminars throughout the region.

The National Counter Terrorism Committee (NCTC) and the National Head Quarter of Counter Terrorism Special Forces continues to thrive through bilateral and multilateral engagements such as:

1. Engagement in bilateral and multilateral discussions with all ASEAN member countries.
2. Continuation of series of counter terrorism exercises within its territory or abroad.
3. Continuation of Maritime Security enhancement with the cooperation of our international partners.
4. Cooperated internationally to further improve border security through information sharing and intelligent gathering by monitoring and tracking terrorist activities and resources.

The Royal Cambodian Armed Forces continues to extend its engagement with key nations such as the Commonwealth of Australia, the United States of America, the People Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, and Japan in order to achieve mutual understanding for a safer region through workshops, seminars, Counter Terrorism Field exercises, and many other officer training programs.

Under an exceptional leadership of Samdech Hun Sen, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, Cambodia continues to achieve complete peace and stability for its citizens of all ethnicity, race, and color, who benefit from the same rights and protections free from discrimination. The Royal Cambodian government promotion of inclusiveness and acceptance is shown from many cultural and religious events. With the commitment of the Cambodian government and the Cambodian People, the Kingdom of Cambodia will continue to improve and to be successful in its counter terrorism programs.

ii. Non-Proliferation, Counter-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

The Kingdom of Cambodia has committed to a range of capability for non-proliferation regime based on national laws, regional and international agreements on disarmament and non-proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to respond the illegal trafficking of the WMD materials. Cambodia has been actively engaging in various diplomatic efforts to achieve a peaceful use of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) materials.

At the national level, significant legal frameworks were passed and have been implemented, including: Law on the Management of Weapons, Explosives and Ammunition, Law on the Prohibition of Chemical Radiological Biological and Nuclear (CBRN) Weapons, and Sub Decree on Chemical Substances involved in the Production of CBRN Weapons.

National Action Plan Operational Principle for CBRN First Response Team Lead by National Authority for Prohibition of CBRN (NACW) Acting as Field Commander Operation

- Strategy Coordinating Group: The NACW has overall responsibility for the multi-agency management of the emergency and establishing the policy and strategic framework within which lower and high levels of command and coordinating groups will operate.
- NACW Acting as Strategic Commander: The Strategic Commander is the command lead for the incident for each of the organizations involved in the CBRNe response.
- Tactical Coordinating Group: The TCG is a multi-agency group of commanders responsible for interpreting the strategic direction (where strategic level command is instigated). They will determine, coordinate and support the delivery of a tactical response to an emergency.
- NACW Acting as Tactical Commander: Military / police Tactical Commander will lead the TCG. The Ministry of Health and ambulance service representatives of this group may be National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers (NILO) or other suitably qualified officers.
- Multi-agency On-Scene Command: The collective name given to the Military and police, MoH and ambulance service commanders (and any other organizations present) that have come together at the forward command post to command, control and coordinate the delivery of the on-scene tactical plan.
- On-Scene Commander: An appointed Military/police, First Response Team or ambulance service commander at the scene, who by applying the National Action Plan principles is responsible for joint decision making to develop and deliver the on-scene element of the tactical plan.
- Operational Command: Operational command of IOR and SOR transition will be reliant upon front-line Operational Commanders from all three services, using the National Action Plan principles, to deliver the response. Operational Commanders will be required to implement direction provided by their On-Scene or Tactical Commander.

- Forward Command Post (FCP): The location from which the on-scene command operates.
- Geographical and Functional Roles: Geographical and functional roles will be assigned by the Operational Commanders to deliver the joint tactical plan.
- Joint Understanding of Risk: The process by which commanders work towards a common understanding of the threats, hazards and risks in order to inform decisions on deployments and the control measures required to mitigate any identified risks to an acceptable level.
- Hot zone: The area where the initial release occurs or disperses to. It will be the area which may pose an immediate threat to the health and safety of all those located within it and is the area of greatest risk.
- Warm zone: An area uncontaminated by the initial release of a substance, which becomes contaminated by the movement of people or vehicles. The warm zone will be extended to include the area of decontamination activity. These areas cannot be guaranteed as free from contamination.
- Cold zone: The uncontaminated area between the inner cordon and the outer cordon where it has been assessed that there is no immediate threat to life.
- Limits of Exploitation: The furthest points to which emergency responders will operate in warm or hot zones. Limits of exploitation will be jointly agreed amongst On-Scene Commanders/Incident Officers as part of an ongoing joint assessment of risk.
- Snatch rescue: A tactical option focused on the immediate extrication of patients to an area of relative safety (such as the Casualty Collection Point) where triage and treatment can be Conducted - Emergency Co-ordination of Scientific Advice Group (ECOSAS): ECOSA is the mechanism, accessed via the National CBRN Centre and coordinated by Ministry of Health Cambodian, through which commanders can secure early coordinated scientific advice to inform decision making until such time as established.
- Casualty Collection Point (CCP): A staging point that enables life-saving interventions to be undertaken before removal to the Casualty Clearing Station.
- Casualty Clearing Station (CCS): Entity set up at the scene of an emergency by the ambulance service in liaison with the medical incident advisor to assess, triage and treat casualties and direct their onward removal.
- Ambulance Loading Point (ALP): An area in close proximity to the Casualty Clearing Station, where ambulances can be maneuverer and patients placed in ambulances for transfer to hospital.
- Tactical Considerations: Interoperable considerations detailed within service specific and joint doctrine, developed to deliver a multi-agency coordinated response across a wide range of CBRN(e) incidents.
- Tactical Options: Commanders have a number of interoperable options available in their tactical or deployment plans. They should take a flexible approach to the options they use, e.g. assessed against threat and risk. They should adapt and mix and match options, depending on the circumstances and resource availability. Examples of the tactical considerations and options can be found in the National Acting Plan Cambodian for CBRN.

iii. **Transnational Crime**

Transnational crime is a common concern and poses a complicated challenge in the South East Asia region including Cambodia. Up to date, transnational crime has not yet been decreased. Transnational crime poses a threat to stability, security, economic development and public order of every country in the region. Although there has been cooperation between the countries in the region to suppress and prevent the crime, it is still evolving along each

country's borders. Furthermore, the criminal groups have well-organized structures and networks. In addition, the globalization and regional integration have made the movement along the national border; the flow of human, finance and technology from one country to another becoming free and much easier. Moreover, the rapid development of the information technology is a factor that eases those criminals' communication and their activities.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, some organized-criminal activities have been slightly reduced. However, it is also an opportunity for some criminal groups to build networks and conduct their activities while the authority is busy in responding to the virus.

There are various types of transnational crime but below description is just some examples:

- a. Cyber Crime: is a crime in information technology era which includes fake news about the legitimate government and hacking to steal important data from the state institutions and private companies which causes significant loss of finance. Currently, this crime is becoming the heated topic and dangerous worldwide.
- b. Illegal Arms Smuggling: is also a concern that needs to be closely monitored amid rising threat of terrorism and separatism against the government. Terrorist groups could have used the weapons that they got from illegal trade to attack on government forces.
- c. Drug trafficking: is still a challenge that needs to be highly cautious particularly in the regions along Mekong River due to the fact that the flow of drugs is from Golden Triangle Region (borders between Thailand, Myanmar and Laos). The authority in the region has forfeited the narcotics that were planned to sell outside the region and the number of the forfeited narcotics is still on the rise. International criminals are still trying to use Cambodia as a country to produce, process and transport drugs in all forms through land, sea and postal. The border provinces especially in the northeast continue to be involved in drug trafficking despite crackdowns on major cases and severance of criminal organizations. Furthermore, it is challenging for the government to control while the criminals try to use small entry points to illegally cross the borders.
- d. Human Trafficking and Exploitation: is still a challenge in the region. Tens of thousands of the victims were trafficked along the borders and deceived by the broker to work without payment. Some women were forced to be sexual labor and work overtime. Despite the travel restriction during Covid-19 pandemic, Cambodia is still concerned about the human trafficked by broker through illegal entry points.
- e. Money laundering and Terrorism financing: is a common concern in the region and the world because syndicates and terrorist groups always laundering their money through transferring, trading and doing business from one country's bank to another. Cambodia is among vulnerable countries to money laundering and terrorism financing. Therefore, the government has closely monitored on these issues.

1) Measures and cooperation to suppress the transnational crime:

- a. Cybercrime: Government of Cambodia has both legal and institutional mechanisms such as:
 - Law on Anti-Cybercrime (drafted version).
 - Sub-Decree on National Internet Gateway (NIG) which took effect on 16 February 2021 will allow authority to maintain and protect the security and safety of the internet use in Cambodia.
 - Established a Department of Anti-Cybercrime under the General Department of National Police, Ministry of Interior to suppress all offences related to the cybercrime.

- b. **Illegal Arms Smuggling**
 - Strictly enforce in checking and monitoring all flows of goods in all targeted zones and border check points in the country and along the borders.
 - Increase cooperation in the region to share information related to any case or individual suspected of arms smuggling and ammunition.
 - Improve effectiveness in implementing the Law on Arms Control, Explosive Substance and Ammunition.

- c. **Drug Trafficking**
 - Enforce the capability of checking and finding narcotic substance with providing modern equipment for legal implementing institutions.
 - All countries shall strictly enforce the law and punish the criminals.
 - Raise awareness and educate the population especially youths about the risk and harmful impact of consuming drugs.
 - Control chemical dual use.
 - International cooperation with bordering countries.
 - Should establish National Anti-Drug Fund.

- d. **Human Trafficking**
 - Raise awareness and educate the population to understand the laws and regulations such as Labor Law, Law on Immigration, Law on Marriage with Foreign Nationals and explain about the risk of immigration so that they can prevent themselves from some bad people.
 - Enforce the Law on Immigration by the implementing authority and strictly punish the criminals in accordance with the law.
 - Strict control of the borders as well as the corridors between the neighbouring counties are needed to prevent the pandemic and monitor the illegal crossing activities.

- e. **Combating against Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing**

In relation to the combat against the money laundering, Cambodia adopted the Law on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism and it was promulgated on 27 June 2020. This law paves the way for effective implementation in combating against illegal activities by terrorist groups.

iv. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

As we are all aware, the continuation of competitions between powerful nation states for geopolitical influences, economic influences, and territorial integrity, brought greater challenges to the global system which greatly influences the world's social, political, economic, and security stability in the region and throughout the world. Complexities from these challenges exert greater problems for many nation states to access resources such as food, medication, shelter, and energy. Compounded with Coronavirus diseases (COVID-19) pandemic, environmental degradation, technological advancement, cyber security, socio-cultural and geopolitical changes through civil wars and national identity have created even a greater uncertainty and complexity to our global environment. Furthermore, with the borderless global environment, we are continually being exposed to even more vulnerability, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA) in the global environment.

Beyond these transnational challenges, regional countries as well as nation states throughout the world are struggling to fight to contain the spread of the Coronavirus diseases (COVID-19) pandemic, which have significantly affected economic, security, health, and well-being of our daily lives. Additionally, other non-traditional threats such as natural disasters have also been increasingly prevalent to our global environment. As far as natural disasters are concerned, relentless typhoons, hurricanes, landslides, and massive earthquakes in our region have increased in frequency at an alarming rate possibly due to the impact of climate change. Furthermore, traditional threats such as drug trafficking, human smuggling, illicit arms trade, piracy, and other violent extremist movements have affected our daily lives and well-being as well. Disasters such as these often outweigh the capabilities of our respective governments, and individual nation states to quickly deal with, respond, and assist.

The Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia has been continuing working endlessly with its ASEAN member states, civil societies, national and international non-governmental organizations to establish and ratify new concepts, procedures, guidelines, regulations, and law on disaster management. In addition, the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) and the Royal Cambodian Gendarmerie (RCG) have been implementing, and participating through either bilateral or multilateral exercise activities on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations with ASEAN militaries as well as regional militaries in line with the ASEAN charter, agreement, protocol and other existing mechanism; and is committed to support all defence cooperative activities conduct by the ASEAN militaries, regional militaries. To further contribute to national, regional, and the world security, the Royal Cambodian Government, the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, and the Royal Cambodian Gendarmerie have carried out measures in disaster relief operations through the implementation of national legislation, and national policy; as well as through the establishment of National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM). Additionally, the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces and the Royal Cambodian Gendarmerie will increase its participation in both bilateral and multilateral defence cooperative activities; particularly in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Operations (HA/DR).

Therefore, by increasing its participation in Command Post Exercises, Field Training Exercises (CPX/FTX), workshops, and seminars. For instance, two Cambodian gendarmeries officers had been participated in the 3rd Japan-ASEAN HA/DR table-top exercise in February 2020. Respectively, five Cambodian gendarmerie officers participated in an online workshop "Senior Executive Programme in Disaster Management" in October 2020; and nineteen other Cambodian officials from various related institutions participated in the November 2020 online course "National Disaster Response Online Course". Furthermore, the RCAF is anticipated to send its' officers to participate in the 4th Japan-ASEAN HA/DR table-top exercise in February 2021. These activities are the integral part in turning vision into reality through forming partnership and collaborative engagement. Additionally, it improved multinational operational capabilities in HA/DR and HA/DR medical planning processes as a whole. Undoubtedly, disaster preparedness and readiness are the key element to the strategic blueprint for the ASEAN Community, and regional partners to hedge against this uncertainty as well as the key element to promote a successful outcome and turning vision into reality. In summary, continued effort to strengthen relationship and closer cooperation while implementing more frequent pragmatic defence cooperative activities among the ASEAN militaries, and regional partners will, undoubtedly build trust, confidence, professionalism and partnership. In addition, our ASEAN militaries, and regional partners will possess the capabilities, skill sets, and intellectual knowledge to respond to these challenges while anticipating and preparing for those of tomorrow. To succeed, we must harness and integrate all aspects of our capabilities, intellectual knowledge, and work closely with allies, friends, and partners.

Promoting closer defence cooperation and implementing more pragmatic defence cooperative activities among the ASEAN member states, and external partners through either bilateral or multilateral exercises would undoubtedly enhance tactical, operational, and strategic capability of Cambodian military, which eventually helps strengthening the nation security, regional security, and the world security as a whole.

v. Maritime Security

Regional Maritime development has been highly regarded as ASEAN's growth centre such as fishery, forest, oil, natural gas and mineral resources. Sea is the gateway for trade and tourism; thus, sea must be peaceful and stable. Along with these developments, ASEAN faces a variety of challenges including piracy, sea robberies, IUU Fishing, transactional crime, human and drug trafficking, contraband smuggling, terrorism, environmental destruction, climate change, and other non-traditional threats. In particular, Cambodia has actively taken part in a number of initiatives to develop the global maritime policy.

In response to maritime threats, The Royal Cambodian Government established the National Committee for Maritime Security (NCMS), which put into place overarching constitutional provisions, national strategy and vision for Maritime Security. NCMS is a national inter-agency mechanism responsible for leading two primary missions: (1) defending the country's maritime sovereignty and (2) managing cohesive maritime law enforcement for the Kingdom of Cambodia. Identifying that Maritime Security requires operations from all involved agencies of the government beyond defence, NCMS facilitates and provides cohesions for national cooperation strategically and tactically. NCMS has organized a large-scale biennial national training exercise named MOHAROU-EL since 2017, aimed at strengthening collaboration and inter-agencies skills. Furthermore, Cambodia has participated in almost all forms of maritime security fora including ARF, AMF, EAMF, ACGF, EAS, ADMM, ADMM-Plus, etc. Cambodia is still an active member of the Southeast Asia Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation (SEAMLEC) that was changed from Southeast Asia Maritime Law Enforcement Initiative (SEAMLEI).

The Royal Cambodian Navy (RCN) plays a pivotal role in defence of Cambodia's coastline, islands and maritime sovereignty, monitoring the security of its main deep-water ports and crucial waterways. Moreover, the RCN has been carrying out its international missions under the framework of ASEAN Charter, ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC) and spirit of ACDFM, ADMM and ADMM-Plus, as a compass and an integrated approach in maintaining peace, security and stability in the region as well as the world. The RCN has also been enhancing its capabilities through national and international exercising, training, exchanging experiences and best practices in order to upgrade human resources capability for interoperability and harmony. Especially, the RCN has been actively participating in international activities including the International Fleet Review (IFR), ASEAN-China Maritime Exercise (ACMEX), ASEAN-US Maritime Exercise (AUMX), Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS), WPNS Workshop, WPNS Exercises, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) and other international activities and the RCN will take part in new exercise ASEAN-Russia Maritime Exercise which is planned to conduct this year.

Cambodia has developed maritime security policy and has taken part in a number of initiatives to develop the global maritime policy. In particular, the NCMS and RCN express its fullest commitment and support to any effort or initiative with the objectives to promote cooperation for maintaining regional maritime peace, security, stability, prosperity and sustainable development.

4. Role of the ARF

The ARF is the first region wide Asia-Pacific multilateral forum for official consultations on peace and security issues. An outgrowth of the annual ARF activities, with the participation from 10 ASEAN member states plus 17 dialogues partners, the ARF provides a setting for discussion and diplomacy and the development of cooperative responses to regional Security issues. The principle and modalities of dialogue and cooperation fostered by the ARF, such as mutual respect, dialogue on an equal footing, non-interference in each other's internal affairs together with the cooperative security concept, are increasingly accepted by country in the region.

The uniqueness of the ARF is that the forum serves as an effective platform where regular collaboration and meeting between military and civil elements in the region take place. The ARF continues to be the most comprehensive multilateral security forum in the region. As an active and responsible ARF member, Cambodia is contributing to regional peace and stability and supporting the development of a more robust, rules based regional order, while upholding the central role of ASEAN in any ASEAN-led forums, Cambodia will also continue to make valuable contribution to the forum through its continuous active participation, contributing ideas and initiatives in many ARF activities, including co-chairing various ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting with other ARF member states.

CANADA

After 44 years as an ASEAN Dialogue Partner, and as a founding member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Canada is firmly committed to the principle of ASEAN centrality and to the region's security and prosperity. Increasingly active engagement within the ARF is vital to Canada's efforts across the Indo-Pacific region.

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

Greater economic integration in the Indo-Pacific region is creating prosperity and new opportunities for development, but also competition and uncertainty with respect to international norms underpinning the rules-based international order and the architecture that will support peace and prosperity well into the 21st century.

The Indo-Pacific region, with a strong ASEAN at its core, is important to Canada. As a Pacific country, we deeply value a secure, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific region that allows for regular engagement and trade with our Asian partners. Canada's economic and people-to-people ties with Asia run deep, and the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) now in force and a potential Canada-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement currently being discussed, will strengthen those ties and make our societies stronger. As such, it is in our collective interest to ensure the safety, security and free flow of lawful commerce in the maritime domain, including in the East and South China Seas. Canada recognizes the importance of respect for international law and internationally accepted rules, standards and norms of behaviour—including those outlined in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Canada recognizes the need to bolster regional connectivity through infrastructure development and supports efforts to boost connectivity in a way that is transparent, makes use of responsible debt financing practices, respects the environment, and ensures respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the rule of law.

a) Korean Peninsula

North Korea's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missile programs are a violation of UN Security Council resolutions and remain one of the most critical threats to regional and international peace and security. Canada continues to call on North Korea to completely, verifiably and irreversibly dismantle its WMD and missile programs, and to avoid any further provocations. Given the significant implications of this threat for the region, Canada believes that this issue should be a central focus of the ARF's work, including at all relevant intersessional meetings.

Furthermore, Canada firmly believes that dialogue and diplomacy represent the only path to security, stability and economic prosperity for the North Korean people, and strongly supports the United States and South Korea in their efforts to strengthen diplomatic engagement with North Korea in order to pursue denuclearization and reduce the risk of conflict.

Canada believes that the implementation of the UNSC sanctions is critical to pressure the North Korean regime to denuclearize. Canada has also imposed comprehensive autonomous sanctions under the Special Economic Measures Act, which includes a ban on all trade with

North Korea, with limited humanitarian exemptions. Canada is participating in a multinational effort to curb sanctions evasion activities at sea, with the deployment of Canadian Armed Forces ships, aircraft and personnel. Canada is committed to working with ARF members and the broader international community to ensure effective and coordinated implementation of sanctions against North Korea.

Canada calls on North Korea to stop engaging in malicious cyber activities and to abide by the norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace.

Canada continues to call for humanitarian access, noting the lack of delivery of humanitarian assistance and access by trusted humanitarian organizations since North Korea's decision to close its borders in response to the pandemic. Since 2005, Canada has provided over \$40.4 million in humanitarian assistance funding through international organizations to address urgent needs in North Korea. Canada also remains gravely concerned by North Korea's human rights violations and the basic denial of freedoms of North Korean citizens.

b) Terrorism and Violent Extremism

Terrorism and violent extremism affect all of us. Violent extremism is a global and a collective challenge that requires a whole of society effort to prevent and counter, including the direct engagement of civil society.

Canada believes that effective and sustainable counter-terrorism (CT) and counter-violent extremism (CVE) measures require a global approach, combining domestic and international efforts. These efforts must be guided by the principles of respect for human rights and the rule of law, and be driven by partnerships. Such approaches should also be evidence-based and gender-responsive. They must build on local strengths and capabilities in order to foster sustainable resilience to violent extremism among those affected.

Canada advocates for a coordinated, global civilian-led approach to CT and P/CVE, that safeguards democracy, human rights, the international rules-based order, and integrates gender considerations and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda into CT and P/CVE initiatives.

Canada's CT efforts link domestic and international efforts, including intelligence, policing, criminal justice, diplomatic, military, development and capacity building. Canada supports international efforts to CT and prevent and counter violent extremism, encompassing not only security-based CT measures but also preventive steps to address the underlying conditions that drive individuals to join violent extremist groups. Terrorism and violent extremism are global problems, not tied to any particular religion, ethnicity or ideology. Canada strongly supports the UN's Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

Canada maintains strong bilateral relationships and is active in a number of international forums in addressing issues related to CT and P/CVE. These include the UN, the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) which Canada currently co-chairs with Morocco, the G7 Roma Lyon Group, the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Canada continues to support the Global Coalition against Da'esh in its military and civilian-led efforts in Iraq and Syria. Under Canada's whole-of-government Middle East Strategy, Canada has provided over \$3.5 billion in funding to respond to the crises in Iraq and Syria, and address their impact on the region. While the Coalition has succeeded in the territorial defeat of Da'esh in the region, Da'esh remains an insurgent threat and continues to exploit instability in Iraq and Syria.

The pandemic has affected the nature of the threat that terrorist and violent extremist groups pose to our society. Restrictions on travel have had a positive impact on the number of terrorists acts in the past twelve months, with exception to the African continent who saw an increase. However, the global pandemic has led to more vulnerable populations, many of which are isolated and spending more time online. Violent extremist groups have taken advantage of the pandemic to increase the spread of online misinformation, conspiracy theories and hateful propaganda and rhetoric, to recruit and inspire individuals to carry out acts of violence.

Canada is deeply concerned with the rise of ideologically-motivated violent extremism (IMVE), both at home and abroad. IMVE threat actors operate in a decentralized manner and pose a challenge to law enforcement because they exist primarily on the web, making it difficult to identify them in the real world.

Canada will continue to build on its partnerships domestically and internationally to counter the threats posed by terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms. Addressing the underlying conditions conducive to such threats is essential.

c) South China Sea

With an estimated one-third of global shipping passing through the South China Sea (SCS) annually, tensions are threatening regional stability and security, with the potential to disrupt the global economy. The SCS is also rich in fish stocks and oil and gas reserves, fuelling competition over fishing rights and offshore energy exploration. Canada is concerned about China's escalatory and destabilizing activities in the East and South China Seas. This includes the militarization of disputed features; the use of naval, coast guard and maritime militia vessels to intimidate and threaten the ships of other states; and the unilateral declaration of administrative authority over the Spratly and Paracel Islands. Canada opposes all unilateral actions that escalate tensions and undermine stability and the rules-based international order. Canada places great importance on lawful commerce, navigation and overflight rights, as well as the sovereign rights and jurisdiction of coastal states in the South China Sea, exercised in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS. These fundamental principles are essential to a secure, stable and prosperous maritime region. Canada stands ready to contribute to initiatives that build confidence and help restore trust in the region. Canada is also concerned that tensions have impeded regional cooperation in protection of the marine environment in the SCS.

Canada continues to urge that China and ASEAN members make concerted efforts to implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC). Canada recognizes efforts made by ASEAN members and China to develop a Code of Conduct for the South China Sea. We encourage transparency in the negotiations. Canada is of the view that

such a Code should be in the spirit of what was agreed to in the DOC and be binding, consistent with international law, and without prejudice to the rights of third parties. Despite diplomatic negotiations on a COC, Canada notes a deterioration of the security situation in recent years, caused by increasing militarization of disputed features in the Spratlys and the Paracels. Canada urges all sides to take steps to de-escalate by removing military assets from disputed features and engaging in good-faith negotiations with a view to managing or resolving disputes in accordance with international law.

2. National Security and Defence Policy

Canada is committed to strengthening peace and security and to enhancing its defence relations and engagement in the Asia-Pacific. In June 2017, the Government of Canada released its defence policy, *“Strong, Secure, Engaged.”* Through this policy, the Government of Canada directs the Department of National Defence (DND) and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) to deepen engagement with the Asia-Pacific region and ASEAN. In particular, *“Strong, Secure, Engaged”* directs DND and the CAF to have a more consistent, predictable, and sustainable presence in the region, including through increased participation in ASEAN Regional Forum events, and to seek membership in the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting – Plus (ADMM+).

Since then, Canada has taken steps consistent with this direction, including increased contributions to the peace and security of the Korean Peninsula, through personnel contributions to United Nations Command, and consistent participation in regional humanitarian assistance and disaster-relief efforts. Canada has also taken concrete steps to strengthen defence relations and cooperation with partners in the Asia-Pacific, including by expanding its network of defence attachés, establishing a more enduring regional naval presence, and increasing its regional military contributions, notably through Operation NEON, which supports international monitoring of North Korean sanctions evasion activities. Canada has also increased its participation in regional military exercises and high-level defence forums, such as the Shangri-La Dialogue, Fullerton Forum, and the ASEAN Regional Forum.

Canada’s defence policy also reaffirms our commitment to capacity building projects and mutual education, training and assistance. The Military Training and Cooperation Program (MTCP) supports cooperative, non-lethal training and military professional development activities across the region that enhance interoperability, expand and reinforce Canadian bilateral defence relations, and promote Canadian democratic principles, the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

The MTCP offers training in broad categories such as language, staff officer, peace support operations and professional development. There are 13 MTCP members within the Asia-Pacific region and over 3,500 candidates in this region have received sponsored training to date. In 2019-2020, DND trained 305 personnel from the Asia-Pacific region. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the postponements of regular MTCP activities in and outside of Canada. As a result, DND contributed lower than normal figures in 2020-2021, training 42 personnel in the Asia-Pacific region. The program has since adapted to delivering a selection of courses and training via distance learning for the time being. Once conditions allow, bilateral training courses hosted in Asia-Pacific countries will be prioritized for resumption. DND will continue using the MTCP to build and reinforce partnerships with Asia-Pacific countries and support Canada’s engagement objectives across the region.

In Canada's 2019-2020 fiscal year, Canadian federal government departments, including the Department of National Defence, incurred a total of CA\$29,612 million in defence-related expenditures.

Detailed information on Canada's military expenditure return is available below. Figures are reported in millions of Canadian dollars (CA\$).

Table 1. Canada's FY 2019-2020 military expenditure in millions of Canadian dollars (CA\$)

Resource Costs	Strategic Forces	Land	Navy	Air Force	Other military forces	Central support administration and command	UN Peacekeeping	Military Assistance and Cooperation	Emergency Aid to Civilians	Undistributed	Total
1. Personnel	-	4,214.5	1,710.1	2,279.7	627.7	5,101.8	10.2	1.8	-	-	13,945.8
1.1 Conscripts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1.2 Active Military Personnel	-	2,551.7	898.0	1,488.7	385.4	1,953.4	8.2	-	-	-	7,285.5
1.3 Reserves	-	387.6	92.6	94.7	21.5	280.3	2.0	-	-	-	878.7
1.4 Civilian Personnel	-	303.3	373.7	131.5	74.7	2,100.8	-	1.8	-	-	2,985.8
1.5 Military Pensions	-	971.9	345.7	564.7	146.1	767.3	-	-	-	-	2,795.8
2. Operations And Maintenance	-	1,881.7	1,686.0	2,422.9	468.4	3,960.7	50.6	12.3	-	-	10,482.6
2.1 Materials For Current Use	-	691.2	590.6	543.5	110.3	288.2	14.2	0.0	-	-	2,238.0
2.2 Maintenance And Repair	-	207.1	328.1	1,073.5	2.2	197.9	0.1	-	-	-	1,808.9
2.3 Purchased Services	-	782.3	602.1	692.0	260.1	1,372.7	19.6	0.6	-	-	3,729.5
2.4 Other	-	201.1	165.2	113.8	95.7	2,102.0	16.8	11.7	-	-	2,706.3
3. Procurement And Construction (Investments)	-	1,316.2	1,426.7	882.0	125.3	1,218.7	-	-	-	-	4,968.8
3.1 Procurement	-	1,025.0	1,284.2	780.2	122.4	1,089.9	-	-	-	-	4,301.7
3.1.1 Aircraft And Engines	-	-	-	676.9	-	18.9	-	-	-	-	695.8
3.1.2 Missiles, Including Conventional Warheads	-	-	15.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15.4
3.1.3 Nuclear Warheads And Bombs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3.1.4 Ships And Boats	-	-	1,185.5	-	-	157.1	-	-	-	-	1,342.7

3.1.4 Ships And Boats	-	-	1,185.5	-	-	157.1	-	-	-	-	-	1,342.7
3.1.5 Armoured Vehicles	-	117.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	117.3
3.1.6 Artillery	-	11.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11.7
3.1.7 Other Ordnance And Ground Force Weapons	-	7.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7.8
3.1.8 Ammunition	-	228.3	2.3	20.1	16.4	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	267.2
3.1.9 Electronics And Communications	-	53.8	18.4	19.1	-	282.7	-	-	-	-	-	373.9
3.1.10 Non-Armoured Vehicles	-	519.3	-	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	519.3
3.1.11 Other	-	86.9	62.6	64.1	106.1	631.0	-	-	-	-	-	950.6
3.2 Construction	-	291.2	142.5	101.8	2.9	128.8	-	-	-	-	-	667.2
3.2.1 Air Bases, Airfields	-	-	-	74.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	74.1
3.2.2 Naval Bases And Facilities	-	-	139.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	139.1
3.2.3 ELECTRONICS Facilities	-	0.2	-	5.4	-	0.9	-	-	-	-	-	6.5
3.2.4 Personnel Facilities	-	-	-	-	-	52.5	-	-	-	-	-	52.5
3.2.5 Training Facilities	-	28.3	0.4	-	-	28.3	-	-	-	-	-	56.9
3.2.6 Other	-	262.7	3.0	22.3	2.9	47.2	-	-	-	-	-	337.9
4. Research And Development	-	1.9	0.4	0.0	8.5	204.2	-	-	-	-	-	215.0
4.1 Basic And Applied Research	-	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	5.8	-	-	-	-	-	6.3
4.2 Development, Testing And Evaluation	-	1.8	0.1	-	8.5	198.3	-	-	-	-	-	208.7
5. Total (1+2+3+4)	-	7,414.3	4,823.2	5,584.5	1,229.8	10,485.4	60.8	14.1	-	-	-	29,612.2

3. National Contributions to Promote Regional Peace and Security

a) Counterterrorism

The global terrorist threat is diverse and complex. It demands a comprehensive and coordinated international response based on common goals, values and institutions. It also demands a response that is consistent with international legal obligations, including international human rights and humanitarian law. Canada's multi-pronged approach to counter violent extremism and terrorism includes diplomacy, intelligence, security and law enforcement, customs and immigration, transportation, justice and finance expertise. Canada is also committed to integrating gender considerations and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda into counter-terrorism efforts to ensure that our approach is consistent with our commitments under the Feminist International Assistance Policy and guided by key principles including equality, non-discrimination, participation, inclusion, transparency and accountability.

Canada is of the view that global counter-terrorism efforts must put more emphasis on preventing and countering the spread of violent extremism, rather than only reacting to the actions of terrorists. The UN Secretary-General is seeking to drive forward the international community through his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. Canada supports this initiative both domestically and internationally.

In June 2017, Canada launched the Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence (Canada Centre). As a centre of excellence, the Canada Centre provides national policy leadership, supports local level initiatives, and coordinates action-oriented research on countering radicalization to violence. Its mandate is to support the prevention of radicalization to violence of all kinds, regardless of where it originates. To support this work, the Canada Centre is engaging broadly with communities, municipalities, provinces, law enforcement, non-governmental organization, and other stakeholders across Canada to: develop relationships built on trust; increase the overall understanding of radicalization to violence; encourage open and transparent discussions; and inform programming, research and policy priorities.

The security of the Asia-Pacific region is inextricably linked to that of ARF partner countries, and Canada is committed to working with those partners to counter terrorist activity. Southeast Asia therefore continues to be a priority region for Canada's Counter-Terrorism Capacity Building Program (CTCBP). Since 2015, CTCBP has supported a number of counter-terrorism capacity building projects in the region totalling over CAD \$18 million.

CTCBP programming has focused on regional efforts throughout Southeast Asia, with a particular emphasis on advancing regional security cooperation amongst ASEAN member states. In order to effectively address terrorist threats in the region, CTCBP has focussed programming efforts on border security, countering the financing of terrorism, legislative and judicial support, countering violent extremism, stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, and strengthening law enforcement agencies across ASEAN member states.

For example, CTCBP is funding UNODC to develop legislation to combat the movement of foreign terrorist fighters and enhance national counter-terrorism legislation to conform to

international human rights principles, norms and standards. This work also supports the implementation of UNSCR 2178 on fighting terrorism.

Through CTCBP, Canada is also providing support to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Cambodia to enhance border security, in hopes of reducing threats posed by transnational organized crime and terrorist activity. The project will provide regular training programs to increase and strengthen national and sub-national immigration and border police units to minimize, track and respond to any type of unlawful movement.

Multilaterally, CTCBP has also supported a number of initiatives, including INTERPOL Special Notices training, as well as investigation, forensic collection skills building, and identifying and tracking foreign fighters moving to/from conflict areas. As a key example, CTCBP has provided funding for INTERPOL's Project SUNBIRD since 2017, to enhance the capacity of enforcement agencies across ASEAN through targeted border and counter-terrorism training. SUNBIRD activities to prevent and counter terrorism threats have been a successful collaboration among policing professionals from a wide range of specialties across ASEAN member countries. Recently concluded, this project reached approximately 400 law enforcement professionals across ASEAN. A total of 13 weeks of training on the use of INTERPOL's Policing Capabilities was delivered, including 207 law enforcement officials, of which 57 (28%) were female.

The nature and extent of training under SUNBIRD has contributed to increased capabilities of ASEAN law enforcement officers to detect persons of interest and respond to threats when employing INTERPOL tools. For example, a Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) training course was delivered in direct response to a request made by the Royal Thai Police (RTP). Separate training was also initiated for other ASEAN countries. These combined activities saw 54 officers in the region trained on INTERPOL international standards in DVI.

In line with Project SUNBIRD's women in policing objectives, nearly 40% of the officers trained were female. Forensic monitoring visits to all ten ASEAN member states were conducted over a ten-month period. The purpose of these visits was to encourage units in using and populating INTERPOL Forensic Databases. This has resulted in increased fingerprint submissions by countries into INTERPOL databases. Two training activities were also dedicated to enhance the leadership competencies of women in law enforcement, reaching over 40 female officers across ASEAN law enforcement. The project's Operational Component contributed to ASEAN countries developing their border-management security through INTERPOL, with all ASEAN countries now having some form of integration with INTERPOL databases.

Noting the importance of combatting violent extremism, CTCBP is also supporting countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts at the regional, national, and local levels through Southeast Asia. These efforts include examining the push and pull factors affecting at-risk refugee communities towards violent extremist groups, advancing countries' capacity to prevent radicalisation in prisons, and enhancing evidenced-based policy-making and strategy formulation in countering terrorism and violent extremism.

For example, CTCBP is working in the Philippines with Big Bad Boo Studios Inc. on implementing the 1001 Nights Life Skills Civic Education Program (LSCE). It is a multi-platform educational entertainment program that uses cartoons to teach 6 to 12-year old children life skills and civic values, including non-violence, human rights, democracy, gender equality and

the rule of law, in formal and informal learning environments. The project will be: (1) making youth more resilient to extremist narratives; (2) providing the Department of Education (DepEd) with a powerful and effective program that can be scaled for preventing violent extremism (PVE) - directly responding to the National Commission on CT's Peace Education priorities; (3) providing teachers and the DepEd with increased capacity to teach and inculcate values that have a proven track record of reducing vulnerability; and (4) providing the DepEd with Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) instruments that will be used during the program, and can be used thereafter, to identify communities and schools that have high degrees of vulnerability. BBB and partners will provide 1001 Nights materials for 100,000 students, 3,500 teachers and 100 schools (school kits and audiovisual equipment). As well, 30 master trainers and 3,500 teachers are trained on the 1001 Nights Civic and Peace Education Program (including teaching pedagogies that promote inclusion and gender equality) with the program is implemented in 100 schools.

Many of the CTCBP funded efforts, particularly those implemented by RCMP, have been delivered at the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC). This unique regional training hub supports ARF member states to collaborate and develop skills to effectively counter terrorist threats throughout the region, and beyond.

In addition to supporting the ARF, Canada works actively within a number of international arenas addressing new and emerging challenges and developing best practices and international standards to combat terrorism. These include the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC); the G7; the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), of which Canada is currently a Co-Chair with Morocco; the Organization of American States (OAS), where Canada chaired the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism from 2014-2015; the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); and the United Nations. Canada also has strong bilateral relationships with a number of key partners to address critical issues related to terrorism.

i. Non-Proliferation, Counter-Proliferation and Arms Control

Canada's approach to non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament is grounded in its steadfast commitment to the rules-based international order. International peace and security is a priority for Canada, as a means to provide stability and prosperity for all, and as such will continue to defend and promote non-proliferation, counter-proliferation and arms control, including in the ASEAN region.

Canada is an active State Party to all major international non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament (NACD) treaties and will continue to work with ARF partners to promote the universalisation and full and effective implementation of such treaties and instruments. These include: the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Arms Trade Treaty, Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, Chemical Weapons Convention, Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, IAEA safeguards system, Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (Ottawa Treaty), Convention on Cluster Munitions, and other arrangements such as The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation and the Missile Technology Control Regime. In addition, Canada continues to be a strong proponent of measures to prevent non-state actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, including UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and its successor resolution (UNSCR 1977), and the Proliferation Security Initiative. Canada also continues to advocate for the immediate commencement of

negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT).

In support of these NACD priorities, Canada's feminist foreign policy recognises that maintaining international peace and security requires an inclusive approach that considers the perspectives of all persons and that gender balance and gender considerations have a positive impact on the achievement of the shared goals across the international non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. As a strong proponent of gender equality and women's leadership in peace and security, Canada is a champion of Action Item 36 of the United Nations Secretary-General's Implementation Plan for the Agenda for Disarmament on the full and equal participation of women in decision-making processes.

Canada promotes these priorities with partners through its Weapons Threat Reduction Program (WTRP), which implements Canada's commitments to the G7-led Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. The WTRP's programming is closely coordinated with the ASEAN Secretariat and its member states to enhance the security of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) weapons and related materials in the region, including through the ASEAN Regional Forum. The ASEAN region is vulnerable to CBRN trafficking owing, inter alia, to its geography, role as a transportation nexus, lack of advanced export controls in certain nations, extremist groups active in the region, and the presence of improperly secured radioactive sources as well as endemic diseases, both with potential to be weaponized.

Since 2011, the WTRP has delivered approximately \$48M in programming in the ASEAN region focused on strengthening biological security, biological safety and disease surveillance capabilities; providing physical protection security upgrades and related training to facilities housing nuclear material; improving radiological security through the introduction of new technologies to store Disused Sealed Radioactive Sources; and building the competencies of nuclear security personnel in the region by establishing and enhancing Nuclear Security Support Centres to provide capacity building training and equipment for hands-on learning experiences.

The health-security capacity that Canada has helped to build in the ASEAN region has meaningfully strengthened the abilities of ASEAN partners to respond to biological threats, including COVID-19. This includes support to the ASEAN Emergency Operations Center Network (led by Malaysia), the ASEAN Plus Three Laboratory Network, and the ASEAN BioDiaspora Virtual Centre (led by the Philippines with support from Singapore) which combines artificial intelligence, public health, medical expertise and advanced data analytics to assess the risks of importation and spread of COVID-19, and is developing national mitigation, preparedness and response measures. Building on this longstanding partnership, Canada's WTRP provided additional support to ASEAN partners in 2020 to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, including an in-kind contribution of 690,000 items of personal protective equipment (PPE) to six ASEAN member states and the ASEAN Secretariat, the provision of COVID-19 diagnostic kits and related training to three ASEAN countries (through a \$5M contribution to the International Atomic Energy Agency) and financial support for the Institut Pasteur du Laos to acquire PPE and other critical equipment and supplies.

Canada considers the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to be the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. As we

approach the August 2021 NPT Review Conference, Canada remains committed to reinforcing and strengthening the NPT and its review process, including in collaboration with ARF partners Australia, Japan, the Philippines and other members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI).

In addition, Canada supports the contribution of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZs), such as the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ), to regional security and nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Canada welcomes efforts aimed at securing the signatures of P5 States to the SEANWFZ Protocol.

Canada continues to make concrete contributions to strengthen nuclear and radiological security worldwide, including in Southeast Asia, to support efforts to prevent the illicit trafficking of nuclear and radiological material, to secure radioactive material in use, storage or transport, to strengthen the physical security of nuclear facilities, to support the development of national legal frameworks, and to enhance domestic nuclear security regimes. This support is channelled through contributions to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund and through partnerships with implementing partners. The most recent project undertaken in the region supports security system upgrades to medical facilities housing on-site high activity radioactive sources in both Thailand and Malaysia. This project builds on previous physical protection upgrades to nuclear facilities in both countries, and will include related security training for personnel at the sites. In April 2021, Canada also initiated a \$2.1 million project with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) to enhance law enforcement and state intelligence agency capacities in preventing the illicit trafficking of nuclear or radiological material in Cambodia, Laos, Philippines, and Vietnam, specifically through national training exercises focused on best practices for information sharing, and activities to foster regional cooperation.

Canada is pleased to have been the inaugural chair of the Nuclear Security Contact Group (NSCG), which aims to implement nuclear security commitments, identify ways of addressing new and emerging threats, and maintain momentum on enhancing global nuclear security. The NSCG currently includes a number of ASEAN members, including the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam. Hungary succeeded Jordan as the Convener in September 2018. The NSCG welcomes new members to the Contact Group to enhance geographic representation, including in the Southeast Asian region.

Acknowledging the role of nuclear technology to meet the increasing energy demands of states and in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Canada supports the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in a safe and secure manner, notably through full cooperation with the IAEA. Canada strongly believes that implementation of the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol constitute the current safeguards verification standard. Through signing and ratifying the Additional Protocol, ARF members and Dialogue Partners can support transparency and confidence in the peaceful nature of their nuclear applications. Canada has consistently supported efforts to assist states to build capacity to fully implement the Additional Protocol and believes that the ARF can also work to promote its universal implementation in the Asia-Pacific region.

b) Transnational Crime

Canada is committed to working with Asia-Pacific partners, including through the ARF, the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOM-TC), and the Bali Process, to counter threats to governance and stability arising from the activities of transnational crime groups in the region, including cybercrime. Frequently linked to organized crimes are trafficking networks, including trafficking in persons, illicit drugs and/or firearms, migrant smuggling, money laundering, and wildlife trafficking, which underscore the transnational dimension of these challenges. Through the Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program (ACCBP) Canada has dispersed over \$14M initiatives in the region since 2015.

Migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons are particular areas of concern. Canada is currently an observer nation to the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Organised Crime with a particular interest in the trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling element of its mandate. Canada will also seek full membership in the Bali Process at its next Ministerial meeting, delayed to 2022 due to the pandemic. In the meantime, Canada remains an active observer and regularly participates in the various Bali Process working groups and the Ad Hoc Group Senior Officials Meetings. Through the ACCBP, Canada also works with regional partners to address these issues, often in coordination with global organizations like the UNODC, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and INTERPOL. The ACCBP Human Smuggling envelope has a funding envelope of CAD\$8.5 million per year to deliver capacity-building support. The majority of this support has focused on strengthening the capacity of authorities to prevent, deter and respond to human smuggling networks in Southeast Asia. This includes assisting countries in the region to strengthen border security through enhancing the capacity of front line officials to identify fraudulent travel documentation, as well as to improve regional collaboration on border management and human smuggling investigations.

Canada is also a regular contributor to the annual International Narcotics Control Board Conference on Precursor Chemicals and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS). This conference is focused on practical measures countries can take to prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals and trafficking of NPS. The Conference is held annually in Thailand, which recognizes the specific challenges faced by the region with respect to NPS trafficking and precursor diversion.

Finally, ACCBP has been reviewing potential cybercrime and cybersecurity projects in the region and is currently supporting one cyber project being implemented by the Royal Institute of International Affairs that seeks to improve cyber resilience in the ASEAN countries through increased understanding of the measures needed to fighting cybercrime, as well as develop informal networks between ASEAN stakeholders.

c) Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

The increasing intensity and frequency of natural disasters underscores the importance of strengthening practical cooperation among Asia-Pacific partners on disaster preparedness and response. Canada continues to be an active contributor to humanitarian relief efforts in the region, by providing timely, effective, coordinated and needs-based assistance, and working closely with partners in the region to enhance cooperation, coordination, and awareness. Ongoing discussions on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) issues

can serve to improve the delivery of such capabilities in the future, particularly in a region which will likely see ARF members respond to the same disaster.

Reiterating the importance of enhancing our response mechanisms through close collaboration and exchange of best practices, Canada is co-chairing the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ARF ISM-DR), together with Lao PDR and China, until 2022. Canada continues to reiterate the importance of finding synergies between the numerous disaster relief initiatives in the region, and to underline the importance of adopting a gender-sensitive approach in all aspects of disaster management, from preparedness through responses and recovery. Likewise, Canada encourages all ARF members to adopt a more proactive approach to collaboration, communications, planning and execution for the effective and strategic delivery of disaster relief assistance.

Moreover, Canada is pleased to be a member of the Regional Consultative Group (RCG) on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination for Asia-Pacific and considers that the Group represents a valuable forum to share best practices on civilian-military cooperation in disaster response and to improve predictability and interoperability in the region.

Canada recognizes the leadership that countries in the region are demonstrating in undertaking significant disaster risk reduction efforts. These efforts are enhancing preparedness and strengthening capacity to respond when disasters strike. Canada supports the ASEAN's efforts to provide a forum for the advancement of regional initiatives aimed at reducing the impact of natural hazards on populations in the area.

With the number of engagements related to disaster response in the region, Canada looks forward to working with ARF partners to better assess opportunities for synergies between the ARF and other mechanisms, including the RCG, EAS, and ADMM+, that strengthen ASEAN capabilities and advance local approaches to disaster response and risk reduction.

d) Maritime Security

As a Pacific nation, Canada is committed to contributing to maritime security and upholding international law alongside our ARF partners. Canada strongly supports continued ARF engagement on maritime security, including with respect to countering WMD proliferation and illicit trafficking. ARF cooperation on maritime security issues will continue to support the region's security and prosperity objectives by ensuring the efficient and secure movement of goods and people through strategic corridors.

Since the identification of maritime security as one of ARF's four key areas, ARF members, including Canada, have developed projects focused on enhanced information sharing and best practices, confidence building measures based on international and regional legal frameworks, and capacity building support to regional maritime law enforcement agencies.

Canada regularly deploys military vessels, aircraft, and personnel to work with our allies and partners in the region, including conducting port visits, exercises and training, as well as contributing to United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanctions monitoring. Canada also participates in the US-hosted multinational Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises that take place biennially. One of our Royal Canadian Navy vessels, HMCS Calgary, recently conducted a number of port visits in the region, including in Brunei, Vietnam and Singapore. This shows

our enduring commitment to strengthening security partnerships in the region and to working together to uphold the rules-based international order.

Canada views the Western Pacific Naval Symposium's (WPNS) "Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea" (CUES) as a means by which navies may develop mutually rewarding international cooperation and transparency, and provide leadership and broad-based involvement in establishing international standards in relation to the use of the sea. Canada was pleased to be involved in the development of this code.

Under Operation ARTEMIS, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) contribute to Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150), an operational flotilla conducting maritime security and counter-terrorism operations in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, and the Indian Ocean. CTF-150 is part of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), a US-led multinational naval partnership that was established in 2001 to combat terrorism and promote maritime security. The mission allows Canada to: contribute to regional maritime security in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa; maintain a presence in a region of strategic importance, and demonstrate Canadian leadership in multilateral security cooperation while operating alongside key allies and non-traditional partners (i.e. Pakistan, Singapore, and Gulf Cooperation Council countries). Canada assumed command of the mission in January 2021.

More broadly, Canada is committed to working with international organizations to meet the security challenges of a complex maritime environment and recognizes the importance of broadening international consensus when addressing these challenges. We are actively engaged in a number of international forums, including the International Maritime Organization and the North Pacific Coast Guard Forum – which brings together experts from maritime safety and security agencies in Canada, China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, and the United States. The North Pacific Coast Guard Forum fosters multilateral cooperation and best practices through information sharing on matters related to fisheries enforcement, maritime security, illegal migration, illegal drug trafficking and combined operations.

Civil society and Track II initiatives can also make a useful contribution to developing informed options for regional partners in areas such as regional connectivity and preparedness to address incidents at sea. Canada will continue to support initiatives to organize workshops and seminars in ARF countries on these themes, and will encourage civil society, academics and others to contribute to the discussion by submitting constructive, original and non-zero-sum proposals that can advance solutions for peaceful resolution.

As mentioned under the Terrorism section above, Canada, through the CTCBP is also supporting maritime counterterrorism efforts in four ARF member states (Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam). This regional maritime security project targets national law enforcement agencies in charge of port and maritime security in order to strengthen institutional capacity to combat terrorism, piracy and armed robbery, and reduce the vulnerability of ships and port facilities to security risks.

e) Cyber (ICT)

The ARF region is susceptible to cyber threats emanating from both state and non-state actors, whether through the theft of intellectual property and sensitive information, the compromise of systems and critical infrastructure, the theft of money, and other malicious activity. The

COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the threat of malicious activity against the health sector, where cyber threats to hospitals and other health care providers have increased, in addition to cyber means being used to spread misinformation related to the pandemic. The pandemic has also highlighted concerns relating to how states seek to censor, control and partition the Internet under the pretext of cyber security and the misuse of cyberspace by criminals.

The ARF first addressed cyber-security issues in 2006 and has been steadily increasing its engagement ever since. The establishment of an Inter-Sessional Meeting (ISM) in 2016 was undertaken to support the process specifically on ICT (cyber) issues. Canada thanks Singapore, Malaysia, and Japan for their leadership of the ISM, in particular through 2020, and is looking forward to working with Indonesia, South Korea, Russia, and Australia as they become Co-Chairs.

The ARF has also put in place an Open-Ended Study Group (OESG) on CBMs to Reduce the Risk of Conflict Stemming from the Use of ICTs. The ARF's work on cyber CBMs, including the Establishment of ARF Points of Contact Directory of Security of and in the Use of ICTs, and the Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Consultations Mechanism has been particularly useful.

Canada believes that peace and stability in cyberspace is grounded on the acceptance of the applicability of existing international law, the adoption of norms for responsible state behaviour in cyberspace, and the implementation of CBMs. Canada welcomes the efforts undertaken by the ARF to develop and implement CBMs that will enhance transparency and dialogue while reducing the risk of misunderstanding, miscalculation and conflict in cyberspace.

Internationally, Canada collaborates with close allies and a wider coalition of countries that share our vision for a free, open and secure cyberspace that in order to promote can be a vehicle for political, social and economic development, and to counter efforts of repressive regimes to control the Internet and its content.

Canada is continuously working with friends and partners, including the ARF and its participating countries, to enhance cyber security by identifying cyber threats and vulnerabilities, and by preparing to respond to a broad range of cyber incidents.

Canada has also supported regional capacity-building efforts aimed at bolstering the ability of states to respond to and mitigate cyber threats. For instance, Canada is contributing \$CAD 1.5 million to a Chatham House led project to increase cyber resilience in the ASEAN countries through increased understanding of the measures needed to fight cybercrime as well as through building informal networks between ASEAN stakeholders.

Canada is also contributing to the ASEAN-Singapore Cyber Centre of Excellence and in April 2021, Canada and Singapore delivered a joint training on the Development of National Cyber Security Strategies. Canada, Singapore, and Malaysia each presented on their national strategies and held a panel discussion. Attendees were from the Philippines, Indonesia, Brunei, Vietnam, and Myanmar.

Canada is committed to continuing the collaboration developed within the ARF to support regional confidence-building and help support collective efforts to maintain a free, open, and

secure cyberspace. This commitment is re-enforced by Canada's intent to seek a Co-Chair position of the ISM on ICTs when next it becomes available (likely 2024).

f) Women Peace and Security and Peace and Stabilization Operations Program in Asia

Canada recognizes that while everyone is affected, women and men, girls and boys, (including gender non-conforming and intersex persons in all their diversity) experience conflict differently. They bring different perspectives to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Women broaden the agenda beyond that of the warring parties, and the link between their meaningful participation and durable peace agreements has been established. Yet, women are often excluded from formal peace processes. In recognition of this, Canada has been a strong supporter of the Women, Peace and Security agenda from its inception and co-sponsored UNSCR 1325 as a non-permanent member of the body in 2000. Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and security, (WPS) guides the efforts of nine federal departments and agencies to implement the agenda both at home and internationally.

Canada is committed to increasing its engagement on WPS in the Asia-Pacific region. In August 2019, Canada led the adoption of the ARF's first Ministerial "Joint Statement on promoting the Women, Peace and Security agenda at the ASEAN Regional Forum". In March 2021, Canada, Thailand and Indonesia co-chaired the ARF's first workshop on Women, Peace and Security to advance commitments outlined in the Joint Statement. The 3-day workshop hosted over 140 participants, including government officials, civil society, and academic representatives, mainly from the Asia-Pacific Region. The workshop addressed ways to strengthen existing regional coordination mechanisms and mainstream WPS agenda into ARF activities, and develop and advance regional commitments in implementing the WPS agenda. Canada will continue to deepen its engagement in Asia on all fronts, making sure to embed the WPS agenda into all its processes.

Canada's Peace and Stabilization Operations Program (PSOPs) is designed to prevent and respond to conflict and crisis abroad. PSOP's approach to stabilization includes targeted efforts to anticipate, prevent and respond to violent conflict and promote long-term stability. PSOPs provides a strong Canadian voice through policy leadership and advocacy, coordinates a whole-of-government response to various conflicts and crises, and provides visible and concrete assistance through targeted programming and expert deployments. PSOPs current engagement in Southeast Asia totals over \$15 million focuses on peace and stability programming to protect and promote human rights, implement peace agreements, and advance the role of women and youth in the participation and promotion of peace and security.

For example, through the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, Canada is supporting the empowerment of Bangladeshi and Burmese women and youth so they are equipped to lead and participate in community-based peacebuilding and decision-making at local, national, and regional levels. The GNWP is working with representatives of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to strengthen the commitment of Member States to further the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security agendas. In particular, GNWP amplified the recommendations from women and youth for sustainable peace and gender equality in Myanmar to ASEAN and other global policymakers. GNWP plans to implement the first national consultation on the National Action Plan to integrate issues

confronted by Rohingya refugee and host community women and girls and advocate for their participation in the implementation in late 2021.

In addition, through funding to the Nobel Women's Initiative, Canada recently supported the Women's Peacebuilder Network, which works with grassroots women's organizations and peacebuilders in the Korean Peninsula, and in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, Canadian support to the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) sustains and strengthens the impact of women peacebuilders and organizations. In Afghanistan, with Canadian support, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom works to strengthen alliances by mobilizing men to work with women for peace and to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

In March 2019, UN Women, alongside the UN Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Department of Peace Operations, announced the launch of the Elsie Initiative Fund for Uniformed Women in Peace Operations. The Elsie Initiative Fund is designed to use collective resources to increase the meaningful participation of uniformed women in UN peace operations, with a focus on police and military roles. It provides flexible funding to countries that contribute troops and police to UN peace operations to increase their deployment of trained and qualified uniformed women. The Fund also includes the provision of the innovative 'Gender Strong Unit Premium,' which is a results-based payment for the deployment of military contingents and Formed Police Units that include the substantial representation of women across all units and functions, and which meet criteria to ensure an adequate work environment. In April 2021, UN Women launched the second programming round, which is currently underway. Canada encourages all troop and police contributing countries in the ASEAN region to consider submitting a letter of interest in the current programming cycle, which is expected to close by 31 July 2021.

To date, the Elsie Initiative Fund has received contributions and pledges of \$27.9M USD toward its \$40M USD fundraising target from Canada (\$17.5M CAD), the United Kingdom, Germany, Finland, Australia, the Netherlands and Norway. With UN Women, Canada currently sits as a co-chair on the Steering Committee. Other seats on the Steering Committee are occupied by the Department of Peace Operations (alternate UN co-chair); the Executive-Office of the Secretary-General; one potential applicant T/PCC (Bangladesh); one major donor country (United Kingdom); and one Contact Group member (Ghana). The three seats that belong to member states rotate every two years. More information is available at www.elsiefund.org.

4. Role of the ARF

a) National Contributions to the ARF

The ARF is a key security forum within the Indo-Pacific region and an important component of Canada's engagement in the region's evolving security architecture. We will continue to engage constructively with our partners to build capacity and ensure that the ARF continues to contribute to security and stability in the region as per the action lines of the Hanoi Plan of Action II (2020-2025) and the principles of the 2009 ARF Vision Statement.

Canada has expanded its diplomatic presence across the region and since 2015 has a resident diplomatic presence in all 10 ASEAN member states. In 2020, the defence representation in Malaysia was upgraded to full defence attaché and a defence attaché office was also opened in Vietnam. Further, Canada's appointment of its first dedicated ASEAN Ambassador in 2016,

as well as the expansion of its mission to ASEAN the year before, demonstrate our strong commitment to ASEAN and engagement with the ARF and our partners in the region.

In the 2020-2021 inter-sessional year, Canada continued to participate in and make significant contributions in a wide range of ARF events and regional security and disaster relief programs despite the constraints to this year's program of events due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to hosting the first ARF Workshop on Women, Peace and Security, Canada co-chaired the 19th ARF Intersessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ISM on DR) and the 3rd ARF Workshop on Implementing UNCLOS and other International Instruments to Address Emerging Maritime Issues. Canada will also co-chair the ARF Dialogue on Health Security to help ARF Members exchange and share best practices on responding to the global pandemic.

b) The Future of the ARF

The regularity of exchange facilitated through the ARF is increasingly important to sustaining an atmosphere of cooperation in a region of global strategic importance. In this respect, Canada encourages a pragmatic and cooperative approach to the ARF's work. By delivering concrete initiatives, we can demonstrate the constructive role played by the ARF in the regional security architecture.

Like many of our partners, Canada believes that it is important to build on the ARF's existing work in order to bring greater focus to addressing the region's security challenges. The development of a dedicated Intersessional Meeting (ISM) on cyber security is a positive development that reflects the ARF's ongoing evolution. In that spirit, the ARF could consider streamlining the agenda of the Intersessional Support Group (ISG) to ensure more time is spent on substance by senior officials rather than procedural matters and determine if the ARF framework should be reinvigorated.

As a mature organization and in the spirit of preventive diplomacy, the ARF can continue to provide a forum for active discussion of issues and perspectives without jeopardizing the activities and exchanges that members support. The ARF has been most successful in bringing together policy practitioners and experts to address specialized security issues that require interagency cooperation across borders. Its inclusive membership highlights the importance of the Indo-Pacific region and the interconnected nature of the global security environment. As such, future activities should take heed of other relevant regional and global efforts.

The ARF's success as a convener of security dialogue and cooperation among interagency communities of practitioners, experts and policy makers, is complementary to the roles of newer bodies like the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM+). These forums offer positive opportunities for complementary regional dialogue and cooperation, in keeping with the spirit of ASEAN-centrality, which Canada continues to support. In order to better contribute to advancing common approaches to shared policy concerns, Canada remains keenly interested in joining the East Asia Summit. Canada also continues to explore ways to increase its contributions to regional defence and security, including as an Observer in the ADMM+ Expert Working Groups on maritime security and HADR. In the longer term, Canada remains interested in membership in the ADMM+ itself.

Since its inception in 1994, the ARF has become a cornerstone of a burgeoning security community that works together to protect the region's vitality and continued economic growth. In line with the consistent efforts of other ARF members, Canada is committed to playing a positive and constructive role in the continuing evolution of the ARF.

1. Situation in Asia

Despite the once-in-a-century pandemic and unprecedented changes in the international landscape, Asia has maintained overall stability since the beginning of 2020. Countries in the region have actively cooperated on COVID-19 response, expedited the restoration of economic and social activities and kept the stability of regional industrial and supply chains. Regional integration continued to keep momentum, highlighted by the signing of the *Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement* and the substantial development of the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation and other sub-regional cooperation. Hotspot issues were in general eased, with situation on the Korean Peninsula remaining stable, peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan entering a new stage, and overall stability being maintained in the South China Sea. Asia has become an important force in promoting global cooperation against COVID-19, advancing world economic recovery and growth, and upholding world peace and stability.

Nevertheless, uncertainties and destabilizing factors remain prominent in Asia. The spreading coronavirus has a deep-seated impact on the economic development and social stability of countries in this region. Evolution of regional landscape has picked up speed. Some major countries in the grip of Cold-War mentality and zero-sum thinking have drawn ideological lines and cobbled together exclusive “blocs” targeting third parties. Such actions have undermined regional solidarity, cooperation and stability, and disrupted long-standing regional industrial and supply chains. Traditional hotspot issues such as the Korean Peninsula and Afghanistan remain complicated, while non-traditional security risks such as terrorism and natural disasters are on the rise. It is therefore imperative that countries in Asia act with a greater sense of community with a shared future and enhanced solidarity and cooperation to jointly safeguard regional peace and prosperity.

2. National Security and Defence Policy

a) China’s national defense policy and defense expenditure

China is committed to peaceful development, and pursues an independent foreign policy of peace and a national defense policy which is defensive in nature. China follows a vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security for the world, and firmly upholds multilateralism and the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, actively promotes a new type of international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice, and win-win cooperation and will always play its part in promoting world peace and development, and upholding the international order.

China places equal importance on development and security and has taken coordinated measures to build both a prosperous nation and a strong army. We follow the principle of developing national defense in tandem with the economy and of building the armed forces through diligence and thrift. China, in light of the development level of its economy and the demands of national defense strategy, decides on the appropriate scale and composition of defense expenditure, and manages and applies these funds in accordance with the law. In terms of usage, China’s defense expenditure is assigned to three sectors—personnel, training

and sustainment, and equipment. The expenditure is open and transparent, and the spending is reasonable and appropriate. Compared with other major countries, China's share of defense expenditure in GDP and government expenditure, as well as its per capita defense spending are all at a relatively low level. Going forward, China's defense expenditure will maintain a moderate and steady growth commensurate with the level of economic development. China's defense budget for 2021 is around US\$209 billion.

b) China's military diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific Region

As a staunch force for world peace, Chinese armed forces have faithfully acted on the call for building a community with a shared future for mankind. Being the military force of a major country, it has actively fulfilled its international obligations and comprehensively promoted international military cooperation in the new era, striving for a better world of lasting peace and common security.

In 2020, despite the difficulties brought about by the pandemic, China managed to advance its international military cooperation in a well-planned and coordinated manner. To fight COVID-19, it donated supplies to the armed forces of 50 countries, sent expert teams to the armed forces of four countries, and held medical experts video conferences with the armed forces of 18 countries. We stay in communication with the US military to manage risks and prevent strategic miscalculation. State Councilor and Defense Minister Wei Fenghe led a delegation to the Moscow Victory Day Parade in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of Victory of the Great Patriotic War, and attended the Joint Meeting of Defence Ministers of SCO, CIS and CSTO Member States. During his visits to Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, the Philippines, Pakistan and Nepal, he reached consensus with his counterparts on strengthening anti-pandemic cooperation and deepening mil-to-mil mutual trust and strategic coordination.

In 2020, the August 1st Aerobatics Team of the PLA Air Force was invited to the Singapore Airshow. In addition, the PLA also participated in mil-to-mil exchanges such as the China-Cambodia joint military training exercise "Dragon Golden 2020" in Cambodia, the "International Army Games 2020", the "Caucasus 2020" exercise in Russia with the Russian armed forces, and the Cobra Gold-2020 joint military exercise in Thailand.

c) China's efforts to promote security in the Asia-Pacific Region

Since 2020, China has actively participated in security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region and strengthened dialogue and cooperation with relevant countries in an effort to jointly tackle all kinds of security challenges and cross-border threats and work relentlessly for regional peace, stability, development, and prosperity.

i. Relations with other major countries and organizations China-US relations

In 2020, the Trump administration took a series of misguided actions on issues related to Taiwan, Hong Kong, Xinjiang, Tibet, the South China Sea and trade, interfering in China's internal affairs and undermining China's interests. On issues related to COVID-19, it tried to stigmatize and scapegoat China, and even went so far as to unilaterally request China to close its Consulate General in Houston. As a result, China-US relations ran into the most complicated and serious difficulties since the establishment of diplomatic ties. In response, China has resolutely pushed back and taken strong countermeasures in order to safeguard its

sovereignty, security and development interests. On the other hand, the two countries maintained economic and trade cooperation. Phase one China-US Economic and Trade Agreement was signed. Bilateral trade in goods in 2020 reached US\$586.72 billion, up by 8.3% from the previous year despite all the difficulties.

After taking office in 2021, the Biden administration sees China as the “most serious competitor”, defines the China-US relationship as the one of “competition, cooperation and confrontation”, and continues to contain China with erroneous rhetoric and actions. China was compelled to respond as necessary in order to safeguard its national interests and dignity. On the other hand, China and the US have resumed some exchanges and cooperation. On 11 February, the eve of the Chinese New Year, President Xi Jinping received a phone call from President Joe Biden, and the two presidents agreed that China and the US should keep communication channels open, enhance cooperation on climate change and many other issues, properly manage and handle differences and avoid conflicts. In March, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs Yang Jiechi and State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi were invited to Anchorage, US, for a China-US high-level strategic dialogue with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan. In April, US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry visited China, and the two sides released the *Joint Statement Addressing the Climate Crisis*. In addition, China and the US also have had some engagements in economy, trade, health, agriculture and people-to-people exchanges, and maintained communication and coordination on major regional and international issues such as the Iranian nuclear issue and the Korean Peninsula issue.

ii. China-Russia relations

In 2020, the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era continued to grow at a high level. The two countries stood together against both the pandemic and the “political virus”, and continued to offer each other firm support on issues concerning the core interests of the other side such as sovereignty, security and territorial integrity. They enjoyed fruitful practical cooperation, vibrant cultural and people-to-people exchanges, and close and efficient coordination on international affairs. Major progress was made in synergizing the BRI with the Eurasian Economic Union. With expanding dimensions, China-Russia relations in the new era set a fine example of a new model of major-country relations. The two heads of state spoke over the phone on five occasions, charting the course for the development of China-Russia relations. On 19 March 2020, President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin had a phone call to exchange views on the COVID-19 situation in their respective countries and on coronavirus-response cooperation. On 16 April, the two presidents had a phone conversation, exploring new, flexible and diverse forms of cooperation to fight coronavirus on an ongoing basis in a bid to uphold global public health security. On 8 May, President Xi Jinping spoke with President Vladimir Putin on the phone to extend congratulations on the 75th anniversary of the victory of the Great Patriotic War and exchange views on upholding the victory of World War II and international fairness and justice. On 8 July, the two presidents exchanged views over the phone on speeding up the reopening of economic activities in various fields and strengthening cooperation in high technology, vaccine and drug R&D and bio-security. During their phone call on 28 December, they took stock of the development of China-Russia relations in 2020 and agreed to make the 20th anniversary of the signing of the *Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation*

Between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation the main theme of the bilateral relations in 2021.

Against the backdrop of COVID-19, China and Russia maintained close high-level contacts via video links in areas of legislation, national defense, science and technology, economy and trade, and people-to-people exchanges. State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met twice and had eight phone calls in 2020 to implement the consensus reached by the two heads of state and compared notes in a timely manner on bilateral relations, COVID-19 response cooperation and international and regional issues of shared interest. The two sides issued the *Joint Statement by the Foreign Ministers of the People's Republic of China and Russian Federation*, highlighting their common position on maintaining global strategic stability and other major international issues.

The two countries conducted close and effective cooperation in combating COVID-19. The two sides firmly supported each other and cooperated closely on the joint response to the virus and vaccine and drug R&D, setting a fine example for the international community to jointly fight the virus. The two sides sent medical expert teams and provided medical supplies to each other, jointly opposed attempts to politicize or stigmatize the virus, advanced joint prevention and control in border areas, and coordinated containment efforts with the resumption of work and production in various fields.

Despite the impact of the virus, practical cooperation between China and Russia maintained steady development. In 2020, bilateral trade volume reached US\$107.765 billion. China has been Russia's largest trading partner for 11 consecutive years. Trade in agricultural products, cross-border e-commerce and services witnessed trend-bucking growth.

iii. China-Japan relations

In 2020, China-Japan relations were stable on the whole. The two sides maintained communications at all levels. Economic and trade cooperation continued to expand. After the start of COVID-19, the two peoples have supported each other in COVID response, which was commended by all sectors of the two societies. On 25 September, President Xi Jinping took a phone call from Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga.

Since 2021, Japan has kept making negative moves which have had severe impact on China-Japan relations and affected regional stability. On 5 April, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, during his phone call with Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, expressed hope that Japan would view China's development in a more positive light, and emphasized that both sides should faithfully implement the important consensus reached by the two leaders, abide by the principles and spirits in the four political documents reached between the two countries, and cherish and uphold the hard-won momentum of improvement in bilateral relations.

iv. China-India relations

Since 2020, China and India have maintained contacts through diplomatic and military channels and prudently handled border situation to keep the bilateral relations on the right direction.

In April 2020, President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang and State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi exchanged congratulatory messages respectively with Indian President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar on the 70th anniversary of China-India diplomatic relations. In September, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on the sidelines of the meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers. They reached a five-point consensus on the border situation and bilateral relations. In February 2021, China and India completed the disengagement of frontline troops in part of the western sector of the border. The two countries have maintained exchanges and cooperation within multilateral frameworks such as the UN, BRICS, G20, the SCO, and the China-Russia-India trilateral mechanism.

v. China-ASEAN Cooperation

China has all along seen ASEAN as a priority in its neighborhood diplomacy, and firmly supports the building of the ASEAN Community, supports ASEAN's centrality in East Asian regional cooperation and supports ASEAN in playing a bigger role in regional and international affairs.

China-ASEAN relations have maintained sound and steady development since 2020. In February 2020, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi attended the Special China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) in Vientiane, Laos. The meeting issued the *Statement of the Special China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting on the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)*. In June, the opening ceremony of the China-ASEAN Year of Digital Economy Cooperation was held in Beijing, China. Premier Li Keqiang and Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc of Viet Nam, the rotating chair of ASEAN, sent congratulatory messages to the event respectively.

In September, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi attended the China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting via video link. Between 27 and 30 November, the 17th China-ASEAN Expo and China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit was held in Nanning, Guangxi Province. President Xi Jinping addressed the opening ceremony via video link. In the same month, Premier Li Keqiang attended the 23rd China-ASEAN Summit via video link, at which the *Plan of Action to Implement the China-ASEAN Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (2021-2025)* and the *Initiative on Building China-ASEAN Partnership on Digital Economy* were released, and the year 2021 was designated as the China-ASEAN Year of Sustainable Development Cooperation. On 7 June 2021, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi attended the Special China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Celebration of the 30th Anniversary of Dialogue Relations in Chongqing, China.

In 2020, two-way trade between China and ASEAN reached US\$684.6 billion, up by 6.7% year-on-year. The two sides for the first time in history became each other's largest trading partner. Cooperation in various fields has made steady progress. The two sides held the China-ASEAN Transport Ministers' Special Meeting on COVID-19, China-ASEAN Economic and Trade Ministers' Meeting, Meeting of China-ASEAN Heads of Intellectual Property Offices, the China-ASEAN Culture Ministers' Meeting, China-ASEAN Media Cooperation Forum, China-ASEAN Health Cooperation Forum, China-ASEAN Cyber Dialogue, and China-ASEAN Defense Ministers' Informal Meeting.

vi. Non-Traditional Security Cooperation Cooperation on disaster relief

Since 2020, China has actively promoted cooperation on disaster relief in the Asia-Pacific despite the impact of COVID-19. As the co-chair of the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ARF ISM on DR), China has led the efforts in updating the ARF Work Plan for Disaster Relief and co-hosted in May 2021 the 19th ARF ISM on Disaster Relief together with Lao PDR and Canada. China took an active part in the 36th and 37th meetings of ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), and worked for the establishment of the mechanism of the China-ASEAN Ministers' Meeting on Disaster Management. China hosted the Virtual Symposium on International Cooperation and Rescue among Departments of SCO Member States, and attended the APEC Emergency Preparedness Working Group. China also engaged in bilateral disaster relief cooperation with Russia, Singapore and Mongolia.

vii. Cooperation on maritime security

Since 2020, China has taken an active part in Asia-Pacific maritime security cooperation despite the impact of COVID-19. China and Japan held the 12th China-Japan High-Level Consultation Mechanism on Maritime Affairs via video link and decided to advance cooperation under the framework of the *China-Japan Agreement on Maritime Search and Rescue*, carry out joint exercises, and support cooperation on fighting maritime crimes and conducting exchanges between maritime law enforcement personnel of the two sides. China and the ROK launched a dialogue and cooperation mechanism on maritime affairs, and maintained regular communication through such channels as the military, coast guards, and search and rescue departments. China and ASEAN countries continued to explore closer maritime security cooperation under the framework of the *Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea* (DOC), and held the 2nd China-ASEAN Symposium on Implementing the International Maritime Labor Convention. China has actively implemented the *Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia* (ReCAAP), supported the capacity building and development of its Information Sharing Center (ISC), and attended the 14th Governing Council Meeting of Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia Information Share Center.

Since 2020, China has been actively engaged in Asia-Pacific maritime law enforcement cooperation for maritime security and stability. China Coast Guard had its law enforcement vessels registered with the North Pacific Fisheries Commission and conducted fishery law enforcement patrols. China and the Philippines held the Third CCG-PCG High level Meeting on Maritime Cooperation & the Second High Level Working Meeting. China and Viet Nam held the Fourth CCG-VCG High Level Meeting and expert group's informal consultation of low-sensitive field cooperation, and conducted joint inspection and patrol in the joint fishing zone of the Beibu Gulf. China and the ROK co-hosted the fishery law enforcement working conference.

China is committed to offering maritime security public goods for the region. The Chinese-constructed South China Sea Tsunami Warning Center provides all-weather earthquake and tsunami monitoring and early warning services for coastal states in the South China Sea. The Marine Environment Forecast and Support System along the Maritime Silk Road was put into operation in 2020, delivering forecast and support services for maritime shipping, escort and

disaster prevention in the Asia-Pacific region. China has also taken an active part in the activities of the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF), and promoted exchange and cooperation in this field through the IMRF's Asia-Pacific Regional Center.

viii. Counter-terrorism cooperation

The current counter-terrorism situation in the Asia-Pacific is complex and challenging. Terrorist activities occur frequently in some parts of the region. Terrorist groups use the Internet for propagation, recruitment and plotting terrorist attacks. COVID-19's impact on the economic and social stability of regional countries has increased terrorist risks in the medium and long terms.

The Chinese government stays committed to a holistic approach to national security that puts people's safety and security first. China opposes terrorism of all forms, and takes comprehensive measures to address both the symptoms and root causes. China firmly cracks down on terrorism and conducts counter-terrorism and de-radicalization operations in accordance with the law. China attaches importance to strengthening international counter-terrorism cooperation and opposes double standards on counter-terrorism. Since 2020, China has actively carried out policy discussion and practical cooperation with Asia-Pacific countries on counter-terrorism, and supported the counter-terrorism capacity building of relevant countries. China has deeply involved in the counter-terrorism cooperation under multilateral mechanisms such as the UN, BRICS, the SCO, APEC, the ARF and the Global Counterterrorism Forum, and hosted the International Seminar on Joint Response to Terrorism under the New Circumstances and BRICS CTWG Sub-Working Group on De-Radicalization. Such efforts have contributed to international consensus building on counter-terrorism and to the security and stability of the region and beyond.

ix. Cooperation in combating transnational crimes

China attaches high importance to combating transnational crimes. China fully leverages bilateral judicial and law enforcement cooperation mechanisms as well as the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* and other multilateral platforms, and takes an active part in international cooperation against transnational crimes in the Asia-Pacific region. China has held two INTERPOL Cybercrime Directors Workshops with law enforcement agencies of Japan, ROK, Singapore, and Hong Kong SAR of China, and participated in the APT Conference on Promotion of International Cooperation in Ensuring Cyber Security and Preventing Cybercrime via video link.

Since 2020, China has kept advancing law enforcement cooperation with ARF Member States despite the impact of COVID-19. China and ASEAN countries have worked together to tackle transnational crimes such as online gambling, telecommunications fraud and human trafficking. China organized the Fifth International Lianyungang Forum for in-depth discussions on fighting new forms of crimes and other issues. China attended the Global Initiative on Data Security Working Group Video Conference and the Lancang-Mekong Integrated Law Enforcement and Security Cooperation Center virtual meetings on combating human trafficking. China and Southeast Asian countries have worked together to combat economic crimes and telecommunications fraud, and rescued 42 trafficked women. Anti-narcotics cooperation has deepened. Since 2020, China has attended the Greater Mekong SubRegion Anti-Narcotics Cooperation High Level Meeting and Liaison Officials' Video

Meeting, and conducted working exchanges with the UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific. China participated in the 44th session of Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA), Asia and the Pacific, and held the China-Myanmar Anti-Drug Cooperation Video Meeting.

x. Cooperation on cybersecurity

China stays committed to enhancing, defending and contributing to global cybersecurity. Guided by the principles of peace, sovereignty, joint governance and inclusiveness, China has actively promoted the global governance of cyberspace to build a community with a shared future in cyberspace. In 2020, China put forward the Global Initiative on Data Security, calling on all countries to keep the global supply chain open, secure and stable, and opposing the use of ICT activities to impair other countries' critical infrastructure or steal important data, infringe upon personal information, or conduct mass surveillance against other countries. Countries should desist from coercing domestic companies into storing overseas data in their own territory or asking companies or individuals to provide overseas data without the latter's permissions. Companies should not install backdoors in their products or services, or seek illegitimate interests by taking advantage of users' dependence on their products. The Initiative aims to serve as a basis for rules-making of global digital governance with a view to maintaining the security of data and cyberspace and promoting the sound development and cooperation of the digital economy.

In 2020, China took a constructive part in the Open-Ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of ICTs in the Context of International Security (OEWG) and the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (UNGGE), and actively promoted the formulation of international rules for cyberspace. China actively supported the work of the UN Ad Hoc Committee to elaborate a comprehensive international convention on countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes, and facilitated the adoption of UNGA Resolution 75/282 in May 2021, which decided the outline and modalities for its further activities, paving the way for the launch of negotiation of the convention. China hosted the World Internet Conference Internet Development Forum to encourage dialogue and exchanges as well as collective efforts in upholding the peace and security in cyberspace.

China has been actively engaged in dialogue and cooperation on cyberspace with Asia-Pacific countries. China has taken a constructive part in the cybersecurity cooperation of ARF, advocated and facilitated the issuance of the ASEAN Regional Forum Statement on Cooperation in the Field of Security of and in the Use of ICTs in the Context of International Security by the ARF Foreign Ministers' Meeting. China has been actively involved in the ARF ISM on ICTs Security, with a view to raising public awareness for emergency response and promoting information sharing in the field of cybersecurity. China co-organized with Singapore and Cambodia the Workshop on Awareness-Raising and Information Sharing on Emergency Responses to Security Incidents in the Use of ICTs. In December 2020, China and ASEAN held the Inaugural China-ASEAN Cyber Dialogue and issued a co-chairs' statement, expanding exchange and dialogue on cyber and digital affairs. In April 2021, China, Russia and Viet Nam co-hosted the first ARF Workshop on Countering the Use of ICTs for Criminal Purposes, at which participating countries had practical discussions on jointly addressing cybercrime. China conducted consultations with the European Union, Japan, the ROK and

Singapore on cyber affairs, and has been deeply involved in digital and cybersecurity cooperation under the frameworks of the G20, APEC, BRICS, and the SCO.

xi. Cooperation on non-proliferation and disarmament

China firmly upholds the international arms control and disarmament system, and actively supports and participates in international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

China attaches great importance to the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (NPT) and firmly upholds its validity, authority and universality. China has participated in the webinar held by the UN Office on Nuclear Disarmament entitled “the Tenth NPT Review Conference: Effective Measures for Nuclear Disarmament”, the Annual NATO Conference on WMD Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, and the ARF Virtual Workshop on Nuclear Risk Reduction. China also engaged in intensive bilateral consultations with major parties and worked actively for practical results at the Conference.

China has worked actively for strengthening the cooperation mechanism among the five nuclear-weapon States (P5). On 10 March 2020, China, together with the other four nuclear-weapon countries, issued a foreign ministers’ joint statement to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT, promising to continue to safeguard the validity, authority and universality of the Treaty. Within the P5 framework, China has taken the lead to resume consultations with the ASEAN countries on the *Protocol to the Treaty on The Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ)*. Without prejudice to previous consensus, China stands ready to continue to facilitate the resolution of the differences on reservations between ASEAN and the other four nuclear-weapon States and jointly promote the early signing of the treaty and protocol. China is leading the Second Phase of the P5 Working Group on Nuclear Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms with important progress. China actively participates in P5 discussions on negotiations of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), nuclear policy, nuclear risk reduction, nuclear war prevention and peaceful use of nuclear energy, etc.

China has consistently called for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all weapons of mass destruction, including biological weapons and chemical weapons, and supported continued efforts of strengthening the validity, authority and universality of the *Biological Weapons Convention* (BWC) and the *Chemical Weapons Convention* (CWC). China has highly valued and actively engaged in international exchanges and cooperation under the framework of these conventions, shared experience of implementation and compliance, and assisted other countries in enhancing capacity to comply with the conventions.

China has strictly fulfilled its international non-proliferation obligations, firmly supported the United Nations in leading international non-proliferation efforts, participated in the implementation and comprehensive review process of Security Council Resolution 1540, and supported regional and international cooperation in non-proliferation export control. In December 2020, the *Export Control Law (ECL) of the People’s Republic of China* entered into force, which was of great significance to further improving China’s rule of law in non-proliferation, and fully demonstrated China’s determination to strictly fulfill relevant international obligations.

xii. Cooperation on outer space security

China has all along called for the peaceful uses of outer space, opposed weaponization of and arms race in outer space, championed a joint effort by the international community to safeguard enduring peace and security in outer space, and promoted the peaceful use of outer space to further bolster the economic development and social progress of all countries, and realize the vision of a community with a shared future.

China and ASEAN countries, guided by a shared commitment to the peaceful uses of outer space and opposition to the weaponization of and arms race in outer space, have engaged in sound cooperation on outer space security affairs, including jointly holding several ARF workshops on outer space security. China is ready to strengthen coordination and cooperation with ASEAN and other parties in the Asia-pacific to jointly contribute to security and sustainable development in outer space.

xiii. Cooperation on combating illicit small arms and light weapons

China exercises strict control domestically over small arms and light weapons (SALW) in accordance with law. China issued and implemented the *Law on Firearms-Control* and the *Export Control Law*, and revised the *Regulations of the People's Republic of China Governing Export Control of Military Goods*, with a view to ensuring the whole-of-the-process administration of SALW. China has also improved inter-agency cooperation and set up a Gun Control Information System to strengthen the management of guns.

China attaches great importance to the humanitarian issues caused by conventional weapons and supports the international community in taking necessary measures to regulate the international arms trade to combat the illegal transfer of conventional weapons, including SALW. China officially joined the *Arms Trade Treaty* (ATT) on 6 July 2020, and the ATT entered into force for China on 4 October of the same year. From 17 to 21 August 2020, China participated in the Sixth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty for the first time as a State Party. China takes seriously ASEAN countries' concerns over the illicit transfer of SALW, actively supports relevant efforts within the region and has participated in a number of ARF workshops on the transfer of SALW and other conventional weapons. China stands ready to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with all parties on this matter under the ASEAN framework.

xiv. Assistance in mine-clearance

China pays much attention to humanitarian issues caused by landmines and continues to promote international cooperation in demining assistance. Since 1999, China has provided demining assistance to ASEAN countries such as Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Myanmar, including training nearly 400 demining personnel and providing nearly RMB 49 million of financial and material assistance. In 2020, China provided Cambodia and Laos with mine detection and clearance equipment and humanitarian supplies worth RMB 9.5 million. In 2021, China will continue to do its best to help and cooperate with ASEAN, Cambodia, Laos, and other countries to help them clear landmines, rebuild their homes, and achieve sustainable economic development at an early date.

3. Role of the ARF

- a) Uphold openness and inclusiveness, and properly handle differences and disputes. The ARF has a large membership. Given the different social systems, histories, cultures, and development stages of these members, it is natural they have diverging views and positions on peace and security issues. All parties need to have equal-footed consultation, strengthen dialogue and communication, accommodate each other's core interests and major concerns, and avoid hyping up differences and sensitive issues. It is important to firmly uphold the international system with the United Nations at its core and the international order based on international law, uphold true multilateralism, and refrain from building "small circles" or seeking closeness and exclusion.
- b) Deepen practical cooperation and improve capacity building. Mankind is in a community with a shared future. Countries in the region face common challenges such as public health, terrorism, transnational crimes, natural disasters, climate change, and cybersecurity. All parties need to follow the *ARF Hanoi Plan of Action II (2020-2025)* and the consensus reached at the Foreign Ministers' Meetings, actively explore and propose practical cooperation projects, draw on each other's strengths through exchanges and cooperation, and enhance capacity building of members, especially developing countries, to better cope with various risks and challenges, and create a sound environment for regional development.
- c) Stay true to the founding aspiration and mission and maintain regional stability. The ARF was founded to promote security dialogue and cooperation. All parties need to stay committed to this mission, uphold the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security, advance confidence-building measures, follow the principle of seeking consensus through consultation and accommodating each other's comfort levels, and conduct preventive diplomacy in a step-by-step manner based on extensive consensus, with a view to contributing our wisdom and strength to enduring peace and stability in the region.

EUROPEAN UNION

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

In Asia, for the past twelve months COVID-19 has remained the top concern for many governments with vaccine access rising to dominate policy dialogues. Nevertheless, the overall security landscape and rise of vaccine diplomacy has exacerbated existing risks or created new issues, which complicate cooperation within Asia and between Asia and the rest of the world.

The value of a multilateral rules based global order has never been more pertinent than today. Those who believe and wish to uphold such an order, have a duty to join forces and cooperate in promoting and defending the rule of law and multilateral dialogue across the region. Therefore, the EU and ASEAN can together be the driving force towards a more cooperative and committed security apparatus ensuring the further longevity of the multilateral global order. Through its bilateral relationships and engagements such as the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), the EU can help ensure stability and security in Asia, which, in turn, helps protect European and global security. This cooperation has only become more important in recent years, with the EU's Asian partners being critical in the fight against issues from climate change to terrorism.

EU engagement in Asia is comprehensive and reached a critical milestone with ASEAN in 2020 when we raised our level of partnership to that of a *Strategic Partnership*. This has consolidated an already strong partnership and will allow us to further engage with our ASEAN partners on issues such as the response to COVID-19, climate change, sustainable development as well as maritime cooperation and cyber security. As well as ASEAN, the EU continues to engage closely with other Asian partners such as China, India, Japan and South Korea and seeks to build further on existing and future partnerships by establishing tailor-made security cooperation solutions with individual Asian countries.

In April 2021, the EU also formally concluded its Indo-pacific strategy highlighting the need to find avenues for cooperation on specific policy areas based on shared principles, values or mutual interest. In this strategic outline, the EU also reaffirmed its support for ASEAN centrality and it will continue to engage with the ASEAN-led regional architecture to promote an effective rules-based multilateral order.

Existing and future security dialogues will be complemented by concrete activities, such as training, targeted capacity building, confidence building, technical assistance peer-to-peer cooperation, table-top exercises; practitioner exchanges and development of networks, summer schools, and internships.

Alongside COVID-19, questions on the protection of human rights, peace and security continue to dominate the critical policy questions of the region. We have seen that in many aspects the health crisis is heavily intertwined with the security status of the region. The crisis has further demonstrated that these global challenges require collective responses. The EU as a multi-lateral actor exemplifies this by its support of the COVAX facility.

The COVAX facility has enabled for the quick distribution of life-saving vaccines to the region with Indonesia, the Philippines, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam and Brunei Darussalam all

receiving shipments through the programme. The EU, as one of the largest donors, sees vaccines as critical to the health, economic and security situation in the region.

The EU's "Team Europe" approach has allowed us to mobilise a package of over EUR 800 million to combat the spread of the disease and mitigate its impact on the ASEAN region, as well as an additional support programme "Southeast Asia Health Pandemic Response and Preparedness" of EUR 20 million, implemented by the World Health Organization. The EU also announced to allocate up to EUR 11 million for disaster preparedness and humanitarian aid in the Southeast Asian region, to support those affected by natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic, and conflicts.

Nevertheless, there are still major hurdles that stand in the way of possible future economic growth. The current health situation is particularly concerning in the context of the deteriorating security situation in Myanmar. This will risk to not only effect Myanmar but also neighbouring countries as displaced people flee from the conflict. In light of this, the EU would like to reiterate its support for UN Secretary-General Guterres' call for a global ceasefire as any conflict risks to exacerbate the existing health crisis.

2. National Security and Defence Policy

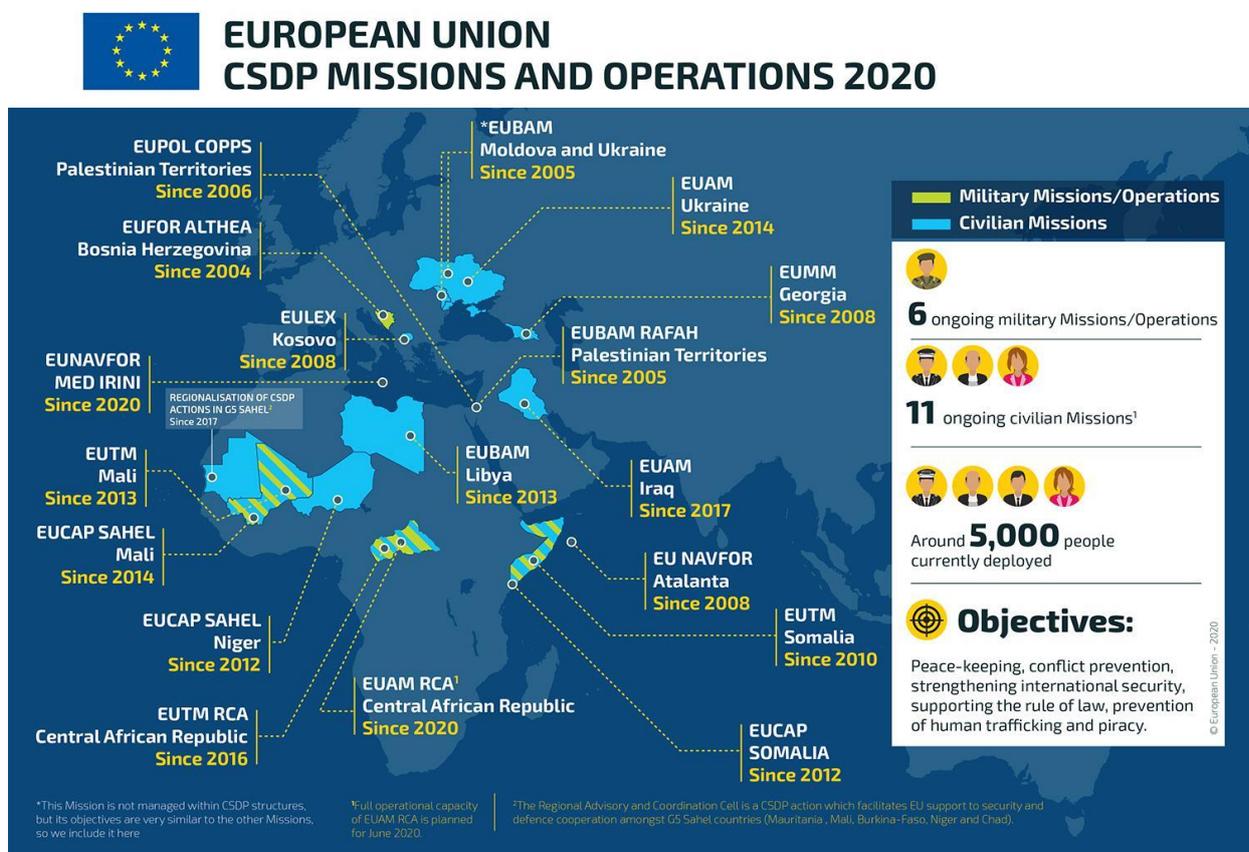
a) Overview of National Security and Defence Policy

Europeans are currently facing an unpredictable security landscape both in their immediate region but also further afield. Evolving threats from climate change, political instability, supply chain disruptions and health crises mean that that the concept of security has rapidly changed in recent years. Globalisation, free movement and the digital transformation continue to bring prosperity, make our lives easier, and spur innovation and growth. However, alongside these benefits come inherent risks and costs. We have seen the health crisis bringing this interconnected international system to a halt. It can also be manipulated by terrorism, organised crime and nation states, all direct threats to our citizens and our European way of life. Security threats are also becoming more complex, increasingly intertwined with climate policy, social policy and migration policy. More than ever, security threats do not limit themselves to national borders, but also reach beyond the border between the physical and digital world. The hybridity of these attacks mean that they can come at a moment's notice and leave no or little trace.

The COVID-19 crisis also transformed our notion of safety and security threats. It was highlighted in European Commission President von der Leyen's call for Europe to be a geopolitical actor and to ensure Europe's strategic autonomy. The EU has sought to ground this concept in supply chains in critical products and services throughout the pandemic. Increasing economic nationalism throughout the world has also reinforced the need to engage every sector and every individual to ensure that the EU is prepared and resilient to respond quickly to the rapidly changing security situation. The EU is in a unique position to bring a multidisciplinary and integrated response by helping security actors in member states access the tools and information they need. The EU will continue to push for a security policy that is grounded in the common values of respecting and upholding the rule of law, equality and fundamental rights and guaranteeing transparency, accountability and democratic control. Nevertheless, the security situation remains fluid within the union's borders but also abroad. To truly guarantee the security of European citizens, the EU needs to address the external

dimension of security and the internal/external security nexus. The EU's current approach to external security lies within the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). It is also preparing to push its external policy dialogue further through the development of its Strategic Compass, which is to be adopted in early 2022.

In 2020, the EU continued to carry out civilian and defence missions throughout its near periphery and in Africa. These missions have allowed the EU to contribute to peacekeeping efforts, conflict prevention and to strengthen international security. They are an integral part of the EU's integrated approach to tackling security concerns in both civilian and military contexts. As of June 2021, the EU conducted 17 CSDP missions and operations (6 military missions and operations, and 11 civilian missions).



In December 2017, the EU formally established the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), a treaty-based framework. 25 EU Member States undertook to advance towards further integrating and strengthening defence cooperation within the EU framework. They acknowledged the need for enhanced coordination, increased investment and more cooperation in developing defence capabilities and also in the joint operational use of those capabilities. Currently, 46 PESCO projects are under development, focusing on different operational domains, such as Cyber, Land, Maritime, Air, Space, Training, Joint/ Enabling. After the end of the first initial phase of the initiative in 2020 and the Strategic Review, which was conducted with a view to setting goals for the next phase, 2021 will see the start of the second initial phase of PESCO (2021-2025). PESCO also aims to ensure that the European defence industry will be more competitive by promoting the cross-border participation of SMEs and Mid-Caps throughout the EU. In November 2020, the EU decided on the general conditions

(political, substantive, legal) under which third States could exceptionally be invited to participate in individual PESCO projects.

Further progress has been made on the European Defence Fund, which has found its footing under a dedicated allocation in the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework. Launched in 2017, the purpose of the fund is to foster an innovating and competitive defence industrial base and to contribute to the EU's strategic autonomy. The current 2021-2027 allocation sits at €7.953 billion and approximately one third will go to financing competitive and collaborative defence research projects. The other two-thirds will complement Member States' investment by co-financing the costs for defence capabilities development following the research stage.

As set out in the EU Global Strategy, the EU recognises that it cannot tackle the world's myriad security tensions alone and requires the continuous support of its fellow multilateral partners. For that reason, the EU is committed to further strengthening international cooperation with key strategic partners (including the United States, Canada and Australia), with key regional and multilateral partners (such as the UN, NATO, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, the Financial Action Task Force), and with other regional organisations (including the OSCE, the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the League of Arab States).

Through 'Framework Participation Agreements', the EU aims to promote the participation of partners around the world in EU CSDP missions and operations. FPAs have been established with ARF members such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the United States and Vietnam.

At the end of 2020, the EU and UN signed the Framework agreement for the provision of Mutual Support in the context of their respective missions and operations in the field. This seeks to facilitate operational alignment and enhance complementarity between the EU and UN field missions in the areas of logistics, medical and security support. At the beginning of 2021, the High Representative and the Commission put forward a new strategy to strengthen the EU's contribution to rules-based multilateralism. At the centre of this strategy is a commitment to making the multilateral system fit for purpose and partnerships with the UN. This year, the EU and the UN are also starting the process of updating their joint priorities in the context of the EU-UN strategic partnership on crisis management and peace considerations. The EU views the UN peacebuilding architecture as critical in operationalising the conflict prevention agenda; coherent, inclusive and participatory peacebuilding and sustaining peace; and ensuring predictable, reliable and flexible funding to meet the increasing demands for peacebuilding activities.

The EU also appreciates and understands the diverse requirements that human and environmental security require in the 21st century. To tackle this, the EU launched the Climate Change and Defence Roadmap in November 2020. It puts forward a set of concrete actions to raise awareness on the effects of climate change on crisis response, security and defence. It also makes clear the desire to build strong cooperation with international partners to tackle the conflicts and instability derived from climate change. This demonstrates the vigour with which the EU tackles the multi-faceted problem of Climate Change.

The diverse requirements of security extend into human security, which has led the EU to place increased focus on gender in their security and external policy. Further upon the EU Framework on Women, Peace and Security in 2019, the EU also established the Gender Action Plan (GAP III) in November 2020. This seeks to ensure that 85% of all new actions throughout external relations will contribute to gender equality by 2025 and share the EU's strategic vision with partners at multilateral, regional and country level. GAP III will aim to empower women, girls and young people to participate in political, economic, social and cultural life. It is the participation and leadership of women that is essential for democracy, justice, peace, security, prosperity and a greener planet. For the EU it is not only the right thing to do, but also the smart thing to do. In this perspective, the EU co-chaired in 2020 the ARF Open Ended Study Group on Inclusivity. The objective of this inclusivity project is to promote and highlight the role of women, youth, and organizations in the region and further outline steps that can be taken to strengthen the roles they play in the ARF as appropriate.

Internationally, in 2020, the EU continued to use the breadth of tools at our disposal to play a leading role on the international scene and press for resolution on intractable security problems. Of particular note, the EU was engaged in:

- a) Preservation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) (as an integral part of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture);
- b) Development of the COVAX mechanism; and
- c) Supporting stabilisation in the Sahel, Libya and Afghanistan.

The EU remains convinced that only a political solution, grounded on the full implementation of UNSC Resolution (UNSCR) 2254 and the Geneva Communique, will enable lasting stability and peace in Syria. The EU and UN co-chaired the fifth Brussels Conference on "Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region". During this conference, €5.3 billion was mobilised by donors of which €3.7 billion came from the EU. This means that the EU as a whole remains the largest donor to Syria with €24.9 billion of humanitarian, stabilisation and resilience assistance collectively mobilised since the onset of the crisis.

In Libya, the EU has continued to support the UN-led Berlin process that aims at restoring peace and stability across Libya. The EU welcomed the formation of the Government of National Unity under the Prime Minister Abdulhamid Al-Debaiba. The EU looks forward to national elections in December 2021 as foreseen in the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum Roadmap and the EU is prepared to assist in institution building, economic governance and preparation for these elections. The EU maintains its close engagement with Libya as demonstrated by the visit of High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell in March 2021.

As part of the strategy on Libya and broader security within the Mediterranean, the Council of the EU has extended the mandate of EUNAVFOR MED IRINI – until 31 March 2023. This CSDP military operation will allow the EU to further enforce the UN arms embargo by inspecting vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya suspected to be carrying arms or related material in accordance with UNSCR 2292. EUNAVFOR MED IRINI will also monitor illicit exports of petroleum from Libya, contribute to capacity building and training to the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy and tackle the disruption of human smuggling and trafficking networks.

The EU continues to develop strong partnerships in Central and South-East Asia, and is actively involved in regional diplomacy and consensus building for peace in Afghanistan, which is

particularly pertinent in light of the US's withdrawal from the country. The EU believes that it is critical to engage in bilateral dialogue with Afghanistan's neighbours – China, India, Pakistan, the Central Asian countries – and with international stakeholders. This was exemplified through the joint press statement of May 2021 by India and the EU, which called for an "immediate, permanent and comprehensive" ceasefire in Afghanistan. The EU has also provided assistance in the context of the ongoing humanitarian crisis by continuing to provide financial and technical support. In 2020, the EU organised and funded a humanitarian air bridge between Europe and Afghanistan to transport 90 metric tons of COVID-19 relief items. In 2021, the EU has allocated €32 million in humanitarian support to ensure relief assistance reaches the most vulnerable (additional to the €250 million provided since 2014).

The EU and its Member States are continuing to intensify efforts to establish an effective, humanitarian and safe European migration policy. The EU has established a comprehensive migration policy and put forward a substantial number of measures to improve the management of migration in the different areas, be it to tackle irregular migration, improve border management, establish a functional asylum policy ensuring protection of those in need or improving legal migration frameworks.

In recent years, the EU has developed a holistic approach to the external dimensions of migration, and has fully embedded migration issues within overall relations with third countries, based on the principles of solidarity, partnership and shared responsibility. The EU's overall aim is to save lives and to promote regular and well-managed migration. The EU is committed to protecting the vulnerable and to providing assistance to refugees, migrants and internally displaced in need. We are also supporting legal migration pathways, in order to reduce irregular and dangerous journeys. The EU is working to help migrants and refugees stay closer to home by supporting the development of third countries and seeking to address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement. We are working with partner countries on resilience and stability and on creating jobs and opportunities for migrants, refugees and host communities.

The EU's approach to migration is based on genuine and tailor-made partnerships to address the challenges of migration, make the best of its opportunities and maximise its benefits. The EU has made considerable progress towards strengthening cooperation with third countries on migration, and there has been increasing political engagement from the EU's partners. EU cooperation on migration management continues to increase at both bilateral and regional levels. Migration issues form an important part of the EU's dialogues and partnerships with its near neighbours, with the Balkan states, with the African Union, with MENA region countries, and with the broader international community. The EU continues to strongly advocate for global responsibility sharing.

3. National Contributions to Promote Regional Peace and Security

The EU has continued to pursue an ambitious international security agenda that reflects our broad cooperation with our international partners. The fight against terrorism, pursuit of disarmament, maritime security and disaster management are key areas of EU engagement. The work is directly relevant to the most pressing issues in the Asia-Pacific region.

a) Counter-Terrorism

The fight against terrorism has picked up further pace during 2020 and 2021. The EU's key objectives at the global level are to deepen international consensus and enhance international efforts in combatting terrorism. The EU has worked to strengthen the strategic and policy continuum between its internal and external security in order to enhance the effectiveness of its counter-terrorism actions across the board.

Strengthening the nexus between internal and external security is a crosscutting priority under the EU Security Union Strategy adopted in July 2020. Noting that our security at home depends on peace beyond our borders, significant importance has been placed over the last year in prioritising action to strengthen the external dimension of counter terrorism: "cooperation on counterterrorism and preventing and countering radicalisation and violent extremism is central to security inside the EU. Further steps to develop counterterrorism partnerships and cooperation with countries in the neighbourhood and beyond is needed, drawing on the expertise of the **Network of EU Counter-Terrorism/Security Experts**".

As for the specific response to the terrorist threat, the **EU Agenda on Counter Terrorism (EU CT Agenda)**, adopted in December 2020 will strengthen the EU's framework on anticipating threats and risks, preventing radicalisation and violent extremism, protecting people and infrastructures, including through external border security, and effective follow-up after attacks.

Concerning its external dimension, the Agenda affirms that Counter-terrorism partnerships, including close cooperation with countries in the EU's neighbourhood, are essential to improve security inside the EU. The Council has called for further strengthening of the EU's external counter-terrorism engagement with a focus on the Western Balkans, North Africa and the Middle East, the Sahel region, the Horn of Africa, in other African countries where terrorist activities are increasing, and **in key regions in Asia**. Such engagement can help Member States in their work to close off terrorist activity, as well as working at a global level to combat terrorist organisations. In this regard, support from the CT/Security experts' network in EU Delegations in facilitating cooperation and promoting capacity building remains essential.

Like many other security threats, terrorism has taken on many different forms and aspects. To combat this, the Council of the EU adopted a regulation for removing terrorist content from the internet in March 2021. This regulation means that Member States' competent authorities will have the power to issue removal orders to service providers requiring them to remove terrorist content within one hour. Not only will this remove harmful content online, it will also reduce the proliferation of terrorist content affecting vulnerable groups on the internet.

The challenge of foreign terrorist fighters is emblematic of the link between internal and external security. Cooperation on counterterrorism and preventing and countering radicalisation and violent extremism is central to security inside the EU. In particular, further efforts should be made to support partner countries' capacity to identify and locate foreign terrorist fighters. The EU will also continue to promote multilateral cooperation, working with the leading global actors in this field, such as the United Nations, NATO, the Council of Europe, Interpol and the OSCE. It will also engage with the Global Counterterrorism Forum as well as all other relevant civil society actors. The Union's external policy instruments, including development and cooperation, also play an important role when working with third countries

to prevent terrorism and piracy. International cooperation is also essential to cut off sources of terrorism financing, for example through the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to tackle money laundering.

The EU actively promotes a criminal law approach to counterterrorism, based on respect for the rule of law and human rights. The EU encourages law enforcement and judicial cooperation, works to address conditions conducive to terrorism, strives to block terrorist financing, and seeks to counter-radicalisation and recruitment by extremist and terrorist organisations.

The EU remains actively involved with ASEAN on Counter-Terrorism through capacity building efforts and political dialogues. The EU holds regular bilateral security dialogues and consultations with ASEAN and its Member States on these issues. Countering radicalisation and violent extremism are priority areas in the *EU-ASEAN Plan of Action 2018-2022* and in the *ASEAN-EU Work Plan to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Crime 2019-2021*. Our policy dialogues continue to focus on four priority areas, namely illicit drugs, violent extremism, trafficking and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) matters.

The EU remains actively involved with ASEAN on Counter-Terrorism through capacity building efforts and political dialogues. Most recently, the EU co-chaired, together with New Zealand and Malaysia the 17th ASEAN Regional Forum Intersessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational crime in April 2021. The EU welcomed the co-chairs contribution on violent extremism and illicit drugs. The EU considers CTTC as one of the most useful areas for cooperation in the ARF region and the EU looks forward to continuing to work on these issues in the future.

As well as Counter-Terrorism, another pertinent area is that of Anti-money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism. To tackle this, the EU would like to organise a future workshop under the auspices of the ARF in order to build on work accomplished since the adoption of the International Convention for the suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (1999) as well as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS) and other important platforms.

b) Non-proliferation, Counter-proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

Addressing non-proliferation and disarmament continue to be an integral EU foreign policy priority in 2021. The EU continues to reaffirm its commitment to preserve the South-East Asian region free of nuclear weapons, and all other weapons of mass destruction (Bangkok Treaty), and to promote relevant international instruments.

The EU believes that a multilateral approach to security, including disarmament and non-proliferation, provides the best way to maintain international peace and security. The EU continues to support universal accession to, and the full and effective implementation of, all relevant international Treaties and instruments. The EU remains a strong supporter of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Chemical Weapon Convention (CWC), the Biological and Toxin Weapon Convention (BTWC), the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (the Ottawa Convention) and the Convention on certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The EU is actively

supporting the universalisation and implementation of these Treaties and Conventions by means of dedicated outreach projects.

The EU welcomed ratification of the CTBT by Cuba and the Comoros in 2021. The EU promotes consistently the benefits and the contribution of the Treaty to peace, security, disarmament and non-proliferation, including in its civil applications. In 2019, the EU was pleased to work with Malaysia on NPT-related projects, in its capacity as Chair of the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. Although the NPT Review Conference was postponed in 2020 due to the health crisis, the EU looks forward to continuing this cooperation in 2022 at the Tenth NPT Review Conference, when Malaysia will chair the Main Committee I on Nuclear Disarmament. The NPT Review Conference is also appropriately focusing attention on the importance of nuclear security, as an end in itself and as an enabler of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The EU is a natural partner in the responsible development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in line with the highest-safety, security and non-proliferation conditions. The EU has substantial experience in nuclear safety and is willing to share this expertise within the ARF framework. The EU promotes the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and its Amendment (A/CPPNM) as fundamental elements of the global nuclear security and anti-terrorism architecture. The EU is aware that accession to and implementation of these instruments may require capacity building. The EU is ready to provide such capacity building assistance, including through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

In this year's ARF ISM in June 2021 on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the EU reiterated its support to the NPT and its interest in a meaningful Tenth Review Conference. The meeting gave a good opportunity also to assess the EU's contribution and programmes in support of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, nuclear safety and nuclear security.

As part of the CBRN Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence, National CBRN Action Plans (NAPs) are one of the main elements of the methodology that form part of the *ASEAN EU Programme of action 2018-2022*. The NAPs have proven to be useful coordination instruments at the country level and efficient tools to channel donor support in this field. Cambodia, Vietnam and the Philippines have now developed officially approved NAPs with the support of the Initiative and Southeast Asia is the third highest financial recipient of this mechanism. Coordination on CBRN related issues with other key regional actors (i.e. the US, Canada, Australia, Japan) has also proved essential, and should continue. Like-minded coordination and sharing information helps avoid duplication and strengthens the position of the Initiative's network of 'national focal points'.

The EU will also look forward to further cooperation with regional bodies such as ASEANTOM which as the *EU-ASEAN Regional Project on Enhancing Emergency Preparedness and Response in ASEAN* and the *ASEAN Early Warning Radiation Monitoring Network*. These technical projects form part of a broader effort to exchange technical expertise to ensure the security of dangerous materials and ensure the consistent application of protective measures in the Southeast Asian region.

The EU will maintain its policies aiming at strengthening the global disarmament architecture and multilateral non-proliferation regimes. This includes continued diplomatic efforts towards

the goal of achieving a 'Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East'. This is also coupled with progress on the new START Treaty extension achieved by the Russian Federation and the United States earlier in 2021. Moreover, the EU is a global top assistance donor in addressing the threats posed by mines and explosive remnants of war. The threat from illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW) will continue to be addressed through international cooperation and supported by the EU through projects in third countries. The EU will also support international efforts to enhance outer space security.

c) Transnational Crime

The new EU security strategic framework in this regard is in the recently issued **EU Agenda on tackling Organised Crime**. The new EU OC Agenda provides the overarching political framework and priorities for the EU policy and aim to support action by the Member States complementing national security and national/local action, as well as supporting effective collaboration and coordination cross-borders, cross-sectors and inter-agencies. The Agenda covers **both the EU and international dimension**, with a focus on Western Balkans, ENP countries, South America, Africa and South East Asia. The Agenda provides the direction for collective action both within the EU and at international level.

Alongside the EU Strategy on Drugs, already in its implementation phase; and the EU Agenda on trafficking in human beings, about to be approved, there are also specific instruments of political guidance regarding transnational crime.

More than one third of the organised crime groups active in the EU are involved in the production, trafficking or distribution of drugs. Drugs addiction led to over eight thousand overdose deaths in the EU in 2019. The bulk of drug trafficking operates across borders with many of the profits infiltrating the legal economy. In response to this issue, the EU has adopted the EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025 which aims to protect and promote public health, to offer a high level of security and well-being for the general public and to increase health literacy. The strategy is focused upon three policy areas namely drug supply reduction, demand reduction and addressing drug-related harm. The EU hopes to achieve these through international cooperation, research, innovation and good governance.

Criminal organisations view migrants and people in need of international protection as a commodity to be exploited and the EU has announced a strategy to tackle that in the 2021-2025 EU action Plan to fight migrant smuggling. This action plan will focus on intra-EU cooperation, emerging counter-smuggling phenomena and more targeted cooperation with countries of origin and transit. This will hopefully tackle some of the illegal organisations that operated as 'facilitation services' for over 90% of the irregular migrants that arrived in the EU in 2015. In 2019, EUROPOL estimated that the eastern Mediterranean route still generated around €120 million in revenue for smugglers. This transnational crime feeds on illegal demand from within and outside the EU. It is an issue that specifically calls for cross-border cooperation and the EU will work with its partners and the EU action plan to support the work of law enforcement in combatting criminal networks.

Apart from human trafficking, organised crime groups have sought opportunities in other fields especially those in high profits and low risk environments. Illicit hunting, trading of wildlife and illegal mining all contribute to financing these crime groups, terrorists and other non-state actors. The EU estimates that illegal logging alone costs the governments of

developing countries €10-€15 billion a year in lost revenues. With these illicit revenue streams in mind, the EU is committed to strengthening its EU FLEGT Facility under the EU Green Deal as well as tackling the illegal wildlife trade as part of the EU's biodiversity strategy. These policies demonstrate the understanding that security is a multi-faceted concept that requires steps to be taken from every angle.

d) Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Cooperation by ASEAN Member States on disaster management make a positive contribution to the strategic aims of ASEAN, to sustainable development and to the broader regional integration process. The EU stands ready to provide humanitarian assistance to ASEAN member states when disasters strike and national or regional response capacities are overwhelmed. The EU's cooperation with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) has been critical with the development of the EU-SAHA Programme running from 2019 to 2023 utilising a fund of €7.2 million. The EU has also allocated €11 million for disaster preparedness and humanitarian aid in Nepal, the Philippines and other countries in the South East Asian region to support those affected by natural hazards and conflicts.

The EU's strategy aims to embed humanitarian response into existing local systems and to develop their ability to scale-up to accommodate new needs. Humanitarian principles and the needs of affected populations must be at the core of EU-ASEAN cooperation on disaster preparedness and emergency response strategies. Risk-informed investment, the inclusion of community knowledge and local solutions in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) planning, public-private partnerships, and identifying innovative solutions are also essential.

The EU, through the European Commission's 'European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations Department' (ECHO), has been active in Myanmar since 1994. In 2020, the EU allocated €51.5 million to help meet the crucial needs of the Rohingya people and host communities in Myanmar, Bangladesh and throughout the region. With the recent military coup of February 2021, the EU allocated €20.5 million in humanitarian aid to address the immediate needs of displaced and conflict-affected communities throughout Myanmar and to assist those who have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. In Rakhine state, the EU works with humanitarian partners to address the protection, food, nutrition and health needs of the most vulnerable people, particularly in the northern townships. The EU also provides humanitarian aid to people affected or displaced by conflict in Kachin, Kayin, and northern Shan states. In addition to providing food, healthcare, water and sanitation support to people displaced in IDP camps, the EU has also contributed to raising awareness of landmines, protection, and supports 'education in emergencies' programming to assist to conflict-affected children to resume their education in safe spaces.

The EU continues its deep engagement in Bangladesh and in 2021, the EU is providing over €25 million in humanitarian aid in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis as well as to strengthen disaster preparedness in the country. Humanitarian support continues to Rohingya refugees and host communities including food assistance, nutrition, clean water, sanitation, healthcare services, education, as well as increased protection for the most vulnerable groups. Both in disaster preparedness and in emergency response activities, the EU has provided more than €308 million in funding since 2002. Disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and resilience remain key priorities for the EU in Bangladesh, a country highlight exposed to

extreme natural events. Apart from formal programmes of aid, the EU has also contributed €100 million to the Bangladeshi welfare programme in 2020, which aims to aid thousands of garment workers hit by pandemic related job losses. Most recently, €650,000 was provided in emergency funding for the victims of the Cox Bazar fire. The EU stands ready and willing to support Bangladesh and the broader region to better prepare and respond to disasters in their countries.

The Philippines frequently faces a large number of different types of natural disasters. In addition, the island in the south of the country, Mindanao, suffers from a complex armed conflict that has lasted for decades and has caused the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people fleeing violence. Overall, the EU has been a staunch partner to the Philippines and has provided €134 million since 1996 of which €15 million was dedicated to disaster preparedness and €84 million was in response to natural hazards and the armed conflict in Mindanao.

Most recently in 2021, the EU provided €4 million of humanitarian aid funding to support the most vulnerable of which €2 million contributed to disaster risk reduction and resilience-building initiatives. The EU has also brought the Philippines into the Copernicus Programme, which will augment the country's environment data and monitoring initiatives and disaster response capabilities. This system was most recently demonstrated during the first typhoon of the 2021 Pacific typhoon season, Typhoon Surigae. In 2020, the EU promised €60.5 million in grants of development funding to the Mindanao region, specifically the *Mindanao Peace and Development Program-Rise Mindanao* and the *Support to Bangsamoro Transition Program*. Both these programmes will ensure job creation, strengthen inclusive and sustainable growth, and promote peace in the country's second largest island group.

In 2020, the EU (through ECHO) also supported Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) efforts in Bangladesh, the Philippines, Nepal and across South-East Asia. The EU systematically mainstreams disaster preparedness into its humanitarian assistance, as appropriate in each context. ECHO's *Disaster Preparedness Strategy* contributes to the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, and to the priorities established by the *ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER)* and its work programmes for 2021-2025.

ECHO support in South-East Asia aims to improve regional systems and capacities, ensure these are responsive and inclusive to community priorities, and fills gaps when local systems are overwhelmed. ECHO has been working on Disaster Preparedness (DP)/DRR in ASEAN countries since 1995, under the banner of its Disaster Preparedness Programme 'DIPECHO'. DIPECHO targets vulnerable people living in the main disaster-prone regions of the world. Its objective is to reduce the impact of natural disasters by strengthening local physical and human resources in high-risk areas. The first DIPECHO action plan launched in 1998. Since then, the EU has invested almost €81 million DP/DRR in this region. The most recent examples of work by ECHO include the *Move Up Project* in the Philippines, *Strengthening local humanitarian preparedness and response to conflict-affected populations* in Myanmar and strengthening the capacity of ASEAN member states to design and implement risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection. Working with local NGOs and CSOs on the ground, these plans have mobilised €3.7 million to aid in disaster preparedness and will ensure that the Asia-Pacific becomes more resilient to the issues that it faces.

The coronavirus pandemic has created a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented proportions, but the EU has been at the forefront providing humanitarian and civil protection assistance in response. On this, as with all other humanitarian issues, the EU works in full solidarity with affected people and with the countries requesting assistance. The EU was quick to respond at the outset of the coronavirus outbreak in China. The European Commission acted swiftly, coordinating and co-financing the delivery of emergency medical supplies through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Over 56 tonnes of personal protective equipment (protective clothing, disinfectant and medical masks) were delivered to China, provided by France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Estonia, Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia. China has since reciprocated on this support, by delivering critical medical equipment to the hardest-hit EU Member States. The EU continues its humanitarian response in 2021 by pushing hard to produce vaccines, which are distributed around the world. The EU is one of the largest financers of the COVAX mechanism, which has already distributed life-saving vaccines to the Asia Pacific region.

e) Maritime Security

The EU is strongly committed to a rules-based international maritime order and to the principles of international law as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The EU is committed to maritime security cooperation, freedom of navigation and overflight, and the peaceful and sustainable use of the seas in the interest of all states.

The EU is an active promoter of maritime security and safety, in Asia and globally. The EU maritime security policy has increasingly gained momentum since June 2017, when the European Council adopted its 'Council Conclusions on Global Maritime Security'. Our progress was again boosted through the revision of the EU's *Maritime Security Strategy Action Plan* in June 2018, which increased our focus on civil military cooperation, information sharing and addressing global challenges to EU sea basins and all oceans through regional responses. The EU is also using this momentum to enhance regional approaches to key maritime issues, notably through its co-hosting of the ARF ISM on Maritime Security from 2018 to 2021 and the third ARF workshop on *Implementing UNCLOS and other International Instruments to address Emerging Maritime Issues* in June 2021.

The importance of maritime security was made critically clear in the EU's recent Indo-Pacific strategy where the EU decided to extend the geographic scope of CRIMARIO II activities from the Indian Ocean into South and Southeast Asia. The EU is also aiming to contribute more meaningful to existing security challenges in the region and the EU's member states acknowledge the importance of a meaningful European naval presence in the Indo-Pacific.

At the international level, and in particular through the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the EU and its Member States are willing to intensify their cooperation with ASEAN countries to enhance maritime security and safety issues. The EU is willing work towards adoption of new common rules in many important areas such as the deployment of armed guards on-board vessels transiting high-risk areas to deter piracy; counter-terrorism; or other politically and economically sensitive issues such as illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Piracy attacks have significantly decreased over recent years, although challenges remain. The EU is proud of the contribution it has made to increasing maritime safety, particularly through its CSDP mission Operation ATALANTA. This mission – in combination with the wider international response, implementation of best practices (designed in international platforms such as CGPCS) by commercial ships, and the provision of private armed guards on-board ships – has made a considerable contribution to reducing the number of attacks at sea in the Western-Indian Ocean region. The EU also welcomes the contributions of Asian partner countries' naval forces to help combat these acts of piracy. Yet, the number of piracy incidents remains a subject of international concern.

4. Role of the ARF

The EU's contribution to the ARF is a tangible demonstration of its willingness to support ASEAN-led security architecture in South-East Asia. It is also evidence of the EU's commitment to regional peace and stability, and to the development of a more robust, rules-based regional security order.

The ARF continues to be the most comprehensive multilateral security forum in the ASEAN region. The ARF offers a valuable platform for partners to engage on a broad range of issues. Building on the ARF's comprehensive approach to security issues, the EU has engaged actively with ARF partners at various levels and on a range of critical issues.

In line with *ARF Ministerial Guidance*, the EU is keen to make the ARF more "action oriented". The EU acknowledges the importance of strengthening the organisational and institutional structures of the ARF, including the ARF Unit in the ASEAN Secretariat. The EU respects and promotes the central role of ASEAN in the emerging regional architecture and believes in the need to ensure transparency and synergy between ARF and other regional fora such as the ADDM+ and the East Asia Summit.

INDIA

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

1. The security situation in the region has been evolving in the light of the changing global strategic environment. The COVID-19 pandemic is impinging on the security challenges with varied level of pandemic spread and consequences across countries and responses by them. The effects of complex trade interdependencies and impact on economic situation have been a cause for concern in the region and beyond. Amid these developments, the regional security environment remains affected by numerous traditional and non-traditional security challenges across the entire Indo-Pacific region.

2. India's security is linked to the wider Indo-Pacific region, which is a seamless maritime space from the western coast of North America to the eastern shores of Africa. Whether it was the forces of nature – the monsoon winds for instance – or our maritime and trading history, there has been a strong connect from the Horn of Africa and the western Indian Ocean on the one hand and the Straits of Malacca on the other. The Indo-Pacific ocean system carries an estimated 65 per cent of world trade and contributes 60 per cent of global GDP.

3. The concepts of "vasudhaivakutumbakam" – 'the whole world is one family' and "sarvebhavantusukhinah" – 'all be at peace' are at the core of our values and traditions. The principles underlining these concepts, inclusivity, equality and openness guide India's Indo-Pacific vision. At the East Asia Summit (EAS) held in Bangkok, Thailand on 4 November 2019, PM Narendra Modi announced the Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI) as practical implementation of India's vision of Indo-Pacific. As an open, non-treaty based global initiative, the IPOI draws on the existing regional cooperation architecture and mechanisms to focus on central pillars conceived around Maritime Security; Maritime Ecology; Maritime Resources; Capacity Building and Resource Sharing; Disaster Risk Reduction and Management; Science, Technology and Academic Cooperation; and Trade Connectivity and Maritime Transport.

4. India calls for a free, open, inclusive and rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific, based upon respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations, peaceful resolution of disputes through dialogue and adherence to international rules and laws. Premised upon the centrality of ASEAN, India supports utilisation of ASEAN-led mechanisms as primary platforms for implementation of our shared vision for the Indo-Pacific. A common rules-based order for the region must equally apply to all countries as well as to the global commons. India's concept of Indo-Pacific recognizes diversity of interests of the countries inside the region as well as those with stakes in the region.

5. The Sea Lanes of Communications passing through the South China Sea are critical for peace, stability, prosperity and development of the Indo-Pacific region. It is natural for the international community to have vital stakes in ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight, and unimpeded commerce in these international waterways. This commitment was also reflected in the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. We hope that all parties to that Declaration would strictly abide by it, in letter and spirit, and will not take any actions that would jeopardize peace and security in this region. India hopes that the Code of Conduct negotiations between ASEAN member states and China leads to an outcome that is in keeping with all relevant international laws, including UNCLOS. We also hope that it does not prejudice the legitimate rights and interests of all nations according to international law.

6. India's engagement with the South East Asian region and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is based on its 'Act-East' Policy (AEP). Key elements of India's Act East Policy are to promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationships with countries in Indo-Pacific region through continuous engagement at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. India shares a deep connect with ASEAN and views it as a central factor for the security architecture in the region. India continues to attach importance to ASEAN centrality and unity in ensuring peace and stability in the region.

7. India is actively engaged with various Indo-Pacific frameworks including, inter alia, Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), East Asia Summit (EAS), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC). India also joined the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) as a Development Partner in July 2019 and has become an Observer at Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) in March 2020. India is also a part of various other multilateral institutions, which deal with maritime security issues in the region including ADMM Plus, Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ship in Asia (ReCAAP) and Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF). India also joined the Djibouti Code of Conduct- Jeddah Agreement (DCOC-JA) as an observer and the G7 and Friends of Gulf of Guinea (FOGG) as a member in 2020.

8. Terrorism continues to be a potent threat to global peace and security. In recent years, terrorist and violent extremist groups have significantly increased their capabilities by acquiring not only arms and ammunition but also new and emerging technologies, including drones and secure communications. Social media networks have been misused by terrorists to promote radicalisation and recruitment of vulnerable youth into their folds. Today's terrorism has dynamics that require calibrated responses and a cohesive approach.

9. The objective of peace and security in the Korean Peninsula has been of interest to the region as a whole. In this context, India supports dialogue and diplomacy to advance these goals. India also believes that solution to the issue of the Korean Peninsula should address concerns about the proliferation linkages of DPRK's nuclear and missile programmes that affect India's security.

10. ASEAN has been functioning as an anchor of stability in the region and its continuance in that role is critical. ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has emerged as an important initiative for developing a pluralistic, cooperative security order reflective of the diversity of the Asia-Pacific region. The ARF can play a critical role in dealing with the challenges posed by traditional and non-traditional threats facing the region and help in developing open, transparent, balanced and inclusive security architecture in the region. In order to strengthen this regional and international security environment, India attaches importance to multifaceted engagements with its partners in both bilateral as well as multilateral frameworks.

2. National Contributions to Regional Security

i. Counterterrorism and transnational crime

11. India believes that in an era when networking amongst terrorists is reaching alarming proportions, only through collective cooperation can the terror organizations and their networks be fully disrupted, the perpetrators identified and held accountable, and strong measures be undertaken against those who encourage, support and finance terrorism and provide sanctuary to terrorists. The growing lethality of these twin problems is a global cause of concern and India has reiterated, at various bilateral and multilateral platforms, its resolve to combat it in all its forms and manifestations.

12. India condemns terrorism in all its forms and expressions and firmly believes that no cause whatsoever or grievance can justify terrorism. India has suffered the scourge of terrorism sponsored from across our borders for a long time. The Government of India is committed to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and to ensure that the perpetrators of terrorist acts, their masterminds and conspirators are brought to justice. Consequently, there has been perceptible improvement in the overall security scenario in the country during the last few years.

13. India is resolute in its fight against terrorism and fully supportive of United Nations efforts in that regard. It has played a crucial role in sponsoring and supporting many resolutions on Counter Terrorism. India has constantly pursued the adoption of draft Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) at the UN with an objective of providing a comprehensive legal structure to combat terrorism.

14. India has consistently taken steps to intensify and strengthen international co-operation through a variety of means like Joint Working Groups (JWGs) on counter-terrorism/security matters, Extradition treaties, Bilateral treaties on Mutual Legal Assistance (MLATs) in Criminal matters.

15. In recent times, the growing threat of cross-border terrorism has brought forth the inter-linkages between terrorist groups, cross-border operations including terror financing networks, propagating ideologies of hatred through the exploitation of modern technologies and funding arms and weapons. These activities have left no country aloof from the impact of terrorism and require a stronger response to deal with the growing challenges of international terrorism.

16. In recent years, the international community has increasingly focused on the phenomenon of the 'transnational organized crime - terrorism' nexus. To address these challenges, increased sophistication and a coordinated international response, with real time intelligence sharing, capacity building and technology assistance among partners is solicited.

17. India, during its UNSC membership in 2021-22, seeks to prioritise responsible and inclusive solutions, concrete and result oriented action by the UNSC for an effective response to international terrorism, reformed multilateralism to reflect contemporary realities, a comprehensive approach to peace and security, and also hopes to help streamline UN peacekeeping with a human touch.

ii. Non-Proliferation, Counter-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

18. India remains committed to universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. India strongly believes that nuclear disarmament can be achieved in a time bound manner through a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework. India's Working Paper, presented to the Conference on Disarmament in 2007, encapsulates this approach. India's annual resolutions in the UNGA on the "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons" and on 'Reducing Nuclear Danger' continue to have wide resonance.

19. India supports the commencement of negotiations on a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention at the Conference on Disarmament. India remains committed to the commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty in the CD on the basis of CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. India espouses the policy of "No First Use" of nuclear weapons and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states. India participates in the meetings on the initiative of 'Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament' (CEND). India also participates in the 25-member Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Nuclear Disarmament Verification (NDV). India is of the view that pending nuclear disarmament, we should advance efforts on nuclear risk reduction. As a responsible nuclear weapon State, India has undertaken various nuclear risk reduction measures in this regard. India has also participated actively in the ARF ISMs on Non Proliferation and Disarmament and related workshops and seminars.

20. India places great value on the role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in facilitating expansion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy while bolstering nuclear security and safety at the national level. India actively participated in the third International Conference on Nuclear Security (ICONS) organised by the IAEA in February 2020 in Vienna.

21. India attaches very high importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and supports all efforts to strengthen the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to enable it to fulfil its mandate within the framework of the Convention. India continues to accord high importance to the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BWC) and its universalization. In light of the upcoming Ninth Review Conference of the Convention in 2022, India reiterates its call for institutional strengthening of the Convention, including negotiation of a comprehensive and legally binding Protocol, providing for an effective, universal and non-discriminatory verification mechanism to strengthen the implementation of the Convention by States Parties.

22. India is mindful of the rapid pace of developments in science and technology which, while offering tremendous benefits, also pose potential challenges to international peace and security. India's annual Resolution at the UNGA on the "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament" highlights their consideration by the international community.

23. India has an unwavering commitment towards global efforts for preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. India continued to coordinate with the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) 1540 Committee and submitted its latest National Report, highlighting the measures and activities undertaken in the area of export controls and implementation of UNSCR 1540. After joining the UNSC as a member in January 2021, India has

participated in deliberations affecting international security affairs. India has also engaged with relevant committees of the UN on specific matters relating to the measures on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. India has a robust system of law based export controls of sensitive material, equipment and technology. India is a member of Missile Technology Control Regime, the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Australia Group. It also subscribes to the Hague Code of Conduct against ballistic missile proliferation.

24. India attaches high priority to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and has been actively participating in the deliberations of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) within the framework of the CCW. India continues to attach high priority to promoting arms control, disarmament and international security education. In this regard, India's Annual Disarmament and International Security Affairs Fellowship launched in 2019 has drawn in young diplomats from around the world including from many ARF member States.

iii. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) and Search & Rescue (SAR)

25. India's HADR and SAR efforts have supported the non-traditional challenges in the Indo-Pacific region. Building on its 2004 tsunami relief experience, India has since undertaken a wide range of HADR Operations ranging from major Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (in Libya, Iraq, Syria and Yemen), provision of drinking water to Maldives in the wake of major water crisis, to disaster response post earthquakes, cyclone and floods. As the "first responder" to calls of assistance, India has provided relief supplies and medical assistance to flood and cyclone victims of various friendly countries in the Indian Ocean Region. In response to the vast disruption and chaos created by the COVID-19 pandemic, Indian Armed Forces were tasked to provide medical teams, testing kits, medicines and food aid towards supporting friendly nations in their battle with the Pandemic. Under the SAGAR series of missions, Indian Navy provided food aid, medicines and medical kits to Indian Ocean littoral states. Indian Navy also provided assistance in prevention of maritime disaster in the IOR in two separate and significant instances of shipping disasters in 2020.

26. India is committed to collaborative and participative partnerships in HADR in the Indo-Pacific and has conducted HADR Workshops, provided HADR guidelines for militaries under aegis of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). India is taking concrete efforts in synergizing resources, actions and finding complementarities among Indo-Pacific nations on HADR assistance and cooperation. India's notable HADR missions in the IOR since 2020 include: January 2020: Cyclone Diane, Madagascar; May-Jun 2020: Medical support, medicines and food aid during COVID-19 crisis 'Mission SAGAR' to Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros and Seychelles; Aug 2020: Oil Spill and Pollution response- to Japanese flagged MV Wakashio off Mauritius; Sep 2020: Maritime assistance and salvage- fire onboard MT New Diamond off Sri Lanka; Oct-Nov 2020: humanitarian assistance and food aid- Mission 'SAGAR II' to Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti and South Sudan; Dec 2020: HADR assistance- Mission 'SAGAR III' to Vietnam and Cambodia; Mar 2021: food aid- Mission 'SAGAR IV' to Madagascar and Comoros; and May 2021: Rescue and pollution response to MV X-Press Pearl at anchorage in Colombo harbour.

27. India's HADR and SAR efforts in the Indian Ocean have seen an enhancement in capability over the years. Disaster Risk Reduction and Management is also an important Pillar of India's Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative. India is also the lead country for Disaster Relief Management priority area of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).

28. India along with Indonesia, is co-chair of the ADMM Plus Experts' Working Group on HADR for the period 2021-2023. The 16th EWG on HADR for the 4th Cycle was conducted on 28-29 April 2021 in a virtual mode. India, amongst other participants, shared its experience in HADR during pandemic times.

iv. Maritime Security

29. Maritime security is an important dimension of India's bilateral relations with all Indian Ocean Littoral states as well as regional bodies that are either based in or border the Indian Ocean region - ranging from IORA, IONS, ARF, ADMM Plus, EAS, Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), Head of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meetings (HACGAM), and the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP). Maritime Security is also one of the seven pillars of India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) on which India has taken lead and to work together with all the interested countries in the region to ensure peace and prosperity.

30. Indian maritime security agencies are actively involved in contributing to maritime security in our extended neighbourhood in cooperation with the countries concerned. India is engaging with all like-minded partner countries towards cooperation in prevention and detection of transnational crime in the maritime domain. On February 6-7, 2020, India, in partnership with Australia and Indonesia, hosted the 4th East Asia Summit (EAS) Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation in Chennai. The Conference focused on maritime security, maritime safety and Blue Economy among other topics, and brought together 18 participating countries of the EAS to deliberate on them.

31. India has been involved in capacity building, capability development and training of the maritime forces in the region; providing Lines of Credit, patrol aircraft and helicopters, patrol vessels and boats for surveillance of their vast EEZ, training to personnel, deploying Training Teams for enhancing maritime security capacities, and giving Hydrographic assistance to various IOR countries.

32. A number of initiatives spearheaded by India have contributed to strengthening maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. India is contributing to regional maritime security by ensuring safety and security of maritime traffic by helping its maritime neighbours in developing their capacity in shared Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA). In this regard, India has also signed White Shipping Agreements with a number of countries, provided capacity building assistance and ensured capability enhancement by imparting MDA related training.

33. Since 2008, Indian Navy has been deploying ships in the Gulf of Aden to address the large spread of unconventional security challenges in the maritime domain, such as piracy, smuggling, human trafficking, gunrunning, etc. Indian Naval ships, in addition to their contribution to maritime security of the region, have also safely escorted ships of World Food Program. With increasing dependence on the seas for national development and engagement with the world, the Indian Navy in coordination with other national agencies continuously coordinates with IOR

littorals on issues of maritime security. Further, based on the evolving security situation in the maritime domain, Indian Navy and Indian Coastguard undertake deployments of their ships and aircraft. Under Operation Sankalp, Indian Navy has been deploying its vessels to ensure freedom of navigation in the Straits of Hormuz since early 2019. In the light of increase in piracy and incidents of kidnapping of seafarers in the Gulf of Guinea, Indian Navy also deploys vessels in the region.

34. India launched the Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) at Gurugram, near New Delhi, in December 2018, to enhance maritime domain awareness through collaboration with partner countries and organizations. The center is gradually expanding its information sharing and cooperation with countries and regional entities. The 24 member Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) offers a broad-based platform for developing operational synergies with the Navies in the IOR and has eight Observer countries.

v. Cyber Issues

35. Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Cyberspace and Cyber security is an important subject of discussion in ASEAN and ARF. Delhi Declaration (January 25, 2018) of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit which marked the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations agreed to strengthen cooperation between ASEAN and India on cyber-security related issues. These included capacity building and policy coordination on cyber-security, including through supporting the implementation of the ASEAN Cyber-security Cooperation Strategy, ARF Work Plan on security of and in the use of ICTs and the work of ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on security of and in the use of ICTs.

36. The first and second ASEAN-India Track 1.5 Dialogue on Cyber issues were organized in New Delhi on 14 October 2019 and 12 October 2020 respectively with participation of government representatives and cyber experts from ASEAN Member States and India. To enhance connectivity between Indian and ASEAN youth in the field of ICT, India organized the ASEAN-India Hackathon from 1-4 February 2021. 330 students and 110 mentors from the 10 ASEAN countries and India worked together online for 36 hrs and competed forming 55 teams to come up with innovative solutions to 11 problem statements on Blue Economy and Education.

37. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Cyber domain including Internet has emerged as an important catalyst for growth in India. India supports a multi-stakeholder approach on matters related to internet governance. In matters related to internet, our policy is guided by democratic values and support for a governance structure that is open, democratic and inclusive.

38. India has over 500 million active internet subscribers, one of the largest in the world in terms of internet users and the number is increasing constantly. India has launched an ambitious programme called "Digital India" to bridge the digital divide, centered around three key areas: (i) Digital infrastructure as a core utility to every citizen; (ii) Governance and services on demand; and (iii) Digital empowerment of citizens.

39. There is growing inter-dependence between public and private, and other actors in the cyber space as well as growing dependence on critical infrastructure such as ports, airports, electricity grids, e-governance systems, health-care and medical facilities, banking and financial institutions, and businesses. Protection of the critical infrastructure is imperative, given the

continued surge of threats over the years that emanate from a wide variety of sources – state as well as non-state actors including proxies. International cooperation on high end cyber R&D skill building is important for addressing the current and emerging challenges in the ICT and cyber fields.

40. Data is increasingly becoming an important source of economic growth, and cooperation should be enhanced for trusted sources, respecting privacy and ensuring data protection. Growing cyber threats have the potential to disrupt national, regional and international security environment. Securing critical information infrastructure and tackling growing incidents of cyber crime and cyber terrorism are paramount. Cooperation on countering terrorism and extremism propaganda on the internet, in removing such content, in alerting each other of such activities and in investigating terrorist attacks mounted through the use of ICTs could be an essential part of confidence building measures among countries.

41. As a key member of the UN, India participated in discussions leading to adoption of two resolutions in December 2018 by the UN General Assembly which established the Sixth United Nations Group of Governmental Experts (UNGGE) and a new Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on developments in the field of information security. India is an active member of the sixth UNGGE and contributes to its deliberations. India participated in the 7th meeting of UNODC Inter-Governmental Expert Group on Cybercrime (IEGC) during the period 6-8 April 2021 which focused on building the capacity of law enforcement and criminal justice stakeholders to combat cybercrime as an ongoing and continuous process. India has extended its support for the adoption of final report on consensus basis in the recently concluded Third substantive session of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on developments in the field of information security held from 8-12 March 2021. India participated in the Organizational Session of Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes that was held from 10-12 May 2021.

v. Outer Space

42. Space activities increasingly contribute to national socio-economic development, promote scientific research, technological progress and support national self-defence endeavours. India believes that outer space should remain an ever-expanding frontier of cooperative endeavour, rather than conflict. It is incumbent on all space faring nations and others to contribute to safeguarding outer space as the common heritage of humankind, and preserve and promote the benefits flowing from space technology and its applications for all. India is party to all the major international treaties relating to outer space. As a major space-faring nation, India has made significant strides in developing a range of space technologies that also benefit other countries, especially fellow developing countries. India has sizeable space assets which provide the critical backbone for the country's economic and social infrastructure. India's focus is on the use of space for 'welfare' and not for 'warfare'. We remain opposed to the weaponization of outer space and preventing arms race in outer space and are willing to engage in deliberations and negotiations for a legally binding instrument in the field of outer space.

3. Role of ARF

43. India views ARF as an inclusive forum supporting dialogue and cooperation towards stability and security in the region. ASEAN is the driving force of the ARF, backed by the unity and solidarity of its member states. India believes that the ASEAN way of "dialogue and consensus"

have served the grouping well and should remain ARF's guiding principles. ARF provides a valuable platform in which practical cooperation can be forged amongst the member States in addressing various challenges.

44. India believes that ARF should continue to evolve into a balanced, open and inclusive framework for partners to interact and cooperate in addressing traditional and non-traditional security challenges. Candid discussions on regional and international security issues in ARF have led to greater understanding and appreciation of different perspectives and activities conducted under its framework, and have contributed to confidence building, among the ARF countries and beyond. India will continue to engage constructively in the ARF processes.

INDONESIA

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

Indonesia highlights the importance of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to upholding the ASEAN Charter, the Charter of the United Nations, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, the Bali Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations, and universally recognized international law thereby enhancing regional peace, security, stability, and prosperity as well as promoting mutual confidence and trust.

Indonesia remains of the view that maritime security in the region as top priority. Indonesia's perspective of the regional security outlook is consistent with its strategic geographical location, its nature as the largest archipelago in the world, and its vision to be the global maritime fulcrum. Southeast Asian waters and the surrounding area are vital to the region's economy, trade, transportation, and communication.

Disputes generated from overlapping claims in the area underscores the necessity for peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It is therefore crucial that all parties to refrain from activities that may escalate tensions, and to fully and effectively implement the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC).

Indonesia attaches great importance to peace and stability in the South China Sea, even though Indonesia is not a claimant state in the territorial dispute in the area. Indonesia appreciates the start of negotiation of the Single Draft Negotiating text of COC since early 2019, and despite the negotiation is being put on hold due to pandemic, Indonesia remains of the view that expediting the COC negotiation process is essential to achieving the main objective to govern the behavior of states in the region.

In the face of the threat of terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism that remains in our region, we need to manage our cross-border interactions. Consolidating border management or information sharing is one way we can tackle this issue together. Our efforts at counter-radicalization are even more crucial. Reports of various terrorist attacks in other parts of the world, and the rapid growth of terrorist groups and rebel groups that practice terrorism are worrisome. They are now big enough to challenge governments, even as they keep on murdering and terrorizing innocent people. We must stop them.

One that remains our concern in the region comes from the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Indonesia believes that Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) threatens the existence of every nation in the world, humanity, as well as peace, security and stability of the world at large.

On the issue of denuclearization of North Korea, Indonesia stresses the importance of a constructive dialogue as the main component of a peace process, which will ultimately be pivotal to the achievement of regional and international peace and security. In the near future, involvement of an independent and competent body (IAEA) in the verification process will certainly help to achieve the goal of a permanent denuclearization of the Peninsula.

To safeguard the region from the threat, Indonesia has always been committed to intensify the ongoing efforts of the State Parties of the Treaty of the South East Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty and the Nuclear Weapons States to resolve all outstanding issues pertaining to the early signing and ratifying of the Protocol to that Treaty, as reflected in the ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together, in accordance with the objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty.

2. National Security and Defence Policy

a. Overview of National Security and Defence Policy

Today's global security and strategic environment influences national defence. National policy should dynamic and adaptive particularly to address the increasingly complex and multidimensional, considering that there are military and non-military threats, and hybrid threats, which can be categorized as factual and non-factual. These threats include terrorism, radicalism, separatism and armed rebellions, natural disasters, border violations, sea piracy and natural resources theft, epidemics, cyber attacks and espionage, trafficking and drug abuse as well conventional war and armed conflicts. Internal country conditions cannot be separated from the influence of the strategic environment triggered by ideology, political, economical, socio-cultural, and security factors. These developments become challenges in managing national defence.

Indonesia pursues an independent and active foreign policy. Indonesia believes that neighbouring countries are friends with a shared commitment to promoting security and stability in the region. Establishing a common perspective is needed to minimize problems faced in international relations, both bilateral and multilateral fora.

Indonesia relies on a total defence system in order to achieve national goals. The system essentially involves all citizens and all other national resources, each with a role and function. The involvement of every citizen is based on love for the homeland oriented towards a common goal to serve national interests. Maritime defence is based on a concept of Indonesia serving as the Global Maritime Fulcrum. This concept of national defense guides every citizen in recognizing national goals, national interests, the nature of national defence, national defence system, national defence functions and national defence basic principles.

Indonesia has actively contributed to the work of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus in promoting regional peace and security through dialogue and cooperation. Within the framework of ADMM and ADMM-Plus, in 2020 and 2021, Indonesia participated in:

2020

- ADSOM WG and ADSOM-Plus WG, 8-12 January 2020 in Da Nang, Vietnam
- ADMM Retreat, 18-20 Februari 2020 in Hanoi, Vietnam
- ADSOM WG, video conference, 12 May 2020
- ADSOM, video conference, 15 May 2020
- ADSOM Plus WG, video conference, 30 June 2020
- ADSOM Plus, video conference, 7 July 2020
- ADSOM WG, ADSOM, ADSOM-Plus WG, and ADSOM Plus, video conference, 16 – 19 November 2020

- 14th ADMM, video conference, 9 December 2020
- 7th ADMM-Plus, video conference, 10 December 2020.

2021

- ADSOM WG and ADSOM-Plus WG, video conference, 2-4 February 2021
- ADSOM WG, video conference, 22-23 March 2021
- ADSOM, video conference, 24-25 March 2021
- ADSOM-Plus WG, video conference, 7 April 2021
- ADSOM-Plus, video conference, 8 April 2021
- Ad Hoc ADSOM WG, video conference, 2 June 2021
- Ad Hoc ADSOM-Plus Wg, video conference, 11 June 2021
- 15th ADMM, video conference, 15 June 2021
- 8th ADMM-Plus, video conference, 16 June 2021

Indonesia has played an active role in promoting peace and enhancing cooperation in the Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean region through ADMM and ADMM-Plus, including by initiating the Discussion Paper on ASEAN Outlook on the Indo Pacific (AOIP) from Defence Perspective which was agreed by ASEAN Defence Ministers at the 15th ADMM, 15 June 2021.

In 2021, Indonesia also actively participated in the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups via video conference, in all seven areas of cooperation. Indonesia takes its role in promoting and enhancing defence cooperation in the field of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) by co-chairing the ADMM-Plus Experts Working Group (EWG) on HADR together with India for the period 2021 - 2024. Indonesia has successfully hosted the 16th ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR on 28-29 April 2021 via video conference, which was the first meeting during the co-chairmanship. The meeting is aimed to discuss the work plan of the fourth cycle of EWG on HADR and to exchange experiences of disaster relief during pandemic situation.

Indonesia also continues its contribution in the regional effort in counter terrorism. As the initiator of ASEAN Our Eyes, Indonesia with other ASEAN Member States has drafted the Standard Operating Procedures of ASEAN Our Eyes (AOE SOP) which was adopted at the 14th ADMM, 9 December 2020. Indonesia also hosted the 3rd ASEAN Our Eyes Working Group (AOE WG) on 3-6 March 2020 in Palembang, South Sumatra, and the 4th AOE WG on 11 August 2020 via video conference which aimed to discuss and finalise the AOE SOP as well as to discuss update terrorism in the region. In 2021, Indonesia hosted the 5th AOE WG via video conference to discuss the implementation of AOE SOP, to discuss the mechanism and facility of each member's Our Eyes Command Centre (OECC), update facility of ASEAN Direct Communication Infrastructure (ADI), and to exchange information on the regional and global terrorism update.

In the framework of ASEAN + 1, Indonesia participated in the ASEAN-Australia Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting at the sidelines of ADMM Retreat in February 2020 as well as in the ASEAN-US Defence Ministers Informal Meeting, ASEAN-China Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting, and ASEAN-Japan Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting at the sidelines of ADMM in December 2020. As the country coordinator of ASEAN-Russia cooperation, Indonesia has managed to bridge Russia's proposal to conduct ASEAN-Russia Naval Exercise (ARNEX) so that the proposal was agreed by the ASEAN Defence Ministers at the 14th ADMM. In 2021, Indonesia also joined the ASEAN-China Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting at the sidelines of ADMM on 15 June 2021.

Indonesia attaches great importance of multilateralism. It is reflected by Indonesia's active participation in the international organizations such as in the United Nations. Indonesia serves its role as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council from January 2019 to December 2020. But Indonesia's participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations dated back since 1957, when the country dispatched its first deployment of military contingent to UN Emergency Force (UNEF) in Egypt. Since then, Indonesia has been a proud contributor by sending more of its military and police servicemen as peacekeepers.

The country's involvement in UN Peacekeeping Operations has always reflected the mandate emanating from the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution, to actively participate and contribute in the maintenance of world order based on freedom, lasting peace, and social justice.

Indonesia's commitment to UN Peacekeeping Operations has also transformed the latter into one of the country's flagships of diplomacy in the United Security Council membership.

As of April 2021, Indonesia's contribution to UN peacekeeping amounted to 2,795 peacekeepers. This number places Indonesia in the rank 8 out of 121 Troop/Police Contributing Countries (TPCCs). They are deployed in 8 missions out of 14 UN missions, namely UNIFIL (Lebanon), UNAMID (Darfur-Sudan), MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of the Congo), MINUSCA (Central African Republic), MINUSMA (Mali), UNMISS (South Sudan), MINURSO (Western Sahara), and UNISFA (Abyei-Sudan).

Indonesian peacekeeping contingent has been supported with moderate numbers of women personnel to help better implementation of the protection of civilian mandate in the field. As of April 2021, 183 female personnel are in the missions and serve as troops, military staff, Formed Police Unit, Individual Police Officers, and some as doctors and nurses.

Their presence has been a critical enabler to generate strong social interactions with the locals by exercising community engagement activities under the Civil-Military Coordination/CIMIC, notably protection to women, girls, and children. Indonesian women personnel are able to further help the contingent in winning the hearts and minds of the local community as an important component to support successful implementation of mandated tasks, as well as useful to provide safety and security to the peacekeepers themselves.

Those postures of contribution thus far have placed Indonesia as one of the main enablers to keep the UN well-resourced and well-oiled to run the machinery of peace operations.

Moving forward, Indonesia is keen to strengthen its contribution and support initiatives that bolster UN Peacekeeping substantively for its ultimate aim that is to assist a nationally-owned and -led endeavor by the host country to build sustaining peace and development. Among others is by enhancing the capacity of the Indonesian Peacekeeping Center in Sentul, as an international hub for regional training, and marshalling the role of the country's civilian capacities, including women participation, into peacekeeping missions to help effective implementation of the contemporary multi-dimensional peacekeeping mandates.

Indonesia has given intellectual contributions to the UN Peacekeeping namely:

- One of the first countries formulating the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P)
- Initiated a Presidential Statement (PRST) at the UN Security Council on increasing peacekeeping capacity to improve the safety and security of personnel (2019)

- Advancing its interests regarding reimbursement, transportation, and equipment in negotiations for the preparation of the Contingent Owned Equipment Manual 2020,
- Initiating the UN Security Council Resolution 2538 (2020) on Women in Peacekeeping.

3. National Contributions to Regional Security

i. Counter-Terrorism

I. National Level

a. The adoption of the revised Anti-Terrorism Law

In May 2018, the Parliament of Indonesia approved the revision of the Anti-Terrorism Law which has come into force in June 2018 through Law Number 5/2018. The Law reflects the balance of hard and soft approaches that have been implementing in Indonesia in countering terrorism.

Some of the new features of the Revised Law as follows: (i) criminalizing acts of individuals joining as FTFs abroad; (ii) criminalizing those individuals supporting others to join as FTFs; (iii) criminalizing the incitement to terrorism; (iv) criminalizing preparatory acts of terrorism; (v) establishing a whole set of the chapter for the prevention of terrorism, which focused on counter-radicalization, deradicalisation, and national preparedness against the acts of terrorism; and, (vi) setting up a clear guideline on restitution and compensation for victims of terrorism.

b. The adoption of the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism that Leads to Terrorism 2020-2024

As mentioned earlier, Indonesia has adopted Presidential Regulation Number 7 of 2021 on the National Action Plan (NAP) to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism that Leads to Terrorism 2020 – 2024. The NAP consists of three pillars, namely: (1) prevention, including national preparedness, counter-radicalization, and deradicalization; (2) law enforcement, protection of witnesses and victims; strengthening national legislative framework; and (3) international partnership and cooperation.

The NAP consists of 130 Action Lines, mostly related to prevention efforts. The overall aim of the NAP is to secure the protection of citizens from violent extremism that leads to terrorism, by addressing the drivers of violent extremism, namely (1) conditions conducive and structural context and (2) radicalization process, the so-called “push and pull factors”. The NAP takes on the whole of government and society approach. The NAP will be implemented by around 48 relevant ministries and agencies, with the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs).

On 16 June 2021, the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism that Leads to Terrorism 2020-2024 was officially launched by the Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia. The NAP also includes measures to prevent and combat terrorist financing. The NAP compliments the National Strategy to Prevent and Combat Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing. The measures are aimed at

preventing and disrupting terrorist activities, such as through the postponement of transactions and freezing of assets without delay.

c. *Initiatives of Soft Approach*

Apart from the NAP, Indonesia is also engaged in implementing national flagship programs in preventing terrorism, among others:

- Establishing the Peace Media Center (PMD) and BNPT TV, as means strengthening national counter-narrative campaigns;
- Establishing Youth Peace Ambassadors, at the national and regional level, by engaging Youth's resilience against terrorist propaganda, including violent extremism;
- Establishing Religious Leaders Task Force – disseminating peaceful messages of religious moderation;
- Establishing the Coordination Forum for Terrorism Prevention (FKPT) in 32 provinces – by involving various local leaders, religious leaders, academicians, and local governments;
- Establishing Synergy (Sinergisitas) between 46 ministries and agencies, focusing on prevention works, in 5 targeted provinces, namely West Java, Central Java, East Java, Central Sulawesi, and West Nusa Tenggara;
- Establishing the Deradicalization Centre, located in Sentul, Bogor, for terrorist inmates to undergo deradicalization program under voluntary nature, as means for creating a “center of excellence”; and
- Launching of the Indonesian Knowledge Hub on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (I-Khub), a web-based application to improve coordination, collaboration, and cooperation in the field of Countering Terrorism/Violent Extremism in Indonesia, among the government, civil society, and development partners. The I-KHub is being supported by the governments of Australia and the US, and by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

II. **Regional and International Level**

a. *The Role of Indonesia in AMMTC and SOMTC*

Through the AMMTC/SOMTC mechanism, as mandated by the Manila Declaration, Indonesia as the “voluntary lead shepherd on counter terrorism has initiated two documents focused on addressing the issue of radicalization and violent extremism, through a cross-sectoral and cross-pillar approach within the ASEAN context.

The first step is through the adoption of the ***ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (ASEAN PoA PCRVE 2018-2025)*** at the 12th AMMTC Meeting in Myanmar on 31st October 2018. The main objective of the ASEAN PoA PCRVE 2018-2025 is to prevent and counter radicalization and violent extremism that leads to terrorism in the Region. This document is expected to be a reference for ASEAN Member States when they begin to establish their respective national/domestic Action Plans in preventing and countering radicalization and violent extremism.

ASEAN PoA PCRVE 2018-2025 consist of 4 (four) pillars, namely (a) Prevention of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism; (b) Counter Radicalization and Promote Deradicalization; (c) Law Enforcement and Strengthening National Legislation Related to Countering Radicalisation and Violent Extremism; and (d) Partnership and Regional Cooperation.

In order to implement the ASEAN PoA PCRVE 2018-2025, as the voluntary lead shepherd in counter-terrorism, SOMTC-Indonesia has held series of ASEAN Cross-Sectoral and Cross-Pillars Meeting in 2019 to develop the Work Plan of the ASEAN PoA PCRVE or the ***Bali Work Plan 2019 – 2025***.

The ***Bali Work Plan 2019-2025*** was successfully adopted at the 13th AMMTC Meeting, on 27 November 2019, in Bangkok, Thailand. This document serves as a testament to ASEAN's commitment to synergize cross-sectoral and cross-pillar collaboration in preventing and eradicating transnational crimes, with the highest number of implementation participation from various sectoral bodies to date. There are 19 ASEAN Sectoral Bodies involved in implementing the Bali PCRVE Work Plan.

Upon the adoption of the Bali Work Plan, Indonesia convened ***The First Bali Work Plan 2019-2025 Multi-Sectoral Task Force (MTF) Meeting*** and also a Consultative Meeting called "***the Bali Work Plan MTF and ASEAN Partners Meeting***" in Bali, Indonesia, 11-12 December 2019. The purpose of this meeting is to introduce the Bali Work Plan to ASEAN dialogue partners and international organisations to encourage them to take part in its implementation.

b. *The Role of Indonesia in ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)*

On a broader scope, through the ASEAN Regional Forum consisting of 27 participating states, including the EU, Indonesia has initiated two documents focusing on addressing the issue of violent extremism, namely:

- 1) The ARF Statement on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism, adopted on the 26th ARF Ministerial Meeting held on 2 August 2019, in Bangkok, Thailand. This Statement is the first of its kind for ARF leaders in addressing the threat of terrorism and violent extremism at the ARF; and
- 2) The ARF Statement on the Treatment of Children Recruited by or Associated with Terrorist Groups, adopted on the 27th ARF Ministerial Meeting held on 12 September 2020 in Hanoi, Vietnam. The statement can be used as a reference for other derivative ASEAN documents related to the treatment of children associated with terrorist groups.

c. *International Context*

The return of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) issue remains a concern in the region. The shift of modus operandi of terrorist networks and the involvement of what used to be unexpected actors, including women and children. We have to anticipate and respond to it by improving our approaches in preventive measures and adjusting law enforcement responses against the perpetrators of criminal acts of terrorism.

Indonesia is of the view that more work needs to be done to advocate efforts to end violence against children. A more balanced approach between public security and the rights of children is supposed to be taken into consideration.

In this context, Indonesia sees it necessary to establish an international standard minimum rule on the issue of treatment of children associated with terrorist groups with the support of the international community. The rule should incorporate three priority areas, namely:

- Prevention of children from recruitment or association with terrorist groups;
- Rehabilitation and reintegration; and
- Justice for children.

Indonesia is also of the view that the treatment of children is an integral part of a comprehensive global strategy against terrorism and violent extremism. It is essential that children associated or recruited by terrorist groups be recognized and treated as victims, in order to promote a long-term strategy to counter-terrorism and violent extremism.

Measures Against Terrorist Financing

The Indonesian Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (INTRAC) is the forefront institution in preventing and combating money laundering and terrorist financing. It has three main functions such as receiving reports, analysing and disseminating the final products as well as financial intelligence reports to the competent authorities.

In terms of terrorist financing investigation, the special detachment 88 Indonesian National Police is the agency which uses the reports for further intelligence hints of investigation, while the National Counter Terrorism Agency (NCTA) is one of the respective coordination agencies using the financial intelligence information in regards to countering the financing of terrorism.

Indonesia has conducted the national risk assessment on terrorist financing including the white paper on risk mapping of terrorism financing related to the domestic terrorist network affiliated with Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

The risk-based approach enables countries to prioritize their resources and allocate them efficiently. It is necessary to enhanced the strategic collaboration among the financial service providers, financial intelligence units, intelligence community, law enforcement agencies and regulators in the terms of information sharing and supervision especially in particular areas within Indonesian region.

To fully support international counter-terrorism, particularly its efforts to fight terrorist financing, Indonesia actively participates as a member of Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG-ML). The government of Indonesia is deeply committed to build a robust defence against the financing of terrorism through the application of global policy standard which known as 40 Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recommendations.

By virtue of Indonesia's active diplomatic and domestic efforts, Indonesia has been delisted from the International Cooperation Review Group-Financial Action Task Force (ICRG-FATF). Furthermore, Indonesia through the Indonesian Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (INTRAC) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Financial Intelligence Units (FIU) of 52 countries to strengthen the anti-money laundering and terrorism financing regime.

To further its efforts at combating money laundering and terrorism financing, Indonesia is in the process of applying to become a Financial Action Task Force (FATF) member. Currently, Indonesia still continues to make efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of the counter terrorist financing regimes.

Indonesia identified three emerging challenges in countering the financing of terrorism: Firstly, it is suspected that humanitarian aids are likely being exploited by terrorist groups to fund their radical movement both domestic and overseas. We reveal the risk of social media in those crowd funding networks and examine the nexus between extremist groups and humanitarian aids. Secondly, the use of new payment method as part of financial technology innovations is identified as one of significant challenges. It is essential to have a comprehensive prevention scheme in combating the potential abuse of payment services for terrorist financing purposes. Thirdly, the potential use of alternative money remittance and currency exchange providers as channels for supporting the movements, these vibrant trends are also related to the issue of border protection.

ii. Non-proliferation, Counter-proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

Indonesia has taken necessary measures to comply with Security Council Resolution 1540, including cooperation with neighboring countries. Indonesia has always been constructively participating in multilateral negotiations to strengthen non-proliferation and to achieve disarmament of Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD) in all its aspects.

The Government in 2016 proposed the amendment of the Law No. 10 Year 1997 on Nuclear Energy which will stipulate three main issues under the National Policy and Strategy of Nuclear Security as well as the penalty that has not been provided by current national law. The three main issues are as follows:

1. Developing the integrated information system to support nuclear security;
2. Increasing coordination related to nuclear security by synergizing the duties and functions of relevant Government authorities; and
3. Strengthening the infrastructure of nuclear security.

Through Presidential Decree No. 19 Year 2017 on Indonesian National Authority on Chemical Weapons, Indonesia has a strong legal framework for our National Authority on Chemical Weapons, and proper modalities for enforcing all obligations of the chemical weapons convention.

With regard to enforcement actions, the Indonesian Nuclear Energy Regulatory Agency and relevant agencies conduct monitoring/control on the issuance of regulations and permits, carries out inspections, and implements procedure of the nuclear material inventory accounting system. The verification of inventory is managed by routine inspection, which involves the monitoring of the quantity, location and ownership; movement of materials from one installation to another; and export and import of nuclear materials. Routine inspection also includes monitoring waste management.

Disarmament

Based on Indonesia's commitment to nuclear disarmament, Indonesia emphasizes the importance of multilateralism as "the core principle" in meetings on non-proliferation and disarmament. In line with this, Indonesia underlines that the objectives of non-proliferation and disarmament should be achieved by lawful methods pursuant to the prevailing international law and within the framework of the United Nations.

Indonesia maintains its position that all pillars of the NPT, namely nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, must be implemented in a balanced, transparent and comprehensive manner.

Indonesia consistently calls on the nuclear states to fulfill their obligation to reduce their nuclear weapons as part of the implementation of Article VI of the NPT, with a clear time frame.

In addition, Indonesia desires that the process of nuclear disarmament be carried out in a verifiable, irreversible and transparent manner. On the other hand, the inalienable right of non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Treaty to pursue their national choices in the area of peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be upheld. It is our strong belief that the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes will ensure the survival of humankind in a regime of sustainable development.

Indonesia has become one of the first fifty countries to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on the 20th of September 2017 on the sidelines of the 72nd UN General Assembly in New York. Indonesia is of the view that the treaty is complementary to the NPT and serves as a major step towards our common goal of eliminating nuclear weapons.

Indonesia is also among the first countries to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) Treaty, having signed it on the same day it was opened for signature, on 24 September 1996. Indonesia believes that the CTBT is a key element in the international regime for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

As an Annex II country, Indonesia has ratified the CTBT through Law No. 1 year 2012, a very timely initiative as it was taken soon after ASEAN Member States concluded negotiations with Nuclear Weapon States (NWSs) on the latter's accession to the Protocol of the SEANWFZ Treaty at the 19th ASEAN Summit in Bali in November 2011.

As part of our unwavering contribution towards the universalization of the CTBT, Indonesia, together with Hungary, assumed Co-presidency of Article XIV Conference in 2013-2015.

Indonesia also actively participated in the series of meetings of the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS), which was held in Washington DC in 2010, Seoul in 2012, The Hague in 2014 and Washington DC in 2016.

Since the inception of the NSS, Indonesia played constructive and have presented a "gift basket" which serve as a reference for countries striving to enhance safety and security in accordance with their respective national processes and legal systems.

Non-Proliferation

Indonesia's reaffirms its principled positions on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects. Indonesia believes that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing and are essential for strengthening international peace and security. Non-proliferation derives its legitimacy from the larger objective of nuclear disarmament.

Pursuing non-proliferation alone while ignoring nuclear disarmament obligations is both counterproductive and unsustainable. Indonesia emphasizes that proliferation concerns are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and nondiscriminatory agreements.

Indonesia continues to advocate that the universality of the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) be made a priority and urges states, which are not yet parties, to immediately accede to the NPT as non-nuclear states.

In line with the ASEAN Political-Security Blueprint 2025, Indonesia envisions a Southeast Asia that is not only a nuclear weapons-free zone but also a region that is free of all other weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, Indonesia stands ready to intensify the ongoing efforts between ASEAN and NWSs to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty with a view to the signing and ratifying of the Protocol of SEANWFZ by the NWSs at the earliest.

Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy

On the other hand, Indonesia believes that non-proliferation policies should not undermine the inalienable rights of States to acquire, have access to, import or export nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes.

The inalienable right of each State to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy, including the sovereign right to develop full national nuclear fuel cycle, for peaceful purposes without discrimination, and to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, material and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

On 5-7 February 2018, during the working visit of the Director General of IAEA, Yukiya Amano, Indonesia and IAEA signed a practical arrangement on enhancing technical cooperation among developing countries and strengthening South-South cooperation. The arrangement covers a three-year period (2018-2021).

Indonesia has been at the forefront of technical cooperation in such fields as enhancing food security and plant breeding, where Indonesia has assisted trainees from Asian and African countries. In this regard, help was extended by the National Nuclear Energy Agency (BATAN) and its Center for Isotopes and Radiation Application (CIRA, BATAN), which is a designated IAEA Collaborating Centre engaged in developing new crop varieties to improve agricultural yields and food security.

iii. Transnational Crime

Information Sharing and Intelligence Exchange and Document Integrity and Security in Enhancing Cooperation to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Crimes

Transnational crime is a major threat to global security. In Southeast Asia. Because of this serious threat to stability and security, ASEAN has become vulnerable. The ASEAN action plan in combating transnational crime (Programme to Implement the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime), focuses on several types of transnational crime such as illicit drugs trafficking, human trafficking, piracy, weapons smuggling, money laundering, terrorism, international banking crime and cybercrime.

Considering that crime incidence has a significant impact on stability and security, as it can disrupt and threaten national development, Indonesia has vigorously enforced the relevant laws to protect its citizens from transnational crime.

Promoting Collaboration in the Prevention of Diversion of Precursors into Illicit Drug Manufacture

Performing across-ministries and other relevant agencies coordinations, especially those in charge of supervising the import, export, producers, suppliers and end users of precursors; (Ministry of Industry and Trade, Director General of Customs and Excise, drug and food supervision agency), checking on companies or individuals who's suspected of sending types of precursors that can be used as raw material for drug productions based on informations and reports received from abroad and within the country. This kind of informations could be recieved through information sharing channel of member countries' Interpol.

Legal basis:

1. Law of the Republic of Indonesia no. 35 of 2009 on Narcotics,
2. Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia no. 40 of 2013 on the Implementation of Law No. 35 of 2009 on Narcotics,
3. Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia no. 44 of 2010 on Precursors

Illicit Drug Trafficking

Indonesia is in a state of narcotics emergency with various problems of drug abuse and illicit trafficking. The prevalence of drug abuse from 2011 to 2019 has decreased significantly. According to national prevalence data in 2019, there was a decline of around 0,6% from 4,53 million people (2.40%) to 3,41 million people (1.80%). Almost one million people in Indonesia managed to be saved from the influence of narcotics. Furthermore, Indonesia also become one of the biggest targets for narcotics distribution by international networks. These facts clearly show the complex reality, trends and existing circumstances Indonesia is facing. For Indonesia, **comprehensive efforts being taken must also include strict and proper law enforcement measures against drug traffickers.**

There are 1004 types of NPS have been reported worldwide until June 2021, but only 83 NPS were found in Indonesia. 74 types of NPS are listed in the Ministry of Health Appendix Number 22 and 23 Year 2020 while 9 others have not been regulated.

In tackling world drug problem, Indonesia focuses its efforts in 3 (three) areas, which are: **demand reduction, supply reduction and international cooperation.**

Demand reduction measures remain an integral part of Indonesia's drug control strategies with a view to reduce and eliminate the illicit demand for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; and drug-related health and social risks. In light of this, Indonesia has recently launched a National Action Plan for Strengthening the Prevention and Eradication of the Misuse and Illicit Circulation of Narcotics and Narcotics Precursors on February 2020. The Action Plan is designed as a **four-pronged strategy focusing on prevention of drug abuse; eradication of illicit drugs, rehabilitation and treatment as well as research and development.**

Moreover, under Law on Narcotics, the government provides treatment and rehabilitation for victims of drug abuse. In 2020, more than ten thousands individuals enjoyed rehabilitation services in Indonesia. The National Narcotics Agency has also implemented the Outreach Drop In Center (ODIC) Program in all provinces in Indonesia, to expand services to addicts and victims of drug abuse in remote areas and among the most vulnerable.

In the area of **supply reduction**, Indonesia focuses on eliminating the illicit production, manufacture, marketing and distribution of, and trafficking in, psychotropic substances, including synthetic drugs, as well as the diversion of and illicit trafficking in precursors.

To tackle this problem, Indonesia has established a national interdiction task force comprising of relevant national agencies to combat illicit drugs coming in and out of Indonesia. Within the region, Indonesia initiated ASEAN Seaport Interdiction Taskforce in 2016 to combat transnational drug trafficking via sea routes, and prevent and deter drug syndicates from using ASEAN countries' seaports to distribute illicit drugs.

Apart from AAITF and ASITF, Indonesia also participates in the UNODC Global SMART (Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends) Program meetings. UNODC Global Smart consists of 11 East and Southeast Asian countries (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam). But in January 2011 it expanded to Latin America. During the meeting, member countries conveyed related to the development of Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS) and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) which are new problems for handling narcotics with the emergence of new substances that can have almost the same effect as natural narcotics.

It is imperative for countries exposed to world drug problems to engage and participate in initiatives taken in bilateral, regional, and international levels. Hence, Indonesia believes that **international cooperation** remains important to deter criminal syndicates and drug traffickers.

With the spirit of common and shared responsibility, Indonesia has established agreements and cooperation with other countries in the region. In light of this, the Indonesian government also organizes judicial cooperation to arrest perpetrators of organized crime involving narcotics, such as through extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA). Indonesia is a party to the ASEAN Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty, and establishes 8 (eight) bilateral agreements on MLA and 11 (eleven) bilateral agreements regarding extradition.

Bearing in mind the different capacities and circumstances of member states, Indonesia is of the view that in addressing the world drug problem, several factors should be taken into account, such as a zero-tolerance stand against drugs, a comprehensive and balanced approach, and the sovereign rights of each country. To this end, Indonesia welcomes the adoption of the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016-2025 as a guideline to address illicit drug activities and mitigate their consequences on society.

Trafficking in Persons and People Smuggling

Preventing and combating trafficking in persons is high on Indonesia's agenda. Indonesia is a country of origin, in addition to being a transit country and a destination for trafficking in persons. The majority of the victims of trafficking from Indonesia are Indonesian migrant workers who were sent to work abroad through illegal channel, especially domestic workers and workers in the fisheries sector.

Against this background, the Indonesian government has undertaken reforms and greater works to strengthen its efforts to combat trafficking in persons. At the multilateral level, Indonesia is a party to United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the Protocol to Suppress, Prevent and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the UNTOC since 2009.

At the regional level, Together with Australia, Indonesia has established the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime to strengthen cooperation in preventing and combating smuggling of migrants as a shared responsibility of countries of origin, transit and destination.

Along with other ASEAN countries, Indonesia has concluded ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children which entered into force since 8 March 2017. Indonesia also involves in other deliberations on counter trafficking within the framework of the ASEAN, through the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime and the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-sessional Meeting on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime.

On the national level, Indonesia has enacted a law on Anti-Trafficking in Persons comprising four main pillars: prevention, prosecution, and victims' protection, and the international cooperation in curbing this heinous crime. Indonesia has also established the Task Force for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Persons, comprised of relevant related government agencies. The Task-Force main approaches are advocacy, public awareness, protection, and joint training.

Indonesia also views that to effectively combat trafficking in persons, a global and collective response, as well as a greater understanding of its root causes are of importance. To that end, Indonesia is standing ready to work together with other countries within the framework of ARF and beyond.

iv. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

In recent years, Indonesia established a comprehensive Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) governance system through the Disaster Management Law and its subsidiary regulations and

policies, Disaster Management Agencies at the national and local levels, risk analysis and Disaster Management plans, partnership and coordination with DRR stakeholders, and all relevant bureaucratic instruments. Considering its importance, commitment to DRR has increased significantly with the passing of the new National Medium-Term Development Plan for 2015-2019, in which disaster management and risk reduction are among priority development programs, particularly as investment to protect economic growth and human development. Indonesia has achieved International Organization for Standardization (ISO) No. 22327 on community-based landslide early warning system.

At the global level, Indonesia's remains firmly committed to the strengthening of the implementation of international frameworks for disaster risk reduction. This includes the commitment on the outcome of the 3rd United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) that is the Sendai Framework On Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015 – 2030. Indonesia stresses the importance of international cooperation to ensure the implementation of SFDRR to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to promote best practices, knowledge sharing and technology transfer. Indonesia also emphasizes the strategic importance of monitoring frameworks at the global and regional levels such as the Global Partnership for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) and the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) to ensure the implementation of SFDRR.

v. Maritime Security

As an archipelagic nation, Indonesia places maritime security at the heart of its Maritime Domain Awareness to secure peaceful passage of international shipping through the Indonesian Archipelagic Sea Lanes Passages (ASLP), Sea-Lanes of Communications (SLOC) and Sea-lanes of Trade (SLOT)., Indonesia pledges to secure the international shipping to enjoy freedom of transit, freedom of navigation and innocent passage by implementing the principles of international laws and regimes.

Indonesia intends to manage the resilience of its maritime resources based on the principles of Blue Economy in order to maintain the sustainability of food security for mankind. Indonesia builds and develops maritime infrastructures and connectivity, and pursue maritime diplomacy as well as maritime security and defense.

Indonesia encourages the enhancement of maritime cooperation in the region, as that is in line with its focus on maritime diplomacy, which is based on sovereignty, security, and prosperity approaches. In this regard, as described in the White Book of Indonesian Maritime Ocean Policy, Indonesia identifies seven pillars of such cooperation: 1) Management of Marine Resources and Development of Human Resources; 2) Defense, Security, Law Enforcement and Safety at Sea; 3) Ocean Governance and Institutions; 4) Economic and Infrastructure of the Marine Sector and of Prosperity Enhancement; 5) Management of the Ocean Space and Protection of Marine Environment; 6) Maritime Culture; and 7) Maritime Diplomacy.

In this sense, the ASEAN Regional Forum has rightly decided on maritime security and resilience as one of its main concerns. The range of maritime security issues is not limited to traditional security issues, but also extends to the discussion of non-traditional maritime security issues relevant to the region. On the other side, maritime resilience deals with any threats to marine resources that may link to human's ignorance of their activities at sea or naturally per se.

Indonesia believes that it is our responsibility as a fulcrum between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, not only to protect Indonesia's sovereignty and to preserve its maritime resources, but also to ensure the safety of shipping and navigation as well as the security of the seas. Indonesia stresses the importance of sharing best practices, developing confidence building measures and capacity building programs in order to enhance our respective capabilities in dealing with maritime security issues.

For that purpose, Indonesia has concluded a number of bilateral agreements and has been part of regional or international arrangements for managing issues of common concern, such as combating illegal activities at sea, trafficking in persons, people smuggling, illicit drugs trafficking, and illegal fishing. Indonesia has arranged for separate coordinated patrols with almost all countries sharing maritime boundaries with Indonesia.

The ASEAN sub-region of the Sulu Sea, where Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines share borders, is facing threats, such as piracy, armed robbery against ships and terrorism. It is imperative to counter these threats within the ASEAN framework and other sub-regional mechanisms. In order to effectively address the issue, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines will conduct Trilateral Patrols in the Sulu Sea. Meanwhile, together with Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, Indonesia continues to secure the busiest sea passage in the region by carrying out the Malacca Straits Patrols (MSP), comprising of coordinated sea patrols, combined maritime-air patrols as well as intelligence and information sharing activities.

Indonesia puts great emphasis in preventing, deterring, and eliminating IUU Fishing. Indonesia observes that IUU fishing is a crosscutting issue, closely related with other crimes, such as people smuggling, human trafficking, forced labor, drugs trafficking, and violation of sanitary and environmental protection regulations. In this regard, Indonesia is of the view that IUU fishing should be dealt with in a comprehensive and holistic manner with emphasis on law enforcement and security aspects.

Thus Indonesia welcomes closer cooperation to deal with this issue in the region, including through the adoption of ARF Statement on Cooperation to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing in 2017. This Statement provides valuable reference and options on how we could further explore practical measures to strengthen existing cooperation in addressing IUU fishing under various ASEAN-led mechanisms.

Through other measure, Indonesia is also vibrant to continuously work on the establishment of a regional cooperation agreement against crimes related to fisheries. Thailand, Viet Nam, and China also have stated their availability to cooperate on the issue.

Indonesia has also conducted capacity building initiatives with countries and mechanisms such as the Heads of Asian Coast Guards Agencies Meeting (HACGAM), Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating IUU Fishing in the Region (RPOA-IUU), and ASEAN Fisheries Consultative Forum (AFCF), as well as through training and other meetings.

Indonesia has also established cooperation with Global Fishing Watch (GFW) as a form of transparency of management and/or utilization of fishery resources. We encourage that ARF Participants could also be part of this mechanism to build transparency of fisheries management in the region.

vi. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

The advent of cyber capabilities provides both opportunities and challenges. Cyberspace is reshaping the international security environment and the economic and social development of nations worldwide, opening up a new world of capabilities and opportunities. However, cyber threats also pose an increasingly serious challenge to regional security.

Indonesia deems it essential for countries to strengthen cooperation in the area of capacity building, information/intelligence sharing, as well as network building among law enforcement agencies.

4. Role of ARF

ARF remains important as an inclusive forum in the Asia-Pacific region for fostering constructive dialogue and cooperation among the Participants on political and security issues of common interest and concern.

In the face of an evolving regional architecture, ARF must keep up its relevance by fully leveraging its potential and demonstrating its uniqueness. One of the strong points of the ARF is that it has built a foundation for political security dialogues that encompasses both civil and military elements.

The idea that the ARF could cover the niche on civil-military cooperation has been highly supported by ARF Participants. Even so, the cooperation between the two elements should not stop at disaster relief training/operations or holding regular ARF meetings exclusively attended by military representatives. Instead, the ARF should foster interaction between the civil and military sectors by increasing military representation in all ARF meetings. Combining constructive ideas from the two perspectives is the formula for the ARF to maintain its relevance.

Subsequently, the ARF could also optimize various tools already provided in the Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement. These tools empower the ARF to expand and enhance its institutional effectiveness in order to ensure the implementation of the Plan of Action. Those tools include the promotion of the role of the ARF Chair, the activation of the Friends of the ARF Chair, the strengthening of the ARF Unit, the enhancement of the role of the ARF EEPs, and the expansion of ARF partnerships with other regional and global institutions.

It is essential to understand that the ARF is not only an institution, but also a process through which countries in the Asia Pacific region strive to maintain dialogue and carry out activities to promote CBMs, preventive diplomacy, and conflict resolution mechanisms. A more robust, substantive, proactive, and action-oriented ARF is therefore instrumental to the process. Indonesia is strongly committed to contribute to this cause by continuously generating initiatives and actively participating in the work of the ARF.

Indonesia is committed to keeping its active role in the ARF, including by co-chairing the ARF Peacekeeping Experts Meeting in Indonesia, ARF Workshop on Women Peace and Security and the ARF Workshop on Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Mitigation.

Indonesia also proposes the ARF Statement on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism to be considered and adopted by ARF Foreign Ministers.

On the whole, Indonesia envisions a more robust, substantive, proactive and action-oriented ARF. Indonesia will therefore continue to contribute to the realization of the ARF's potential through active participation, initiatives and the development of innovative ideas.

1. Japan's Overview of the Regional Security Environment

The balance of power in the international community is shifting dramatically due to the rise of emerging countries, among other factors. Inter-state competition, in which states seek to shape an international order to their advantage as well as to increase their influence, is emerging more prominently. Meanwhile, challenges to the universal values are becoming ever more severe and there is growing uncertainty over the existing order. For instance, attempts to change the status quo taking advantage of the COVID-19 crisis are observed. Threats of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, and international terrorism which is getting serious continue to constitute major challenges for the international community. At the same time, the scope of national security has further broadened to encompass economic and technological fields in recent years, requiring the enhancement of efforts regarding the security policy in these fields.

The security environment surrounding Japan is becoming severe and uncertain at a significant speed. Moreover, countries with outstanding military capabilities both in terms of quality and quantity are concentrated around Japan, and there is a clear tendency of further reinforcement of military capabilities and acceleration of military activities.

Regarding terrorism, while the territory controlled by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Iraq and Syria has been liberated as a result of the operations against ISIL, the return to home countries or relocation to third countries of foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) who had been under its influence has spread the threat of terrorism and violent extremism around the world including Asia. In April 2019, simultaneous terrorist attacks, one of the largest cases in Asia in recent years, took place in Sri Lanka, which resulted in deaths of more than 250 people including Japanese. Later in December 2019, a Japanese doctor was killed by a gun attack in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the form and background of terrorism has been diversified, as can be seen from cases in which the video at the incident was distributed via social media at once.

Recent advances in technology are invigorating activities in new domains such as outer space and cyberspace. While this presents big opportunities, it also brings about new risks and threats, therefore international rule-making is required in terms of security.

Furthermore, technology transformation which can bring about an essential change to the nature of the society and people's lives, such as IoT, 5G, AI, quantum technology, is advancing. All countries are engaged in fierce competition to develop technology, which is directly linked to their competitiveness, as well as accelerating their activities to apply technology to the realm of security. In this way, it is predictable that successes and failures in innovation might have considerable impact on the security environment.

Against these backgrounds, the Indo-Pacific region is making progress cooperating in the field of non-traditional security issues through confidence-building measures, not only in bilateral and trilateral frameworks but also in multilateral security frameworks, such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus). Japan welcomes these developments that contribute to creating a better regional security environment. Japan is eager to further promote and develop these multi-

layered initiatives through the above-mentioned regional frameworks securing peace and stability of the region. On the other hand, situations surrounding the Korean Peninsula and the South China Sea are major issues that can destabilize the security environment in the Indo-Pacific region. It is essential to continue discussing these issues at the ARF.

Maritime issues including those surrounding the South China Sea are directly linked to the peace and stability of the region and are legitimate concerns of the international community. It is necessary for the international community to cooperate for the maintenance and development of open and stable seas.

In the keynote address at the Shangri-La Dialogue in May 2014, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe advocated the “Three Principles of the Rule of Law at Sea”: (i) making and clarifying their claims based on international law; (ii) not using force or coercion in trying to drive their claims; and (iii) seeking to settle disputes by peaceful means. These three principles gained supports from many countries, and Japan will consistently support actions based on these principles. In this context, Japan calls for full implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) of 2002, and takes note of the progress of the negotiations towards an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC). COC should be consistent with international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and should not prejudice the legitimate rights and interest of all stakeholders. Diplomatic efforts such as COC should lead to demilitarization and a free and open South China Sea.

On the other hand, the international community including Japan expressed serious concerns over the continuing unilateral actions in the South China Sea that could change the status quo and raise tensions in the region, including large-scale and rapid land reclamation, building of outposts, as well as their use for military purposes, including deployment of offensive weapons. Japan has to date consistently supported the full adherence to the rule of law in the South China Sea, and places importance on freedom of navigation and overflight as well as assistance for safe sea lanes. Japan has also emphasized the importance for all the concerned parties related to the South China Sea to work toward peaceful settlement of disputes based on international law including UNCLOS. Each state must refrain from unilateral actions and acts based on international law as reflected in UNCLOS and in light of the final award rendered by the Arbitral Tribunal under UNCLOS on July 12, 2016, which is final and legally binding on both parties to the dispute. In particular, coastal states need to recognize that in maritime areas pending final delimitation, they are obliged by international law to refrain from unilateral actions that would cause permanent physical change to the marine environment, be it for military or civilian purposes. It is also of critical importance for each state to clarify grounds of maritime claims, through invoking the relevant provisions of UNCLOS on which the claims are based. Japan strongly hopes that the parties’ compliance with the award will eventually lead to the peaceful settlement of disputes in the South China Sea.

At the same time, attempts to unilaterally change the status quo in the East China Sea by force or coercion are unacceptable. Japan will continue to respond calmly and resolutely while strengthening coordination with the relevant countries, along with strengthening communication in order to make the East China Sea a “Sea of Peace, Cooperation and Friendship.”

Japan shares serious concerns with international community over the newly-enforced China's Coast Guard Law, as it includes several articles that are problematic in terms of consistency with international law. For instance, the sea areas to which the Law is applied are not clear, nor are conditions where the use of force by the Coast Guard is permitted under the Law. It is unacceptable that the tensions in the East and South China Seas are raised by the Law.

Ever since the announcement of "the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)" by ASEAN in June 2019, Japan has consistently expressed its full support to it, just as Prime Minister Suga did at the East Asia Summit in November 2020.

In addition, at the 23rd ASEAN-Japan Summit Meeting in November 2020, Japan and ASEAN issued the Joint Statement of the 23rd ASEAN-Japan Summit on Cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP). The AOIP sets forth the rule of law, openness, freedom, transparency, and inclusivity as ASEAN's principles of action, and the statement notes that it shares fundamental principles with the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" promoted by Japan.

Japan is committed to cooperate in accordance with AOIP's priority areas, namely maritime cooperation, connectivity, SDGs, the economic and other possible areas of cooperation.

Following the 23rd ASEAN-Japan Summit Meeting, furthermore, Prime Minister Phuc of Vietnam, as the 2020 Chair for ASEAN, announced the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases, and in response, Prime Minister Suga stated that Japan will continue to provide support, including through technical cooperation by JICA through dispatching experts and conducting training, to ensure that the Centre develops into a robust organization that will protect ASEAN's people from the threat posed by infectious diseases.

North Korea has not dismantled all of its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner in accordance with relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs). At the military parades on the occasion of the 75th founding anniversary of the Worker's Party of Korea in October 2020 as well as of the 8th Congress of the WPK in January 2021, North Korea has demonstrated possible new types of ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missiles)-class missiles or submarine-launched ballistic missiles. Japan strongly condemns launches of ballistic missiles as clear violations of UNSCRs, including those conducted in 2021.

To this end, it is imperative for each country to fully implement the relevant UNSCRs. From this perspective, Japan will continue to steadily take measures for their implementation. The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and the Japan Coast Guard are conducting information gathering activities for vessels suspected to be in violation of UNSCRs including ship-to-ship transfers with North Korean-flagged vessels. JMSDF has found several activities strongly suspected to be ship-to-ship transfers in the East China Sea, and Japan shared information with Partner countries such as the US, the UK, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, France, and the Republic of Korea (ROK), notified the UNSC 1718 Committee and the Panel of Experts and published the information. Partner countries have also engaged in monitoring and surveillance activities against illicit maritime activities including ship-to-ship transfers. Japan will continue to cooperate with the US, and trilaterally with the US and the Republic of Korea (ROK), and coordinate closely with the international community including China and Russia, aiming for the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

With regard to Japan-North Korea relations, Japan's basic policy remains unchanged that it seeks to normalize its relations with North Korea, through comprehensively resolving outstanding issues of concern such as the abductions, nuclear and missile issues, and settling the unfortunate past in accordance with the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration.

2. National Security and Defense Policy

a) Japan's Security Policy

i. "Proactive Contribution to Peace"

The security environment surrounding Japan is becoming more testing and uncertain. Japan cannot secure its own peace and security by itself, and the international community expects Japan to play a more proactive role for peace and stability in the world, in a way commensurate with its national capabilities. Being well aware of this, and under its policy of "Proactive Contribution to Peace" based on the principle of international cooperation, Japan will contribute even more actively to ensuring peace, stability, and prosperity of the international community. With the National Security Council (NSC) serving as a control tower, and in accordance with the National Security Strategy (NSS), Japan will continue its path as a peace-loving nation, work in close cooperation with the US and other partners as a major global player in the international community, and implement its national security policies in a steadfast manner, thereby making a more proactive contribution to peace and stability of the region and the world more than ever.

ii. Japan's Legislation for Peace and Security

Japan's Legislation for Peace and Security took effect in March 2016. The legislation is designed for Japan both (i) to make a seamless response to any situation amid an increasingly severe security environment surrounding the country, and (ii) to put into concrete practice its policy of "Proactive Contribution to Peace" based on the principle of international cooperation, and thereby administer more proactively to the peace and stability of the international community.

As the Legislation for Peace and Security has taken effect, Japan's "use of force" is permitted, under the Constitution, to exercise the right of collective defense in a limited manner in addition to the right of individual self-defense if the "Three New Conditions," which are unmatched worldwide in terms of stringency, are met.

The legislation has expanded the range of activities in which Japan can engage in during UN PKOs. It also allows Japan to participate in internationally coordinated operations for peace and security that are outside the UN PKO framework. Furthermore, the legislation allows Japan to engage in cooperation and support activities, such as supply and transportation under certain conditions, when the peace and security of the international community is threatened including those concerning UNSC resolutions. By allowing these activities, the legislation enables Japan to better contribute to the peace and stability of the international community.

However, Japan's postwar posture as a peace-loving nation has not been changed for more than 70 years. Japan has taken various opportunities to explain both its policy of "Proactive

Contribution to Peace" and the Legislation for Peace and Security to the countries concerned in a transparent and sincere manner, winning support and understanding from countries around the world.

Three new conditions for "Use of Force" as Measures for Self Defense:

- 1) when an armed attack against Japan occurs, or when an armed attack against a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan occurs and as a result threatens Japan's survival and poses a clear danger to fundamentally overturn people's right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness.
- 2) when there is no other appropriate means available to repel the attack and ensure Japan's survival and protect its people.
- 3) use of force limited to the minimum extent necessary.

b) Japan's Defense Policy

i. National Defense Program Guidelines and the Medium-Term Defense Program

The National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) for FY2019 and beyond sets forth Japan's basic defense policy, the roles of Japan's defense capability, and the organizational objects for and the target level of specific organization of Self-Defense Forces, etc. Japan's security environment is becoming more testing and uncertain at a remarkably faster speed than expected when the former NDPG was formulated. The new NDPG was approved by the Cabinet in December 2018 to take measures in line with the realities of security environment it has hitherto never faced.

The new NDPG sets out the following three points: (i) strengthening Japan's own architecture for national defense, (ii) strengthening the Japan-US Alliance, and (iii) strengthening active promotion of security cooperation, under the basic precept of maintaining an exclusively defense-oriented policy. Japan will strengthen each of the means by which to defend such national interests as Japanese nationals, territory and sovereignty. The NDPG calls for the building of a "Multi-Domain Defense Force" that enables (1) execution of cross-domain operations, which organically fuse capabilities in all domains to generate synergy and amplify the overall strength, so that even when inferiority exists in individual domains such inferiority will be overcome, (2) sustained conduct of flexible and strategic activities during all phases from peacetime to armed contingencies and (3) strengthening of the Japan-US Alliance as well as the promotion of security cooperation. As capabilities, especially, in new domains—space, cyberspace and electromagnetic spectrum — will remarkably enhance overall military capability to conduct operations, states are focusing on these areas.

The Medium Term Defense Program (MTDP) is, on the other hand, the first five-year defense buildup program laid out to achieve the target level for defense capabilities set forth in the NDPGs.

The expenditure target for the implementation of the defense capability build-up described in this program amount to approximately 27,470 billion yen in FY 2018 prices. For the duration of this program, in harmony with other measures taken by the Government, substantive funds will be secured by means of thoroughgoing greater efficiency and streamlining in defense force development. The annual defense budgets target for the implementation of this

program is expected to be around approximately 25,500 billion yen over the next five years. The amount of expenses based on contracts (material expenses) to be newly concluded to implement this program will be allocated within the ceiling of approximately 17,170 billion yen in FY 2018 prices, and the future obligation shall be managed appropriately.

ii. Defense-Related Expenditures

In addition to the cost of maintaining and operating the JSDF, defense-related expenditures in Japan include the cost of improving the living environment in the vicinity of defense facilities and support for US forces stationed in Japan.

As the budget based on the new NDPGs and MTDP mentioned above, the FY2021 defense-related expenditures budget includes an array of projects aimed at the establishment of a Multi-Domain Defense Force.

Excluding the costs related to the Special Action Committee on Okinawa or SACO (the cost of implementing the SACO Final Report to mitigate the impacts on people in Okinawa), the US forces realignment-related expenses (the portion allocated for mitigating the impact on local communities), and expenses for the introduction of new government aircraft, the expenditure budget for FY2021 has been increased by 54.7 billion yen (or 1.1 % growth rate) from the previous fiscal year to 5,123.5 billion yen, marking the ninth consecutive year of growth.

Including these expenses, the total expenditure budget for FY2021 amounts to 5,342.2 billion yen, an increase of 28.9 billion yen, or growth rate of 0.5% from the preceding fiscal year.

The FY2021 defense-related expenditure is 0.92% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with SACO-related expenses, US forces realignment related expenses, and expenses for the introduction of new government aircraft excluded, and 0.96% with the above three included.

The FY2021 defense-related expenditure includes expenditure which will be transferred to Cabinet Secretariat and Digital Agency (tentative name) (18.7 billion yen).

c) Japan-US Security Arrangements

Given an increasingly severe security environment in the Indo-Pacific region, securing the forward deployment of US forces based on the Japan-US Security Treaty and strengthening the deterrence of the Japan-US Alliance are essential not only for the security of Japan, but also for peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region.

In order to further strengthen the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-US Alliance, the two countries have been expanding and strengthening cooperation in a wide range of areas, such as ballistic missile defense, cyberspace, outer space, and maritime security, including efforts made under the 2015 Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation and the Legislation for Peace and Security.

In light of the recent security environment, the US will strengthen its presence in the Indo-Pacific region, and Japan will assume larger roles and responsibilities in the Alliance. Japan and the US will further enhance cooperation with allies and partners in the region.

3. Japan's Contributions to Regional Security

a) Maritime Security

Japan is a maritime nation that has achieved economic growth through maritime trade and development of marine resources, and has pursued "Free, Open and Stable Seas." For Japan, maritime rights and interests, which are the basis for economic survival, including the freedom of navigation and overflight, and development of marine resources, are of great importance toward securing peace and security. To ensure these maritime rights and interests in the long-term and in a stable manner, it is indispensable to maintain a maritime order and ensure safe maritime transport. Furthermore, "Free, Open and Stable Seas," which are upheld by a maritime order governed by law and rules and not by force, are essential for peace and prosperity not only of Japan, but also of the international community as a whole. To maintain and develop "Free, Open and Stable Seas," Japan contributes actively to maintaining and strengthening maritime order and ensuring safe maritime transport through various initiatives such as counter-piracy measures in Asia and Africa as well as close coordination and cooperation with other countries.

As part of its efforts to secure the safety of navigation in Asia, Japan had advocated the establishment of a forum to provide EAS member countries with the opportunity to discuss maritime cooperation and maritime issues in the region, which bore fruit in the form of the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF). At the eighth EAMF, which was chaired by Viet Nam, in December 2020, Japan expressed serious concerns about the current situation in the South China Sea, underscored the importance of a maritime order based on the rule of law, and reiterated its commitment to achieve a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

In addition, Japan took the initiative in establishing the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP). Japan has been actively contributing to the implementation of the ReCAAP by sending Executive Director and Assistant Director to the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) from its inception and supporting ReCAAP ISC's efforts in the area of information sharing and capacity building assistance through making financial contributions among others. For instance, the third Capacity Building Executive Programme on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia was held in Singapore in 2019. This Executive Programme provided an opportunity for the participants from 19 countries to deepen their understanding on Japan's efforts and views on such topics as the importance of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific, safety of sea lanes, freedom of navigation, rule of law at sea, enhanced cooperation among maritime law enforcement agencies, maritime domain awareness (MDA), and counter piracy and armed robbery against ships by utilizing the ReCAAP framework.

ARF plays an important role in ensuring the rule of law at sea, the freedom and safety of navigation and overflight, and peaceful settlement of disputes based on international law. In this context, Japan welcomes a number of initiatives that have been taken within the framework of ARF such as official events to discuss maritime security issues in the region. Japan co-chaired the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ARF ISM on MS) with the Philippines and the United States from August 2014 to August 2017. Together with the co-chairs, Japan worked on revising the ARF Work Plan on Maritime Security. Furthermore, Japan serves with Malaysia as the lead countries for "confidence-building measures based on international and regional legal frameworks, arrangements, and cooperation," which is one of

the priority areas for the ARF Work Plan on Maritime Security. In this context, Japan hosted the ARF Seminar on Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery in Asia, in Tokyo in March 2015 (co-chairing with the US, Malaysia, and India), ARF Seminar on Regional Confidence Building and Law of the Sea, in Tokyo in December 2015 (co-chairing with Vietnam and India), the First ARF Workshop on International Cooperation on MDA in Tokyo in March 2018 (co-chairing with Malaysia), and the Second ARF Workshop on International Cooperation on MDA in Tokyo in February 2020 (co-chairing with Viet Nam). Against this backdrop and building on the successful outcomes of the past two workshops, Japan intends to organize the "3rd ARF Workshop on International Cooperation on Maritime Domain Awareness" as a face-to-face meeting in Tokyo in the near future, if the situation permits.

b) Disaster Relief

Japan has provided active support in responding to large-scale natural disasters in the Indo-Pacific region. During FY 2020, Japan provided emergency relief goods in three cases to assist the people affected by major natural disasters, such as typhoon in Viet Nam.

Japan will continue to work with other ARF participants and contribute to ARF activities in order to make regional disaster relief cooperation more practical and effective.

In addition, Japan is an active player in other regional frameworks as well. Within the framework of Japan-ASEAN cooperation, Japan provides mainly four types of assistance through the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre). The first type of assistance concerns the establishment of an integrated ICT-based disaster management system. This has helped facilitate timely information-gathering and responses, and international rescue and relief operations. The second type concerns the establishment of a Disaster Emergency Logistic System for ASEAN (DELSA). DELSA has been developing a framework for stockpiling emergency relief supplies at specific locations and transporting these items to disaster-hit areas. The third type of assistance concerns the capacity building of the Regional ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT). This has helped further enhance a coordinated response to disaster emergencies by the ASEAN-ERAT. The fourth type of Japan's assistance through the AHA Centre concerns a human resources development project (ACE Programme) in DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction). This project involves a four-month training program for officials at the DRR organization in ASEAN Member States. Japan welcomes the proactive and abstractive role the AHA Centre has played in extending humanitarian support for the affected persons in regards to the situation in the Marawi and Rakhine State. In the field of disaster health management, Japan International Cooperation Agency initiated in 2016 a project for strengthening the ASEAN regional capacity (ARCH Project) under the collaborative framework with Thailand and in 2020 what has been achieved till 2019 was reviewed for a way forward.

c) Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime

In the field of counter-terrorism, Japan continues to make efforts against international terrorism and violent extremism in cooperation with the countries and the regional and international organizations concerned. In this regard, at the Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting held in Vientiane, Laos in September 2016, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced that Japan would provide approximately 45 billion yen over the next three years for Asia as comprehensive counter-terrorism measures consisted of (i) improvement of counter-terrorism

capacity, (ii) measures to counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism, and (iii) social and economic development assistance for creating a foundation for a moderate society. He also stated that Japan would help develop 2,000 personnel for counter-terrorism over the next three years. In September 2018, Japan had already achieved this goal one year ahead of its goal.

Japan has continuously held multilateral and bilateral counter-terrorism consultations with nations in the Indo-Pacific region and elsewhere, primarily with Southeast Asian countries, to enhance international counter-terrorism cooperation. We held the consultations with ASEAN, US, Australia, and UK in 2019. To help build counter-terrorism capacity, Japan supports projects in such areas in the field of border control, aviation security, maritime security, and law enforcement under a number of frameworks, which include the ASEAN-Japan Counter Terrorism Dialogue (AJCTD), the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime plus Japan (AMMTC+Japan), and the Senior Official Meeting on Transnational Crime plus Japan (SOMTC+Japan). The center of ASEAN-Japan cooperation in this area is the ASEAN-Japan Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Crime, which was adopted by the 17th Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting in Myanmar in November 2014 and expanded its scope to include international organized crime. In order to implement this declaration, SOMTC+Japan adopted its updated "SOMTC + Japan Work Plan for Cooperation to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Crime (2018-2022)" in October 2018, based on which SOMTC+Japan has further strengthened cooperation to prevent and combat terrorism and transnational crime.

Japan has also been stepping up its efforts to combat transnational crimes in the Indo-Pacific region in three major aspects. The first aspect is strengthening transnational legal frameworks. For example, Japan has been tackling drug problems in alliance with ARF member countries through measures such as the exchange of information on synthetic drugs, including new psychoactive substances (NPS), and investigative cooperation in accordance with the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 and other drug-related treaties. The second aspect is supporting local initiatives designed to combat illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, cybercrime, and corruption in the Southeast Asia through projects of Japan's ODA and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). For example, in 2020, Japan decided to support a new initiative, "ASEAN-Japan Workshop on Technology-based Approach to Tackle Trafficking of Children", which is proposed by Vietnam, through the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) 2.0. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) continued to strengthen mutual learning and networking for anti-trafficking in person under the COVID-19 pandemic including by inviting relevant personnel engaging in measures against trafficking in persons in ASEAN countries to online-seminar to share challenges and measures of trafficking in person in the greater Mekong sub-regional countries. Japan also continued to contribute to the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Fund (CPCJF) managed by UNODC for implementation of a project to enhance the criminal justice capacity including trafficking in persons countermeasures of law enforcement authorities in Southeast Asia.

The third aspect is promoting policy coordination with various countries and international organizations. Japan actively participate in multilateral frameworks such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), and also makes financial contribution to the Bali Process, which involves consultations on irregular immigrants and trafficking in

persons. Japan also hosted 14th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in March 2021 to advance crime prevention and criminal justice in furtherance of our effort to promote the rule of law and achieve the SDGs.

d) Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during wartime, Japan has the responsibility to take the lead in efforts by the international community to realize a world without nuclear weapons.

The global security environment has been severe in recent years. There exists an apparent divergence of views on how best to advance nuclear disarmament, a divergence that exists not only between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states but also among non-nuclear-weapon states that are exposed to the threat of nuclear weapons and those that are not. Considering these circumstances, it is necessary to persistently advance realistic and practical measures with the cooperation of nuclear-weapon states in order to promote nuclear disarmament.

Japan continues to pursue bridge building between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states with the aim of realizing a world without nuclear weapons. It has done this through such means as holding meetings of the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament, submitting a draft resolution for the total elimination of nuclear weapons to the UN General Assembly, and utilizing the framework of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) and bilateral consultations. Moreover, Japan intends to carry out realistic and practical measures that also involve nuclear-weapon states, including maintaining and strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), promoting entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and commencing negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT).

Taking into consideration serious challenges to the international non-proliferation regime, Japan is engaged in outreach activities in the Indo-Pacific region with the aim of achieving three key objectives: (i) promoting the universalization of disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and reinforcing their implementation at the national level, inter alia IAEA Safeguards are the fundamental component of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and it remains our key objective to increase the number of States with the Comprehensive Safeguard Agreement (CSA) and the Additional Protocol (AP); (ii) establishing and strengthening export control systems; and (iii) raising awareness of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and enhancing related efforts. As part of these activities, Japan has been hosting a range of meetings each year, including the Asia Senior-Level Talks on Non-Proliferation (ASTOP) and Asian Export Control Seminar. Japan has also actively participated in PSI exercises and related conferences including PSI rotation exercise in the Asia-Pacific region.

e) Cyberspace and Outer Space

Cyberattacks are becoming increasingly diversified and sophisticated. How to develop systems and capabilities to protect states, and the lives and property of the citizens from such cyberattacks constitutes a major challenge from both national security and economic perspectives. To this end, Japan is working with other countries concerned to promote a mutual understanding on these issues in a number of areas. One such area is promoting the

rule of law in cyberspace, including contributing to the discussion the international community about the application of existing international law in cyberspace as well as the implementation of non-binding voluntary norms. Other areas include supporting capacity building and developing confidence-building measures.

Countries in Indo-Pacific Region are discussing cyberspace issues under frameworks such as ARF and ASEAN+3 meetings.

The ARF Work Plan on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), which was endorsed at the 22nd ARF Ministerial Meeting in 2015, calls for confidence-building measures, awareness-raising, capacity building support, regarding cybersecurity. Japan is proactively participating in international meetings on these issues to boost cybersecurity in the region.

From the viewpoint of the increasing importance of the situation surrounding cyberspace, ARF recognizes the value of continuing to exchange views from a comprehensive standpoint with the aim of promoting a peaceful, secure, open, and cooperative ICT environment, and preventing conflicts and crisis through capacity-building trust and assistance while building confidence among nations. In January 2021, Japan co-chaired the ARF-ISM on ICTs Security 6th Open Ended Study Group (Study Group) on Confidence Building Measures in Singapore as co-chair countries with Malaysia and Singapore. Going forward, Japan will continue to increase support capacity building in cyber security with a focus on ASEAN countries according to the "Japan's Basic Strategy of Cybersecurity Capacity Building".

Japan's bilateral initiatives include discussions and dialogue on cyberspace with the US, Australia, the U.K., France, India, Russia, Israel, Estonia, Germany, ROK, Ukraine, and European Union (EU). Japan has also been holding trilateral talks involving China and ROK, and exchanging views with such international organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Council of Europe (CoE), and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

In addition to these initiatives, Japan will accelerate ties with ASEAN countries and public/private-sector collaboration to reinforce its efforts to address cybersecurity issues.

In order to maintain stable and sustainable use of outer space, Japan is proactively engaged in rule-making efforts in multilateral fora, in close cooperation with partners including ARF members. Recalling the recent adoption of the LTS Guidelines at the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), Japan will cooperate with our partners to implement these guidelines for ensuring the sustainability of our outer space activities. Japan is also committed to reducing space threats through principles of responsible behaviors. In this regard, it is important to mention that on December 7 2020 a draft resolution entitled "Reducing Space Threats through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviors", co-sponsored by various countries including Japan and the United Kingdom, was adopted at the UN General Assembly with widespread support of 164 countries. As one of the leading space-faring nations, Japan has promoted bilateral dialogues on space with various countries and international space cooperation focusing on multiple areas. Japan has also utilized its space technologies, for the benefit of all, to address global issues such as environmental protection, disaster relief, and resource management.

f) Preventive Diplomacy

Japan believes it is important for ARF to make steady progress from the first stage of the “promotion of confidence-building measure” to the second stage of “development of preventive diplomacy” and further to the third stage of “approaches to dispute settlement.” However, despite the cumulative efforts of the ARF countries have so far succeeded in facilitating confidence-building measures to a certain extent, progress toward the development of preventive diplomacy has only just begun. Japan has long been committed to conflict prevention and peace building through human resources development and other modalities means. Japan will take advantage of its expertise in these areas to further contribute to the ARF’s efforts to promote preventive diplomacy.

g) ADMM-Plus Initiatives

The ADMM-Plus, in which Defense Minister has been participating from Japan since its establishment, provides a framework for addressing a wide range of security issues common to the region. Japan is committed to this framework with the aim of developing the forum into a key pillar of regional security cooperation. Within the ADMM-Plus, seven Experts’ Working Groups (EWGs) have been established to increase concrete military-to-military cooperation in handling security issues common to the region: humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR), maritime security, counter terrorism, military medicine, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian mine action and cyber security. Japan is taking part in each EWG to further enhance regional security cooperation by actively exchanging views with other countries and making proposals.

Under the framework of ADMM-Plus EWG, Japan has intensified cooperation with other member countries. In the first cycle, from 2011 to 2013, Japan acted as co-chair of the EWG on military medicine along with Singapore, conducting field training exercises on HA/DR and military medicine in Brunei in June 2013. In the second cycle, from 2014 to 2017, Japan co-chaired the EWG on HA/DR together with Lao PDR. Efforts were made to formulate a standard operating procedure (SOP) for the establishment and management of a Multinational Coordination Center (MNCC) so as to amplify the activities of assisting foreign forces that are accepted by disaster-affected countries in the event of natural or other disasters. In August 2015, for example, a table top exercise (TTX) was conducted in Lao PDR. In September 2016, exercises on HA/DR and military medicine, AM-Hex 2016, were conducted in Thailand in order to test the final draft of the SOP. At the 9th EWG meeting on HA/DR in December 2016, the SOP was adopted and it has been on the track of discussion in the framework of ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting (ADMM) since then. In the third cycle, from 2017 to 2020, Japan actively participated in and contributed to each EWG. In the fourth cycle, from 2021 to 2024, Japan has assumed with Vietnam the role of co-chair of the EWG on PKO, and successfully convened the 1st EWG under the new cycle in April 2021 by taking up Women Peace and Security (WPS) as the main discussion topic. Japan will continue its active contribution to international peace and stability by enhancing the capabilities of ASEAN member states in PKO through its strong initiatives as a co-chair of the EWG on PKO.

The ADMM-Plus is a vital framework providing the member countries with opportunities to conduct multilateral talks on a wide range of regional security issues in an open manner. Japan believes it is important to keep this framework open without putting any restriction on the

issues to be addressed in the forum, while allowing the participating countries to discuss a wide range of issues in a candid manner.

h) Japan's Future Contribution to Enhance Capability of ARF

As a framework for candid discussion on the political and security issues of the entire Indo-Pacific region, ARF has steadily contributed to confidence-building in the region. In recent years, various initiatives have been put forward in a wide range of areas, including maritime security, disaster relief, counter terrorism and transnational crime, non-proliferation and disarmament, preventive diplomacy, cyberspace, and outer space.

To further develop ARF as an action-oriented framework instead of making it serve merely as a forum for dialogue, ARF countries that co-organize each initiative need to establish practical agenda items and programs with the cooperation with stakeholders, including relevant international organizations and experts. Also, member states need to work more closely with one another to avoid duplications among initiatives and produce favorable outputs. In addition to these efforts to improve ARF functions, it is also important to strengthen cooperation with other regional security frameworks in pursuing effective synergy. The edge of the wedge is the area of disaster relief. In this particular area, similar exercises are increasingly conducted under different regional frameworks such as ADMM plus. Member states need to streamline such exercises from the viewpoint of reducing personnel and financial costs for participating countries and pursuing practical initiatives.

Japan will proactively contribute to improve ARF functions and coordinate among different regional frameworks while continue to exercise initiatives in various areas.

LAO PDR

I. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

Regional and international peace and security, and development cooperation are of paramount importance to all countries and regions to achieve sustainable development as well as regional economic integration. Nevertheless, situation in some parts of the world remains complex and evolving due to various challenges and uncertainties in pursuing their national socio-economic development and cooperation, such as pandemic, political and social unrests, natural disasters, terrorism, violent extremism, natural disasters, climate change, trafficking in persons, people smuggling, illegal migration, trafficking of illicit drug, territorial disputes, armed conflict, issue of cyber security, cyber-crime, and poverty and development gap. In addition, geopolitical landscape is more diversified and economic globalization is confronted with the rising of tensions between major powers and protectionism policies. Apart from this, the digital disruption also places both opportunities and challenges to the development in the region, which requires countries to adapt and embrace the advantages presented by the advancement of technology.

Peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region has continuously been maintained and promoted through bilateral and multilateral regional cooperation and platforms, including ASEAN-led mechanisms. The good relationships and cooperation between countries have been enhanced, and contributed to regional economic growth and promoted peace, security, stability and development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to cause severe impacts on global stability and security without knowing when its development will come to an end. While some parts of the world have begun to ease their domestic restrictions thanks to the availability of the vaccine, COVID-19 situation in many countries remains worsening. Equitable, affordable and accessible to vaccine, and unity and cooperation amongst the countries with resources and know-how are regarded vital to pave the way for the global community to fight against the virus and to help the global order return to its normalcy.

The Lao PDR shares the view of the international community on the situation in Korean Peninsula, which overall remains complex and unpredictable. The Lao PDR wishes to see peace, stability and development in the Korean Peninsula, and encourages all parties concerned to pursue engagement through dialogue and diplomacy with a view to addressing differences in a peaceful manner.

The peaceful and stable environment in the Asia-Pacific presents a solid foundation not only for countries in the region in the pursuit of their socio-economic development and mutually beneficial cooperation, but also for ASEAN in consolidating and strengthening its community through the realisation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

The achievements of ASEAN over the past more than 5 decades have proved the relevance of ASEAN and made ASEAN a unique and developed an example of regional inter-governmental organisation, playing a significant role in promoting and maintaining peace, security, stability and prosperity in the region. Besides, ASEAN-initiated frameworks or platforms have served as venues where ASEAN and its external partners as well as external partners themselves

engage one another on issues of common interest and concern, thus contributing to enhancing mutual trust and confidence among participants and also promoting peace, security, stability and development in the region and beyond. Most importantly, ASEAN's centrality has been recognised by all external partners.

Moving forward, ASEAN will further strengthen its resilience and innovation, while enhancing its external relations through its outward looking policy to ensure the realisation of regional economic integration and the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. The adoption of the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific by the ASEAN Leaders is a significant milestone as the Outlook will equip ASEAN with a common approach on engagement and cooperation in the wider Indo-Pacific region based on the principles and areas of cooperation that outlined in the Outlook.

II. National Security and Defence Policy

Since its proclamation in 1975, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) has implemented the two strategic tasks of national safeguarding and development by pursuing its consistent People's Comprehensive National Defence and Security Policy of self-defence with the participation of the entire Lao multi-ethnic people in conjunction with socio-economic development and international cooperation in accordance with its foreign policy of peace, independence, friendship and cooperation.

The objective in the pursuit of the People's Comprehensive National Defence and Security Policy is to safeguard the national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, to protect national interests and the entire Lao multi-ethnic people, and to ensure national security and social order, thus creating a favourable environment for socio-economic development of the Nation. The Lao PDR's consistent policy is to neither participate in any military bloc or alliance, nor allow foreign military bases in the territory of the Lao PDR since its armed forces are for self-defence only.

The national defence and security is the task of the entire Lao multi-ethnic people where everyone has a role to play as stipulated in the Constitution of the Lao PDR.

III. National Contributions to Regional Security

The Lao PDR is fully committed to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and ASEAN Charter, and pursuant to its foreign policy of peace, independence, friendship and cooperation and the People's Comprehensive National Defence and Security Policy of self-defence, the Lao PDR has deepened and widened its cooperative relations with all friendly countries and regional and international organisations around the world through the principle of mutually beneficial cooperation to enhance mutual understanding, trust and confidence in the region and the world, thereby ensuring a favourable environment for promoting development cooperation.

To date, the Lao PDR has established diplomatic relations with 143 countries and actively participates in sub-regional, regional and international frameworks such as ASEAN, ASEAN-initiated frameworks (ASEAN Plus One, APT, ARF, ADMM Plus, EAS and AMMTC), United Nations, Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), ASEANAPOL, INTERPOL, Moscow Conference on International Security, Xiangshan Forum and Shangri-La Dialogue, among others.

The Lao PDR has over the years been entrusted and given the honour to chair many sub-regional, regional and international meetings. To name a few, the Lao PDR chaired ASEAN in 2004-2005, the 1st Meeting of State Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in 2010, the 9th ASEM Summit in 2012 and ASEAN for the second time in 2016, including ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Informal Meeting (ACDFIM) and other defence-related meetings. The Lao PDR is also the Coordinator of Clearance and Reduction Education 2017-2019 under the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The Lao PDR has been working with regional and international communities to address various challenges of common concern and interest based on its ability and in accordance with universally recognised principles and norms.

a. Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime

The Government of the Lao PDR always attaches great importance to counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime. The Lao PDR has a consistent policy on cooperating with international community to prevent and combat all forms of terrorism. At the national level, numbers of legal framework have been issued and amended such as Law on National Public Security (2014) and Law on Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Financing of Terrorism (2014). More importantly, the Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure Law and Penal Code have been amended to criminalize all act of terrorism as well as suppressing and punishing illegal activities related to the crime of terrorism which cause loss to life and property of its citizens, public security and order and national integrity. Operational Organisation called National Counter-Terrorism Ad-Hoc Committee has been established, led by the Ministry of Public Security with mandate, inter alia, to act as an advisory body to the Government on counter-terrorism related issues. Whereas the National Ad-Hoc Committee on Implementing and Reporting United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1737 is led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This Committee oversees the implementation of all UNSC terrorism-related resolutions and submits the National Report to the 1737 Committee.

Moreover, the Lao PDR attaches great importance to the issues of anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism. The Anti-Money Laundering Intelligence Office was established in 2007 operates under direct supervision and advice from Deputy-Prime Minister directly, who is a Chair of National Coordination Committee for Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Financing of Terrorism (NCC). However, AMLIO still receives assistance from Bank of the Lao PDR in terms of funding and human resource. In addition, the National Assembly of the Lao PDR enacted the Law on Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) on 21 July 2014 upon the request of the NCC, a government body with the mandate to supervise such issues. Following that, the President of the Lao PDR promulgated the Decree No. 012/PO, dated 4 February 2015 to implement the new Law on AML/CFT. The latter laid the fundamental and legal framework for the Lao PDR to undertake the work of the AML/CFT rigorously. In addition, the Lao PDR issued sub-legislation under the Law AML/CFT "Order on withholding, Freezing or Seizure of Funds Relating to Financing of Terrorism (revised), No. 03/PM, dated 11 February 2016, Directive on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Prosecution No. 01/NCC, dated 8 January 2020, and Directive of the Head of the General Police Department of the Ministry of Public Security No. 17/PD, dated 17 December 2020 concerning the increased attention for giving direction, leading, follow up, monitoring, strictly in the investigation, prevention, anti and combating financing of terrorism". Moreover, the Lao PDR

is drafting the Instruction on the Procedure of Domestic and Foreign Listing and Delisting of Terrorists or Financing of Terrorism.

At the bilateral level, to ensure safety and security in the border areas, and to jointly address border-related issues, the Lao PDR has bilateral cooperative mechanism on border issues with each of its immediate neighbouring countries, namely Lao-Cambodia General Border Committee (GBC), Lao-China Joint Border Inspection Committee, Lao-Myanmar Provincial/Regional Border Committee (P/RBC), Lao-Thai General Border Committee (GBC), and Lao-Viet Nam Border Committee (BC).

At the regional level, the Lao PDR joined the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) in 2007, which is a sub-regional body of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in order to further advance the work on anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism in the country as well as to enhance cooperation with other countries in the region. The Lao PDR ratified the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism on 28 November 2012. In order to expand its international cooperation, the Lao PDR is now in the progress of applying for Egmont Group membership to conduct information exchange and sharing financing intelligence information on money laundering and terrorist financing activity. The Lao PDR is also co-chairing the ARF Workshop on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism with Indonesia and the EU in the Inter-Sessional year 2021-2022.

At the international level, the Lao PDR has always implemented all UNSC terrorism-related resolutions and closely worked with International Community to prevent and combat terrorism. This included information sharing, regularly attended international training and seminars on the margin of INTERPOL and other related transnational crime meetings. The Lao PDR is a state party and signatory to the following 13 UN conventions on counter-terrorism:

- Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft (1963);
- Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (1970);
- Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation (1971);
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, Including Diplomatic Agents (1973);
- Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (1979);
- International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages (1979);
- Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation (1988);
- Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (1988);
- Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf (1988);
- Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection (1991);
- Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel (1994);
- International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (1997); and
- International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (1999).

Recently, the Lao PDR is one of the countries faced with the emerging ICT/Cybercrime. As number of individuals and entities have significantly accessed to Information Communication and Technology, it is more likely that they are vulnerable to cyber-threats and cyber-attacks such as information and data theft, scam, phishing and spear phishing attack. These cyber-attacks have caused social-economic insecurity as well as a threat to national security. Therefore, the Government of Lao PDR has been working closely with regional and international organizations to prevent and combat cybercrimes. In order to counter cybercrimes, number of legal frameworks have been issued and amended namely Law on Data Protection (2017), Law on Prevention and Combating cybercrime (2015), Law on National Public Security (2014), Law on E-Transaction (2012), Law on Telecommunication (2011). Moreover, we have amended Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure Law and Penal Code to criminalize an act of conducting cybercrimes. Ministry of Public Security, led by General Department of Police and Ministry of Technology and Communications (Lao Computer Emergency Response Team-Lao CERT) are the main operational government agencies addressing this issue. To ensure the prevention and response to such transnational crime, the Lao PDR is a part of INTERPOL24/7 and the country will continue to work closely with the International Community to tackle ICT threats effectively and in a timely manner.

b. Non-Proliferation, Counter-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

Underscoring the great importance of disarmament and non-proliferation in ensuring durable international peace and security, the Lao PDR is supportive of multilateral disarmament efforts under United Nations frameworks.

The Lao PDR has neither the capacity nor the intention to produce, use or possess, transport, transfer or deliver nuclear, chemical or biological weapons to any states or non-state actors. The Lao Government fully supports the effort of the international community on disarmament and non-proliferation in the world and this should be carried out under the principle of multilateral diplomacy. Today, nuclear proliferation continues to be a major threat to global peace and security. Amid regional conflicts and disputes as well as civil unrests occurring across various regions, the international community should redouble its efforts to address the issue of armament. In this context, the Lao PDR will continue to work closely with regional and international communities to address those issues.

In addition, the Lao PDR is a state party to a number of regional and international instruments on disarmament and non-proliferation such as the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty, Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), and Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), and recently signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, or Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, among others. Furthermore, being one of the members of APG, the implementation of the 40 recommendations on Counter-Proliferation Financing CPF is a mandate.

The Lao PDR believes that the creation of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones has significantly contributed to strengthening the global regime of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and the enhancement of regional and global peace and security, and consolidated international efforts towards peace and security. The Lao PDR further reiterates

that the recognizance of these zones by the Nuclear Weapons States (NWSs) is of great importance.

The Lao PDR recognizes the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in nuclear non-proliferation and the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Lao PDR became a member of the IAEA in 2011 and signed the IAEA Additional Protocol in November 2014. Currently, the Lao PDR is drafting the Law on Radioactive Protection and Nuclear Safety, and Decree on Dual-Use Goods Management related to Weapon of Mass Destruction. However, to ensure the Lao PDR can manage to fully safeguard the implementation of Proliferation Financing (PF), the government issued the Prime Minister's Order on the Withholding, Freezing or Seizure of Funds Relating to Financing of Proliferation No. 20/PM, dated 26 November 2020.

To address the serious impact arising from the unexploded ordnances (UXOs), the Lao PDR, as a state party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions or OSLO Convention, has been actively promoting this universal Convention in order to prevent further victimization of humankind. In addition, the country has acceded to the CCW and has been a party to the Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War. Addressing the UXO impact remains a top priority for the Lao Government. The Lao PDR was a first among the few countries in the world to adopt its own national Millennium Development Goal called MDG9 in early 2000 and recently launched its own national SDG entitled "SDG18: Lives Safe from UXO". However, UXO clearance, victim assistance and mine-risk education remain challenges for the Lao PDR to fully operate due to the fact that the operation is a very complex process which requires sufficient resources, human and technical capacities, Therefore, that is very important that all countries, International Organisations and INGOs continue to support and assist UXO/Mine Action Sector in the Lao PDR. In order to further strengthen regional cooperation in this area, the Lao People's Army and the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation co-chaired the ADMM-Plus Experts Working Group (EWG) on Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) from 2017 to 2019, and successfully accomplished their aims and objectives by organising numerous activities as follows:

- 5th ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA, 22-25 May 2017, Vientiane, Lao PDR;
- 6th ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA, 2-5 October 2017, Moscow, Russia;
- 7th ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA, 24-27 April 2018, Xiengkhouang, Lao PDR;
- 8th ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA, October 2018, Moscow, Russia;
- ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA Site Survey And Final Planning Conference, 26–29 March 2019, Bogor, Indonesia;
- ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA FTX, 14-22 September 2019, Bogor, Indonesia; and
- 9th ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA and Co-Chairmanship Handover Ceremony, 3-6 December 2019, Vientiane, Lao PDR

In addition, the Lao PDR supports the role of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre as the center of excellence to encourage efforts to address explosive remnants of war (ERW), to facilitate cooperation between interested ASEAN Member States and relevant institutions, including the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), and has contributed USD 10,000 to the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre.

c. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

The Lao PDR places high importance to and supports regional and international cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) based on its limited resources and in accordance with the principle of request or consent of the affected countries.

The Lao PDR is a party to four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and two additional Protocols as followings: Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field, 12 August 1949; Convention (II) for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea, 12 August 1949; Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, 12 August 1949; Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 12 August 1949; Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977; and Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 8 June 1977.

The Lao PDR hosted and chaired the 7th Joint Task Force on Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Relief on 5 April 2017 in Vientiane and the 31st ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management, 8th Task Force on Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Relief, 5th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management and 6th Conference of Party to ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response on 17-19 October 2017 in Luang Prabang, and the Lao PDR volunteered to be co-chair of the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief for cycle 2018-2022).

The Lao People's Army has actively contributed to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). To name a few, the Lao People's Army co-chaired the ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR with Japan from 2014 to 2016 and successfully carried out the following activities:

- 5th ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR on 10-12 December 2014, Vientiane, Lao PDR;
- 6th ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR (TTX) on 5-7 August 2015, Vientiane, Lao PDR;
- 7th ADMM-Plus EWG on 9-10 December 2015, Tokyo, Japan;
- 8th ADMM-Plus EWG on 10 May 2016, Tokyo, Japan;
- ADMM-Plus Military Medicine Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Joint Exercise 2016 (AM-HEX 2016), 1-11 September 2016, Chonburi, Thailand; and
- 9th ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR, 14-16 December 2016, Vientiane, Lao PDR.

In addition, the Lao People's Army hosted and chaired the 7th ACMMC under the theme: "Strengthening ASEAN Military Medical Cooperation in HADR" on 11-15 July 2017 in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

The Lao PDR has co-chaired with Canada and China the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ARF ISM on DR) for the cycle 2018-2022 (one additional year extended due to the COVID-19 pandemic), the co-chairs successfully hosted the 18th ARF ISM on DR on 2-3 April 2019 in Vientiane, the Lao PDR and the 19th ARF ISM on DR on 19 May 2021 via videoconference.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR has jointly organised annual seminars on international human rights law (IHL) to promote awareness and understanding of IHL in the Lao PDR.

d. People Smuggling

The Lao PDR acknowledges that people smuggling and human trafficking violate fundamental rights, freedom and dignity of its citizens as stipulated in the Lao PDR's Constitution and laws as well as in international conventions. Therefore, the Government has attached great importance to addressing those issues by establishing a National Steering Committee on Human Trafficking in 2004 as a dedicated anti-trafficking governmental body, which is comprised of high ranking government officials from ministries concerned. Amongst others, the Committee cooperates with neighbouring countries, international agencies as well as with non-governmental and civil society organizations to actively run projects and joint activities in response to human trafficking that takes place domestically and across the border. It also enhances the implementation of the policies and legislation as well as National Plans of Action (NPA) and other preventive measures on countering human trafficking to be in line with sub-regional and regional action plans. To support this ambitious work of the Committee, the Ministry of Public Security set up the Department of Anti-Human Trafficking to act as the Secretariat and the National Focal Point for cooperation with foreign governments, and regional and international organisations. The Department of Anti-Human Trafficking chaired the 32nd Meeting of Heads of Specialist Units on Trafficking in Persons on 23 May 2017 in Vientiane Lao PDR.

In order to institutionalize the fight against human trafficking as well as to bring justice to the victims and punish the offenders, the Law on Anti-Human Trafficking has been approved by the Lao National Assembly in 2015 after a broad consultation process. The law calls for strong punitive measures, including maximum penalty of life imprisonment and covering all forms of human trafficking while also foreseeing protection and assistance for the victims. In fact, the law reflects our obligations and commitments under relevant regional and international instruments to which the Lao PDR is party.

In order to fight against human trafficking in a comprehensive and effective manner, the Lao Government further enhances its strong bilateral cooperation and collaboration with countries in the region such as Thailand, Viet Nam and China as well as multilateral collaboration with ASEAN and Mekong sub-region countries, including through ASEAN-Australia cooperation on counter trafficking, Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking Process (COMMIT) and the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crimes.

The Lao PDR signed the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP) in 2015 and ratified it in 2017.

At the international level, the Lao PDR has concluded bilateral agreements and is party to the following conventions on and relating to the fight against human trafficking:

- Convention on the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others in 1950;

- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime in 2000;
- Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in 2000;
- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1979;
- Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989;
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Lao PDR and the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand on Cooperation to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in 2017;
- Agreement between the Government of the Lao PDR and the Government of Viet Nam on cooperation in Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Persons and Protection of Victims of Trafficking in 2010
- Agreement between the Governments of the Lao PDR and People's Republic of China on Cooperation in Preventing and Trafficking in Persons in 2014;
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Lao PDR and the Government of Australia Concerning Mutual Cooperation in Combating Unlawful migration, Trafficking in Humans and Smugglings of People in 2003;
- United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime;
- Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters;
- Treaty between the Lao PDR and Viet Nam on Mutual Legal Assistance in Civil and Criminal Matters in 1998;
- Treaty between the Lao PDR and China on Mutual Legal Assistance in Civil and Criminal Matters in 1999; and
- Treaty between the Lao PDR and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on Mutual Legal Assistance in Civil and Criminal Matters in 2008.

IV. Role of the ARF

Since its inception, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), a multilateral forum with ASEAN as the primary driving force, has played an important role in promoting mutual understanding, confidence and trust among diverse participants through dialogue and practical cooperation, thereby contributing positively to the maintenance and promotion of peace, stability and development cooperation in the region and the world as a whole.

The ARF has achieved significant progress in its three-stage process towards the ultimate stage of conflict resolution. In light of growing traditional and non-traditional security challenges and in moving forward, all participants should build upon the achievements made thus far including through joint initiatives, and move the ARF process forward at a pace comfortable to all ARF participants, taking into account the diversity of this Asia-Pacific region with a view to further enhancing mutual understanding, trust and confidence, and maintaining and promoting peace, stability and cooperation for development in the region and the world at large. To this end, the Lao PDR will continue to work with all participants under ARF processes, including the ARF ISM on DR that the Lao PDR is a co-chair from 2018 to 2022, the 3rd ARF Workshop on Urban Emergency Rescue, and the ARF Workshop on Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism, in contributing to the realisation of the ARF Vision Statement.

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

The world has seen its fair share of major historic events due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, new security challenges are becoming increasingly multi-faceted and cross-dimensional in nature, which require an integrated and interoperable regional architecture with the goal of addressing the region's current and emerging security challenges - both traditional and non-traditional.

Indeed, there has been a general decline in the number of **terrorism**-related arrests and attempted attacks in Malaysia in recent years. Nevertheless, despite the downward trend and increasing pressure to redirect resources to other priorities to help curb COVID-19, Malaysia remains vigilant on the threats, influence and elements of terrorism and violent extremism.

From the defence perspective, cooperation among countries is important, especially in sharing of intelligence and information to fight terrorism and other related activities such as the movement of terrorists across borders, kidnap for ransom, transboundary criminal activities, piracy and sea robbery. The incidents that took place a great distance away, such as the Paris beheading, Austrian attack, Boko Haram kidnappings, should not be treated as isolated events. Instead, they should prompt counter-terrorism policy-makers and practitioners to reflect on the potential impacts of terrorism pose in the local and regional context.

In this connection, the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) continues its efforts in strengthening regional cooperation, driven by regional organisation such as ASEAN. Malaysia's contributions towards regional counter-terrorism efforts can be illustrated by SEARCCT's involvement in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). Other platform such as the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP), has provided SEARCCT with the opportunity to include participants from the Southeast Asian region and beyond in the Centre's programmes.

Although the restrictive measures taken to combat COVID-19 in Malaysia have significantly reduced openings for physical terrorist attacks, terrorists have, nevertheless, taken this opportunity to use the cyberspace to recruit potential terrorists, including through the use of social media. The interdependencies on digital information networks have increased as people adopt a remote working culture in response to COVID-19 by using various tools and applications.

Cyber-attacks are increasing in number which could threaten a country's critical infrastructures, as well as towards the country's defence, security, and financial sectors. This exponential growth in the use of the internet and cyberspace has created new areas of opportunities for threat actors to exploit the internet and cyberspace for malicious activities, and pose various threats to the country's cyber realm. This phenomenon, in turn, has called for the government's advertence to cybersecurity issues.

Malaysia believes that **cybersecurity** is not an issue exclusive for the department of information technology (IT), but should become a concern of every management/sector and business model of every organisation - at the national, regional and international level. Hence,

there is a need for an encompassing framework and action plans in fostering close collaborations among stakeholders to manage the evolving cyber-related issues and incidents.

Maritime security is an integral aspect in maintaining the peace and security in the region. Malaysia believes that maritime security can be enhanced by transparency, dialogue and cooperation to augment confidence for coordinated response to maritime security threats. The increased presence of warships in the South China Sea could heighten tensions in the region, impede freedom of movement, and raise the possibilities for miscalculations and incidents at sea. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing) activities have also caused coastal countries millions of dollars in lost revenues, destruction of maritime ecosystem, and negatively impacted the livelihoods of people who are dependent on the sea.

The Southeast Asian region is also one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world. Natural disasters have increased in frequency and magnitude, requiring us to be prepared in responding and managing disasters. Cooperation in **disaster management** is, therefore, vital, as natural disasters often impact more than one country, as seen in the 2004 Aceh Tsunami. Natural disasters can also move from one place to another, such as the 2013 Typhoon Haiyan, which started in the Pacific Ocean and hit a number of countries like the Philippines, Vietnam, and China.

2. National Security and Defence Policy

a) Overview of National Security and Defence Policy

The Defence White Paper (DWP), published in 2020, outlines Malaysia’s perspectives on national, regional, and global strategic trends, as well as its National Defence Framework. The DWP serves as a long-term blueprint for defence planning in pursuing Malaysia’s aspiration as a secure, sovereign, and prosperous nation.

The DWP acknowledges Malaysia’s geostrategic importance, being a maritime country with continental roots, flanked by the South China Sea and Pacific Ocean on one side and the Straits of Malacca and Indian Ocean on the other. It also emphasises the importance of the ‘*whole-of-government*’ and ‘*whole-of-society*’ approach towards defence.

The DWP defines Malaysia’s defence strategy based on the following three pillars, namely:

i.	Concentric Deterrence	Malaysia’s national defence is pursued along the concentric areas that cover land, maritime, air and cyber electromagnetic domains. These are categorised into three geographic areas:	
		Core Area:	The land masses of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak; the territorial waters; as well as the air space above them.
		Extended Area:	The Malaysian Maritime Zone (MMZ), strategic waterways, airspace and critical lines of communications.
		Forward Area:	Covers locations beyond the extended area, where Malaysia’s national interests are involved.

ii.	Comprehensive Defence	Adopting the whole-of government and whole-of-society approaches to defend the country, in line with the spirit of Total Defence.
iii.	Credible Partnerships	To build Malaysia's credibility as a dependable partner through bilateral and multilateral defence cooperation with external partners, as well as to contribute to defence readiness, security needs and regional stability of Malaysia and its partners.

Data Contribution to ARF Arms Register

Total defence expenditure on annual basis

DEFENCE EXPENDITURE*		
*Exchange rate as per January 2021 (USD1 = MYR4.1014)		
Operating Expenditure	RM11,355,404,800	USD2,768,665,528.84
Development Expenditure	RM4,505,188,000	USD1,098,451,260.55
Total Defence Expenditure	RM15,860,592,800	USD 3,867,116,789.39
Defence Expenditure as a Percentage GDP	1.18%	
Defence Expenditure Per Capita	RM483.92	USD117.99

3. National Contributions to Promote Regional Peace and Security

a) Counter-terrorism

i. Promoting a people-centred approach to counter-terrorism

The period between 2020 and 2021 will remain in history as one that has presented the world with unprecedented challenges, and it is no different for SEARCCT. Notwithstanding the global outbreak of COVID-19, SEARCCT has managed to conduct a few programmes and initiatives that focused on youth empowerment and capacity-building culturally and generationally-relevant messengers, along with a few other programmes related to the role of gender in both violent extremism; and **preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE)**.

In September 2020, SEARCCT held a Roundtable Dialogue with Sabahan Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on **Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism**, in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The Dialogue explored the possible roles of CSOs within their respective grassroots communities with regard to addressing potential grievances and/or drivers of violent extremism. Other than that, the Dialogue sought to identify the key target audiences and the credible messengers that would resonate within their communities.

SEARCCT embarked on the **Gendered Approach Towards Outreach on Radicalisation (GATOR)** programme that aims to identify gender-sensitive PCVE strategies in Malaysia, and to leverage the participation of women and women's organisations in PCVE. Two roundtable discussion (RTD) sessions were conducted with government agencies and CSOs to gather input and perspectives on incorporating gender-based PCVE approaches and assessing the need for capacity-building programmes for stakeholders.

In line with its objective to partner with the youth in shaping a comprehensive and community-based solutions, SEARCCT conducted a youth workshop for undergraduate students - **Building Effective Stories Through Narratives by Youth to Enhance Resilience** (BESTNYER) Virtual Workshop. The 3-day virtual workshop brought together 25 undergraduates from several public universities, in which they participated in a series of lectures and break-out sessions that allowed them to voice out their opinions on a safe platform as well as to incentivise them into becoming future messengers of peace.

In efforts to promote the role of media in PCVE initiatives, SEARCCT also collaborated with the Malaysian Press Institute, the International Institute for Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and supported by the United States Embassy in Kuala Lumpur to develop a **PCVE Media Portal**, primarily for media practitioners as well as researchers alike. The aim of this portal is to provide information, resources and guidelines that can help users to analyse and better understand terrorism and violent extremism, as well as the efforts, activities and methods that are aimed at preventing and countering their various manifestations.

Recognising the continued importance of counter-messaging, SEARCCT partnered with established comic artists to produce the CIVETCAT comic series - **Curbing Ideologies of Violent Extremism Through Comics and Technology**. This project resulted in 12 PCVE-themed comics, which were launched in February 2021. This project strived to explore the efficacy of comics in presenting PCVE values to the youth demographics, especially those in the younger age groups (i.e. schoolgoers).

Tapping on the growing podcast consumption in Malaysia especially among younger population, SEARCCT has recently launched a podcast series online. The **No-Book Book Club podcast** feature researchers, analysts and subject matter experts as they share their research findings on topics related to preventing and countering violent extremism.

ii. Promotion of inter-civilization dialogue

SEARCCT has ventured into a new collaboration with the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM). This collaboration is seen as a counter-messaging initiative in conveying positive and alternative messages to the general public on a religious platform. The first outcome of this synergistic collaboration is a Friday Prayer sermon entitled "*Waspada Fahaman Ekstremisme*" (**Beware of the Extremism Ideology**). The sermon explains the danger of violent extremism and the distortion of violent extremist narratives away from the Islamic perspective. The sermon also emphasises values such as tolerance and mutual respect among communities that should be reflected in everyday life.

SEARCCT has also organised a programme themed "*Prinsip Kenegaraan Penyatu Kepelbagaian*" (**National Principles for Unity**) that emphasised on the importance of common values such as respect, tolerance, compassion and unity. These messages of peace and harmony foster a greater sense of Malaysian identity and communities that are resilient to terrorist propaganda and violent extremist ideologies.

iii. Information sharing and intelligence exchange and document integrity and security in enhancing cooperation to combat terrorism and transnational crimes

Together with Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia, Malaysia has established the **Malacca Straits Patrols (MSP)** in 2004; and the **Trilateral Corporation Arrangement (TCA)** in 2016, with Indonesia and the Philippines, with the aim to improve maritime security conditions in the Sulu and Sulawesi Seas. These initiatives give a special focus in securing the sea lines of communications to ensure safe passage of vessels, prevent illegal cross-border activities, sea robbery, and piracy, as well as combat the movement of foreign terrorist fighters. These initiatives involve the conduct of maritime air and sea patrols, including in providing immediate assistance for people and ships in distress, conducting information sharing and intelligence, as well as serves as hotline of communications between Member States.

Malaysia is a member of the **ASEAN Our Eyes Initiative** under the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), adopted at the 12th ADMM in 2018. The Initiative aims to enhance information and intelligence exchanges at strategic level among ASEAN Member States to combat terrorism through the use of ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI), a secure telecommunication connection between Defence Ministers of ASEAN Member States.

Malaysia is also a member of the **ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Counter Terrorism (ADMM-Plus EWG on CT)** since its establishment in 2011. The current EWG on CT cycle (2021-2023) is co-chaired by Myanmar and Russia. Malaysia is an active participant in the EWG activities, meetings, conferences, and exercises together with other ADMM-Plus Members, particularly in capacity building through practical defence cooperation and confidence building measures between ASEAN and Plus Dialogue Partners in counter terrorism.

iv. Cooperative counter-terror action on border security

- Malaysia established the **Malacca Straits Patrols (MSP)** in 2004, together with Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia; and
- Malaysia established the **Trilateral Corporation Arrangement (TCA)** in 2016, together with Indonesia and the Philippines.

v. Measures against terrorist financing

Through the Central Bank of Malaysia (BNM), the Government of Malaysia has taken, among others, the following initiatives:

1) National Risk Assessment

Malaysia is in the process of finalising its **2020 National Risk Assessment (NRA)** that is expected to be concluded in the second half of 2021. The NRA is conducted every three years to identify Malaysia's exposure to high-risk crimes, including terrorism and terrorism financing crimes (TF), as well as any emerging trends within the TF landscape. The assessment also determines financial sector vulnerabilities and the interlinkages that may be abused to facilitate such crimes. The NRA allows better allocation of resources in combating, among others, terrorism and terrorism

financing activities, as well as supports more targeted actions in anti-money laundering and combating terrorism financing (AML/CFT) measures.

2) Collaboration between public and private sectors

As the custodian of financial intelligence under the **Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act 2001** (AMLA), the Central Bank of Malaysia collects, analyses and discloses financial intelligence on suspected terrorism and terrorism financing activities, based on suspicious transaction reports (STRs) submitted by financial institutions, to domestic law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and foreign financial intelligence units, for their further investigations on TF offences under their purview. In 2020, 18% of the financial intelligence disclosures to LEAs were related to terrorism or terrorism financing activities.

Additionally, BNM collaborates closely with LEAs, as well as the financial institutions to share relevant information on the latest terrorism and terrorism financing trends, techniques and threats to encourage vigilance and responsiveness in addressing the evolving nature of such crimes.

This collaboration is further expanded with the official establishment of Malaysia's public-private partnership platform, the **Malaysian Financial Intelligence Network** (MyFINet) in 2019, with the aim to enhance the capability of public and private sectors in detecting suspicious behaviour and transactions relating to terrorism financing and other serious crimes.

3) Strengthening policies related to countering the financing of terrorism

In ensuring that the financial system is not being abused to facilitate terrorism financing, the Central Bank of Malaysia as the competent authority under AMLA has strengthened and refined its policy document on **Anti-Money Laundering, Countering Financing of Terrorism and Targeted Financial Sanctions for Financial Institutions, Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions** (DNFBPs) & **NonBank Financial Institutions** (NBFIs) in 2020, specifically on the obligations of reporting institutions on targeted financial sanctions related to terrorism and terrorism financing. These refinements would support better and more effective implementation of sanctions screening requirements and monitoring of the FIs/NBFIs customers and related transactions.

In terms of capacity building, in 2020, a **counter-terrorism financial investigation course** was organised by SEARCCT involving 30 participants from various organisations and agencies such as the Royal Malaysia Police, Attorney General's Chambers and the Central Bank of Malaysia.

vi. **Proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control and disarmament**

Biological Weapons	Malaysia signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (1972 BWC) on 10 April 1972; and ratified the Convention on 6 September 1991.
Chemical Weapons	Malaysia ratified the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (1925 Geneva Protocol) on 10 December 1970.
Chemical Weapons	Malaysia signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (1993 CWC) on 13 January 1993; and ratified the Convention on 20 April 2000.
Conventional Weapons	Malaysia signed the Arms Trade Treaty on 26 September 2013.

Malaysia strongly believes that the total elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) must remain at the top of the international agenda. Malaysia is convinced that the complete elimination of such weapons would significantly contribute towards international peace and security.

Malaysia remains committed in preventing the proliferation of WMDs and their related technologies and delivery systems.

In this regard, Malaysia is Party to a number of international instruments on disarmament and non-proliferation of WMDs, among others the **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**, the **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)**, the **Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty**, the **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)**, the **Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC)** as well as the **Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)**. Malaysia is also a signatory State to the **Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)**.

Malaysia is also a member of the **Virtual Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR) Defence Experts** under the ADMM, which aims to promote multilateral cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member States against potential CBR threats and to advance knowledge and techniques for responding to CBR attacks.

1) Supporting national implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540

In fulfilling the obligations stipulated under United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540 (2004), Malaysia enacted the **Strategic Trade Act 2010 (STA 2010)** on 5 April 2010, which came into force on 1 January 2011. STA 2010 provides for control over the export, transshipment, transit and brokering of strategic items, including arms

and related material, and other activities that will or may facilitate the design, development and production of WMDs and their delivery systems.

In order to give full effect to the provisions of STA, several subsidiary legislations have also been enacted. After seven (7) years of the implementation, STA 2010 underwent its first amendment, known as the **STA (Amendment) 2017**. The purpose of the amendment was to adapt the STA to the changing dynamics of proliferation scenarios and at the same time ensuring its compliance with the relevant UNSCR without discouraging trade activities. The STA (Amendment) 2017 came into force on 8 September 2017.

2) Amendments to the Atomic Energy Licensing Act 1984 [Act 304]

The amendments to the **Atomic Energy Licensing Act 1984** are being carried out by Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB), under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI), for the purpose of strengthening the provision of safety, security and supervise the usage of atomic energy implicitly and comprehensively. This process is a follow-up to the need to improve and strengthening of the national atomic energy legal infrastructure and governance system, as to be in line with new developments of the use of atomic energy applications and nuclear technologies related in Malaysia; which are widely used in supporting the country's economic growth. These improvements are also aimed at providing the country's legal infrastructure ecosystem that is equivalent and competitive with the international atomic energy legal control regime. This regime which will also affect the accessibility to the technology and applications of atomic energy by local industries and researchers and are needed to expand the scope of licensing as to ensure the controls on security and safeguards under the **Atomic Energy Licensing (Amendment) Bill 2021**.

Malaysia needs to heed to the country's own experience; which is associated with the export control of nuclear-related items by Scomi Precision Engineering Sdn. Bhd. (SCOPE) in Shah Alam in 2004, to an entity in Libya orchestrated by the A.Q. Khan Network. As a result of this incident, the international community linked Malaysia as a hub country that could be manipulated for the purpose of developing WMDs. The incident also caused a Malaysian employee of the company to be banned by the United States Department of State back in 2009.

Following the incident, Malaysia signed the **Additional Protocol to Safeguards Agreement (AP)** on 22 November 2005; which sets out the responsibility to control and report any activities related to nuclear items and technology to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). At this point in time, the process of ratification of this protocol is very vital and subject to the adoption of the Atomic Energy Licensing (Amendment) Bill 2021 which will empower the Malaysian Government to regulate nuclear items and technology produced or imported by Malaysia.

Currently, the aspects of control of nuclear items and technology-related are being regulated by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) through the Strategic Trade Act (STA) 2010, whereby this law was gazetted as to implement the Malaysia's obligations under the UNSCR 1540, in curbing the development of WMDs. However, the scope of control, under the 2010 STA, is only focusing on the subject of

export, transit, transhipment and brokerage activities authorized to implement it to AELB, as the authority under STA 2010. In addition, the expansion of this legal control must also take into account Malaysia's commitment; through the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was recently ratified on 30 September 2020.

3) Export Control

STA 2010 has come into force on 1 January 2011, whereby the legislation provides controls on the export, transshipment, transit and brokering of strategic items and technology, including arms and related materials, as well as activities that will, or may facilitate the design, development, production of WMDs and their delivery systems. By the implementation of this act, Malaysia can fully adhere its obligation under the UNSCR 1540.

Malaysia is always consistent with its stand, in line with the UNSCR 1540, that emphasizes the **importance of maintaining and promoting existing non-proliferation multilateral agreements**, and acknowledges that the Resolution does not interfere with State obligations under such treaties. In addition, it is important to know that export control under this Act is not only revolving in fulfilling international obligation, but most importantly, the Act enables the protection of national security, and to combat the proliferation of WMDs that mainly include chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons.

In order to fulfil the State's obligation under the UNSCR 1540 through Malaysia national instrument STA 2010, a Strategic Controller in The Strategic Trade Secretariat will be appointed by MITI to act as the focal point for the administration of STA 2010. Apart from the Controller, the Malaysia Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) together with the relevant agencies, namely AELB and Pharmaceutical Services Division, are responsible to issue permits for the activities listed in UNSCR 1540, mandated by STA 2010. These agencies are designated as the licensing and enforcement authorities under the Act. Furthermore, STA 2010 does not only apply to the person who are engaged in the activities of export, transshipment, bringing into transit or brokering of strategic items which includes exporters, traders, manufacturers, brokers, and others who have ownership of the product when it is exported; it also includes the activity of a person who either in his own behalf or acting as an agent on behalf of another person is directly involved in the negotiation, purchase, financing, conveying, buying, selling and supply of such items.

vii. Non-proliferation

Nuclear	Malaysia signed the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water (1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty - PTBT) on 21 August 1963; and ratified the Treaty on 15 July 1964.
	Malaysia signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (2017 TPNW) on 20 September 2017; and ratified the Treaty on 30 September 2020.
	Malaysia signed the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (1998 CTBT) on 23 July 1998; and ratified the Treaty on 17 January 2008.
	Malaysia signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (1968 NPT) on 1 July 1968; and ratified the Treaty on 5 March 1970.

	Malaysia signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Seabed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof (1971 Seabed Treaty) on 20 May 1970; and ratified the Treaty on 21 June 1972.
	Malaysia signed the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) on 15 Dec 1995; and ratified the Treaty on 11 Oct 1996.
IAEA	Malaysia signed the Agreement between the Government of Malaysia and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards in Connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (1972 IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement) on 29 February 1972.
	Malaysia signed the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency on 1 September 1987.
	Malaysia signed the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident on 1 September 1987.
	Malaysia signed the Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (2017 RCA) on 19 June 2017.
	Malaysia signed the Agreement between the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Governments of Malaysia and the United States of America Concerning the Transfer of A Research Reactor and Enriched Uranium (Supply and Project Agreement) on 22 September 1980.

Malaysia reaffirms the role of the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Malaysia had chaired the **2019 NPT Preparatory Committee**, which took place from 29 April to 10 May 2019 in New York, and will be chairing **Main Committee I on Nuclear Disarmament** during the **10th NPT Review Conference** when it is convened. Malaysia looks forward to contributing towards a successful Review Conference, both in its national capacity and as Chair of Main Committee I on Nuclear Disarmament, and hopes that the upcoming Review Conference will bring States Parties together towards achieving the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, despite the challenges facing the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

Malaysia reaffirms the significance of **the SEANWFZ Treaty as the disarmament and non-proliferation instrument in the ASEAN region**. Malaysia welcomes the readiness of the Nuclear Weapon States to resume consultations on the **Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty**, and stands ready to engage the Nuclear Weapon States towards the resolution of outstanding issues pertaining to their accession to the Protocol.

On 30 September 2020, Malaysia ratified the TPNW thus becoming the 46th State Party to the Treaty. Ratifying the TPNW is Malaysia's tangible effort to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament on the international stage and reaffirms Malaysia's unwavering commitment and support towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Malaysia continues to support activities under the ambit of the ARF relating to disarmament and non-proliferation issues. Malaysia had co-chaired with Canada and New Zealand the 7th, 8th and 9th **ARF Inter-Sessional Meetings on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament** (ARF ISM on NPD) in 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively, and continues to participate in ARF ISM on NPD

meetings, most recently in June 2021 via video conference, co-chaired by Indonesia, the Republic of Korea and Japan.

Malaysia recognizes the contribution of the CTBT to global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Malaysia continues to host a **Radionuclide Monitoring Station (RMS)** as part of the monitoring and verification installations under the Treaty since 2008. Malaysia has also served as Chairperson of the **CTBT Organisation Preparatory Commission** from June to December 2019.

With regard to arms control, Malaysia remains supportive of the **Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)** and had played a constructive role during the negotiations leading up to the conclusion of the Treaty. Malaysia is actively pursuing the ratification of the ATT domestically, and looks forward to being a State Party at the earliest opportunity.

As a State Party to the **Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)**, Malaysia continues to fully adhere to its obligations under the Convention. The Science and Technology Research Institute for Defence (STRIDE) under the Ministry of Defence serves as the Lead Agency for the implementation of the BWC in Malaysia, and is responsible in ensuring that Malaysia continues to fully adhere to its obligations under the Convention. Malaysia recognizes the importance for States Parties to undertake necessary measures, including reviewing its constitutional process to implement the provisions of the Convention as stipulated under Article IV of the BWC. In demonstrating Malaysia's commitment to the BWC, Malaysia is in the process of finalising a comprehensive BWC Bill, which would reinforce the existing legislation such as the Arms Act 1960, Customs Act 1967 and STA 2010.

Malaysia is committed to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the CWC. The **National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention of Malaysia (NACWC)**, which was officially established in September 2006 in conjunction with the promulgation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) Act 2005, has served as the national focal point for effective liaison with the **Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)** and to assist Malaysia in fulfilling its obligation under the CWC. Malaysia also moderated the 5th Article XI Workshop on 2 November 2020, in the capacity as the Interim Facilitator.

Malaysia is actively undertaking efforts to enact **the Atomic Energy Bill** which will allow Malaysia to ratify and accede to the various international instruments on nuclear safety and security such as the **Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and its Protocol**, the **IAEA Additional Protocol** and the **International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT)**. The Bill will also help strengthen Malaysia's efforts in the non-proliferation and disarmament field.

1) Supporting Nuclear Security-Related International Initiatives

Malaysia is continuously enforcing, since 1 July 2011, its comprehensive export controls law, STA 2010. The enactment of the STA is in tandem with Malaysia's commitment to implement the UNSCR 1540. The national authority for this act is MITI, with the support of Nuclear Malaysia as the nuclear technical support organization and AELB as the nuclear regulator, for nuclear related matters.

Malaysia remains fully supportive and committed in implementing the IAEA Information Circular, INFCIRC/225 Rev. 5, on the **Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities**. INFCIRC/225 Rev. 5 is applied in regulating the only research reactor facility in Malaysia including for assessment of transport of nuclear materials via Malaysia.

Malaysia plays an active role within the framework of cooperation to the **Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism** (GICNT). Through collaboration and partnership of GICNT and IAEA, Malaysia has hosted Trilateral Exercise between Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines in addressing nuclear security threat: the **Table Top Exercise “Peak Kinabalu”** in August 2018. Through Peak Kinabalu, a training video featuring good practice, on Concept of Operation (ConOps) and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on **nuclear security detection and response mechanism** involving key law enforcement authorities, was developed and has been further used by IAEA for training purposes worldwide (Video Link: <https://youtu.be/yFCHp3P0WH4>).

Malaysia plays its active role in promoting effective and harmonic approach in the implementation of nuclear security within the **ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy** (ASEANTOM); which includes the exchange of good practices and experiences activities. Malaysia perceives such regional cooperation between neighbouring countries will promote harmonized implementations, while strengthening network and better understanding between the countries involved.

2) Strengthening and Developing National Nuclear Security Regimes

Malaysia recognizes nuclear security issues as part of fundamental national security issues, in line with other conventional threats to Malaysia. In this regard, nuclear security infrastructure program is being deployed under the chairmanship of National Security Council (NSC) in setting up policy and strategy in multi-agencies environment. With the acceptance to the National Operation Planning Committee coordinated by NSC, AELB has been given a role as the lead technical support agency for the implementation of nuclear security measures in Malaysia. Nuclear security is now being designed and implemented in line and in accordance to national security legal framework and arrangements.

Nuclear security is planned and implemented through an establish framework of **IAEA Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan** (INSSP) for assurance of comprehensive approach in line with IAEA international good practices. Malaysia’s INSSP was jointly developed and approved in 2009 based on findings and recommendations of IAEA International Nuclear Security Advisory Service (INSServ) mission Implemented that was hosted in 2005.

Malaysia will continue its contribution to ensure that all related activities will fulfill the relevant international standards and guidance defined by the IAEA, and had recently approved its **INSSP 2019-2021** that was proven to be very instrumental in designing and guiding the establishment of sustainable national nuclear security capability.

Malaysia will be hosting the **revision of the International Nuclear Security Advisory Service** (INSServ) in 2022, following the newly developed Guidelines in assessing

current approach in addressing nuclear security out of regulatory control; following the lesson learned from the previous incidents that took place in Malaysia.

3) **Building National Capacities for Nuclear Security**

Malaysia is recognized as the only **Nuclear Security Support Centre (NSSC)** with the "regional roles" by the IAEA since December 2012. Malaysia has been extending our NSSC capability on a basis of experiences and best practices sharing-session with countries such as Albania, Indonesia, Sudan, Mauritania, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Zimbabwe and Zambia, through cooperation with the IAEA.

Learning from the benefit of organizing bilateral/multilateral workshops that are based on sharing of experiences and best practices with regional countries, Malaysia is now determined and willing to further extend such capability to other nuclear security framework; in the field of export control, radioactive source security, legal and regulatory framework, national nuclear security infrastructure establishment and detection and response activity for material out of regulatory control.

Malaysia is utilizing NSSC as a tool to retain knowledge and expertise gained from various international cooperation and assistance in nuclear security. Malaysia's NSSC is also capable to provide regional support for maintenance and acceptance and testing of radiation detection equipment in order to sustain national capability through establishment of **Nuclear Security Detection Laboratory** through the support of European Union funding to the IAEA. On 25 September 2020, AELB, on behalf of Government of Malaysia, signed Practical Agreement with the IAEA on **Loaner Pool of Radiation Detection Equipment** that will be supporting regional countries for equipment loans and training on behalf of IAEA.

Malaysia has successfully completed the establishment of **Physical Protection (PP) Laboratory** developed through the support of Canadian funding to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund (NSF). The Lab will support the enhancement of national **Radiation Protection Officer (RPO) Certification Training** through practical session and lab work. The PP Lab will also host the first **Regional Training programme on Physical Protection for Radiation Facility** under ASEANTOM Action Plan.

A strong collaboration between national and international agencies are being conducted to ensure the availability on national resources for Nuclear Security in Malaysia. This involves cooperation with the Nuclear Science Department of the National University of Malaysia (UKM) to establish an academic program on nuclear security. UKM will be hosting the first Masters in Safety and Security level in 2020 that is also open for international student applications. For sustainable assurance, Malaysia is pragmatic in extending role for developing future resources in nuclear security through partnership with academic institutions such as UKM that is also playing active role within **IAEA International Nuclear Security Education Network (INSEN)**.

In appreciation to the support given by IAEA to Malaysia, national resources from AELB, RMP and RMCD have been deployed as invited experts to support IAEA programs at international level in providing good practices as well as promoting fundamental implementation on security matters.

4) Addressing Material out of Regulatory Control (MORC)

Malaysia has been part of the **Illicit Trafficking Database in Nuclear Material and Other Radioactive Sources** since 29 March 2001, which is implemented by the IAEA in cooperation with the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the International Police Organization (INTERPOL). Malaysia is committed to exchange the information to the **IAEA Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB)** as part of national commitments to support global nuclear security objectives.

Malaysia has incorporated **radiation detection screening** during major public event involving the development of radiation detection and response techniques for such event to the Royal Malaysian Police with the cooperation of the IAEA. Such implementation was deployed with great success during the SEA Games 2017 and Malaysia Games 2018. Learning from recent experience, Malaysia is confident and committed to further deploy radiation detection as part of main security screening activities to other upcoming major public event to be held in the future.

With IAEA support of radiation detection equipment and various training programmes, RMP is well equipped with SOPs to react on nuclear security threats including **criminal and terrorism investigation mechanism** developed within the framework of CBRNE capacities and procedures. Nuclear security is also instilled within major urban areas (MUA) assessment by RMC.

To ensure technical readiness in addressing MORC and life cycle management of disuse source, Malaysia cooperates with IAEA to pilot the development of **Mobile Hot Cell and Borehole Disposal** for secure management of disused sources of Category 1, 2 and 3. Malaysia has recently approved license application for borehole facility and in the phase of reviewing mobile hot cell pending submission by Nuclear Malaysia Agency (MNA).

5) Enhancement of Industries Involvement

Malaysia believes that nuclear security requires holistic approach that demands involvement of all relevant stakeholders, particularly the licensed users. Awareness programmes have been implemented to further emphasize and promote regulatory compliance through a targeted group workshop and national scale seminar implemented jointly with RMP and industries representative in 2019. As a transparent national regulatory body, AELB is also involved in industries in proposing enhancement to security measures; for example, in assessing the feasibility of Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking mechanism implementation as to enhance monitoring mechanism for mobile sources in Malaysia. This approach is also expected to enhance sense of participation and contribution for safety and security assurance among industries.

6) Cooperative Counter-Terror Action on Border Security

Malaysia through AELB has implemented its nuclear security detection measure to **combat illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive material**. It is also part of ongoing discussion and development among ASEANTOM countries. **Joint Cross**

Border Exercises were conducted between countries hosted by Malaysia in cooperation with the IAEA, including information exchanges related to nuclear and radioactive material out of regulatory control.

viii. **Transnational Crime**

Information sharing and intelligence exchange and document integrity and security in enhancing cooperation to combat terrorism and transnational crimes

- a. Malaysia established the **Malacca Straits Patrols** (MSP) in 2004, together with Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia;
- b. Malaysia established the **Trilateral Corporation Arrangement** (TCA) in 2016, together with Indonesia and the Philippines;
- c. Malaysia is a member of the **ASEAN Our Eyes Initiative** under ADMM, adopted at the 12th ADMM in 2018. The Initiative aims to enhance information and intelligence exchanges at strategic level among ASEAN Member States to combat terrorism through the use of **ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure** (ADI), a secure telecommunication connection between Defence Ministers of ASEAN member states; and
- d. Malaysia is a member of the **ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Counter Terrorism** (ADMM-Plus EWG on CT) since its establishment in 2011. The current EWG on CT cycle (2021-2023) is co-chaired by Myanmar and Russia. Malaysia actively participates in the EWG activities, meetings, conferences, and exercises with other ADMM-Plus members, particularly in capacity building through practical defence cooperation and confidence building measures between ASEAN and Plus Dialogue Partners in counter terrorism.

ix. **Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief**

Recently, ASEAN has experienced multiple devastating earthquakes, major floods, numerous cyclones, and droughts that have severely affected its Member States. The vulnerabilities of the region are a result of the population growth, lack of coordination in urbanisation planning, environmental degradation, climate change, as well as the geological, hydro-meteorological, and man-made hazards. As a consequence, this has increased the frequency and impacts of the disasters we face today.

Each disaster is a profound reminder to enhance our readiness and preparedness at many levels. Since the signing of the **ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response** (AADMER), Malaysia and other ASEAN Member States have pledged to collectively:

- 1) respond in the regional disaster preparedness;
- 2) coordinate effective utilization of the **ASEAN Standby Arrangements for Disaster Relief and Emergency Response**;
- 3) coordinate multi-national maritime search and rescue;
- 4) ensure effective and timely distribution of aid and humanitarian assistance including in its management of consular assistance; and
- 5) managing information and the media.

Malaysia will continue to support efforts to improve the **ASEAN Joint Disaster Response Plan**, and looks forward to the exercise that will stimulate two large-scale scenarios, namely the 'Metro Manila Earthquake', and 'Mentawai Megathrust Tsunami', as well as other relevant simulation exercises/training, such as the ARF Technical Exercise, and Training Course on Urban Search and Rescue (USAR).

Imminent calamities require close collaboration between civilian bodies and the military. Hence, it is important to note the unique focus and vision of every institution involved in the civil-military coordination of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

In this regard, Malaysia reiterates the importance of establishing a standardized **ASEAN Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination** courses and exercises to cultivate effective coordination in times of disaster. Such initiative will contribute towards realising the One ASEAN One Response, building trust and confidence between the disaster management entities and defence sector.

Malaysia maintains that the ARF is the strategic platform for ASEAN and its partners from other sectors to synergize and collectively execute HADR missions. Malaysia will continue to play an important role and make contribution on HADR. In this connection, Malaysia has mobilised HADR assistance to various countries in the region, such as Indonesia, Lao PDR, and the Philippines.

Malaysia is also a member of the **ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief** (ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR) since its establishment in 2011. Malaysia was the co-chair of the previous EWG on HADR cycle (2017-2020) with the United States. Malaysia actively participates in the EWG activities, meetings, conferences, and exercises with other ADMM-Plus members, particularly in capacity building through practical defence cooperation and confidence building measures between ASEAN and Plus Dialogue Partners in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

Correspondingly, Malaysia initiated the formation of the **ASEAN Militaries Ready Group (AMRG) on HADR** under the ambit of ADMM to facilitate the coordination and rapid deployment of ASEAN military personnel, assets, and capabilities to disaster areas within the ASEAN region under a single ASEAN banner. This is to promote ASEAN solidarity in responding to disaster, as well as to improve coordination, prevent redundancy in assistance provided and optimise the use of military resources during disasters. The proposal was adopted at the 9th ADMM in 2015, and the **Standard Operating Procedure of AMRG on HADR** was adopted at the 14th ADMM in 2020.

The Malaysian Armed Forces regularly mobilises HADR assistance to various countries in the region, such as through the utilisation of its Royal Malaysian Air Force transport planes to help transport aid to disaster affected areas.

Against this backdrop, Malaysia hosts the **World Food Programme United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot** (WFP UNHRD) in Subang, Selangor, which houses relief items ready to be transported to disaster-affected areas in short notice. The Depot is also part of the **Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN** (DELSA), which is a key mechanism for quick provision of relief items to ASEAN Member States facing disasters.

Malaysia has also set up the **Malaysian Field Hospital** at Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh in November 2017 to provide medical aid to Rohingya refugees. However, Malaysia has closed down the Field Hospital officially in September 2020, due to the need for the field hospital to support COVID-19 treatment in Malaysia.

In line with "**One ASEAN, One Response 2020 and Beyond: ASEAN responding to disasters as One**", Malaysia urges all parties to refine the critical role of the ASEAN Member States in establishing a sustainable and effective mechanism in the dynamic humanitarian landscape of the region through **ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management** (AHA Centre). The collaboration and support of the ARF Participants would help the AHA Centre become more impactful and relevant to the needs of the ASEAN Member States and wider ASEAN Community. ARF is also an important platform to chart the future direction of ASEAN's disaster cooperation and take stock on the previous successes, weaknesses, and challenges.

Malaysia consistently continues to mainstream disaster risk reduction agenda into the planning and development process, in line with Malaysia's commitment towards **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDG). Malaysia calls upon all ARF Participants to support the effort to achieve the seven global targets set by the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** (SFDRR) in 2015. Malaysia looks forward to improving the management of disaster risk, and to fully transform from managing disaster approach to managing disaster risk.

x. **Maritime Security**

- 1) Malaysia established the **Malacca Straits Patrols** (MSP) in 2004, together with Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia;
- 2) Malaysia established the **Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement** (TCA) in 2016, together with Indonesia and the Philippines;
- 3) Malaysia is a member of the **ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security** (ADMM-Plus EWG on MS) since its establishment in 2011. The current EWG on MS cycle (2021-2023) is co-chaired by Thailand and the United States. Malaysia was the co-chair during the first EWG cycle (2011-2014), together with Australia. Malaysia actively participates in the EWG activities, meetings, conferences, and exercises with other ADMM-Plus members, particularly in capacity building through practical defence cooperation and confidence building measures between ASEAN and Plus Dialogue Partners in maritime security.

xi. **ICTs Security**

Malaysia is a member of the **ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Cyber Security** (ADMM-Plus EWG on CS) since its establishment in 2017. Malaysia is currently co-chairing the current EWG on CS cycle (2021-2023) with the Republic of Korea. During this cycle, Malaysia and ROK aim to promote positive cyber norms among ADMM-Plus countries through the publication of a guideline known as the **Cyber Security Framework**, in addition to the conduct of meetings and exercises.

1) Malaysia Cyber Security Strategy 2020-2025 (MCSS)

Malaysia has developed the Malaysia Cyber Security Strategy (MCSS), a strategic document that outlines the key objectives which will govern all aspects of cyber security planning and implementation in Malaysia until 2025.

The strategy outlines five (5) Pillars and 12 implementation strategy that holistically touch all aspects of Malaysia's cyber security concerns, including:

- a) governance and management;
- b) legislation and enforcement;
- c) local industry development;
- d) innovation and technology;
- e) research and development (R&D);
- f) capacity and capability building,
- g) awareness and education, and
- h) international engagement and cooperation.

The global cooperation in cybersecurity affairs is addressed under Pillar 5 of the MCSS.

Strong international engagement plays an important role to effectively counter the evolving cyber threats. Malaysia is committed to adhering to the international commitments and obligations in relation to cyber security, at the regional, sub-regional and multilateral level. Malaysia also recognises the need to build capacity in cyber diplomacy.

xii. Cybersecurity Law and Enforcement

1) Cybersecurity Act

Malaysia is in the process of conducting a feasibility study on the requirement to enact a specific cyber law.

2) National Cooperation on Cybercrime Enforcement

Malaysia is developing the **Capacity and Capability of Cyber Crime Enforcement** via coordinated effort by establishing a dedicated and integrated platform for information sharing between related enforcement agencies in Malaysia to ensure effective and swift response in combating cybercrime.

a. ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of ICTs (ARF ISM on ICTs Security); and ARF Open-Ended Study Group (OESG)

Malaysia is actively involved in the ARF workstream on ICT Security cybersecurity issues, including in the ARF ISM on ICTs Security and ARF OESGs. Among the initiatives led by Malaysia are as follows:

- i) Malaysia has co-chaired three (3) ARF ISMs on ICTs Security; and 7 ARF Open-Ended Study Groups (OESGs), together with Japan and Singapore since 2018.

- ii) Malaysia is working with Australia on the establishment of an **ARF Directory of Cyber Point of Contacts**, which aims to reduce misunderstanding, and improve communication as well as connectivity among the ARF Participants. Currently, there are 20 ARF Participants that have participated in the Directory. It is envisioned that the Directory will establish better interaction and coordination between countries in response to cyber incidents.

b. Matrix - ASEAN Regional Action Plan (RAP)

Malaysia is currently spearheading the development of the **Matrix -ASEAN Plan of Action on the 2015 11 UNGGE Voluntary, Non-Binding Norms of Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace**, to assist ASEAN Member States to stocktake on the initiatives to operationalise the norms. This initiative is one of the activities under the **ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee (ASEAN Cyber-CC)**, supported by Singapore and the ASEAN Secretariat.

The Matrix lists out the regional initiatives that are identified to improve ASEAN Member States' capacity and/or capability to implement the UNGGE Norms. It will also serve as the stocktaking reference for ASEAN Member States when developing the initiatives or activities to implement the UNGGE Norms.

4. Role of the ARF

a) National contributions to enhancing the ARF and regional security

Under Brunei Darussalam's Chairmanship, Malaysia proposes to organise an online seminar on "**The Role of Youth in Building Digital Resilience to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism**", together with New Zealand and Australia. This initiative is also part of Malaysia's contribution to support the ASEAN Chair's deliverable in advancing regional cooperation on Youth, Peace and Security. Through this online seminar, Malaysia wishes to leverage the expertise of SEARCCT with a view to strengthening the resilience of youth against the elements and influence of terrorism and violent extremism, and ensure continuity of regional peace and stability among ARF Participants.

b) Future of the ARF

The world has seen its fair share of major historic events due to the COVID-19 pandemic. More than ever, ARF has to adapt itself to the new security challenges that are multi-faceted and cross-dimensional in nature, particularly in fostering an integrated and interoperable regional architecture with the goal of addressing the region's current and emerging security challenges - both traditional and non-traditional.

In order to further develop the ARF as an '*action-oriented*' forum, ARF Participants must ensure the effective implementation of the **Hanoi Plan of Action II (2020-2025)**. Similarly, Malaysia believes that the **Guide to ARF Processes, Procedures, Practices and Protocol**, and **ARF Work Plans** under the respective Priority Areas, should be relooked and updated accordingly, in order to ensure ARF documents and processes remain practical, relevant and adaptable.

As ARF continues to be the most comprehensive multilateral security forum in the ASEAN region, Malaysia remains fully committed to the ARF and its role, in promoting stability and prosperity through a transparent and inclusive process. Malaysia will continue to work towards strengthening ASEAN-related initiatives and mechanisms with ASEAN Centrality as the guiding principle.

MYANMAR

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

Asia-Pacific is a strategically important region in the world. As Southeast Asia is typically included in Asia-Pacific region, some problems occurring in Asia Pacific region have threatened peace, stability and security in the region. Southeast Asia region is strategically located between Eastern and Western hemispheres of the world. In Southeast Asia, the synergy of ASEAN Member States in the political, economic and cultural sectors, have largely contributed to regional security and stability. Yet, among the ASEAN Member States, issues such as border disputes between neighboring countries, multiple claims to certain islands, illegal border trades, transnational crimes, human trafficking and interference in the internal affairs of other nations are the problems that needed to be carefully tackled.

The military expansions of regional states, the issues of disputed islands in East Asia and the power rivalry of super powers are the regional security problems which can transmute from the form of a spark to a flame at any time. If the problems are not peacefully tackled, these situations will impact from state-level security to regional security. As mentioned above, there are not only traditional security threats to the Asia-Pacific region, but also the non-traditional security threats to the region. The threats include international terrorism, production of WMDs, arms smuggling, transnational crimes, illegal drugs producing and trafficking, human trafficking, maritime security, natural disasters and climate change, epidemic of infected diseases and illegal migration. As the consequences of technology developments, the momentum of Globalization assists the spread of non-traditional security problems and such threats are likely to endanger the regional to global security.

2. National Security and Defence Policy

a) Overview of the national security and defence policy

Myanmar Tatmadaw upholds the three main national causes as the national policy and always takes the responsibility of national security and defence. Regarding the Defence of the Union of Myanmar, the article 42 of State Constitution (2008) has clearly promulgated that:

- 1) The Union of Myanmar shall not commence aggression against any nation.
- 2) No foreign troops shall be permitted to be deployed in the territory of Myanmar.

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar lays down the following National Defence Policies to safeguard the national interests of the Union as well as the citizens:

- 1) To prevent all acts detrimental to the three main national causes which are non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of the national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty.
- 2) To formulate the National Defence with the People's War Strategy centered at Tatmadaw as pillar depending on the synergy of entire people.
- 3) To valiantly and effectively prevent foreign aggression and interference in the internal affairs of the Union, deploying various ways and means while avoiding interference in the internal affairs of other nations.

- 4) To employ a defence system that has oriented towards friendly relations with other nations in accord with the five principles of peaceful co-existence.
- 5) Not to permit forming military alliance with other nations and the deployment of any foreign troops in the territory of the Union.
- 6) To cooperate with international community in non-traditional security issues and anti-terrorist affairs and to render assistance when calamities occur in the Union.

b) Data Contribution to ARF Arms Register

a. Defence Budget (Military Expenditure)

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar allocated Defence Budget about US \$ 2.3 Billion (2.7 % of GDP) for 2020-2021 fiscal year.

3. National Contributions to Promote Regional Security

Myanmar joined ASEAN in 1997 and has promoted the regional cooperation. In the same year, Myanmar became the member of Bay of Bengal Initiative of Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and has promoted the cooperation with South Asian countries. After becoming the ASEAN Member State, Myanmar joined ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) which is the most important political and security platform in Asia-Pacific region and has participated in the dialogues and workshops organized by the ARF.

Myanmar has commenced the formulation of the bills for anti-terrorism since 2005. After carrying out the amending and adding the complements to the bills with regard to the funding terrorism and handing over of criminals, Myanmar signed the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Among Like-Minded ASEAN Member Countries. Moreover, Myanmar signed the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism-ACCT as member in 2007 and ratified the Convention in 2012.

Regarding anti-narcotic measures, Myanmar has attended annual Meetings of ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matter-ASOD as an observer before joining ASEAN. After becoming a member of ASEAN in August 1997, Myanmar has annually attended the ASOD since its 20th meeting in Brunei and has been implementing its resolutions.

There are no ASEAN militaries' meetings and exchanges hosted by Myanmar from June 2020 to April 2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic.

For regional cooperation, Myanmar signed the MOU for narcotic drugs control with China, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia in 1993 and MOU for the Centre of Information Sharing in Asia-Pacific region was signed with ASEAN Member States and Republic of Korea in 2014. A 15-year project for total elimination of narcotic drugs was implemented from 1999-2000 to 2013-2014 through the adoption of five measures: the elimination of poppy cultivation; eradication of narcotic drug use; preventative measures; organising local people to support the measure; and cooperation with international organisations. Anti-narcotic measures are also conducted in real time collaboration with adjacent countries in the region. In order to meet Myanmar Anti-Narcotic Project's requirements, another 5-year drug elimination plan for the fiscal years 2014-2015 to 2018-2019 was implemented. For the effectiveness of anti-

narcotic measures, the Department of Narcotic Drugs Elimination was reorganized into Myanmar Police Force Narcotic Drug Suppression Division in 2013.

In order to develop the friendly relations with regional countries, senior officials from Myanmar Armed Forces have all paid goodwill visits to regional countries. Reciprocally, military leaders from regional countries have also paid goodwill visits to Myanmar. Senior military officials and related ministers from Myanmar have attended ASEAN defence-related meetings and participated in regional security activities. Moreover, Myanmar has participated in regional security exercises.

As ASEAN is enclosed in the Asia-Pacific region, the security threats to the region are also challenges for ASEAN. International terrorism, production of WMDs, arms smuggling, transnational crimes, illegal drug producing and smuggling, human trafficking, maritime security, natural disasters, climate change, epidemic of infected diseases and illegal migration are the challenges not only for the region but also for the global security.

Act of terror still remains as one of the most challenging measures to the sustainable security in the ASEAN region even though sustainable security in fact focuses on four interconnected, long-term drivers of insecurity: climate change, competition over resources, marginalization of the majority world, and global militarisation. The underlying root causes for such acts of terror are affiliated with the stimulus such as politics, nationalism and religion. Regardless of type of terrorism, human resources and modernized technologies will compulsorily be required in order to conduct counter terrorism.

As the impacts of the security threats grow among ASEAN Member States, all Member States have compulsorily to share the information related to counter terrorism. Any type of terrorism is to be the concerns of any country, and the common security threat for ASEAN Member States, the deeper cooperation among ASEAN militaries become necessary. Preventive measures and intelligence services should be sorted out as a high priority, additionally accompanying activities such as enhancing cooperation, reciprocal assistance in technology and training sectors, bilateral and multilateral support among countries and creating blockage in interconnection among terrorist extremist groups.

The acts of terror become the prominent threat in 21st century, and these terrorist activities are carried out by the individual groups or non-state actors. Some terrorist organizations are able to establish their connection not only with other organization within the country, but also with those from other countries and regions. Consequently, the cooperation among ASEAN Member States, is necessarily required for conducting counter terrorism, otherwise the Safe Havens for the terrorist organizations will also be existed occurring their continuous attacks around the world.

As for Myanmar, the Union is actively participating in matters relating to counter terrorism as in regional forums, workshops, and conferences in cooperation with other ASEAN Member States and international communities. ASEAN Member States have to enhance the bilateral and multilateral relations and deepen military and security cooperation to respond to the challenges relating to acts of terror which we are now confronting and support us building our future nations as to be peace, tranquil and developed. Coordination among countries will surely support for dissolving the problems and enable to confront the challenges. Moreover,

the betterment of the relationship among the ASEAN Member States will ensure the successful implementation processes of counter terrorism.

4. Role of the ARF

With regards to the role of ARF, the contributions of the ASEAN Member States based on the principles of coordination and cooperation to the stability and peace of the region are critically required. In responding to the regional security challenges by the cooperation and principles of joint actions, the role of the ASEAN Member States should continue emphasizing on a more stable and secure region. Moreover, the non-traditional security threats such as natural disasters, terrorism, maritime security and transnational crimes, epidemics, food and energy security, human security, cybercrimes, climate changes and global warming are still regional concerns and the ASEAN Member States should continue conducting the information sharing, capacity building, joint exercises and trainings.

ASEAN Member States should continue enhancing peace and stability of the region in cooperative manner, encourage the states to sign the additional protocol of the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty(SEANWFZ), cooperate more in the areas of traditional security challenges and non-traditional security challenges that will impact regional peace and stability such as the risk of extremists and terrorists, disaster management and information security, drug trafficking, human and arms smuggling, transnational crimes, illegal migration, money laundering, sea piracy and maritime security, climate change and epidemics like Zika, Ebola and Coronavirus Diseases (COVID-19).

NEW ZEALAND

1. Overview of the regional security environment

The Indo-Pacific region is central to New Zealand's security and economic well-being. At a time when the region faces unprecedented challenges from COVID-19, New Zealand values its engagement with the regional security architecture, including the East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus). These channels provide us the means to coordinate our efforts and work collectively on initiatives that will support a broad-based recovery from the crisis and a more stable, prosperous and resilient Indo-Pacific region.

New Zealand also considers that regional bodies such as the ARF, EAS, and ADMM-Plus have an important role to play in promoting the principles, rules and norms that New Zealand values in the Indo-Pacific region, such as openness and inclusivity, ASEAN centrality, transparency, freedom of navigation and overflight, adherence to international law, open markets and respect for sovereignty.

In addition to promoting a strong rules-based system, close regional cooperation on security threats is increasingly important as the nature of threats continues to evolve. New Zealand is working to ensure that we – as a country and as a region – are equipped to deal with the emerging risks posed by the increased use of technology, potential security impacts of climate change and the diverse range of actors seeking to challenge global rules and norms. In September 2020 the New Zealand government released a five year strategy to tackle the increasing threat of transnational and organised crime. As COVID-19 has demonstrated, the operating environment in the region can change rapidly. But it is also providing us with opportunities to build a more resilient, sustainable and prosperous future.

The nuclear threat presented by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) continues to be the biggest long term security threat in our region. The DPRK's possession and ongoing development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles is a clear violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions. The challenges on the Korean Peninsula are long standing and complex. Any resolution will require patience and careful diplomacy. It is New Zealand's hope that diplomatic engagement will resume and lead to greater stability and prosperity in our region. New Zealand continues to engage actively with international efforts to achieve the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of North Korea, including through the full and effective implementation of sanctions in accordance with all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The military coup on 1 February in Myanmar and the resulting violence, leading to deaths, internal displacement and disruption to basic services, has become an additional security challenge of immediate concern to the region. New Zealand supports ASEAN-led efforts to address the situation, and looks forward to prompt implementation of the ASEAN leaders' consensus reached in April. New Zealand is also concerned that the coup has the potential to worsen the serious situation faced by Rohingya refugees. Since September 2017, New Zealand has contributed a total of NZ\$32.1 million to the humanitarian response to the Rohingya in both Myanmar and Bangladesh and continues to see this as the most serious humanitarian situation in the region, alongside COVID-19.

Prosperity and stability in the Indo-Pacific region also depends on a secure maritime environment and the peaceful resolution of maritime disputes. All ARF members have an interest in avoiding miscalculations and the maintenance of the regime of maritime zones and the freedoms of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea, in accordance with international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. New Zealand is concerned that activities such as land reclamation, construction and militarisation could escalate tensions and erode the trust and confidence that is needed to achieve an enduring solution. It is important that all parties take steps to rebuild trust, avoid provocative actions and manage tensions. New Zealand continues to support the conclusion of an effective and enduring Code of Conduct on the South China Sea which is in accordance with international law and does not impinge on the rights and interests of third parties.

New Zealand is also strongly committed to an open, rules-based trading regime and considers that enhanced economic integration is one of the most effective means of ensuring longer term regional security and prosperity. New Zealand is committed to pursuing multilateral, plurilateral and bilateral trade agreements that support this goal. New Zealand attaches considerable importance to the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which entered into force in 2010 and is currently undergoing upgrade negotiations. The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) has entered into force for most parties, while others are completing their domestic processes. The broadest regional trade agreement to date, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), was signed in November 2020 and New Zealand is currently completing the domestic ratification process. Our bilateral FTAs and Closer Economic Partnerships with ARF members including China, the Republic of Korea, Australia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore.

New Zealand aims to strengthen the broader regional trade architecture to ensure it is resilient to future shocks. As APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) Chair for 2021 New Zealand is leading a progressive agenda to reignite growth and lead to a long-lasting recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. National security and defence policy

a) Overview of national security and defence policy

As a founding member of the United Nations, respect for international norms and law is fundamental to New Zealand's approach to promoting security, stability and peace. The onset of COVID-19 tested our assumptions and challenged national and regional security structures in new and unanticipated ways. While New Zealand's domestic territorial borders are geographically isolated, New Zealand is not immune to the accelerating and intensifying impacts of geo-strategic competition and trans-national threats such as climate change, terrorism, arms proliferation, organised crime, cyberattacks, and bio-security. Recognising this, New Zealand is highly committed to multilateral solutions to security threats and the promotion of effective international rules. New Zealand takes a multi-layered approach to security that includes strong bilateral relationships, regional partnerships, and support for regional architecture and institutions.

ASEAN-centric regional security architecture has an increasingly important role in bringing countries together and providing a forum for discussions. Our view is that these forums fulfil

an important role promoting understanding, entrenching habits of dialogue and facilitating practical military-to-military cooperation.

New Zealand has a strong interest in fostering and maintaining a network of robust international relationships, which include:

- a. New Zealand's alliance with Australia;
- b. the Five Power Defence Arrangements (New Zealand, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore and the United Kingdom);
- c. the Five Eyes partnership (New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States);
- d. close bilateral ties with Pacific Island neighbours, including those for which New Zealand has constitutional responsibilities;
- e. close and growing bilateral ties with a number of Indo-Pacific partners from North Asia to South and Southeast Asia; and
- f. Pacific and Indo-Pacific regional security architecture such as the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting (SPDMM), the ARF and the ADMM-Plus, in addition to the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (the Bali Process).

New Zealand defence policy settings are articulated in the *Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018*. This statement describes Defence's value to New Zealand in terms of its contributions to the community, the nation and the world, with emphasis on community and environmental resilience. It also provides perspective on the evolving strategic environment; specifying the priority for the Defence Force being able to operate in the South Pacific (to the same level as that for New Zealand's territory, the Southern Ocean and Antarctica); featuring a set of principles for Defence; and underscoring the importance of contributing to New Zealand's key security partnerships. The statement reaffirmed that the ADMM-Plus remains New Zealand's principal forum for multilateral defence engagement in Asia. The Statement has been supplemented by standalone assessments such as *The Climate Crisis: Defence Readiness and Responsibilities*. The Statement is supported by indicative planned investments as set out in the *Defence Capability Plan 2019*.

b) Data contribution to ARF Arms Register

The total appropriation for the New Zealand Defence Force for the year ended 30 June 2020 was NZ\$7.452 billion, of which operating expenses were NZ\$6.597 billion and capital expenditure was NZ\$855 million. ¹

3. National contribution to regional security

i. Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime

As was demonstrated by the callous and violent terrorist attack against the Muslim community at worship in New Zealand on 15 March 2019, no country is immune from terrorism and violent extremism. New Zealand remains firmly committed to countering and preventing terrorism

¹ Operating expenditure was significantly higher in 2020 than 2019 due to a one-off recognition of a veterans' entitlements liability (\$3.5 billion).

and violent extremism in all forms, and to combatting transnational organised crime. To prevent, detect, and respond to these threats, New Zealand is engaged at the multilateral, regional, sub-regional and bilateral levels, with a particular focus on the Indo-Pacific region.

To support achievement of New Zealand's global security priorities, including assisting with capacity building in neighbouring states, New Zealand has a number of specialised security funds, including dedicated Global and Pacific Security Funds. The specialised security funds assist New Zealand's achievement of its Plan of Action with ASEAN, particularly in areas of border control; legislation; law enforcement; policy; irregular migration; and prevention/counter radicalisation and countering the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters.

Globally, Da'esh/ISIS and its affiliates continue to pose a significant threat to international and regional security, even though the group no longer controls the territory it once held in Syria and Iraq. Foreign terrorist fighters and their families currently in Iraq and Syria continue to pose a potential threat. Ongoing collective effort is required to prevent their relocation to other conflict zones or effectively manage their return home through targeted rehabilitation and reintegration support.

In line with our commitment to reduce the risk of South East Asia being a target or source of terrorism we are sharpening our strategic focus, and strengthen efforts to support partners to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks, counter the root causes of violent extremism by building resilient communities, and help invigorate mechanisms that promote coherence and coordination of counter-terrorism policy and practice within governments and across the region.

Breaking down the silos that impede cooperation within governments and the barriers that hinder cooperation between governments is necessary to tackle these significant and complex transnational security threats. New Zealand seeks to work closely with our partners in the region to help achieve coherence in policy and practice, including ASEAN-centred initiatives such as those under the umbrella of the ASEAN Regional Forum. New Zealand's co-chairing of the ARF workstream on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime along with Malaysia and the EU is indicative of the importance that we place on this regional mechanism, especially as a forum for advancing broader regional efforts to counter violent extremism online.

On a bilateral basis, capacity building in South East Asia is a significant focus of New Zealand's global counter-terrorism engagement. We have long-standing relationships with institutions in the region such as the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement and the South East Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (Malaysia). Recent examples of capacity building initiatives New Zealand has contributed to across the region include:

- training of law enforcement personnel on Countering Violent Extremism(CVE);
- training of corrections staff to help manage extremist prisoners;
- aviation security and counter-Improvised Explosive Device (IED) training; and
- post-blast crime scene investigation courses.

New Zealand also remains concerned about irregular migration and its regional impact. As part of our contribution to managing the security and humanitarian challenges posed by irregular migration, New Zealand is an active and constructive member of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (the Bali Process).

In addition to Co-Chairing (with Fiji) the Working Group on the Disruption of People Smuggling and Trafficking Networks, New Zealand provides support for regional capacity building, through our capacity building assistance and secondment contributions to the Bali Process' Regional Support Office.

New Zealand also works closely with the Asia-Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering to support the coordination of technical assistance in Southeast Asia and the Pacific to combat transnational organised criminal and terrorist groups, by targeting their financial systems and processes.

Additionally, New Zealand has funded and organised a number of regional capacity building workshops for ASEAN countries on key issues, including anti-money laundering/counter-terrorist financing standards, cyber security, terrorist prosecutions, chemical and nuclear security, major event security, and maritime and aviation security. These efforts are complemented by significant bilateral work to build individual national capability, especially within law enforcement agencies.

New Zealand also participates in multilateral initiatives which engage on counter-terrorism projects in the region, including the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), for which we are pleased to support the extension of the CVE programme to the Philippines.

In addition to its work in South East Asia, New Zealand also works with Pacific Island countries (PICs) to help strengthen resilience and build capacity to respond to a range of shared security challenges. In 2018, Pacific Islands Forum Leaders endorsed the Boe Declaration on Regional Security, which affirms an expanded concept of security, recognising climate change as the preeminent security threat to the region. This expanded concept of security encompasses traditional and non-traditional challenges encountered by the region, prioritising human security, environmental security, transnational crime, and cyber security. New Zealand strongly supports the implementation of the Boe Declaration, and channels this through existing programmes related to climate change, information sharing, leadership training, cyber security, transnational crime, and national security policy development. These programmes are in addition to the number of initiatives New Zealand supports through the Pacific Islands Forum, including enhancing aviation and maritime security, and supporting the implementation of UN Security Council sanctions. New Zealand works closely with and funds regional law enforcement agencies such as the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police Secretariat, Oceania Customs Organisation and the Pacific Immigration Development Community, and contributes to their consideration and responses to regional security issues. New Zealand also provides technical assistance, capacity building, and mentoring for law enforcement and border agency officials in the region.

One growing challenge the region faces is the unprecedented use of social media by terrorist groups. This has forced states to adapt, with many adopting sophisticated counter-messaging protocols and systems to enable them to convey another view to would-be terrorists. In response to the use of social media as part of the March 15 2019 terrorist attack in Christchurch, New Zealand developed (with France) the Christchurch Call to Eliminate Terrorist and Violent Extremist Content Online. The Call represents a unique effort to have technology companies and countries work together, with civil society, to tackle the shared problem of this

content and its harmful effects, while protecting a free and open internet and human rights online. A summit was held in May this year to mark the second anniversary of the Call.

ii. Non-proliferation, Counter-proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

New Zealand has a long-standing commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. New Zealand is a strong supporter of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Most recently New Zealand signed on to the text of a Malaysian-led Joint Communiqué to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the NPT's entry into force and calling for full implementation of the Treaty, including its nuclear disarmament obligations. New Zealand has also continued its active promotion of nuclear disarmament within the NPT through our current coordination of the New Agenda Coalition, our membership of the ministerial-level Stockholm Initiative, and our active engagement in other groupings including the De-alerting Group.

New Zealand is a key proponent of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). New Zealand ratified the TPNW Treaty in 2018 and, as one of its Core Group members, works to encourage non-signatory states to sign, and signatories to ratify the Treaty. New Zealand has continued its active promotion of nuclear disarmament more generally, including through its membership of the New Agenda Coalition and its current leadership of the De-alerting Group.

New Zealand is a strong proponent of nuclear weapon-free zones in view of their role in reinforcing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation commitments. New Zealand is party to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone (Treaty of Rarotonga) and has had legislation in place since 1987 creating a New Zealand Nuclear-Free Zone. New Zealand strongly encourages all Nuclear Weapons States to ratify the Protocols to Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones, including the South East Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ) and the Treaty of Rarotonga, without any reservations or interpretative declarations.

New Zealand supports the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as an important contribution to regional and global security. New Zealand has welcomed ratification of the CTBT by Annex 1 and 2 states in the region and encourages ratifications by all ARF participants.

New Zealand is a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which provides the global focal point for nuclear cooperation and safeguards. New Zealand is in full compliance with its safeguards obligations and supports international projects involving the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We routinely urge all states to sign Additional Protocol agreements with the IAEA.

New Zealand joined the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) in 2007, and, alongside over 80 GICNT partners, is committed to preventing nuclear or radiological material falling into the hands of terrorists. New Zealand has contributed to the GICNT in the Indo-Pacific region by: developing a table-top exercise kit for use by other GICNT partners in testing their own national response systems; supporting radioactive source security projects in Southeast Asia; providing funding support to GICNT workshops in the Indo-Pacific region; and helping its Pacific island neighbours address the risk of nuclear/radiological security.

New Zealand is a strong proponent of enhancing nuclear security. In 2016, New Zealand ratified two key nuclear security treaties: the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical

Protection of Nuclear Material and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. In 2016, New Zealand also enacted a new Radiation Safety Act to ensure its legislative framework for the safety and security of nuclear and radioactive material meets current international best practice. New Zealand has provided financial support for nuclear security capacity-building projects in the Indo-Pacific region. Additionally, we make annual voluntary contributions to the IAEA's Nuclear Security Fund.

New Zealand is a party to Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. We have provided financial assistance for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to assist with the removal of chemical weapons materials in Libya and Syria, and have spoken out strongly against all uses of chemical weapons. We are also a member of the Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

New Zealand has in place a comprehensive national export control regime. This is informed by our active membership of the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Australia Group, the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Zangger Committee. New Zealand was the chair of the Missile Technology Control Regime 2019- 2020.

New Zealand's involvement in the Proliferation Security Initiative, including our membership of the Operational Experts Group (the PSI steering committee) and participation in exercises and capacity building initiatives has enhanced New Zealand's capabilities to prevent proliferation activity both nationally and in collaboration with partners. New Zealand has developed (and shared with PSI partners) a Model National Response Plan which provides easy-to-follow guidance on the range of issues that need to be considered in developing a framework for responding to proliferation situations. New Zealand would welcome further adherence to the PSI throughout the Indo-Pacific as part of a coordinated effort to reduce the threat of WMD proliferation.

Given the role played by the unregulated global arms trade in fuelling conflict, New Zealand is a strong supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which we ratified in 2014. The ATT is an important contributor to international and regional peace, security and stability. New Zealand has been engaged in a breadth of initiatives that support broader membership, and greater implementation, of the Treaty, including as current Chair of the Treaty's Voluntary Trust Fund which has as its core objective the assistance of States Party to implement the Treaty. In our national capacity New Zealand has sponsored the development of ATT model legislation and a model control list, both of which can assist countries to implement their domestic obligations under the ATT. New Zealand hosted a conference in Auckland in 2018 to promote greater adherence to the ATT and other conventional arms treaties among Pacific Island countries, and co-sponsored – with significant support from Australia – a follow-up conference in Brisbane in 2019. New Zealand looks forward to continuing to work closely with its ARF partners on reinforcing the ATT.

New Zealand strongly supports the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and the Anti-Personnel Landmine Ban Convention (APLMBC). Landmines and cluster munitions are indiscriminate weapons that – in New Zealand's view – breach International Humanitarian Law. As such, New Zealand is pleased to have worked with many ARF States on practical mine clearance operations, including in Cambodia and Lao PDR – some of the most mine-contaminated States on the planet, but which are making large and promising steps to meet their clearance obligations. New Zealand is the coordinator for national implementation

measures in the CCM, and we have produced model legislation for possible use by small states with no history of use or contamination. New Zealand continues to work closely with ARF participants that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to both Conventions. In 2019, New Zealand sponsored and co-hosted alongside the governments of the Philippines and Sri Lanka, a regional workshop on CCM universalisation and implementation hosted in Manila, which included the participation of eight South Asia and Pacific States who are not yet signatories of the Convention.

iii. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

The Indo-Pacific region continues to be afflicted by natural disasters that underline the need to continue deepening practical and effective cooperation in relation to disaster reduction, response and recovery. New Zealand has been an active participant in ARF and EAS discussions about preparing for and responding to regional disasters.

New Zealand is continuing to play its part in deepening regional capacity to prepare and respond to disasters, including drawing on lessons learned from the Christchurch earthquakes. New Zealand is committed to further cooperation and implementation of work plans in ARF, ADMM-Plus and EAS contexts. Disaster Risk Management is a priority study area for our knowledge and skills investments in the Indo-Pacific region.

New Zealand has been a solid proponent of the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance (AHA) Centre since its inception, and has trained ASEAN officials in disaster response leadership at the University of Canterbury and contributed technical expertise to the Centre. New Zealand made a contribution of NZ\$1 million to the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Centre (AHA) in 2021.

New Zealand successfully co-hosted the Pacific Environmental Security Forum (PESF) with the United States Indo-Pacific Command (US INDOPACOM) on 21-24 May 2019. The Forum convened 120 civil-military participants from nearly 40 countries and regional organisations. Discussions centred on the theme of building resilience in the Pacific and facilitated alignment with existing regional efforts. The forum generated strong momentum for the network of mid-senior regional practitioners and identified environmental security projects for practical civilian and military partnership. The US INDOPACOM seeks to continue this momentum towards the Philippines' hosting of the PESF in 2020.

New Zealand has a strong legacy of supporting Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) clearance in the Indo-Pacific region for nearly 20 years where we work with Lao PDR and Cambodia and Myanmar.

iv. Maritime Security

Maritime Security, including the preservation of secure and sustainable oceans, is fundamental to New Zealand's security. Accordingly, New Zealand released a Maritime Security Strategy in 2021 to combat increasingly complex challenges to our maritime domain and borders and deliver guardianship over our maritime domain for future generations. New Zealand is not alone in facing these complex challenges. We value our maritime cooperation with ARF partners and have been actively involved in the implementation of the ARF's maritime security work plan, and in sharing our experiences on various maritime security-related issues,

including upholding the rules-based system relating to the oceans, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, transnational crime, and marine environment issues.

In May 2018 New Zealand co-hosted with Singapore the ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue. The dialogue included thematic sessions on maritime counter-terrorism, counter-terrorism interagency cooperation, and chemical, biological and radiological defence. More recently, New Zealand participated in the virtual 3rd ARF Workshop on Enhancing Regional Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation on 16-17 March 2021, and in the 3rd ARF Workshop on Implementing UNCLOS and other International Instruments to address Emerging Maritime Issues held virtually and in Ha Noi in early June. New Zealand continues its active involvement in the ADMM-Plus Experts Working Group on Maritime Security and the ARF Maritime Security workstream.

v. ICTs Security

Connectivity is a crucial driver of our region's growth. However, with increased connectivity comes increased exposure to cyber threats. New Zealand remains concerned by the growing number of cyber incidents globally, including activity undertaken by both state and non-state actors. These incidents underscore the importance of adherence to and implementation of the framework of responsible state behaviour online, comprised of international law, norms of responsible state behaviour, confidence-building measures, and capacity-building.

New Zealand sees the ARF as an important forum to support implementation of the framework of responsible state behaviour online, and to improve transparency, understanding and confidence among regional partners in cyber space. To this end, we were pleased to participate in the third Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the use of ICTS in April 2021, and the associated Study Group on Confidence-Building Measures. We welcome Indonesia and Australia's confidence building proposal to host an ARF Workshop on Implementing Norms of Responsible States' Behaviours in Cyberspace, and look forward to further cooperation in this area.

46. New Zealand remains committed to building regional cyber security capacity, including through membership of the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise, with a particular focus on our Pacific and South-East Asian neighbours. We continue to deliver initiatives under New Zealand's NZ\$10 million Cyber Security Support to the Pacific programme.

4. Role of the ARF

a) New Zealand's contributions to enhancing the ARF and regional security

For New Zealand, the ARF is a key mechanism for security engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. It contributes to building an environment of dialogue and cooperation on a wide range of regional security issues. The ARF is also contributing in an important way to the development of international norms and principles on security that are directly relevant to this region. The number and diversity of practical ARF projects under implementation during the current intersessional year, including those postponed from 2020 due to COVID-19, reflects the ARF's ability to respond to contemporary security challenges facing this part of the world.

New Zealand also attaches considerable importance to working with its ARF partners to advance the ARF's preventive diplomacy agenda, in line with the ARF's three-stage evolution.

In April 2019, New Zealand co-chaired with the US, Indonesia and Timor-Leste a Preventive Diplomacy Workshop on Early Warning Systems in Dili. This workshop followed two others co-chaired by New Zealand: one on negotiation and mediation in Naypyidaw in September 2018 (with the US and Myanmar) and one on Preventive Diplomacy in a Post-conflict Environment in Dili in April 2017 (with Singapore and Timor-Leste). In 2020-2021, New Zealand is co-chairing with the US and Indonesia an additional preventive diplomacy series building on this earlier work. The first workshop was held by the US in November 2020. New Zealand hosted the second part in July 2021, which was a virtual “study tour” of preventive diplomacy methods in New Zealand’s domestic context and preventive diplomacy as practiced by New Zealand in the region. The aim is to enable ARF participants to enhance their understanding capacity to employ preventive diplomacy methods to prevent and mitigate conflict between and among States.

New Zealand is committed to working with its ASEAN partners to ensure coherence between the ARF and other pieces of the regional architecture, in particular the EAS and ADMM-Plus. While the ARF and ADMM-Plus have their distinct mandates and different memberships, greater functional coordination between them on issues that straddle multiple fora, such as disaster relief/management, cyber security and maritime security, would help to achieve streamlining and eliminate unnecessary duplication of activities. New Zealand also actively supports efforts to strengthen the EAS, to ensure it can fulfil its role as the region’s premier forum for leaders to address issues of strategic risk.

b) Future of ARF

The ARF is a forum that was established with the aim of fostering habits of constructive dialogue on issues of concern. At the ARF’s outset it was envisaged that the Forum would move as part of its evolution from a confidence building phase to preventive diplomacy, and finally to conflict resolution. The ARF has constructed a solid base of confidence building measures and made progress in the field of preventive diplomacy. But it has yet to reach its potential. New Zealand supports the ARF in increasing its capacity and effectiveness in the preventive diplomacy space, and encourages all participants to keep an eye to the future to ensure we are well-equipped when we move into the conflict resolution phase.

PAKISTAN

Overview of the Regional Security Environment

Regional security in South Asia is defined by dynamics of relations between Pakistan, India, Iran, China and Afghanistan. Pakistan aims to strengthen bilateral relations with Afghanistan through cooperative partnership and strengthened connectivity. Pakistan emphasizes that peaceful settlement of Afghan dispute, through an Afghan-led and Afghan owned peace process, is imperative for return of peace in Afghanistan. Pakistan believes that implementation of US-Taliban peace agreement in full spirit is vital for headways towards Intra-Afghan dialogue. No country suffers more benefits more from peace and stability in Afghanistan and likewise no country suffers more from unrest in Afghanistan other than Pakistan. A stable Afghanistan would help in promoting our agenda of economic development and regional connectivity. Pakistan also supports timely repatriation of Afghan refugees in an honorable and dignified manner. Pakistan has consistently supported institutional engagements between the two countries to further promote bilateral relations.

In addition, contours of strategic stability in South Asia are largely defined by relations between India and Pakistan. Hawkish rhetoric and hegemonic posture as well as continued illegal occupation of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) by current Indian government has had detrimental effects on regional stability in South Asia. Persistent gross and systematic human rights violations of the Kashmiris in IIOJK have been recorded by many international organizations including the UN OHCHR. Jammu & Kashmir issue has been a major dispute between two countries which has caused major friction in relations. India's unilateral and illegal actions in IIOJK on 05th August, 2019 have exacerbated the intensity of dispute. This, coupled with anti-Pakistan rhetoric and fabricated allegations against Pakistan, can have dangerous consequences for peace in the region. India has also been found to be involved in sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan. Pakistan will continue to draw international focus on human rights violations in IIOJK by highlighting it at international and regional forums.

Pakistan believes in peaceful coexistence with its neighbors yet with a resolve that sovereignty of the country will be protected at all costs.

Counter-Terrorism

Pakistan has played a leading role in the war against terrorism in the region. We have remained a frontline state in the fight to eliminate the scourge of violent extremism as well as terrorism. Pakistan's successes and sacrifices in countering terrorism, both in terms of human and economic capital, are unparalleled and are widely acknowledged by the international community. No country in the region has sacrificed more for peace than Pakistan. We have paid an enormous price in terms of loss of precious lives of our citizens and security personnel (83,000 lives lost) and the cost to our economy (US \$126 billion). We have been a major, proactive and a willing partner of international community in the global war against terrorism over last two decades. Pakistan has not only waged this struggle kinetically, by employing a whole of society approach including through targeted and effective counter terrorism military operations, but we have also played a key role in shaping the normative discussions on counter terrorism at various regional and international forums.

We believe that a sustainable effort to end the menace of terrorism entails a comprehensive approach, requiring special attention to eliminate the root causes and drivers of radicalization leading to extremism and violent conduct. Pakistan strongly believes that

terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any race, religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. However, the rise of right wing, populist and supremacist ideologies, fascists and illiberal forces has emerged as a great threat to peace and harmony in our times. We remain deeply concerned about the rising incidents of xenophobia and islamophobia in recent times. Pakistan has been a victim of terrorism planned, supported and sponsored from across our borders. With sheer resolve and determination of our people, we have managed to turn the situation around. This was made possible due to concerted efforts and sacrifices of our security forces which have been fully backed by the nation. We are determined to maintain these gains and completely eradicate terrorism in Pakistan.

The Government of Pakistan is working for a peaceful, prosperous and economically vibrant polity. In line with the vision of 'Naya Pakistan', the government is fully determined to implement the National Action Plan which is a comprehensive strategy to deal with the menace of terrorism. We remain committed to ensure that our recent counter terrorism actions remain concrete, verifiable and irreversible. As a result of these efforts, there has been a marked decline in the incidence of terrorism in Pakistan over the last three years. The improved security situation in Pakistan has also been acknowledged by our international partners. Multiple leading journals and publication, includes Forbes has pitched Pakistan as one of the next top tourist destinations of the world. This alone is a testimony to the success of our counter terrorism efforts and improvement in the perception of the security situation in the country.

Non-Proliferation, Counter-proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

Pakistan shares the global objectives of preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and their delivery to state and non-state actors. In this regard, Pakistan has been proactively fulfilling its obligations under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) since its adoption. Beside actively participating in the work of 1540 Committee, Pakistan has been regularly reporting on its effective national implementation the 1540 resolution. So far, Pakistan has submitted seven national reports on the implementation of 1540 resolutions. A well-qualified expert from Pakistan has served at the 1540 Committee from 2012-17. Following mechanisms are in place to ensure non-proliferation, counter proliferation, arms control and disarmament:

➤ **Pakistan Export Control:**

Pakistan supports the non-proliferation objectives of the international export control regimes. In this regard, it has expressed keen interest in joining international export control regime and has placed an internationally harmonized domestic export control system on all sensitive and dual use items. Pakistan adopted the "Export Control on Goods, Technologies, Material and Equipment related to Nuclear and Biological Weapons and their Delivery Systems Act" (Strategic Export Control Act – 2004) with a purpose to control those items and technologies which may contribute to the designing, development, production, stockpiling, maintenance, or use of weapons of mass destruction including their delivery systems.

➤ **National Control List and Regular Revision**

Pursuant to the Strategic Export Control Act 2004, in 2005, the Government of Pakistan notifies National Control List of Goods, Technologies, Materials and Equipment related to Nuclear and Biological Weapons and their Delivery Systems. The Control List encompasses the lists and

scope of export controls maintained by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Australia Group (AG), and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

The Control List is regularly reviewed through a comprehensive interagency review process. The regular revision of Control Lists signifies the continuing resolve and policy of Pakistan as a responsible nuclear state of advance the shared goals of non-proliferation.

➤ **Strategic Export Control Division**

In 2007 Strategic Export Control Division (SECDIV) as a part of Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also set up to administer export controls. An Oversight Board was also set up in the same year to monitor the implementation of Strategic Export Controls Act 2004. Since then SECDIV has taken number of steps to strengthen Pakistan's national export control architecture.

In 2009, "Export Control (Licensing and Enforcement) Rules" were promulgated which included detailed procedures in this regard. Any export of goods and technology specified in the Export Control Act and the Control List is required to go through the registration and licensing procedure specified in these rules. For licensing, an inter-ministerial License Review Committee (LRC) has been constituted notified vide SRO 412(I)/2018 on 29 March 2018 which has further strengthened the inter-agency coordination for the implementation of SECA-2004.

In August 2018, Pakistan also established Inter-Agency Committee for Coordination, Review and Monitoring Committee (CRC Committee), notified vide S.R.O. 1067(I)/2018 dated 28 August 2018, to effectively implement, supervise and monitor the enforcement of UNSC resolutions/decisions on countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to ensure effective implementation.

Besides that, Pakistan has also set up National Counter Proliferation Unit to prevent money laundering and proliferation financing.

➤ **Safety and Security**

Pakistan accords the highest priority to safety and security issues pertaining to chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological areas. Pakistan has taken a number of steps to further strengthen safety and security. As a demonstration of its continued commitment towards nuclear security, Pakistan joined Nuclear Security Contact Group (NSCG) in 2019 by subscribing to IAEA INFCIRC/899. Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) has promulgated "Regulations on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (s) and Nuclear Installation-(PAK-925)". These regulations are based on IAEA INFCIRC/225/Rev.5, obligations of Convention of Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and its 2005 Amendment, international best practices and national experiences. These regulations provide requirements for the physical protection of nuclear material against unauthorized removal during its use, storage & transport and for protection against sabotage of nuclear installations.

Pakistan has deployed modern technical solutions for physical protection measures including detection, delay and response at nuclear installations and radiation facilities in accordance with national requirements and international standards. Physical protection measures comprise personnel, equipment and procedures intended to prevent, detect, and extend delay and appropriate response to neutralize a malicious act.

IAEA-Pakistan Nuclear Security Cooperation Programme is being implemented successfully to improve and upgrade nuclear security and physical protection infrastructure at

national level. Twenty-seven nuclear medical centers have been upgraded under the programme.

Pakistan Centre of Excellence on Nuclear Security – a regional and international hub for nuclear security trainings

Pakistan conducts regular training courses in the area of nuclear safety and security, in partnership with IAEA. Several countries have benefited from these training programs at the Centre of Excellence on Nuclear Security in the domain of nuclear safety and security which includes Pakistan's Centre of Excellence for Nuclear Security (PCENS), National Institute of Safety and Security (NISAS) and Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS). The Centre has Physical Protection Exterior Labs (PPEL) and Physical Protection Interior Labs (PPIL) that are equipped with physical protection gadgetry. The Centre of Excellence on Nuclear Security has grown into a regional and international hub for nuclear security training.

Over the years, Pakistan has acquired considerable experience as well as expertise in the safe and secure utilization of nuclear energy as well as in the application of chemical and biological fields for peaceful purposes. Pakistan stands ready to offer its assistance, including in the form of trainings to interested states and in response to specific requests in those areas where it has gained expertise including in the form of trainings to interested states and in response to specific requests in those areas where it has gained expertise including those relating to the implementation of UNSCR 1540. These areas include:

- **Strategic Exports Controls**
 - Establishment of legal and regulatory framework on export controls
 - Training of enforcement officials in Commodity Identification of dual-use items.
 - Industry Outreach and Public awareness raising.
 - International Compliance/Self-regulation.
 - Training for Licensing Officers.
 - Outreach to academia and research institutions and setting up a compliance mechanism.

- **Nuclear Security Trainings/Assistance**
 - Introduction to evaluation of physical protection system effectiveness.
 - Implementation of nuclear security recommendations on physical protection of nuclear material and facilities.
 - Security of radioactive sources.
 - Radiation Detection Techniques for Front Line Officers.
 - Technical Support Capabilities for Alarm Assessment and Response initiation.
 - Sustainability of Radiation Detection Equipment and Export Support Capabilities.
 - Threat assessment and risk-informed approach for nuclear and other radioactive material out of regulatory control.
 - Threat assessment and design basis threat.

- **CWC Related Trainings/Assistance**
 - Assistance in establishment of a National Authority on CWC, including drafting of CWC-related legislation, advanced trainings to first responders/law enforcement agencies
 - Industry outreach and awareness raising to public/academia.

➤ **Chemical Weapons Convention:**

Chemical weapons related issues are covered by a separate legislation, the CWC Implementation Ordinance-2000. To regulate export and import of chemical weapons related materials and equipment, a separate department, known as National Authority on Chemical Weapons Convention (NA CWC), is working in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was pursuant to implement of the Chemical Weapons Convention as well as chemical safety and security. The CWC Implementation Rules (2010) are being updated to broaden the regulatory framework to encompass safety and security aspects in procurement, production, storage, transfer, transportation, usage, import and exports of chemicals. Since its inception, Pakistan National Authority on CWC has enhanced and implemented CWC regime with complete commitment. Till 2019, OPCW conducted 21 inspections in Pakistan.

➤ **Biological Weapons (BW)**

Draft legislation is under inter-ministerial consideration to broaden the scope of national measures with regard to implementation of Biological Weapons Convention, including in areas related to UNSCR 1540. Pakistan submits voluntary Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) with regard to Biological Weapons Convention were submitted to the Office of Disarmament Affairs, United Nations.

Transnational Crimes

Transnational organized crimes pose serious challenges to the international community. They undermine rule of law, threaten peace, violate human rights and impede sustainable development in varying degrees in different countries across the globe. Therefore, Pakistan is fully committed to combat transnational organized crimes in all their forms and manifestations. Pakistan is cognizant to the fact that peace and stability and rule of law are pre-requisites for social and economic development at the domestic, regional and international levels.

Keeping above in view, Pakistan has actively contributed to global efforts as well as policy discussions on transnational organized crimes at the United Nations and other multilateral forums. As current members of Vienna-based UN Commissions on Narcotics Drugs and Crime Prevention & Criminal Justice, Pakistan is taking lead role to promote and enhance international cooperation in this area. Pakistan is party to UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes (UNTOC), which provides the main legal framework in this domain. Moreover, Pakistan has also ratified the UN Convention against Corruption and the three UN Conventions on international narcotics control regime. At the domestic level, Pakistan is taking numerous legislative, policy and administrative measures to effectively implement these international conventions and to eradicate this menace. Pakistan is also keen to learn from ASEAN's best practices and experiences in fighting transnational organized crimes and stands ready to share her experience as well.

Pakistan's Efforts on Preventing Covid-19

To fight the pandemic effectively, Pakistan followed a 'smart lockdowns' policy and adopted the three-pronged strategy focused on 'Saving Lives, Securing Livelihoods, and Stimulating the Economy'. Through its '*Ehsas Emergency Cash Program*', the government disbursed more than 200 billion rupees to 15 million families in the vulnerable segments of the population. We have launched a vaccination drive that will cover 70 million people by December 2021. In this regard, 27 million vaccine doses have been administered so far (as of

27 July 2021). A sustained strategy is needed to fully overcome the pandemic and maintain and stimulate economic growth. To recover from Covid-19 crisis and “build back better”, all efforts must be made to ensure vaccine equity; urgently mobilize the finance needed by developing countries to recover from the Covid-19 induced recession; and to restore them on the path to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

THE PHILIPPINES

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

The Indo-Pacific region is beset with a variety of increasingly intensifying problems—including geopolitical tensions and deceleration of economic growth—all happening amidst a pandemic.

The region remains susceptible to complex relationships, growing strategic divergences, and differing visions of regional order between major powers. While these major powers seek to expand their influence, other countries have found themselves in the middle of a push and pull—navigating between competing imperatives of economic and development assistance, while at the same time balancing political-security trade-offs. As a result, most states have sought to pragmatically engage major powers while seeking to diversify and deepen relations with other partners.

For the past year, the ability of states to engage one another amidst rising tensions has been put to the test. For one, the region is bombarded with escalating tensions in maritime security, particularly from the territorial and maritime disputes in the South China Sea. The huge presence of Chinese maritime militia vessels and their continuing militarization in reclaimed islands have reinforced distrust towards them. The recent primacy of military over civilian authority in Myanmar, along with the loss of lives, is another alarming development in the region that warrants immediate solution. Other security problems such as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, transnational crimes, natural disasters and humanitarian crises, and cybercrimes continue to remain key concerns for the future of the region. These issues necessitate the prudent management of state-to-state relations and implementation of timely, efficient, and long-lasting solutions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly become the greatest global public policy challenge. It has exposed systemic weaknesses within states, particularly with the seeming discord between the health and economic sectors. To make matters worse, the inadequacy of health systems and medical supplies has undermined effective solutions to the pandemic. As a result, economies have been suffering with the implementation of border closures, lockdowns, restrictions in mobility, and delays in manufacturing and trade, among other issues.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated political tensions within and beyond national borders and has highlighted the limits of collective global action. State leaders are scrambling to curb the negative effects of the pandemic by implementing a myriad of public health, economic, and security measures. Major powers are also seemingly in a race to provide vaccines to less developed countries across the globe.

Maintaining international stability is a fragile endeavor, with the ebbs and flows of existing and new security challenges. However, it also offers opportunities for new forms of cooperation and strengthening of regional mechanisms. It is therefore necessary for states in the region, their external partners, and other stakeholders, to enhance dialogue and cooperation to effectively address these challenges and prevent them from further escalation. Equally important, states must move beyond commitments and ensure tangible outcomes.

a) Maritime Security

For coastal states like the Philippines, maritime security is essential to national development. Free, open, and healthy seas facilitate trade, provide food and livelihood, and potentially, offshore hydrocarbon resources to satisfy national energy needs. The exploitation of marine resources must be balanced against the protection of coastal and marine ecosystems to allow continued and sustained benefits for future generations.

Threats to free, open, and healthy seas are multidimensional and transnational. These include piracy and armed robbery at sea; maritime kidnapping and terrorism; trafficking in and smuggling of weapons, drugs, and persons; illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing; poaching; intentional marine environmental destruction; climate change; and disregard for safety of life at sea and navigation, including engaging in maneuvers that increase the risk of collisions at sea.

Disputes over maritime rights and entitlements also threaten maritime security. They limit the ability of coastal states to exploit marine resources and manage crimes at sea. Disregard for international law and undertaking unilateral actions, including the militarization of offshore outposts and the use of military and paramilitary assets to assert sovereignty claims, also increase tensions and undermine regional stability.

These maritime security threats have persisted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. To address these threats, coastal states must continuously build and strengthen their maritime law enforcement capacities. However, because of the transnational character of maritime threats, coastal states must also engage in sustained dialogue among themselves, and regularly undertake meaningful cooperation grounded in international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and in shared values and common interests.

b) Situation in the Korean Peninsula

Positive developments in inter-Korean relations remain limited due to setbacks in building consensus between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) towards sustainable peace and verifiable denuclearization. Imbalanced threat perceptions and deterioration of mutual trust have reinforced DPRK's apprehensions in engaging with ROK through high level dialogue. External factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic have further restricted the range of strategies in resuming negotiations among the parties.

Border hostilities and accidental military clashes continue to threaten security in the Korean Peninsula. The fatal shooting of an ROK civilian officer near Yeonpyeong Island in September 2020 by DPRK forces exposed the looming danger of an escalation of violence in the region.² Despite disagreements between DPRK and ROK authorities in investigating the incident, their leaders swiftly communicated with each other to prevent its recurrence and further reduce tensions.³

² "Gov't confirms North Korea shot missing South Korean official," *The Korea Times*, September 24, 2020, https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2020/09/103_296589.html (accessed March 15, 2021).

³ "Blue House calls for joint probe by two Koreas into fatal shooting of S. Korean man," *Arirang*, September 28, 2020, http://www.arirang.co.kr/News/News_View.asp?nseq=265599 (accessed March 15, 2021).

The DPRK continues to violate various inter-Korean agreements and UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions by extensively developing nuclear capabilities, fueling distrust among parties and heightening the tension in the peninsula. This has been evident in the unveiling of the Hwasong-16 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and Pukguksong-5 submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) during a military parade in October 2020, and in the ongoing operations within the Yongbyon nuclear reactor complex.

The rising number and sophistication of cyberattacks by DPRK agents pose new security risks and undermine the effectiveness of economic sanctions. Since 2020, espionage groups have developed new malware in attempts to hack databases of various institutions and private companies in ROK, including pharmaceutical firms that have been developing COVID-19 vaccines.⁴ Cybercriminals have also carried out attacks against South Korean financial institutions to gain hard currency and other resources for the DPRK's nuclear and missile weapons program.

Domestic power transitions in the ROK and the US bear significant implications for the revival of cross-border engagements. There is the daunting task for ROK of ensuring policy continuity on inter-Korean cooperation while maintaining a robust defense posture against nuclear threats. In spite of the DPRK's reluctance to cooperate in inter-Korean exchanges, the ROK reaffirmed its pledge to deliver tangible progress in the peace process through dialogue and "win-win" cooperation on relevant fields such as infectious diseases.⁵

The international community needs to renew its commitment to fostering a long-lasting peace in the Korean Peninsula by consistently implementing sanctions and other mechanisms to deter nuclear proliferation. The DPRK can play an important role in this goal by becoming more receptive to proposals for non-proliferation and its benefits. Hence, the parties should refrain from using divisive rhetoric for it would only engender mistrust that may further incite provocations. The stakeholders of the region are also encouraged to revive meaningful dialogue by building on previous inter-Korean agreements and utilizing creative channels for diplomacy, such as humanitarian aid and disaster relief (HA/DR), health diplomacy, and sports and culture.

c) Regional Power Dynamics

The Asia Pacific region continues to be fraught with strategic challenges and long-standing tensions. The global magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic has proved inadequate to push major powers to dial the competition down and has even exposed the intensifying and changing nature of geopolitical issues in the region.

The complex relationships of major powers continue to shape regional power dynamics. As some countries have diplomatically distanced themselves from the region by prioritizing their respective domestic agenda, some have taken this period of pandemic as a strategic opportunity to boost their hard and soft power. This is reflected in the increase of good will initiatives such as development aid, trade and investment, and health initiatives to expand

⁴ Han-sol Park, "North Korea attempted to hack into COVID-19 vaccine developers data," *The Korea Times*, November 3, 2020, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2020/11/103_298676.html (accessed March 15, 2021).

⁵ Cheong Wa Dae, "2021 New Year's Address by President Moon Jae-in," January 11, 2021, <http://english1.president.go.kr/briefingspeeches/speeches/931> (accessed March 15, 2021).

influence and gain the trust of partners in the region. However, these initiatives have been accompanied by asymmetrical military strategies and the use of economic carrots and sticks, which have caused great alarm in the region.

Competing visions for regional order and norms that will govern future regional affairs remain to be the driver of the major powers' interest to vie for regional influence.⁶ Southeast Asian states are yet again faced with the challenge of striking a delicate balance to keep the scales from tipping to one side. To do so, states must continue to hedge, develop necessary functional relations with external partners while diversifying partners and maintaining stable relations with other major powers.⁷

Major powers have wielded considerable diplomatic and economic influence in the region. This reaffirms the intertwining of security and economic development considerations, and could greatly affect the future of global security. This has left some states uncertain about the prospect of economic gains vis-à-vis the challenges in ensuring the rights of sovereign equals.

Amidst regional power competition, maintaining ASEAN Centrality is vital to managing the impact of unilateral actions of major powers and their interactions in the region. Should major powers desire an active role in shaping global governance rules, it must be through international and regional organizations and initiatives such as the ASEAN. Equally important, all states must strive to become responsible stakeholders in the global arena by abiding by international law. Regional peace and stability will rest on the commitment and efforts by all states to a stable, open, and rules-based order.

d) Terrorism

As governments around the world grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, the threat of terrorism and violent extremism persist. The pandemic presents both challenges and opportunities for terrorists across the ideological spectrum. On the one hand, the restrictive measures taken by governments to curb the spread of the virus has suppressed the activities of terrorists in public spaces. But on the other, terrorists exploit public fears amid uncertainty by incorporating the pandemic in their extremist propaganda online. The pandemic has further accelerated existing trends and, at the same time, highlighted the resiliency of terrorist groups.

The use of online spaces for spreading propaganda, attracting followers, and recruiting new members is not new. However, the conditions brought by the pandemic further accelerated this trend. As more people stay home, more people spend more time online. This circumstance could result in exposure to a cornucopia of online information and the increased engagement in online communities that encourage violent extremism. Terrorists could use online platforms to spread disinformation, conspiracy theories, and propaganda to sow mistrust of the authorities and incite violence against groups they consider their enemies.

Aside from extremist ideologies, socio-economic conditions such as youth unemployment, poverty, militarization, and corruption cultivate extremism in the communities. Weak local

⁶ Ely Ratner, "Rising to the China Challenge," Center for New American Security, January 28, 2020, <https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/rising-to-the-china-challenge>.

⁷ Charles Dunst, "How the US Can Win Back Southeast Asia," The Diplomat, September 1, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/09/how-the-us-can-win-back-southeast-asia/>.

institutions coupled with stagnant economic development make it difficult to weed out radicalization. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these conditions as many lost their jobs and were forced to delay their education. These disruptions could affect mental health and foment anti-government attitudes that make people, especially the youth, more vulnerable to extremist narratives.

In Southeast Asia, terrorist groups indoctrinate and recruit new members mainly through social networks (e.g., family and clan ties), informal religious schools staffed by overseas-educated radical preachers, and cyberspace (e.g., social media and encrypted messaging apps). The Islamic State's (IS) Southeast Asian allies, such as the Philippines' Abu Sayyaf and Indonesia's *Jamaah Ansharut Daulah*, have used family ties to recruit and mobilize suicide bombers. The 2019 Jolo Cathedral bombings and the 2021 Makassar church bombing were among the suicide bombing attacks in the region involving family members in recent years. The perpetrators have included women, which highlights the need for a gendered approach to counter-terrorism. Many Southeast Asians who joined the IS in the Middle East were families, lured by the idea of a utopian Islamic caliphate. Many have since returned following the territorial defeat of the IS. Together with foreign terrorist fighters, IS-linked local groups continue to operate and move across Southeast Asia's porous maritime borders.

The persistence of terrorist threats necessitates stronger cooperation and collaboration among states and other stakeholders. Apart from sharing best practices and expertise in deradicalization, national governments must also continue to strengthen and standardize security laws and border controls, increase intelligence-sharing, develop rehabilitation practices, and improve the capacities of communities. Most importantly, it is imperative to strengthen social and economic institutions to address the underlying conditions of terrorism and violent extremism, such as economic inequality, social injustice, and marginalization.

e) Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the structural vulnerabilities of countries to possible weapons of mass destruction (WMD) attacks. With the attention of national governments focused on the health crisis, non-state actors may leverage on the existing disruptions and socio-economic fallout to promote radicalization and extremist propaganda. Non-state actors may also be inspired to pursue bioterrorism as a viable tactic to inflict similar or worse devastation to societies across the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic refocused attention to low-probability security threats with global consequences. It reinforced the need for greater vigilance and international cooperation in addressing chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) threats.

f) Cybersecurity

The growing global dependence on ICT increases sophisticated cybersecurity risks such as cyberattacks on critical infrastructure, data breaches, malware attacks, loss of data, hacking, electronic espionage, state-sponsored cyberwarfare, cybercrimes involving financial fraud, and online child sexual exploitation and abuse. Cyberattacks compromise national security by paralyzing government functions and disrupting military technologies, disrupting financial institutions and business corporations, and endangering the lives, privacy, and safety of ordinary citizens. In addition, easy access to the internet has also resulted in the rise of

radicalization as insurgents, terrorists, and other groups have used this space to spread extremist ideologies.

The COVID-19 pandemic catalyzed the shift of societies to the use of digital technologies in performing daily activities. The protocols implemented in “the new normal” (e.g., lockdowns and physical distancing) have caused a rapid surge in the number of internet users worldwide. Work, education, health services, transportation, and access to essential goods are just some of the common activities that are now highly reliant on the use of digital platforms. These new developments highlight the urgent need of societies to have more accessible, faster, and more secure internet access.

Another important issue related to ICT is the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which is characterized by an unparalleled connectivity and level of data exchange. Technology has become more sophisticated with the use of data science and artificial intelligence. However, the hyperconnected system and sophisticated technologies can also be accompanied by more advanced ways of cyberattacks. It is therefore imperative that governments adapt to the fast-changing technology to counter the possible dangers brought about by the rapidly developing cyber industry.

The international community should be able to rapidly adapt and respond to challenges emanating from cyberspace. This would entail updating national legislations on cybercrime issues, increasing the number and building the capacity of cybersecurity professionals and experts, especially in the law enforcement and security sectors, and investing in and strengthening critical infrastructures. There should also be enhanced and sustained cooperation and collaboration between stakeholders at the national, regional, and international levels to address the gaps and ongoing improvements in strengthening cybersecurity initiatives. Likewise, governments must also see to it that an overarching strategy is in place that can keep multi-national corporations in check as they are equally capable of carrying out actions that may put personal data of consumers at risk.

2. National Security and Defense Policy

a) Overview of National Security and Defense Policy

The Philippines’ National Security Council crafted the 2017-2022 National Security Policy (NSP) and the 2018-2022 National Security Strategy (NSS) to articulate the country’s security objectives, strategic direction, and major efforts. In support of this, the Department of National Defense (DND) published the 2018-2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS), which further refines these objectives as it pertains to the defense sector, providing sector-specific tasks, mission areas, responsibilities, and points for expansion. In 2019, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) released a new National Military Strategy (NMS) which articulates how the AFP would conduct its missions in pursuit of its mandate and in support of the NSS and NDS.

The COVID-19 pandemic, while primarily a major health crisis, has also contributed to and even exacerbated some geopolitical and defense concerns. Like the rest of the world, the Philippines utilizes its armed forces to support other civilian government agencies in mitigating the impact of COVID-19. Since the start of the Philippine government’s response to the ongoing pandemic, the defense sector has assumed roles in (1) urban search and rescue, (2) logistics support, (3) military medicine, and (4) implementing law and order.

The Philippines continues to develop and upgrade its defense capabilities to achieve a minimum credible deterrence. Despite the delays of several projects due to the pandemic, the implementation of Horizon Two of the Revised Armed Forces of the Philippines Modernization Program (RAFPMP), is ongoing and is expected to run until 2022. In this regard, the Philippines continues to place importance on strengthening and diversifying its defense collaboration and security engagements with other countries to facilitate strategic trust and practical cooperation.

b) Data contribution to ARF Arms Register

i. Total defense expenditure on an annual basis

1) Defense expenditure

For the fiscal year 2021, the approved defense budget of the Philippines is PHP 205.8 billion (USD 4.244 billion), which is a 7.13 percent increase from PHP 192.1 billion (USD 3.776 billion) in the previous year. The defense budget also makes up for 4.57 percent of the total government budget of PHP 4.506 trillion for 2021.

2) Defense expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP)

The Philippines's 2020 defense expenditure (USD 3.776 billion) was 1.03 percent of its GDP (USD 367.36 billion).

3) Defense expenditure per capita

In 2020, the Philippine defense expenditure per capita was USD 34.46, an increase from USD 32.1 in the previous year.

ii. Total number of personnel in national armed forces and its percentage in population

Active military personnel

Philippine Army	101,105 (0.09%)
Philippine Navy	24,499 (0.02%)
Philippine Air Force	18,648 (0.02%)

3. National Contributions to Promote Regional Peace and Security

a) Counter-terrorism

Terrorist attacks in the Philippines have continued unabated amid the COVID-19 pandemic. On 24 August 2020, twin bombs were set off in Jolo, Sulu, killing 14 and injuring 80, for which Abu Sayyaf claimed responsibility. The Philippines remains among the top countries affected by terrorism. Nevertheless, the Philippines' ranking has improved in the 2020 Global Terrorism Index at 10th place, one step lower than the previous year's ranking.

In the Philippines, terrorism continues to emanate from the local terrorist groups (LTGs), including the IS-affiliated groups such as the Abu Sayyaf and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, and from foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), who continue to collaborate with the LTGs in carrying out terror attacks. Abu Sayyaf remains the most active among the IS-affiliated groups despite suffering from relentless government security operations.

The lessons from the Marawi siege have been the driving force behind the implementation of several inclusive counterterrorism initiatives, which focus not only on the application of military force to combat terrorist activities, but also on the elimination of the socio-economic conditions that allow radicalization and violent extremism to thrive in communities. In his speech at the 75th UN General Assembly, President Rodrigo Duterte reaffirmed his commitment to protect innocent civilians from terrorism and all its manifestations.

In response to the growing radicalization in the country, the government adopted the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (NAP-PCVE), with the Department of Interior and Local Government leading its implementation. The plan involves addressing the root causes of extremism in spaces where they are likely to breed, including certain communities, learning institutions, jails, and social media.

Recognizing the role of education in preventing radicalization, the government designated the local government units (LGUs) in conducting PCVE training and workshops at the grassroots. These initiatives include working with religious leaders (e.g., *imams* and *Muftis*) to help deradicalize youths who are often vulnerable to recruitment. There are also deradicalization programs that will be implemented in detention centers and jails, where several suspected violent extremists are being detained. In July 2020, the AFP Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom) and religious leaders organized the Religious-Military Advisory Council (RMAC), which will serve as consultants and advisers in anti-terror and security campaigns.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) continues to help various government agencies and LGUs to facilitate the operationalization of the NAP-PCVE. It deployed Community Support Program Teams in the countryside to assess the people's needs, facilitate development, and improve governance in the area by organizing communities and linking them to appropriate government units and agencies. Promptly addressing bad governance and lack of basic services means that terrorists would have lesser issues to exploit to bolster their propaganda and recruitment narratives.

The government also fast-tracked the enactment of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) of 2020, which repealed the Human Security Act of 2007. The enactment was in line with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. With sufficient safeguards against abuse in place, it strengthens terrorism-related law enforcement capacities and criminal justice procedures to preserve national security. The ATA also provides the legal framework to prosecute FTFs, as the recent bombings in the country illustrate their role in instigating terror attacks in the country. The Marawi siege has taught the government that an effective legal framework is needed to address the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism in the Philippines.

To complement its national initiatives and policies, the Philippines pursues a broad range of bilateral and multilateral partnerships. The Department of National Defense and the AFP have

been collaborating with partners for mutual development of critical counter-terrorism capabilities through joint trainings and exercises and subject matter expert (SME) exchanges. Among the initiatives include the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA) with Malaysia and Indonesia, intelligence exchanges (INTELEX) and Analyst-to-Analyst Exchanges (ATAX), ASEAN-365 Information Sharing Platform, "Our Eyes" Initiative, and the Regional Counter-terrorism Information Facility (CTIF) in Singapore.

Despite the pandemic, the Philippine government continued to carry out meetings with foreign governments and international organizations to discuss strengthening cooperation against common threats for lasting sustainable peace in the region. These meetings include the Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines Trilateral Security Conference, the 5th Philippine-Australia Strategic Dialogue, and the 8th Regional Meeting of Heads Intelligence and Security Services in South-East Asia. High-level visits include the scoping visit for the Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism in Asia (STRIVE Asia) Project on 22 January 2020, the UN Countering Terrorist Travel (UNCTT) Programme Technical Assessment Visit from 27 February to 2 March 2020, and the Joint High-Level Visit of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) from 2 to 3 March 2020. At the heart of these meetings and visits is the commitment to strengthen the Philippine government's counter-terrorism capacity to respond to national security threats.

b) Non-proliferation, Counter-proliferation, Arms Control, and Disarmament

The Philippines deposited with the United Nations the instrument of ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on 18 February 2021, following the Philippine Senate's unanimous concurrence of the treaty's ratification on 1 February 2021. This milestone, according to President Rodrigo Duterte, "reinforces the Philippines' resolve together with the international community in pursuing a world free from nuclear weapons." It also builds on the country's "principled commitment to work towards the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction for peace, security, and the survival of all humanity."

The Philippines' staunch commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is anchored on its constitution. Article II, Section 8 of the 1987 Constitution declares that "the Philippines, consistent with the national interest, adopts and pursues a policy of freedom from nuclear weapons in its territory."

In the face of intensifying great power competition and uncertainties brought about by COVID-19, the Philippines urged all states to continue pursuing forward-looking, action-oriented outcomes to implement obligations in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). To accelerate progress on nuclear disarmament, the Philippines reiterates the need for the full and effective implementation of the decisions and resolutions adopted during the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, the 13 practical steps in the 2000 NPT Review Conference, and the 64-point action plan in 2010 NPT Review Conference

Recognizing the destructive effect on the environment of nuclear testing and the humanitarian consequence of its use, the Philippines signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996 and deposited the instrument of ratification in 2001. The Philippines continues to urge the eight remaining Annex 2 states to promptly sign and ratify the CTBT to usher its long-overdue entry into force.

The Philippines reiterates its commitment to preserve Southeast Asia as a region free from nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty on the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). With the rest of ASEAN, the Philippines will continuously engage the nuclear-weapon states (NWS) and intensify the ongoing efforts to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty.

From 18 to 19 November 2020, the Philippines and Australia convened experts from ARF participating countries to a two-day virtual workshop on nuclear risk reduction. The workshop aimed to build understanding around the different approaches to risk reduction, including through collaborative work between NWS and non-nuclear-weapon States (NNWS).

The virtual workshop highlighted the need to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education among the youth. In line with this, the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute, with funding support from the Philippine Department of Energy, is currently preparing instructional materials on nuclear energy, radiological, and nuclear emergencies for students in secondary and university levels of education.

The Philippines is looking forward to the establishment of a Regional Early Warning Radiation Monitoring Network (EWRMN) and an ASEAN Radiation Exchange Platform (ASEAN-RDEP). This project, to be supported by the European Commission, will enable the timely detection of enhanced levels of radiation whenever they first occur in, or over, the territory of ASEAN. The Philippines will receive 10 gamma dose rate monitoring stations (GDRMS) to be installed at locations facing the West Philippine Sea. These stations will complement the 14 national environmental radiation monitoring stations already installed facing the Pacific Ocean.

The Philippines continues to promote regional and multi-agency cooperation through the hosting of the Regional Secretariat of the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative (CBRN CoE) for Southeast Asia since 2013. The country also plays an active role in strengthening regional cooperation and preparedness, response, and assistance in addressing CBRN threats. Under the ARF, the Philippines has hosted several workshops and table-top exercises on issues such as biological threat reduction; bio-risk management; disease detection and surveillance; preparedness and response to a biological event; countering illicit trafficking of CBRN materials; and raising awareness on CBRN risk management.

At the national level, the Philippines implements a unified and whole-of-government approach to counter the threat of weapons of mass destruction under the CBRN National Action Plan. The country's diplomatic, security, health, science, and technology sectors closely coordinate to improve standards, processes, and regulations for threat reduction, risk management, preparedness, and response.

As a member of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Philippines contributed USD15,000 for the construction of the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre) on 9 April 2021. The Centre will enhance OPCW's capability to assist and provide critical support and training for Member States in tackling new and emerging chemical weapons threats.

The Philippines continues to strengthen its national implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540. The National Security Council–Strategic Trade Management Committee (NSC–STMCom), which is the central authority on all matters relating to strategic trade management, issued Resolution No. 1 directing different government agencies to form permanent subcommittees and assist the Philippine Strategic Trade Management Office (STMO) in fulfilling its functions. These subcommittees are as follows:

- 1) Subcommittee on Technical Reachback (SCTR);
- 2) Subcommittee on Risk Assessment (SCRA);
- 3) Subcommittee on Enforcement (SCE); and
- 4) Technical Working Group on Trade Facilitation (TWGTF).

To raise awareness of the Philippine Strategic Trade Management Act (Republic Act No. 10697) and increase compliance by the industry, the STMO has reached out to 500 companies in the country. One-on-one consultations have also been provided to address specific concerns related to registration and authorization requirements, setting up an Internal Compliance Programme (ICP), and classifying strategic commodities based on the Philippine National Strategic Goods List (NSGL). The STMO adopts a phased implementation approach, with registration already operational since 2019; exports, transit or transshipment, and re-export or re-assignment to be available in 2025; and related services and import in 2028.

c) Transnational Crime

i. Proliferation of Illicit Drugs

The Philippines remains steadfast in providing a proactive solution to the proliferation of illicit drugs through upholding the rule of law, observing due process, and complying with international human rights conventions commitments. The country is continuously guided by the Philippine Anti-Illegal Drug Strategy (PADS) which harmonizes anti-illegal drugs initiatives and encourages collaboration among national government agencies. Anchored on the National Security Policy and the 2017-2022 Philippine Development Plan, PADS is governed by three principles: 1) evidence-based and culturally appropriate, 2) comprehensive and balanced approach, and 3) inter-sectoral and participatory. The government provides financial grants to agencies and organizations that support commitments under PADS.

The Philippine government adopts a comprehensive, whole-of-nation approach in addressing the drug problem through prevention, education, and public awareness, treatment and rehabilitation, law enforcement, and dispensation of justice. Through the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB), the government has implemented various seminars and programs to raise awareness on drug prevention and promote a drug-free society. These initiatives are catered to government employees, educators, youth, families, health practitioners, and law enforcers.

Specific examples of these programs include Systemic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP), Drug-free Workplace Program, Drug Abuse Prevention Education, and the Youth Empowerment through the National Orientation of *Barkada Kontra Droga* Program. Due to mobility restrictions brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has utilized digital technology to carry out these initiatives.

On 29 January 2021, Republic Act No. 11521 was signed to strengthen prosecution and judicial measures of drug-related cases, including intensifying the investigation of dubious financial transactions of illegal drug trading activities.

Amid the pandemic, the Philippines has issued guidelines on the Use of Electronic Prescription for any legitimate transaction of dangerous drugs. The flexibility of prescribing and dispensing these items, which remain under strict monitoring, is a way to ensure that access to medical preparations containing dangerous drugs by patients with legitimate medical needs will not be hampered.

The government advocates for the reduction of drug-affectation through the implementation of the Barangay Drug Clearing Program (BDCP) that integrates supply, demand and harm reduction strategies toward forming drug-resistant and self-policing communities. The BDCP consists of three phases of implementation, with the end goal of rehabilitating and reintegrating drug users and offenders to the society and clearing communities from illegal drugs. As of 28 February 2021, 21,252 out of 42,045 communities nationwide have been cleared of illicit substances.

In terms of treatment and rehabilitation, the Philippines has institutionalized Community-Based Drug Rehabilitation Programs (CBDRP) in recognition of the important role of communities in creating favorable conditions of treatment and rehabilitation for People Who Use Drugs (PWUDs). The government has provided funding to cities and provinces throughout the country to establish, maintain, and operate CBDRP facilities for mild and moderate PWUDs who would surrender voluntarily for appropriate interventions under *Oplan Sagip*. Through the reformation activities of 209 *Balay Silangan* reformation centers, the government has reintegrated 2,738 drug offenders into the society.

The Philippines recognizes the importance of a unified data and scientific basis of the important aspects of its anti-drug campaign in aid of policy, program development, and implementation of targets and deliverables. It has launched the 2021 DDB Research Forum Online Series which aims to promote the sharing of scientific information of research in the field of drug prevention and control.

At the regional level, the Philippines supports ASEAN mechanisms, such as the ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN), which give emphasis to policy formulation and program development through data collection, sharing of best practices, and establishing accountability among ASEAN Member States. Likewise, the Philippines continues to support the implementation and realization of the goals identified in the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016-2025.

In the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters, the Philippines serves as Chair of the Treatment and Rehabilitation Working Group, where it benchmarked its policies and best practices on institutionalizing treatment and rehabilitation initiatives with ASEAN Member States.

Globally, the Philippines aligns its drug policies with international protocols, laws, and standards such as the UN General Assembly 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation toward an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. The Philippines is also a signatory to the 1961 Single Convention of Narcotic

Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol; the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances; and the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

ii. Trafficking in Persons

The Philippines retained its Tier 1 status in the 2020 US State Department Report on Trafficking in Persons for fully complying with the standards for the elimination of human trafficking.⁸

On 19 November 2020, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Philippine-sponsored resolution “Trafficking in Women and Girls” in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The resolution highlights the importance of preventing trafficking, eliminating the demand for it, prosecuting the perpetrators, and protecting and reintegrating victims. Built upon a resolution that the Philippines has been facilitating since 1995, the 2020 resolution recognizes the impact of the pandemic on human trafficking, especially as it increases the vulnerability of women and girls.

The government continues to strive for justice for Filipino victims of human trafficking. From January to June 2020, it has convicted 33 cases of trafficking in persons, almost half of 2019’s total convictions.⁹ The prosecution of overseas perpetrators of sex trafficking and illegal employment underscores the commitment of the Philippine government to protect and promote the rights of its citizens across the globe.

On 17 December 2020, the government opened the “*Tahanan ng Inyong Pag-Asa* (TIP) Center,” the first shelter for rescued trafficked persons. The center also serves as a one-stop-shop for trafficking complaints, counseling services, among other concerns.¹⁰

On 12 February 2020, the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 11299 otherwise known as “An Act Establishing the Office for the Social Welfare Attaché” was signed. The law highlights the provision of psychosocial services to distressed overseas Filipinos, including victims of trafficking, particularly in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, South Korea, Qatar, Malaysia, and Hong Kong.

Amid physical mobility constraints, the government has capitalized on technology in prosecuting suspects of online sexual exploitation. It has also launched the first digital case management system that could track and ensure coordinated government action, from providing legal assistance to repatriation and reintegration assistance, in cases involving trafficking of Overseas Filipino Workers.¹¹

At the regional level, the adoption and entry into force of the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP), which was spearheaded by the

⁸ United States Department of State. *2020 Trafficking in Persons Reports*. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-trafficking-in-persons-report/> (accessed on 03 March 2021)

⁹ Cathrine Gonzales. *PH gains ‘good number’ of convictions for trafficking cases in 2020 – IACAT*. Inquirer. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1314476/ph-gains-good-number-of-convictions-for-human-trafficking-cases-in-2020-iacat>

¹⁰ Department of Justice. *Inauguration of first IACAT Center for trafficked persons*. https://www.doj.gov.ph/news_article.html?newsid=689

¹¹ Department of Justice. *IACAT Launches Digital Case Management System Against Trafficking of OFWs on World Day Against Trafficking*. https://www.doj.gov.ph/news_article.html?newsid=663

Philippines, marked a major achievement that demonstrated a region-wide commitment to combat trafficking in persons. It provides specific action plans within ASEAN Member States' domestic laws and policies, as well as relevant international obligations, to effectively address concerns such as prevention of trafficking in persons (TIP), protection of victims, law enforcement and prosecution, and regional and international cooperation and coordination.

Article 24 of the ACTIP holds the Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) responsible for promoting, monitoring, reviewing, and reporting periodically to the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crimes on the effective implementation of the Convention. The Philippines recognizes the urgent need to establish mechanisms institutionalizing the reporting, monitoring, and evaluation of the implementation of the ACTIP, as indicated in Article 24. Such a system would be an essential tool for gauging the effectiveness of the ACTIP.

As Chair of the 20th ASEAN SOMTC, the Philippines continues to set a high standard in the fight against transnational crimes and acts as Voluntary Lead Shepherd on Trafficking in Persons.

The Philippines strengthens online child pornography laws to better protect minors from exploitation amid the fast-evolving technological advancements. Internet Service Providers shall be sanctioned if their platforms will be used for online child exploitation.

The Philippines' experience in combating transnational crimes demonstrates the need for an integrated approach among government agencies, and the active support by other sectors and stakeholders, complemented by strong collaboration with international partners.

iii. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

While 2020 witnessed how the COVID-19 virus upended the global economy and public health, climate-driven disasters continue to cause devastation, particularly to the world's most vulnerable sectors. According to the World Disasters Report 2020 prepared by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), more than 50 million people were significantly affected by more than 100 disasters during the first six months of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹²

The Report also adds that the resources needed by 50 developing countries to adapt to current climate risks for the next decade—50 billion US dollars annually—pales in comparison to the global economic response to the pandemic pegged at more than 10 trillion US dollars.¹³ The IFRC also notes that many high-risk developing countries fail to get ample support to improve climate change adaptation strategies. It is evident that while the world is reeling from the current pandemic, there is a need to intensify climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts at the international level.

In 2020, four of the five worst natural disasters in the Philippines were climate change-related. Earthquakes have the highest risk index score, followed by tropical cyclones, tsunamis, floods,

¹²International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, World Disasters Report 2020, <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/world-disaster-report-2020>

¹³ Ibid.

and droughts, respectively.¹⁴ The United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) notes that 20 tropical cyclones entered the country, with the three most destructive typhoons occurring in the last quarter.¹⁵ The COVID-19 pandemic has outpaced all other disasters in terms of people affected. From March to December 2020, the number of confirmed cases had reached 474,000.

Disaster risk management will continue to play a crucial role in minimizing the increasing economic, social, and environmental costs of natural disasters. The COVID-19 pandemic presents a formidable challenge to disaster risk management in the Philippines, with health systems being overburdened by increasing cases. World Bank Country Director for Brunei, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines Ndiame Diop emphasized that the current pandemic and natural disasters experienced by the Philippines underscores the importance of mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into policy and planning.¹⁶

The Philippines' National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) of the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) and the World Bank (WB) have initiated the *Ready to Rebuild: Disaster Rehabilitation and Recovery Program*, which aims to strengthen the capacity of national and local governments in undertaking pre- and post-disaster recovery activities such as data gathering, creation and implementation of rehabilitation and recovery plans, channeling emergency procurement, crafting a communication strategy, and establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.¹⁷

iv. Maritime Security

As an archipelagic coastal state, the Philippines places high priority in maritime security. It is fully committed to resolving its territorial and maritime disputes peacefully, combating crimes at sea, guaranteeing the freedom and safety of navigation, and ensuring the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and in cooperation with regional partners and the international community. The country also takes seriously issues such as piracy and armed robbery at sea; maritime kidnapping and terrorism; trafficking in and smuggling of weapons, drugs, and persons; illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing; poaching; intentional marine environmental destruction; climate change; and disregard for safety of life at sea and navigation, including engaging in maneuvers that increase the risk of collisions at sea.

At the local level, the Philippines has strengthened its Coastal Security Patrol as part of its efforts to protect its maritime domain against any forms of threat at sea. It has also established

¹⁴ Statista, Risk index of natural disasters in the Philippines for 2020, by type,

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/921036/philippines-risk-index-for-natural-disasters/>

¹⁵ United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Philippines 2020 Significant Events Snapshot, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/210115_OCHA%20PHL%202020%20Humanitarian%20Highlights%20Snapshot.pdf

¹⁶ The World Bank, PHILIPPINES: While Battling the Pandemic, Strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Needed to aid Recovery, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/12/08/philippines-while-battling-the-pandemic-strengthening-disaster-risk-reduction-and-management-needed-to-aid-recovery>

¹⁷ National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, Ready to Rebuild: Disaster Rehabilitation and Recovery Program, <https://ndrrmc.gov.ph/index.php/ready-to-rebuild.html>

a Maritime Crime Index Rate that serves as a consolidated system of data pertaining to maritime crimes. There have also been efforts to strengthen the monitoring of vessels and watercrafts traversing through Philippine territory through a numbering system and maritime safety and security card mechanism, among other.

In the South China Sea, the Philippines affirms the importance of promoting and maintaining the international rule of law, regional stability, freedom and safety of navigation and overflight, freedom of international commerce and other lawful uses of the seas, and the peaceful settlement of disputes, without resorting to the threat or use of force, through friendly consultations and negotiations among sovereign states and in accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and the 1982 Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes.

In his statement at the General Debate in the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, President Rodrigo Duterte underlined the country's commitment to settle the South China Sea disputes peacefully in accordance with the 1982 UNCLOS and the 2016 Award of the South China Sea arbitration. The Philippines recognizes that the Award is now part of international law and firmly rejects all attempts to undermine it. The Philippines further acknowledges the Award as a celebration of the international rule of law in order to settle disputes amicably, achieve peace, advance a rules-based and equitable international order, and foster cooperation among friendly, responsible, and civilized nations.

The Philippines employs multilateral and bilateral approaches to peacefully manage the territorial and maritime disputes in the South China Sea. Within ASEAN and related institutions, the Philippines emphasizes the need for parties to uphold international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS; enhance mutual trust and confidence; observe non-militarization in the South China Sea; and exercise self-restraint in conducting unilateral activities that could further complicate the situation. In this regard, the Philippines urges all parties to observe the full and effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety.

The Philippines also underscores the urgency of concluding an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) consistent with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, in order to reduce tensions and minimize the risk of incidents. The Philippines recognizes that actions that coerce, intimidate, provoke, escalate tensions, undermine mutual trust and confidence, and violate state sovereignty and sovereign rights guaranteed by international law, particularly the 1982 UNCLOS, impede the progress and momentum of the COC negotiations and threaten its success.

As Country Coordinator for the ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations for 2018–2021, the Philippines is committed to working closely with ASEAN Member States and China in substantive negotiations toward a COC. The Philippines welcomes the completion of the first reading of the Single Draft COC Negotiating Text and the commencement of the second reading in 2019. The Philippines also appreciates the resumption of COC consultations in 2020, which had been delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While COC consultations are underway, the Philippines encourages all parties in the South China Sea to continue exploring practical maritime cooperative initiatives as early harvest measures in accordance with Paragraph 6 of the 2002 DOC. The Philippines is pleased with

the implementation of the 2016 Joint Statement on the Application of the Code of Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) in the South China Sea and the 2016 Guidelines for Hotline Communications among Senior Officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of ASEAN Member States and China in Response to Maritime Emergencies. The Philippines hopes that substantive regional cooperation also will emanate from the 2017 Declaration for a Decade of Coastal and Marine Environment Protection in the South China Sea (2017–2027), which affirmed the commitment of ASEAN Member States and China to preserve and sustainably manage coastal and marine ecosystems in the South China Sea.

Alongside multilateral approaches, the Philippines also makes use of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism on the South China Sea (BCM) with China. Established in 2017, the BCM provides a forum for the Philippines and China to hold constructive dialogue on issues of mutual concern in the South China Sea and explore avenues for practical maritime cooperation, including on maritime search and rescue, maritime safety, marine scientific research and marine environment protection, and fisheries management. The Philippines also looks forward to progress in the negotiations on joint oil and gas exploration and exploitation in the South China Sea pursuant to the 2018 Philippines-China Memorandum of Understanding on Oil and Gas Development.

Beyond the South China Sea disputes, the Philippines is fully committed to peacefully resolve its maritime disputes with other neighbors. In 2019, the Philippines completed the ratification of its maritime boundary agreement with Indonesia over their overlapping exclusive economic zones (EEZs) in the Sulawesi Sea and the Philippine Sea. The treaty entered into force on 01 August 2019 after an exchange of the instruments of ratification. The Philippines considers the maritime boundary delimitation agreement with Indonesia to be a valuable example of peaceful and rules-based dispute settlement in accordance with the 1982 UNCLOS.

In the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas, the Philippines is pleased with the state of its cooperation with Indonesia and Malaysia under the 2016 Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement, which establishes a framework for coordinated maritime and air patrols among the three countries. Since the launching of patrols in 2017, there has been a significant reduction in abductions of shipping crews in the tri-border area. The Philippines is confident that continued trilateral cooperation will eventually help the littoral states effectively combat piracy, armed robbery at sea, and other crimes at sea in the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas.

To manage various maritime threats in Southeast Asian and western Pacific seas, the Philippines supports ASEAN-led maritime security fora such as the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ARF ISM- on MS), the ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF), the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM), and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus). The Philippines lauds maritime security initiatives that have emerged from these ASEAN-led fora, including the Inaugural ADMM-Plus Maritime Security Field Training Exercise (FTX), the launching of the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI), and the adoption of the Guidelines for Air Military Encounters (GAME) and the Guidelines for Maritime Interaction.

The Philippines also supports ASEAN-led multilateral maritime exercises, such as the ASEAN Multilateral Naval Exercise (AMNEX), first held in 2017 with a second iteration scheduled in 2023 to be hosted by the Philippines; and the ASEAN-US Maritime Exercise, inaugurated in 2019. The Philippines recognizes the value of these various fora and initiatives in fostering

dialogue, enhancing mutual understanding, and building confidence on maritime issues at different levels. The Philippines also supports efforts to boost coordination and synergy among these ASEAN-led fora.

The Philippines advocates greater cooperation among regional coast guards and maritime law enforcement agencies. In 2018, the Philippines hosted the 2nd Experts' Group Meeting on the Establishment of an ASEAN Coast Guards Forum (ACGF). The Philippines hopes for further discussions to explore the feasibility of establishing an ACGF. The Philippines also welcomes parallel efforts at the ARF, guided by the 2016 ARF Statement on Enhancing Cooperation among Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies.

The Philippines promotes regional efforts to protect the marine environment and sustainably manage fishing activities. The Philippines acknowledges the role of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), which it hosts in Los Baños, Laguna, in facilitating collaboration among ASEAN Member States on biodiversity conservation, such as through the ASEAN Heritage Parks Program. The Philippines also recognizes the roles of the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI), the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) in enhancing regional cooperation on sustainable marine economic development and marine environmental protection.

v. Security of Information and Communications Technology

The pandemic has fast-tracked countries' shift to the use of technology and online platforms for transactions and access to goods and services. With the implementation of lockdowns, education and health services have also shifted online. This shift has compelled countries to provide internet access for all people and strengthen ICT infrastructures and capacity to address the security risks posed by the rapidly evolving nature of ICT.

According to a research conducted by cybersecurity firm, Kaspersky in 2020, the Philippines ranks 6th among the most attacked countries worldwide¹⁸. The country's vulnerability to cyber-related attacks is evident with the 200-percent increase in phishing incidents since the national lockdown which began in March 2020.¹⁹

Recognizing that security in the cyber domain serves as a critical building block for national progress, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) launched the National Cyber Security Plan 2022 to serve as a roadmap of actions to safeguard cyberspace against threats and attacks. Among its primary goals is to implement cyber resiliency through:

- 1) Continuous and safe operation of critical infrastructures, public, and military networks;
- 2) Implementation of cybersecurity measures to enhance the ability to respond to threats before, during and after attacks;
- 3) Effective coordination of law enforcement agencies; and
- 4) Promotion of a cybersecurity educated society.

¹⁸ Philippines 6th among countries with the most online threats in 2020

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/technology/776942/philippines-6th-among-countries-with-the-most-online-threats-in-2020/story/> (accessed 22 March 2020).

¹⁹ Phishing is top PH cybercrime during pandemic – authorities <https://www.rappler.com/nation/phishing-top-philippines-cybercrime-during-pandemic> (accessed 22 March 2020)

The establishment of the Cybersecurity Management System (CMS) Project and the National Cyber Intelligence Web Monitoring (NCIWM) are milestone initiatives of the government. The CMS is the country's first-ever cyber resiliency initiative—a unified national platform for intelligence-sharing with which the DICT and its cybersecurity partners from the private sector are able to assist government agencies with cybersecurity threats, attacks, and other issues. Meanwhile, the NCIWM is a tool which can provide real-time analysis of web attacks on government websites and other domain names added to the system.

The government has also introduced the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training Program. It is a capacity-building initiative to train government ICT personnel on information security. It is also an effort to establish and promote emergency response in the country.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines also initiated several steps to strengthen its cyber defense. The AFP Cybersecurity Strategic Plan (CSP) was established to enhance the organization's cybersecurity capabilities. AFP also organizes Cyber Security Summit which aims to educate and raise the awareness of the Armed Forces on the latest trends in cybersecurity.

Equipping the general public with skills and knowledge on cybersecurity has also been a priority of the government. Capacity-building activities and awareness campaigns have thus been initiated. This includes the Digital Parenting Advocacy Campaign, which seeks to equip parents on the proper use of ICT in order to protect their children from digital and online dangers, and the Cybersecurity Awareness and Information Caravans to High School and College Students. There are also efforts to integrate cybersecurity courses in the academe with the aim of increasing the number of experts and professionals in the field of cybersecurity.

The Philippines actively participates in regional efforts to address cybersecurity threats. At the 5th ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity (AMCC) in October 2020, officials from ASEAN Member States convened virtually to discuss the possibility of building a rules-based cyberspace and strengthening regional cyber resilience through Critical Information Infrastructure (CII) protection.

The Philippines strongly supports regional initiatives aimed at strengthening the security and use of ICTs, which is especially critical to support economic growth and mitigate the impact of COVID-19. The country likewise supports efforts at strengthening capacity-building initiatives and other relevant ASEAN-led mechanisms in cybersecurity such as the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of ICTs and the ASEAN Digital Ministers Meeting (ADGMIN). The country also welcomes the establishment of the ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee (Cyber-CC) under the purview of the ADGMIN.

109. The Philippines also values the endeavors and commitment of the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group (EWG) on Cybersecurity. Since its establishment in 2017, the EWG has been able to develop a point of contact directory for cyber incidents, a cyber-terminology glossary, and a draft communications plan to guide the escalation and communication of cybersecurity issues. In addition, the EWG has also established an information sharing portal, and has conducted a cyber-security legal seminar for subject matter experts.

4. Role of the ARF

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has been a key platform for active engagement in cooperative security in the Asia-Pacific since 1994. In light of new security challenges and an evolving regional and international environment, the efficiency and relevance of the ARF has been challenged throughout the years. However, the ARF has proven to play a significant role in norms-building and in the facilitation of interstate cooperation towards maintaining regional stability and security in the region. It has also become an important platform for dialogue and for providing mutual assurance on issues of common interest.

The Philippines will continue to support the endeavors of the ARF as a platform for confidence-building and preventive diplomacy. The region has more to gain with a peaceful and stable environment than one fraught with unresolved conflicts, brewing tensions, and miscalculations. Hence, the Philippines is committed to work with ARF partners towards strengthening existing institutional mechanisms for crisis management and in raising awareness on critical issues. Likewise, the Philippines strongly supports initiatives that aim to increase meaningful participation of women, youth, and non-governmental actors in promoting peace and security in the region.

- a. As part of its commitment to regional preventive diplomacy, confidence-building, and inclusive representation, the Philippines has been engaging in a multi-track diplomacy. Track 1 efforts of the Department of Foreign Affairs and other government agencies continue to be complemented by Track 2 and 1.5 initiatives of various think tanks and academic institutions through timely studies and recommendations on issues and problems that have foreign policy implications, including conflict analyses and dispute resolution mechanisms.
- b. It is crucial that the principle of ASEAN Centrality be continuously exercised within the ARF. ASEAN, for its part, must be able to balance the interests of a variety of external partners and ensure that outcomes do not favor only a few, otherwise the institution will lose its relevance.
- c. In order to remain relevant, the ARF must not limit itself to being a mere platform for constructive dialogue and consultation on security matters in the region. The ARF should move beyond dialogue, commitments, and written declarations. Its strength will rely on whether it can deliver tangible results through the development of substantial measures on areas of common concerns for both traditional and non-traditional issues.
- d. The real test for the ARF is to move towards its main goal of developing preventive diplomacy (PD) mechanisms. ARF participants must have a coherent strategy and a collective ability to respond to regional challenges and substantively shape the discourse towards a direction that contributes to regional stability and development.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

While there has been progress and expansion of international cooperation in the region, the need for preventive diplomacy and confidence building still prevails. Emerging challenges, such as pandemic and ICT security threats, prompts the region to work together to jointly address and respond to both traditional and non-traditional security challenges and achieve peace and prosperity in the region.

Creating a stable security environment is a prerequisite for ensuring prosperity and sustainable development in the region. The Republic of Korea (ROK) continues its endeavors to promote lasting peace not only on the Korean Peninsula but also throughout the region, to consolidate a People-centered Community of Peace and Prosperity as envisioned in the New Southern Policy by actively participating in multilateral mechanisms such as the ARF and working together with other regional initiatives.

a) Korean Peninsula

Despite the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic undermining the environment for dialogue, the ROK government continued to engage in a range of efforts for the resumption of dialogue with the DPRK. At the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2020, President Moon Jae-in, emphasizing that the two Koreas are bound by a single community of life and that inter-Korean cooperation in disease prevention and control and public health will prompt dialogue and cooperation, proposed the launch of a Northeast Asia Cooperation Initiative for Health Security (NEACHS), whereby the DPRK would participate as a member together with countries such as China, Japan, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea. He also reiterated that the end-of-war declaration – an act that would serve to affirm the mutual commitment to peace – would open the door to complete denuclearization and a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. Moreover, the ROK-US cooperation to rekindle the momentum for dialogue also remained steadfast amidst the pandemic. In 2020, Stephen Biegun, US Deputy Secretary of State and Special Representative for North Korea, visited Seoul on two occasions to discuss ways to engage in dialogue with the DPRK as well as to send a coordinated message towards Pyongyang.

Amid the prolonged absence of talks, tensions on the Korean Peninsula were heightened when the DPRK demolished the Inter-Korean Liaison Office in Gaesong in June 2020. The ROK expressed strong regret and warned of a stern response to any further steps by the DPRK. The incident in the Yellow Sea where an unarmed civilian of the Republic of Korea was killed by the DPRK military in September 2020 also strained inter-Korean relations. The ROK government strongly condemned the DPRK's inhuman act, and called for a formal apology, joint investigation and restoration of the bilateral military communication line. The DPRK conveyed Chairman Kim Jong Un's message offering an apology for the incident. The ROK's firm response and consistent efforts for peace contributed to a de-escalation of the tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

As the US Presidential transition approached, the DPRK authorities released a statement in July 2020 emphasizing that the US-DPRK talks are not beneficial to the North unless the US

withdraws its hostile policies towards the DPRK. The DPRK's stance on the dialogues remained the same in early 2021 with it once again reaffirming its stance during the 8th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea in January 2021.

Nevertheless, the ROK government strived to generate renewed momentum for the resumption of dialogue with the DRPK, in strong coordination with the US. Following the US presidential election in November 2020, President Moon underscored that the ROK government will pool wisdom, including lessons learned, with the incoming US administration to make further progress in achieving denuclearization and establishing peace on the Korean Peninsula. Then President-elect Biden also noted that he will work as a close partner to address the North Korean nuclear issue, in his first phone conversation with President Moon in November 2020.

In 2021, the ROK government remained committed to its unwavering efforts for peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. In his New Year's Address, President Moon proposed inter-Korean cooperation to counter COVID-19 as a means to promote mutual benefits and peace between the two Koreas, while highlighting that the year 2021 marks the 30th anniversary of the two Koreas' simultaneous joining of the United Nations. Close consultations with key partners also continued, with a series of high-level face-to-face meetings including the ROK-US Foreign Ministers Meeting and, Foreign and Defense Ministerial Meeting, as well as the National Security Advisors' Meeting between the ROK, the US, and Japan, and bilateral and trilateral meetings between the three countries on the occasion of the G7 Foreign and Development Ministers' Meeting.

The recently-completed US policy review also reflected the results of close coordination and consultations between Seoul and Washington. President Moon welcomed the direction of the policy in his special address to mark four years in office in May 2021, while also reiterating his strong commitment to do everything he can if there are opportunities to advance the peace process on the Korean Peninsula.

With the successful holding of the ROK-US Summit in May 2021, there are sincere hopes in the international community that these concerted diplomatic efforts will indeed generate renewed momentum for substantial progress with a view to achieving complete denuclearization and permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula.

b) The ROK's Visions for Regional Cooperation

Amid changes in the global strategic landscape, the Republic of Korea has made continuous efforts to diversify its diplomatic ties and expand its diplomatic horizon. As part of these efforts, the ROK has launched the New Southern Policy (NSP) with the vision of People-centered Community of Peace and Prosperity in 2017 which aims to expand and deepen partnerships with countries in the region, including ASEAN member countries and India. Under the NSP, the ROK has strived to enhance its relationship with ASEAN and India, through various ways including the 2019 ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit and the 1st Mekong-ROK Summit in 2019, which elevated ROK-ASEAN relations to new heights in all spheres. Facing COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the ROK has worked together with ASEAN to overcome the unprecedented crisis by providing ASEAN with COVID-19 test kits and medical equipment, contributing to ASEAN-led mechanisms including the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund, and

also actively participating in regional mechanisms such as the Special ASEAN+3 Summit in April 2020.

In the midst of the challenges posed by the pandemic, the Korean government announced the New Southern Policy Plus (NSP Plus), an upgraded version of NSP, on the occasion of the 21st ROK-ASEAN Summit in November 2020. The NSP Plus embodies seven areas for cooperation: public health, education, culture, trade & investment, infrastructure, future industry and non-traditional security. It aims to make the NSP more practical and relevant to the priorities of ASEAN partners and India, as confirmed throughout various channels of communication.

The ROK has also been actively pursuing cooperation with other partners to create synergies in implementing initiatives and policies in the region. Over the last few years, many countries in the region have presented multiple initiatives and strategies for stronger regional cooperation. The ROK is of the view that these concepts and policies in general share the principles of openness, inclusiveness, transparency, and respect for international norms and that they can complement each other and facilitate cooperation for peace and prosperity in the region. Based on this view, the ROK has co-hosted the 'Australia-ROK Senior Officials' Policy Dialogue on our Support for Southeast Asia and ASEAN' and the 'ROK-U.S. Policy Dialogue on Southeast Asia and ASEAN' in the first half of 2021, which both served as a timely opportunity for strengthening the momentum for cooperation with respective countries in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific region. The ROK will continue to explore opportunities to create synergies to realize peace and prosperity in this region. To that end, well-established ASEAN-led mechanisms including the ARF provide valuable platforms to deepen cooperation. The ROK will continue to work with the ARF Participants in strengthening and expanding the scope of cooperation and contributing to regional peace and stability.

On the other hand, the aim of the New Northern Policy is to create future growth engines by enhancing connectivity with Eurasian countries in such areas as transportation, logistics, and energy and usher in the era of a northern economic community of peace and prosperity. The Strategies and Priority Projects of the New Northern Policy, unveiled by the Presidential Committee on Northern Economic Cooperation, seek to achieve peace in the Northeast Asian region as well as the entire Eurasian continent. The committee has set the following four objectives for the New Northern Policy: laying the foundation for peace in Northeast Asia, pursuing a shared strategic interest with the region, creating future growth engines, and promoting mutual understanding between people. In order to successfully achieve these objectives, the committee is working to strengthen multilateral cooperation in the region, build integrated networks, increase industrial cooperation, and expand cultural exchange.

In 2020, the ROK and the Russian Federation agreed to implement the 9-Bridge Strategy 2.0, in part by categorizing existing cooperation projects into 9 specific fields: energy; railway and infrastructure; maritime affairs and shipbuilding; healthcare and medical services; agriculture and fisheries; environment; finance; innovation platforms; and education and culture.

With regard to Central Asian countries, the Korea-Central Asia Cooperation Forum is playing a key role in deepening regional cooperation. The forum was first launched in 2007 as an annual vice-minister-level meeting. To further strengthen cooperation, member countries established the Korea-Central Asia Cooperation Forum Secretariat in 2017. In 2020, while the world was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 13th Forum was held face-to-face in Seoul on November 25. At the Forum, each country shared experience in their response to the

COVID-19 crisis in various sessions arranged under the themes of public health, remote education, quarantine standardization and climate change. In addition, they agreed to hold the Korea-Central Asia Cooperation Forum regularly at the foreign minister-level, creating momentum to take Korea-Central Asia relations to the higher level.

The ROK Government has also exerted great efforts in strengthening the 'Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation (NAPC) Platform,' a multilateral cooperation framework in Northeast Asia. The Platform has served as a venue for regional countries to participate in and freely share their opinions on relevant issues, thereby cultivating a habit of cooperation and dialogue. Each year, the Korean Government held the 'Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Forum,' which brought together government officials and civil experts from key countries including China, Japan, the United States, Russia, and Mongolia, and dialogue partners such as Australia, New Zealand, ASEAN, the EU, NATO, the OSCE and the UN. The 'Inter-governmental Meeting,' preceded by the Forum, has also enlarged its scope of cooperation by having in-depth discussions on ways to deepen the regional dialogues. This year, the ROK Government will continue to encourage key countries and dialogue partners within the region to participate in the NAPC Platform, so that the entire region can effectively address regional issues.

2. National Security and Defense Policy

a) Overview of National Security and Defense Policy

The ROK government has established and been promoting its National Security Strategy that includes the vision of a Peaceful and Prosperous Korean Peninsula in the security domain. While maintaining robust security, the ROK government is determined to realize denuclearization and establish permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula.

The ROK military has established and been promoting defense policies to realize the defense vision of Competent Security, Robust Defense. The ROK will maintain its robust security posture in support of the establishment of permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula, and will continue its efforts in developing an advanced, elite, and strong military force built upon cutting-edge technologies. Furthermore, the ROK seeks to foster an advanced military culture in order to build a trusted military that stands by the people.

b) Data contribution to ARF Arms Register (as of 2020)

Total Defence expenditure on annual basis

- Defence expenditure (in KRW billions): 48,378
- Defence expenditure as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product(GDP): 2.52%
- Defence expenditure per capita (in KRW billions): 0.0009

3. National Contributions to Promote Regional Peace and Security

The ROK has been working with ARF participants both bilaterally and multilaterally to encounter ongoing and emerging security threats in the region. In line with New Southern Policy, the ROK has continued to pursue leadership in the disarmament, non-proliferation and ICT security agenda, actively engage in maritime security and disaster management issues, and put strong efforts in fighting against terrorism and transnational crime.

i. Counter-terrorism

Terrorism and violent extremism continue to pose a grave threat to international peace and security. The threat of terrorism is continuously spreading to every corner of the world including Asia, especially with ISIS trying to expand its influence in the region. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated the drivers of violent extremism conducive to terrorism. With the global increase in the use of the Internet and social media during the pandemic, terrorists and violent extremists are increasing their attempts to spread violent extremism content through online platforms. Under the firm position that terrorism should be eradicated and not be tolerated in any form, the Republic of Korea has been doubling its efforts to combat terrorism at the national, regional and global levels.

While rigorously countering imminent terrorist threats, the ROK has been emphasizing the importance of Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE). The ROK government is working closely with the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) to build capacity in countries prone to violent extremism and funding the UNOCT's PVE programs such as the *Global Programme on Security of Major Sporting Events and Promotion of Sport and its Values as a Tool to Prevent Violent Extremism*. In addition to participating in the high-level meeting and expert group meeting on preventing violent extremism through sport values in 2020, the ROK is now supporting the creation of an e-platform to enhance global knowledge exchange and deliver remote capacity-building training as part of the Global Programme.

The ROK government is also working with the UNOCT to enhance countries' border security and management operational capacities for countering and preventing terrorism with the implementation of the ongoing project *Joint UNCCT-Republic of Korea Initiative to Expand the UNCCT Border Security and Management Good Practices in Response to the COVID 19 Pandemic*.

The ROK government is also actively participating in the global fight against terrorist financing. The ROK has worked together with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to prevent illegal financial transactions and encourage member states to implement relevant policies. The ROK attended the FATF Plenary Meeting held in February, June, and October 2020. The FATF's Mutual Evaluation Report published in April 2020 recognized that the ROK had improved its legal framework since its last evaluation, including its terrorist financing offenses and confiscation regime. Along with its international contribution, the ROK faithfully implemented UN Security Council resolutions 1267, 1988, 1989, and 2253 to prevent terrorist-related financial flows into domestic institutions.

ii. Non-proliferation, Counter-proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

As the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and their means of delivery continues to pose grave challenges to international peace and security, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)'s nuclear and ballistic missile programs remain a serious threat to regional and international peace and security. The Republic of Korea (ROK) will continue to faithfully implement relevant UN Security Council Resolutions until the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula has been achieved.

Even though the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the tenth review conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the ROK remains firmly committed to the

full implementation of the Treaty. In this regard, the ROK will actively continue its contribution to the maintenance and further strengthening of the NPT regime. The ROK has actively participated in the 2021 NPT review process and will continue to work with other states parties for balanced progress across all of its three pillars. In a bid to facilitate progress in nuclear disarmament, the ROK is also actively participating in the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament Initiative and the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. The ROK will closely cooperate with its partners to achieve concrete deliverables. In addition, the ROK will continue to seek an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and call for an immediate start of negotiations on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty.

In response to the growing risk of WMD terrorism, the ROK is working toward full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540. As preventing WMDs and related materials from falling into the hands of terrorists is vital, the ROK has been making active efforts to implement UNSCR 1540 effectively. Such efforts include chairing the 1540 committee for the 2013-2014 term, hosting industrial outreach conferences in September 2016 and September 2018, and providing financial assistance for the UNSCR 1540 online education program in 2018 and 2019 and the project to apply emerging technologies in support of strengthening UNSCR 1540 implementation in 2021.

As one of the original States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, the ROK has actively participated in the international efforts to support and strengthen the regime and to prevent any use of chemical weapons. Recognizing the continuing efforts of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to accomplish their task in the midst of COVID-19, the ROK, as the first State Party to have provided voluntary contributions on the Chem-Tech project in 2017, continues to make financial contributions on an annual basis. The ROK has also been hosting the annual Seoul Workshop on the Peaceful Development and Use of Chemistry together with OPCW to facilitate regional cooperation in the field of chemical safety and security since 2012. Though the Workshop was not held in 2020 during the pandemic situation, the ROK looks forward to its possible resumption in 2021. The ROK has also contributed to reinforcing the Biological Weapons Convention since its ratification.

Moreover, fast-paced technological advances extending into new domains including autonomous weapons and outer space in particular, are becoming a new sphere of strategic competition, posing severe challenges to the current international disarmament and nonproliferation regime. In response to these challenges, the ROK played an active role in a number of consultative bodies on specific disarmament issues, such as the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems and the Group of Governmental Experts on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, to contribute to setting international norms in these areas. Also, the ROK fully supports the 2020 UN General Assembly 1st Committee Resolution 75/36 titled "Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours" and will relentlessly seek ways to promote international cooperation in space security.

As a reliable and long-standing supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the ROK is exercising strict control over illicit transfer and diversion of conventional arms while respecting the principles of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Drawing on our advanced national control system and best practices, the ROK now serves as the chair of the ATT Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation. Furthermore, to increase the

number of States Parties to the ATT, the ROK has translated the treaty guidelines into 10 different Asian languages. The ROK reaffirms its continuous commitment to establish the highest possible common standards governing arms transfers.

The ROK has relentlessly sought ways to boost global counter-proliferation efforts. In this regard, the ROK has been actively engaging in relevant international efforts such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). The ROK has annually participated in the PSI Operational Experts Group (OEG) meetings and Asia-Pacific Exercise Rotation exercises. In November 2020, the ROK participated in the OEG meeting held virtually due to the COVID19 pandemic, in which each participant shared ways to expand strategic communications. The ROK will continue to reach out to its PSI partners in the region to strengthen global counter-proliferation efforts.

Since 2002, the ROK and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs have co-hosted the annual ROK-UN Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues. At the 19th Conference in December 2020, disarmament and non-proliferation experts from governments, international organizations, academia, and industry gathered online and intensively discussed the impact of emerging technologies, including lethal autonomous weapons, hypersonic weapons, space weapons, and biological weapons, on the disarmament and non-proliferation regime as well as their implications in the international fora.

The ROK will continue to seek ways to contribute constructively to the international community's discussions on disarmament and non-proliferation issues. In this regard, a ROK-led resolution titled "Youth, Disarmament, and Non-Proliferation" was adopted for the first time by the 74th UN General Assembly in December 2019. For its part, the ROK hosted a "2020 Youth NPT Conference" in July 2020, marking the 50th anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force. Following a competitive selection process among the country's university and graduate students, 46 finalists engaged in active debates and laid out their perspectives in a final report with recommendations for ways forward in nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation. The ROK will explore ways to promote further youth engagement in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation in the future including through the adoption of a second resolution youth and disarmament and non-proliferation at the upcoming 76th UN General Assembly later this year.

iii. Transnational Crime

The ROK has been increasing efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers under the Criminal Act, thereby identifying and protecting the victims of human trafficking. The ROK amended its Criminal Act in 2013 to newly introduce a provision for trafficking as part of its efforts to meet the standards of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC). In 2015, the ROK ratified the UNTOC and the Protocols thereto in addition to these legislative measures. In August 2016, the National Human Rights Commission developed the Indicators for the Identification and Protection of Trafficking in Persons, which were distributed to the relevant government branches and recommended for use as guidelines to identify and protect victims. The ROK enacted *the Act on the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons and Victim Protection, etc.* in March 2021, which requires the government-wide establishment of comprehensive countermeasures to prevent trafficking in persons and enhance support for victims.

In 2019, the ROK participated as the co-sponsor of the EAS Leaders' Statement on Cooperation to Combat Transnational Crime, which was proposed by Australia and adopted at the 14th East Asia Summit held in Bangkok, Thailand. Through the Statement, the ROK reaffirmed its commitment to applicable international instruments such as the UNTOC and the development of effective policy, regulatory and operational responses to transnational crime. In 2020, the ROK also participated in the Conference of the Parties to the UNTOC held on the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the UNTOC and the Protocols thereto.

To further strengthen efforts to combat transnational crime, and in line with ROK's efforts to fully implement UN Security Council resolutions 2250, 2419, and 2535 to contribute to the advancement of YPS agenda, the ROK co-sponsors 'Joint Statement to Promote the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda at the ARF', which is to be adopted at the 28th ARF Foreign Minister's Meeting. Through these efforts, ROK will assist in preventing youth from being the victim of violence and empowering youth as a key partner in the whole cycle of peace.

iv. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

The Republic of Korea (ROK) has actively responded to humanitarian needs caused by emergency disasters such as earthquakes, typhoons, infectious diseases, and protracted humanitarian crisis in conflict areas such as Syria, Yemen, and Iraq. To alleviate the suffering of the affected people and to minimize damage from disasters, the ROK government provided approximately 148 million US dollars in humanitarian assistance in 2020.

Facing unexpected natural disasters growing in size and frequency due to climate change in 2020, the ROK government provided close to 10 million US dollars in response to 21 sudden-onset disasters such as emergence of African desert locusts, the Beirut explosion in Lebanon. It also helped ASEAN countries to overcome natural disasters including Taal Volcano eruption (January) and Typhoon Goni in the Philippines as well as heavy rains in central Vietnam (October). Moreover, the ROK provided approximately 61 million US dollars in response to protracted humanitarian crisis including the Syrian refugee crisis and the ongoing humanitarian situation in Rakhine State.

In 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak dramatically increased humanitarian needs around the world. The ROK actively responded to the unprecedented pandemic by promoting its 1.6 billion US dollars of ODA initiative, the Building TRUST, which consists of three pillars, namely humanitarian assistance, health cooperation, and longer-term response to socioeconomic impact. With regard to humanitarian assistance, in particular, it provided bilateral and multilateral assistance to 125 countries, which centered on in-kind donation such as diagnostic kits and facial masks in line with the request from the recipient end countries.

Given that the Asia-Pacific is a disaster-prone region, the ROK is taking a constructive role in strengthening regional cooperation. During the co-chairmanship of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief with Thailand in 2018, the ROK contributed to drafting the ARF Work Plan for Disaster Relief 2018-2020. As a follow-up to the work plan, the ROK has supported Bangladesh, Timor-Leste, Cambodia, the Philippines, and Vietnam to develop disaster risk reduction strategies in cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). It aims to share business models, best practices, and localized approaches to raise the awareness of potential disaster risks and to take further steps

in establishing contingency measures at the local and national levels. In 2020, the ROK further strengthened cooperation with UNDRR by providing unearmarked funding and extending the operation period of the UNDRR Office in Incheon for Northeast Asia (ONEA), which supports the implementation of the Sendai Framework by Northeast Asian countries.

The ROK government is also supporting ASEAN member state's capacity building in disaster management by using ASEAN-ROK Cooperation Fund. More specifically, since 2020, the ROK has been pursuing 'ASCEND' project with AHA Centre to create a regionally recognised certification scheme for professions in disaster management to ensure and promote higher standards and quality in the management of disasters in the region. Through ASCEND project, we aim to benefit the general public of ASEAN by improving the quality of disaster management and emergency response, and, therefore, contributing to the reduction of losses caused by disasters and improving the resiliencies of the community.

The ROK will continue its relentless efforts to identify and narrow the gap between the increasing humanitarian needs and the resources available, and to ensure that the limited resources efficiently reach those in greatest need.

v. Maritime Security

Maritime security covers a wide range of issues. One of the most critical of those issues is countering and preventing piracy and armed robbery against ships. Toward this end, the ROK has actively participated in regional maritime security forums such as the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP).

The ROK became a contracting party to the ReCAAP in 2006 and has been closely cooperating with the ReCAAP Information Sharing Center (ISC) by sending Korean staff to the Center since 2007. Moreover, the ROK has made voluntary financial contributions to the ReCAAP to support regional capacity building. Approximately 90,000 US dollars have been provided annually from 2008 to 2012, and 130,000 US dollars—nearly 50 percent increase— annually from 2013 onwards to broaden the ROK's role and scope in combating piracy in Asia.

In order to take part in the global effort against piracy, beyond the region, the ROK has deployed the Cheonghae ("pure sea" in Korean) Anti-Piracy Unit to the high seas off the coast of Somalia since 2009. The Cheonghae Unit has been conducting convoy missions as a part of the Combined Task Force (CTF) under the command of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). The Unit has further participated in the European Union Naval Force's Operation Atalanta since February 2017, to carry out convoy missions to protect vessels of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), World Food Programme (WFP) and others.

Since 2009, the ROK has played an important role in the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS). Specifically, the ROK made financial contributions to the Group to expand the coastal states' capacity in countering piracy. Until the Group announced the plan to close its trust fund by 2021, the ROK had contributed a total amount of 1.7 million US dollars to the fund.

In addition, the ROK made financial contributions totaling 800,000 US dollars to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Djibouti Code of Conduct Trust Fund to strengthen

Somalia and its neighboring countries' judicial capacity in tackling piracy from 2009 to 2017. In light of the recent rise in piracy attacks near West Africa, the ROK has also contributed to the IMO West and Central Africa Maritime Security Trust Fund— annually 100,000 US dollars from 2018 to 2020 and 200,000 US dollars in 2021. In cooperation with the IMO, the ROK plans to host training programs for maritime security personnel of the Gulf of Guinea countries and to provide communication equipment connecting the region's maritime operations centers.

vi. Cybersecurity

Information and communications technology (ICT) provides immense opportunities for social and economic development. However, at the same time, the recent increase in the number of malicious cyber activities and the level of sophistication of such activities pose significant challenges to international peace and security.

In order to address these growing threats, the ROK has launched the National Cybersecurity Strategy in April 2019. The Strategy sets out the ROK's vision and goals cybersecurity and outlines the strategic tasks at individual, industry and government.

Given the transnational nature of cyber-attacks and threats, strong partnerships at a bilateral, regional, and international level are the key to securing cyberspace from malicious cyber activities. The ROK remains committed to promoting mutual understanding and working together to address cyber security challenges.

In this respect, the ROK continued to engage actively in a number of bilateral and trilateral cyber consultations in 2020. Although many of the meetings were held virtually due to the pandemic, the ROK managed to successfully hold bilateral cyber policy consultations with the United Kingdom, the European Union, Singapore, and the United States, and a trilateral consultation with Japan and China.

The ROK has been an active and constructive member of the ARF InterSessional Meetings (ISMs) on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies and the Open Ended Study Group on Confidencebuilding Measures (CBMs). The ROK is expected to assume the co-chairmanship in the upcoming ISM on ICTs in 2021-2023 in close cooperation with Indonesia, Australia, and Russia. The ROK welcomes the new CBMs proposed and adopted within the ARF context and stands committed in implementing and developing the CBMs in cooperation with other ARF participants.

The ROK expects that such CBMs adopted within the ARF ISM will produce a synergy effect with ROK-led capacity-building projects currently underway in the ASEAN region such as the ROK-led capacity building program on cybercrime and cybersecurity in Indonesia and Vietnam, and launched the Asia-Pacific Information Security Center, a regional education and training program. The ROK is also participating in other capacity-building projects led by the ASEAN-Singapore Cyber Security Center of Excellence (ASCCE) and Asia-Pacific Cybercrime Capacity Building Hub.

Furthermore, considering the importance of sharing policies and experiences on cyber confidence building measures between Asia and Europe, the ROK and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) co-hosted the Second Inter-Regional Conference on Cyber/ICT Security in May 2019. In 2020, the ROK also hosted Inter-Regional Conference

on the Impact of Emerging Technologies on International Security and Terrorism. During the Conference, participants discussed cybersecurity issues in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In June 2021, the Third Inter-Regional Conference on Cyber/ICT Security will be held in a virtual format.

At the international level, the ROK has actively participated in the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) process on developments in the field of information security, and contributed to a consensus-based final report. The ROK will also continue to participate in the new OEWG, which will start in 2021.

4. Role of the ARF

a) National Contributions to Enhancing ARF and Regional Security

As a founding member of the ARF, the ROK is committed to the Forum's visions of promoting confidence-building measures, developing preventive diplomacy, and elaborating approaches to conflicts in the region. The ROK actively participated in the ARF's various CBMs and PD activities during the inter-sessional year of 2020-2021, which include the Inter-Sessional Support Group meeting (ISG), Inter-Sessional Meetings (ISMs), and Defense Officials' Dialogue (DOD), along with other workshops and seminars. In particular, the ROK co-chaired the 12th ARF ISM on Non-Proliferation on Disarmament on June 2-3, 2021.

The ROK government will deepen its engagement in the ARF's endeavors and will cochair the ARF ISM on ICT security in 2021-2023 with the Republic of Indonesia, the Commonwealth of Australia, and the Russian Federation; Indonesia, the ROK, and Australia will serve as co-chairs for the first year; Indonesia, the ROK, and Russia will serve as co-chairs for the second year; and Indonesia, Russia, and Australia will serve as co-chairs for the final year. The ROK looks forward to working closely with the ARF Participants in contributing to building confidence and securing peace and stability in this region.

These participation would include the private sector and well, and the ARF EEPs – originally initiated by the ROK-and other experts should be able to increase involvement in such process and provide expertise on how to strengthen the mechanism.

b) Future of ARF

Since its establishment in 1994, the ARF has played an essential role as a unique intergovernmental forum for multilateral security in the region in promoting regional peace and stability. The ARF has served as an effective venue for exchanging views on common security threats and the regularity of information sharing facilitated through the ARF has been increasingly important to sustaining the atmosphere of cooperation in a region.

The dynamic security landscape in the region necessitates the ARF harnessing its strengths to the fullest and working to build complementary relationships with other regional mechanisms, such as the ADMM+ and the East Asia Summit. Furthermore, it is essential that the ARF Participants strive to make the Forum more efficient and effective by active participation and further initiatives. These participation would include the private sector and youth as well, and the ARF EEPs and other stakeholders should be encouraged to increase its involvements in such process and provide expertise on how to strengthen the mechanism.

Noting the significance and strength of the ARF, which includes diverse set of actors and its comprehensive and inclusive approach to major security issues, the ROK will continue to contribute in making ARF the forum to enrich and expand our understanding in security and bringing views together to strengthen peace in the region.

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

Despite the challenging conditions of a global crisis caused by the spread of the new coronavirus infection the Asia-Pacific region has maintained the leading position in the integration building process and has strengthened the multi-layer system of cross-sectoral ties. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has gravely exacerbated the existing problems in the region. Traditional security challenges are complicated by the growing geopolitical confrontation and the deteriorating culture of compromise and respect for mutual interest.

In this environment the intensified efforts to consolidate the existing and establish new closed political-military blocs and rechannel the region-wide practical cooperation through narrow "like-minders groups" can undermine the ASEAN-led system of open and constructive dialogue and create new dividing lines. Another matter of concern is the intention recently expressed by NATO leaders to expand its "sphere of interest" and advance to East Asia, to deal with the South China Sea issues, as has been openly stated by Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary-General. This would hardly harmoniously augment the Asia-Pacific region-wide cooperation model.

The situation in the South China Sea requires permanent monitoring. The parties to the territorial disputes should strictly respect the principle of refraining from threat or use of force and continue to seek for political and diplomatic solutions to the current problems in conformity with international law on the basis of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, as well as the instruments adopted by ASEAN and the People's Republic of China, namely the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct (DOC) of Parties in the South China Sea and the Guidelines for the Implementation of the DOC agreed upon in 2011. Negotiations should be held between the parties directly involved in the disputes in the most efficient format determined by themselves. The Code of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea that is being drafted by the ASEAN Member States and China is intended to be an efficient mechanism for resolving disputes.

In view of the state of emergency introduced in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the transition of power to the military administration and the resulting domestic political tension, priority should be given to restoring civil peace and national unity on the basis of mutual restraint of all parties involved and launching a political dialogue. A critical prerequisite for settlement efforts undertaken within multilateral formats should be commitment to the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs and neutrality, as well as refraining from exerting pressure by imposing sanctions, especially in circumvention of the UN Security Council. We support a balanced and responsible approach of ASEAN Member States that have adopted a "Five-Point Consensus" at ASEAN Leaders' Meeting in Jakarta.

The situation on the Korean Peninsula is relatively stable. A positive development is that the US and the DPRK refrain from the actions leading to an escalation of tensions and, in principle, do not oppose the idea of resuming their dialogue. At the same time, we believe that both parties should simultaneously start moving towards each other rather than wait for the other to make the first step. Only that could serve as a basis for practical work towards complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, building a multilateral system of peace and security

in the subregion, establishing mutually beneficial economic ties and developing humanitarian cooperation. The list of measures for successful achievement of these goals is set out in the Russian-Chinese plan of action for a comprehensive settlement on the Korean Peninsula.

We consistently advocate the gradual easing of sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council on Pyongyang subject to the progress made in denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula, as well as minimizing negative humanitarian impact of the current restrictions on the DPRK population. The broadened interpretation of international restrictions and consequent blocking of legitimate external relations of North Korea in the fields not related to the prohibited nuclear missile programs are inadmissible.

The situation in the Asia-Pacific is adversely affected by developments in certain Middle East countries, primarily due to the spreading terrorist threat. The Russian Federation continues to help eradicate the remaining hotbeds of terrorism and extremism in Syria while making efforts to stabilize the situation in the country and intensify humanitarian assistance to all those in need.

High levels of military tension and complex military and political situation persist in Afghanistan. ISIL activities remain a significant security threat. Critical prerequisites for sustainable peace in Afghanistan include the complete withdrawal of foreign troops and a direct inclusive intra-Afghan dialogue, with support from international partners. We believe that at the current stage, the most effective international mechanism for promoting the normalization of the situation in Afghanistan with a view to facilitating Afghanistan's emergence as a peaceful, independent and neutral state is the extended "Troika" (Russia, United States, China and Pakistan), as well as the Moscow format of consultations involving key regional countries. We emphasize the special capacity of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group for active involvement of Kabul in regional integration.

2. National Security and Defense Policy

a) Defence Policy of the Russian Federation and International Military Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific

The activities of the Russian Armed Forces in the Asia-Pacific are carried out in compliance with international norms and bilateral agreements, posing no threat to peace and stability in the region. Russia is focused on expanding bilateral and multilateral contacts among armed forces.

Russia assigns a particular role in ensuring regional stability to the mechanism of ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meetings Plus (ADMM-Plus), in the framework of which Russia, together with Myanmar, co-chairs counter-terrorist activities in 2020-2023. Special emphasis is given to sharing the experience in the use of armed forces, primarily modern weapons, military and special equipment against terrorist groups, as exemplified in Syria.

Despite the restrictions introduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian Ministry of Defence continues to develop cooperation with Asia-Pacific countries, primarily China, India and ASEAN Member States. We have been maintaining high-level military contacts with Indonesia, Myanmar and Vietnam both offline and online.

Russia-China military cooperation is based on the agreement between the defence ministries updated in 2019. In December 2020, the second joint air patrol was carried out in the Asia-Pacific. The defence ministers of Russia and China signed a protocol to extend the intergovernmental agreement on notifications of ballistic missiles and carrier rockets launches for another 10 years.

Russia continues to strengthen its military and military-technical cooperation with India. In September 2020, the INDRA joint naval exercises were held in the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea. An agreement on mutual logistics support is being drafted. The parties have been proceeding with launching of joint ventures to produce defence products in accordance with national programs "Make in India" and "Self-Reliant India". Facilities for aftersales service and repair of Russia-designed weapons are expanding.

Major importance is attributed to the friendly calls of Russia's Navy to the ports of ASEAN Member States (in 2020-2021 Russian naval ships visited the ports of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, the Philippines and Singapore). In 2020, the Russian-Indonesian PASSEX naval exercises were successfully carried out. Experts from the International Mine Action Center of the Russian Ministry of Defence continued to provide assistance in clearing Laos of explosive remnants of the Indochina War and training deminers from among the Lao military personnel.

Military delegations of China, Myanmar and Pakistan participated in the Kavkaz-2020 strategic table-top exercises. The defence ties with the Asia-Pacific nations will be further strengthened through their participation in the International Army Games organized by the Russian Ministry of Defence (in 2020 troops were sent from Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Pakistan and Vietnam), as well as in the International Military-Technical Forum "Army-2020".

b) Nuclear and Missile Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Security in the Asia-Pacific

Strict compliance with international arms control treaties and agreements constitutes a basic principle of the Russian foreign policy reflected in fundamental doctrinal documents of the Russian Federation.

Russia has been consistently diminishing the role of nuclear weapons in its defence policy and making a significant practical contribution to nuclear disarmament efforts. We continue to implement the 2010 Russian-US Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START) extended for another five years in 2021 on our initiative. Russia has managed to timely reach the limits of warheads and delivery vehicles set by the Treaty and scrupulously complies with them. The Russian Federation believes that the extension of the New START Treaty provides an opportunity to reverse the negative trend caused by the strategic stability degradation.

We are deeply concerned over the continued deployment of the Asia-Pacific elements of the global US BMD system, including the commissioning of the Haguro destroyer in March 2021, the eighth Japanese ship equipped with the Aegis system. Such actions may endanger regional and global security and stability.

The collapse of the 1987 Treaty between the United States and the USSR on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) has increased the risks

of substantial complication of the security situation in various parts of the world, including the Asia-Pacific region. In these circumstances, Russia has made a unilateral commitment not to deploy ground-launched intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles before similar US manufactured weapons are placed in those regions. The US and its allies have been invited to make similar commitments in order to prevent a new missile arms race, as well as to consider concrete options for mutual verification measures to allay the existing concerns. All parties concerned have been called upon to search for ways to maintain stability and prevent missile crises in the Asia-Pacific region.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an important tool for strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The status of the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) has yet to be formalized. Russia reaffirms its readiness to sign with standard reservations the Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty and is open to consultations between the P5 and ASEAN to institutionalize this nuclear-weapon-free zone as soon as possible.

The threat of an arms race in outer space and its becoming an arena for military confrontation is of serious concern. The draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against outer space objects, proposed by Russia and China, aims at countering these negative trends. At the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, our resolution "No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space" (NFP) was co-sponsored by 40 countries, including 10 Asia-Pacific nations. Moreover, Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Vietnam are full-fledged NFP participants, who made the relevant political commitment in bilateral statements signed with Russia.

c) Combating International Terrorism and Transnational Crime in the Asia-Pacific

The Russian Federation will remain focused on expanding cooperation with Asia-Pacific countries, including in global and regional fora, on the full range of issues related to fighting terrorism, transnational organized crime, piracy, armed robbery at sea, illicit drug production and trafficking. Special emphasis is traditionally made on fighting ISIL, Al-Qaida and affiliated terrorist organizations, as well as on countering foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), terrorism financing and the spread of terrorist and extremist ideology, including online.

We believe that violation of international law, as well as undermining of the sovereignty of states and interference in their internal affairs, including under the pretext of fighting terrorism or preventing extremism, are inadmissible. In our opinion, attempts to shift the focus from countering and preventing terrorism to other issues, including human rights and gender-related matters, are unreasonable.

We are convinced of the need for a depoliticized and unbiased approach to the fight against extremism that requires the development of a unified terminology in this field and aims to consolidate the international legal base of counter-terrorism. In this context, it is important to continue to coordinate joint efforts against extremism in accordance with the UN Charter, relevant UN Security Council resolutions, as well as the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Given the growing threats of terrorists using chemicals and biological agents as weapons, most Asia-Pacific countries continue to support the initiative proposed by Russia in 2016 to develop an international Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Chemical and Biological Terrorism to counter WMD terrorism at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament.

With the growing politicization of drug control and evidently different views of various countries on their obligations under drug conventions, most Asia-Pacific nations maintain conservative, close to the Russian approach to drug control. At the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs reconvened in December 2020, several regional countries voted against the recommendations by WHO experts to change the cannabis control regime and joined Russia initiated statement on the inadmissibility of legalization of this drug for recreational use made on behalf of 29 like-minded nations.

Russia actively participates in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). We commend the adoption of the Ha Noi Plan of Action II for 2020-2025 that sets out Forum's main medium-term goals and objectives at the 27th ARF in September 2020. We have been consistently pursuing counter-terrorism efforts under the ADMM-Plus and the ASEAN-Russia formats. The draft ASEAN-Russia Work Plan on Countering Terrorism and Transnational Crime for 2021-2024 is being finalized. The APEC Counter-Terrorism Working Group remains instrumental in the field of fighting terrorism. Its meetings in October 2020 and February 2021 confirmed need to further strengthen the Working Group as one of the crucial and most effective international mechanism to coordinate common counter-terrorism approaches in the Asia-Pacific.

d) International Information Security in the Asia-Pacific

Cooperation in the field of international information security (IIS) with Asia-Pacific nations both within relevant global and regional platforms and at the bilateral level is a priority of the Russian foreign policy. Russia believes that the activities of regional mechanisms should be carried out under the UN central coordinating role taking into account its objective of promoting rules, norms and principles of responsible behavior of states in the information space, as well as developing a universal international convention on countering the use of ICTs for criminal purposes.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, ARF actively continued working on establishing an open, safe and accessible ICT environment in the Asia-Pacific region in 2020. The 27th ARF adopted several important documents that laid the foundation for practical IIS cooperation, including the Statement on Cooperation in the Field of Security of and in the Use of ICTs in the Context of International Security co-sponsored by Russia. Two Russian initiatives have been implemented, including a discussion on Terminology in the Field of Security of and in the Use of ICTs and a Workshop on Countering the Use of ICTs for Criminal Purposes (April 2021).

Russia is a regular participant of the Singapore International Cyber Week (SICW), the most reputable and influential discussion platform in the Asia-Pacific region that unites representatives of relevant ministries and agencies, academia and business circles. Despite the restrictions introduced due to the world pandemic, the 5th SICW in October 2020 provided an opportunity for its participants to thoroughly discuss a wide range of IIS-related issues.

e) Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief in the Asia-Pacific

Russia continues to promote regional disaster management and humanitarian assistance cooperation, focusing on capacity building for emergency response in the Asia-Pacific in particular the development of the Global Network of Crisis Management Centers (CMCs).

In May 2021 Russian experts joined the discussion of the Forum priorities up to 2023 at the 19th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief. In December 2020 they took part in the SCO Workshop on International Rescue Operations. Important APEC events included the 17th meeting of the Emergency Preparedness Working Group (EPWG) in May 2021 that, among other things, adopted a Strategic Plan for 2021-2024, and the 14th APEC Senior Disaster Management Officials Forum (SDMOF). Russian emergency response experts shared their experience of working during the COVID-19 pandemic with foreign colleagues.

Emergency response is one of priorities under ASEAN-Russia Dialogue. In February 2021 Russia and ASEAN signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Disaster Management. Its implementation was discussed on the sidelines of relevant ASEAN meetings in April and June 2021. Matters related to cooperation on disaster management and disaster resilience capacity building were included on the agenda of the second Meeting of the Network of ASEAN-Russia Think Tanks (November 2020).

Serious attention is paid to the development of practical emergency prevention and response cooperation with neighboring countries at the local level. Russia and China carry out annual joint patrols in the Amur River. In June 2020 an expert dialogue with Chinese specialists was held to exchange experiences of countering the COVID-19 epidemic.

We remain consistent in pursuing a policy of strengthening the system of humanitarian assistance for countries in need within the UN. Special-purpose contributions to the UN World Food Programme (WFP) in 2020-2021 were used to provide relief to the DPRK. A special Russia-funded WHO project is also used to support regional countries in emergency situations. Moreover, in April-May 2021 India was provided with humanitarian aid to combat COVID-19. The potential of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific is also engaged to deliver technical assistance to developing partners.

f) Regional Security Architecture and Trends of Multilateral Diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific

The current threats in the Asia-Pacific, including terrorism, extremism, illicit drug trafficking and unresolved conflicts, demand a collective response through multilateral ASEAN-led mechanisms as the cornerstone of existing security and cooperation architecture. Russia firmly supports ASEAN's intention to ensure safe international environment for multilateral cooperation and has always advocated the strengthening of the system of international relations based on principles of rule of international law, non-interference in the internal affairs, peaceful settlement of disputes and refraining from threat or use of force.

We have consistently been upholding the basic principles of sovereign equality of all participants and consensus decision-making in ASEAN-led fora with a view to enhancing their international positioning and authority to reinforce the existing cooperation parameters.

We view ARF as key regional mechanism to promote confidence-building measures and introduce preventive diplomacy tools and call for the further consolidation of the Forum and increase of its practical value. At the same time, we are concerned over the attempts to shift the focus of its activities from peace and security to highly politicized human rights, gender and other related issues that go far beyond its scope, as well as to replace Track I practical

interaction with unreasonable involvement of non-governmental organizations that lack necessary resources for the tasks at hand.

An important factor of developing cross-platform ties in the region is Russia's initiative to build a Greater Eurasian Partnership with a view to establishing a broad integration framework for multilateral cooperation with the substantial participation of ASEAN, SCO and EAEU as core elements of continent-wide processes of practical interaction.

SINGAPORE

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified and accelerated global challenges that were already in motion, including major power rivalry, nationalistic and protectionist tendencies, and a weakening of the multilateral rules-based order. Non-traditional security threats such as transnational crime and terrorism remain unabated as criminal networks adapt and exploit government's preoccupation with the crisis. The pandemic has changed the understanding of global threats and increased reliance on digitalisation which further exacerbated society's vulnerabilities to cybercrimes. It is all the more important that ASEAN and its partners continue to make use of ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ASEAN Plus Three (APT), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), East Asia Summit (EAS), and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to strengthen mutual confidence and trust, and enhance practical cooperation among the key stakeholders of our region to tackle common challenges. ASEAN can only be relevant and effective as a regional bloc if it remains at the core of the regional architecture. It must stay innovative and continually reinvent itself to meet the needs of our citizens as security threats evolve. Singapore will continue to work towards strengthening ASEAN-related initiatives and mechanisms with ASEAN Centrality as our guiding principle.

2. National Security and Defence Policy

Singapore's defence policy is built on the twin pillars of deterrence and diplomacy. Singapore believes in the need for a strong defence to ensure that we enjoy peace and security. A strong defence also provides us with the political space and freedom to act in the best interests of our people. Hence, Singapore has invested steadily and prudently in defence over the years to build up a professional and capable Singapore Armed Forces (SAF). To overcome our small size and lack of resources, Singapore makes use of technology as a force multiplier to augment our well-educated conscript force and to train our soldiers to fight effectively. The SAF has also played an important role in assisting in domestic contingencies, such as supporting Singapore's COVID-19 response efforts by supplementing civilian frontline services. Singapore's defence expenditure in FY2019 stood at 2.8 per cent of our Gross Domestic Product.

3. National Contributions to Promote Regional Peace and Security

As a small country, Singapore's security and prosperity are highly dependent on regional peace and stability. Through extensive bilateral and multilateral cooperation, Singapore seeks to establish strong and friendly ties, with defence establishments and armed forces regionally and globally. Singapore also believes that regional security and stability are best served by a robust, open and inclusive security architecture that encourages countries to engage constructively in dialogue and practical cooperation. As such, Singapore actively participates in ASEAN-led platforms like the ADMM, ADMM-Plus, EAS, ARF as well as other multilateral fora like the Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD) and the Five Power Defence Arrangements.

The ADMM is the highest defence consultative and cooperative mechanism in ASEAN which aims to promote regional peace and stability through dialogue and practical cooperation. Singapore has also harnessed the ADMM to contribute to ASEAN's efforts against the

pandemic. At the ADMM Retreat in February 2020, Singapore co-sponsored the Joint Statement on Defence Cooperation against Disease Outbreaks. The Joint Statement demonstrated that militaries can assist in public health and social cohesion. Under the Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR) Defence Experts, Singapore also hosted the first ASEAN online workshop on managing infectious disease outbreaks in June 2020.

The ADMM-Plus commemorated its 10th anniversary in 2020. Through the Experts Working Groups (EWG), Singapore was able to conduct practical cooperation with the 18 ADMM-Plus countries. Good progress was achieved in the seven ADMM-Plus EWGs in the areas of maritime security (MS), humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), peacekeeping operations (PKO), counter-terrorism (CT), military medicine (MM), humanitarian mine action (HMA), and cyber security (CS). Singapore co-chaired the EWG-MS with the Republic of Korea (ROK) during the third EWG cycle from 2017 to 2020. We sustained the momentum of practical military-to-military cooperation and promoted maritime security norms based on respect for international law. At the 12th EWG-MS Meeting in Singapore in November 2017, the ADMM-Plus Navies agreed to collectively adopt the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES). CUES was practised during the EWG-MS Field Training Exercise, which was successfully conducted in May 2019 involving 19 ships, 10 aircrafts and approximately 700 personnel.

Singapore also hosts the annual Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD) organised by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). Since its inception in 2002, the SLD has established itself as the foremost defence and security conference in the Asia-Pacific region. The 18th SLD was held from 31 May to 2 June 2019 and was attended by participants from 41 countries and 34 Ministers from Asia-Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East. PM Lee Hsien Loong delivered the keynote address in commemoration of Singapore's Bicentennial and participants exchanged candid views on pertinent security issues, including global terrorism and cyberattacks. The SLD was not held in 2020 due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. However, the ninth SLD Sherpa Meeting was held from 18 to 19 January 2021 in a hybrid format. The SLD Sherpa Meeting supplements the SLD process by providing an inter-sessional platform for senior officials to engage in frank discussions on security issues. The meeting was attended by approximately 60 in-person and 150 virtual participants from 26 countries and the EU. Singapore's Senior Minister of State for Defence Mr Zaqy Mohamad delivered the keynote address.

i. Counter-Terrorism

Terrorism and its underlying ideologies pose complex and long-term challenges. Modes of radicalisation have evolved with rising consumption of digital content. Continued vigilance and international cooperation are vital to deal with this threat.

Since the 1997 Declaration on Transnational Crime, ASEAN's counter-terrorism efforts have made much progress. Singapore was one of the first AMS to ratify the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT) in 2007, which is the first regional legally-binding anti-terrorism pact. Recognising the importance of preventing violent extremism conducive to terrorism, Singapore supported the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism 2018-2025 in 2018. More recently, Singapore actively contributed to the drafting of the Work Plan of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism 2019-2025 ("Bali Work Plan") and supported its adoption at the 13th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime in

November 2019. Singapore also supported the ARF Statement on the Treatment of Children Recruited by or Associated with Terrorist Groups in 2020. Singapore welcomes these significant achievements by ASEAN, which enhance regional cooperation and commitment to the global strategy on counter-terrorism.

Singapore is committed to strengthening the regional counter-terrorism security architecture. In November 2018, the ADMM noted Singapore's 3R Concept (Resilience, Response, Recovery), which aims to foster greater regional counter-terrorism cooperation. Singapore also hosted a Track 1.5 symposium, the 2018 Southeast Asia Counter-Terrorism Symposium: Building a Collective Approach, in October 2018. The symposium brought together cross-sectoral perspectives on how we can strengthen the region's collective efforts against terrorism. In addition, Singapore also supports the ASEAN "Our Eyes" (AOE) initiative that was adopted by the 12th ADMM in 2018 and its Standard Operating Procedures that was adopted by the 14th ADMM in 2020. The AOE enhances strategic information exchange on counter-terrorism among ASEAN defence establishments. At the military level, we support the ASEAN 365 Information Sharing Platform that was established in October 2018 as an online portal for ASEAN military intelligence agencies to share information on counter-terrorism.

In 2019, Singapore seconded a senior Police Officer to kick-start the work of the INTERPOL Regional Counter-terrorism Node for Asia and South Pacific (RCTN ASP) located in the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation (IGCI), Singapore. Singapore's seconded officer heads the RCTN ASP, covers as Head of RCTN Americas (including U.S., Canada and Latin America) and oversees the CT representation of 74 member countries. The RCTN ASP works with police units in the Asia-Pacific region to encourage the transfer of intelligence concerning terrorist activities. It also has access to 18 INTERPOL databases that provide information including on foreign terrorist fighters, the social media platforms that terrorists use, and their travel patterns and mode of transport. Singapore has been actively engaging INTERPOL to shape the RCTN and its mission in four main areas: (i) intelligence; (ii) border management and operations; (iii) capacity building; and (iv) incident response. Singapore's seconded officer to the RCTN was appointed the mission leader of the INTERPOL Incident Response Team to support the Sri Lankan authorities in their investigations into the Easter Sunday Bombings in May 2019.

ii. Non-Proliferation, Counter-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

Singapore is active in combating the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). We ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1976 and concluded a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1977. Singapore also ratified the IAEA Additional Protocol (AP) and adopted the modified Small Quantities Protocol in March 2008. Singapore supports the universalisation of both the CSA and the AP, and works closely with the IAEA on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Singapore serves regularly on the IAEA's Board of Governors (BOG), most recently from September 2016 to September 2018 and hosted regional workshops on topics such as emergency preparedness and response, nuclear regulatory law, and nuclear safety. Singapore is also party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and supports its early entry into force. To promote a more robust nuclear non-proliferation regime in our region, Singapore hosted a "Regional Seminar on Developing Effective State Authorities for Nuclear Safeguards Implementation" in January 2020, which was organised by the US Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration.

Singapore joined the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism in May 2010 and subscribed to The Hague Code of Conduct against the Proliferation of Ballistic Missiles in August 2011. In September 2014, Singapore acceded to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and accepted the 2005 Amendment to the CPPNM. Singapore ratified the International Convention on the Suppression of Nuclear Terrorism in September 2017.

Singapore signed the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the first legally binding international instrument that regulates the international transfer of conventional arms, on 5 December 2014. This reaffirms Singapore's commitment to the elimination of the threat posed by the illicit arms trade and to international disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives that promote global peace and security.

Singapore strongly supports counter-proliferation initiatives such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), and recognises the importance of preventing rogue groups, such as terrorist organisations, from acquiring WMD. Singapore has actively participated in the PSI since its establishment in 2003. Singapore is the only country in Southeast Asia to be in the PSI Operational Experts Group (OEG) and has hosted PSI exercises and meetings. Singapore also participated in the virtual PSI OEG Meeting chaired by Italy in November 2020, and Exercise Eastern Endeavour in Busan, Korea in July 2019. Singapore will host the upcoming PSI Exercise Deep Sabre in October 2021. This will be the fourth time we are hosting a PSI exercise.

Singapore fully supports the efforts of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to further develop capabilities and readiness against the threat of chemical weapons. We participated in the 25th Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in November 2020. Pursuant to Article X, Singapore has been conducting the Emergency Response to Chemical Incidents training course on a biennial basis since 2009. The sixth instalment of the course was conducted in December 2019, which benefitted 24 participants from 10 of the OPCW Member States in Asia. The course has been a platform for the sharing of experiences on the management of hazards. In addition, Singapore values the opportunity to contribute to the work of the Scientific Advisory Board of the OPCW as a participant of the Temporary Working Group on Investigative Science and Technology, and to contribute an expert to serve on the Technical Requirement Team of the OPCW ChemTech centre since February 2020. Since 2012, Singapore has also been submitting returns on the Biological Weapons Convention's (BWC) CBMs annually.

As a reflection of our commitment to prevent WMD proliferation, Singapore adheres to a robust and enhanced export control regime. The Strategic Goods (Control) Act controls the transfer and brokering of goods capable of being used to develop, produce, operate, stockpile or acquire WMD, along with strategic goods and related software and technology. The Act's control list is regularly updated to ensure that it keeps abreast of technological developments and remains aligned with the four multilateral export control regimes. In May 2018, Singapore Customs organised the Customs Competent Authority Seminar to enhance awareness of the trading community on the regulatory requirements for various controlled goods and recent developments.

iii. Transnational Crime

In today's world, security challenges are increasingly transnational in nature. These cannot be adequately addressed by individual countries' domestic policies. Singapore has therefore actively worked towards facilitating a concerted regional effort to combat transnational crimes.

Under the aegis of the ASEAN Ministerial and Senior Officials' Meetings on Transnational Crime (AMMTC & SOMTC), Singapore is the ASEAN Voluntary Lead Shepherd for international economic crime (IEC). Singapore conducted an annual ASEAN Workshop on International Economic Crime to equip relevant investigators with competencies required for the investigation of commercial crime. These workshops reviewed the latest trends, threats, and challenges facing law enforcement agencies in the area of commercial crime and seeks to provide updates on the latest developments in white-collar crime. The last workshop was organised in 2019, and covered common concerns such as international fraud, payment systems fraud and money laundering).

Additionally, the Singapore Police Force's Commercial Affairs Department (SPF/CAD) runs the International Economic Crime Course (IECC) seminar. This seminar was attended by local and foreign participants from Malaysia, Hong Kong and Australia. For future sessions, Singapore intends to expand the participation to involve other AMS and regional partners.

Singapore takes a serious view of trafficking-in-persons (TIP) crimes. An inter-agency taskforce, jointly led by Singapore's Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Manpower, was formed in 2010 to coordinate whole-of-government strategies to fight TIP. The Taskforce works closely with the law enforcement agencies and embassies of countries that victims may originate from. Information-sharing and upstream enforcement against human traffickers also prevent the exploitation of the innocent.

Singapore supports regional and international efforts to combat TIP. Singapore cooperates with other AMS through platforms such as the AMMTC and SOMTC, which oversees the region's effort to combat TIP. Singapore worked closely with other AMS on the development of the ASEAN Convention on Trafficking in Persons (ACTIP) which was signed by ASEAN Leaders at the 27th ASEAN Summit in November 2015. Following the signing of the ACTIP, Singapore also worked closely with other AMS on the development of the ASEAN Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons (APA) and the Bohol Trafficking in Persons Work Plan, which were endorsed in 2015 and 2016 respectively. The APA and Work Plan complement the ACTIP by outlining specific actions and policies to address the challenge of combatting TIP. Beyond ASEAN, Singapore works with partners such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as well as the Group of Friends United Against Human Trafficking (GOF) in New York and Geneva, to explore more effective ways to combat TIP. In 2019, Singapore attended the 5th Ministerial Breakfast Meeting hosted by the GOF in New York on the sidelines of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Singapore also co-sponsored an event organised by Belarus on behalf of the GOF in Geneva on combatting TIP in the context of armed conflict held on the sidelines of the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in December 2019. Singapore is also a party to the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (UN TIP Protocol), which seeks to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking in persons while protecting victims and promoting cooperation among State Parties.

iv. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Disasters can affect any country without warning. As a good neighbour and friend, Singapore undertakes HADR missions when the need arises.

In 2019, Singapore deployed two officers to be part of two separate ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) missions. The first mission was in support of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre)'s efforts to conduct preliminary needs assessment to identify possible areas where ASEAN could support the repatriation process in the Rakhine State. The second mission was to support the Myanmar Delegation's 2nd High Level Visit to Bangladesh in December 2019.

Apart from overseas operations, Singapore also seeks to build regional capacity for HADR. Singapore launched the Changi Regional HADR Coordination Centre (RHCC) in September 2014 to provide a platform for military-to-military coordination in HADR, and to support the military of a disaster-affected State. The RHCC's focus on military coordination complements existing disaster response institutions – such as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the AHA Centre. Singapore is appreciative of like-minded countries that have supported and partnered with the RHCC. These countries include Australia, Brunei, Canada, China, France, India, Lao PDR, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines, the ROK, Russia, Thailand, the UK, the US, and Vietnam, which have attached International Liaison Officers (ILOs) to the RHCC or exchanged contact points for disaster relief.

From 2 to 4 April 2019, the RHCC/SAF partnered the Bangladesh Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, the Bangladesh Armed Forces Division, and the US CFE-DM to co-organise a multinational HADR Table-Top Exercise, Exercise Coordinated Response (COORES) 2019. COORES built military linkages, enhanced mutual understanding and interoperability, and strengthened military cooperation in disaster relief. COORES involved 25 militaries from across the Asia-Pacific region and Europe and 19 international organisations, governmental agencies and non-government organisations.

Since 2015, Singapore has been hosting the annual Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management (SPDDM) to chart long-term strategies for the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) and sharpen ASEAN's policy direction, strategic engagements, and thought leadership in disaster management. In addition, Singapore organised the ASEAN Senior Executive Programme in Disaster Management, targeted at nurturing the planning and crisis management capacities of the senior leadership cadre within each AMS' National Disaster Management Organisation. Singapore is the Lead Shepherd for the development of the AHA Centre's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) capabilities, with funding support from the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF).

v. Maritime Security

As a maritime nation, Singapore has a strong interest in keeping the international sea lines of communication open, safe, and secure. Singapore takes a serious view of any threats to the freedom and safety of navigation. To this end, Singapore works with like-minded countries to uphold universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and plays an active part in fostering regional maritime security cooperation and enhancing port security.

As a major hub port and one of the top ten ship registries in the world, Singapore is committed to the security of seaborne cargo. As one of the first States to implement the International Maritime Organization (IMO) International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, Singapore has contributed actively to capacity building programmes at various regional forums to assist countries in their implementation of the ISPS Code. Singapore is also party to the IMO's International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA Convention 1988), and the 1988 Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms located on the Continental Shelf (SUA FFP 1988).

Given the existence of vital sea lines of communication in the region such as the South China Sea (SCS), the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS), the Lombok Strait and the Sunda Strait, Singapore cooperates closely with key stakeholders to uphold maritime security and freedom of navigation. To this end, Singapore remains fully committed to the following three principles, which have gained broad consensus amongst regional stakeholders: (i) primary responsibility for the security of regional waterways lies with the littoral States; (ii) the international community, including major user States and bodies, like the IMO, have an important role to play; and (iii) new cooperative measures should be developed in line with the 1982 UNCLOS and other international conventions. Singapore is also supportive of ASEAN's approach towards the maritime issues encapsulated in the Bali Concord II, signed in October 2003, which reiterates the transboundary nature of maritime issues and the need to address them in a holistic, integrated and comprehensive way.

These principles have translated into cooperative efforts at a regional level. Singapore is part of the Malacca Straits Patrol (MSP), a joint undertaking by the littoral States of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, to enhance maritime security in the SOMS. Since its inception in July 2004, the MSP has substantially reduced the incidence of piracy and armed robbery against ships occurring in the SOMS. The 14th MSP Joint Coordinating Committee was conducted from 15 to 16 January 2020, where members discussed possible measures to strengthen information-sharing and operational coordination to deter and disrupt sea robberies within their respective territorial waters in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.

Apart from conducting air and sea patrols, Singapore also believes in enhancing maritime awareness and ensuring systematic and timely exchanges of information to keep sea lanes safe. In this regard, the Information Fusion Centre (IFC) established in 2009 seeks to advance inter-agency and international cooperation in maritime information-sharing through its linkages to operations centres and network of ILOs. Through partnerships and the pooling of various information-sharing and analytical systems in one location, IFC is able to provide a platform for multinational information sharing and collaboration with regional and extra-regional partners by cuing operational responses to a wide range of maritime security issues, including piracy, hijacking, search and rescue, weapons proliferation, human/arms trafficking, and smuggling. As of September 2019, the IFC has established operational linkages with international maritime centres, operational centres and agencies across 41 countries, and 20 ILOs have been accredited to the IFC from 19 different countries.²⁰ The IFC also supports broader efforts to build regional capacity for maritime awareness, such as sharing best

²⁰ The 19 countries are namely Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, China, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines, the ROK, Thailand, the UK, the US, and Vietnam.

practices and conducting exercises, workshops and other training activities. This includes supporting the ASEAN Information Sharing Portal and the conduct of the Maritime Information Sharing Exercise (MARSIX). For example, the IFC hosted the MARSIX in conjunction with IMDEX in May 2019.

Singapore is a founding Contracting Party to the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), the first intergovernmental initiative that promotes and enhances cooperation against piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia. At present 20 States are Contracting Parties to the ReCAAP.²¹ Singapore has also been hosting the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) since its inception in 2006. Over the years, the ReCAAP ISC has established itself as a go-to authority on trends and analyses of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia and continues to play an instrumental role in disseminating timely and accurate information for governments and industry members alike.

The ReCAAP ISC has collaborated with partner organisations and the industry to produce useful practice guides for the maritime community, such as Guidance on Abduction of Crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and Waters off Eastern Sabah in July 2019. The ReCAAP ISC has also supported numerous capacity building efforts to improve the capability of regional governments to combat piracy and armed robbery against ships in the region. The ReCAAP is held up as a successful model of regional cooperation in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships by the IMO and has inspired other similar initiatives, such as the Djibouti Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden (GoA). In March 2021, the ReCAAP ISC commemorated its 15th Anniversary by organising a Symposium to reaffirm Contracting Parties' commitment to regional cooperation against piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia, and to map out the future steps to enhance the ReCAAP ISC's relevance and standing as a Centre of Excellence for Information Sharing. The symposium was attended by ReCAAP ISC Governors and delegates from all 20 ReCAAP Contracting Parties, representatives from international organisations, the shipping industry, as well as academia and research institutes.

vi. ICTs Security

Cyber threats are a transboundary and cross-cutting challenge to all AMS. At the same time, cybersecurity is also a key enabler of economic progress, job creation and better living standards as AMS enter into a digital future.

Under Singapore's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2018, the first ever ASEAN Leaders' Statement on Cybersecurity Coordination was endorsed by Leaders to reaffirm ASEAN's commitment to a secure and resilient rules-based cyberspace. Since 2016, Singapore has also been hosting the ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity (AMCC), held on the side-lines of the Singapore International Cyber Week (SICW). At the 5th AMCC in 2020, participants reiterated their commitment to develop a long-term regional cybersecurity action plan to chart the implementation roadmap for the norms of State behaviour in cyberspace at a comfortable

²¹ The 20 countries are namely Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Denmark, India, Japan, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, the ROK, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the UK, the US, and Vietnam.

pace to all ASEAN Member States. Participants also agreed on the urgent need to protect national and cross-border Critical Information Infrastructure (CII).

As set out in the 2018 ASEAN Leaders' Statement, Singapore worked closely with ASEAN to draft the initial proposal for better cybersecurity policy coordination in ASEAN. The proposal to establish an ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee (ASEAN Cyber-CC) comprising representatives from relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies overseeing cybersecurity issue was considered at the ADGMIN in 2019. Its objective is to strengthen cross-sectoral coordination on cybersecurity while preserving the exclusive work domains of the sectoral bodies. The inaugural meeting of the ASEAN Cyber-CC was held on 5 November 2020.

At the 10th ASEAN Network Security Action Council (ANSAC) Meeting and 2nd Telecommunications and IT Senior Officials-ASEAN Telecommunications Regulators' Council (TELSOM-ATRC) Leaders Retreat in August 2019 in Bangkok, the methods for the implementation of the ASEAN Computer Emergency Response Team (ASEAN CERT) was noted, and the scope of work for the ASEAN CERT was agreed on. Singapore was tasked to continue the study on its implementation model.

At ADGMIN 2021, the ASEAN Digital Ministers welcomed Singapore's proposal for the establishment of an ASEAN CERT information exchange mechanism to facilitate incident response and exchanges amongst all AMS CERTs, and coordinate CERT capacity-building programmes in the region through the ASCCE. Singapore envisions the mechanism to form a core part of the work of the potential future ASEAN CERT. Singapore has also been convening an annual ASEAN CERT Incident Drill (ACID) for the last 15 years to strengthen the cybersecurity preparedness of AMS, reinforce regional coordination drills, and enhance regional cooperation.

In our capacity as the ASEAN Voluntary Lead Shepherd on Cybercrime, Singapore has been working closely with other AMS and key stakeholders, such as INTERPOL, to identify priority areas of common interest to harmonise ASEAN's competencies in combating cybercrime. Singapore has also organised training programmes and meetings for AMS to encourage information sharing and build a close network of cyber experts within the region. The initiatives proposed to combat cybercrime are in close alignment with the objectives in the ASEAN Political-Security Blueprint 2025. On 28 November 2019, Singapore was formally appointed a permanent member of the INTERPOL Cybercrime Directors Workshop during the 10th edition of the Workshop. Members would convene twice a year to exchange operational information and experience in tackling various types of cybercrimes and cyber threats in the region. The 11th Cybercrime Directors Workshop took place on 23 April 2020 via video conference and focused on the sharing of information about cybercrime and cyber-enabled cases in relation to COVID-19 in their respective countries.

In order to bolster our regional efforts to effectively address the growing cybercrime threat, Singapore spearheaded the operationalisation of the ASEAN Cyber Capability Desk in the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation (IGCI). Singapore secured unequivocal support from SOMTC and AMMTC on this initiative in 2017. With this endorsement and firm commitment from Singapore and Brunei to second officers, INTERPOL launched the ASEAN Desk to focus on driving regional cybercrime operations on 25 July 2018. The ASEAN Cyber Capability Desk was renamed as the ASEAN Cybercrime Operations Desk (ASEAN Desk) in 2020 and currently has seconded officers from Singapore, Brunei and Vietnam. In February 2021, the ASEAN Desk

published its 2nd ASEAN Cyber Threat Assessment Report that provided analyses and insights on the latest cyberthreat landscape in ASEAN and highlighted strategies and the way forward for the region.

We have also contributed to other capacity and awareness building efforts. In conjunction with the Singapore International Cyber Week (SICW), the 3rd ASEAN Cybercrime Prosecutors' Roundtable Meeting (ACPRM) was organised in September 2019, to provide a platform for cybercrime prosecutors and law enforcement officers to share best practices and chart the way forward for better cooperation in this domain.

Alongside Malaysia and Japan, Singapore currently co-chairs the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ARF ISM on ICTs Security). The ARF ISM on ICTs Security and its Open Ended Study Group (OESG) focuses on the adoption of CBMs to facilitate communication, information sharing as well as the exchange of know-how and best practices. In so doing, we can reduce the risk of cyber conflict, and build inter-country trust and confidence in cyberspace. Singapore hosted the 3rd ARF OESG in January 2019, and the 4th ARF OESG as well as the 2nd ARF ISM on ICTs Security meeting in March 2019.

In terms of capacity building, Singapore launched the ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence (ASCCE) in October 2019 as an extension of the ASEAN Cyber Capacity Programme (ACCP) to move capacity building efforts forward in a coordinated manner. While the COVID-19 pandemic has temporarily suspended physical capacity-building initiatives, regional cyber capacity building efforts under the ASCCE have adapted onto digital platforms. Through the online programmes, the ASCCE continues to maintain the momentum of cyber capacity building for ASEAN participants. The ASCCE's multi-disciplinary training facility is currently operational and will be officially opened in 2021. The ACCP and ASCCE have together trained more than 600 ASEAN officials to date.

In the defence sectoral, Singapore actively participates and contributes to the ADMM-Plus EWG on CS. Singapore has also been an active participant in key international platforms facilitating discussions on cyber norms, capacity building, and CBMs. Singapore is deeply committed to continuing discussions on international cyber rules and norms at multilateral fora, such as the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts (UNGGE) and the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security. Singapore is committed to supporting both UN processes as they offer countries, big and small, an opportunity to engage in and enhance cyber cooperation, as well as to play a key role in the development of rules and norms in cyberspace to maintain international peace and security.

During the Second Substantive Session of the OEWG in Feb 2020, Egypt proposed a Programme of Action (PoA) as a future regular institutional dialogue mechanism for cyber discussions. Singapore co-sponsored the PoA proposal as of late-September 2020 as the proposal could unify the two parallel processes of the OEWG and UNGGE, and be a "stepping stone" towards an inclusive multilateral order. We note that the concerns and interests of all States on the PoA could be taken into account through equal State participation at the UN.

4. Role of the ARF

Since its inception in 1994 as an open and inclusive forum to discuss key political and security issues, the ARF has evolved from Stage I Promotion of CBMs to Stage II Development of Preventive Diplomacy (PD) mechanisms. As the 2010 Hanoi Plan of Action (POA) to implement the ARF Vision Statement expired in 2020, ARF Participants developed a new POA (2020-2025), which will guide ARF's future progress in accordance with universally recognised norms and principles of international law. This is a timely initiative as the world grapples with the political, economic and social consequences of a global pandemic.

Against this backdrop, we should be prepared to face more complicated regional security challenges. More than ever, recovery and success would depend on greater confidence and trust among ARF Participants, fostering closer collaboration and candid dialogue, as well as responding collectively to the complex post-pandemic landscape. ASEAN will have to ensure our continued centrality and unity through initiatives, including at the ARF, that assert our relevance. The regional architecture is constantly in flux and COVID-19 has intensified some centrifugal forces. The ARF must be vigilant and renew our value as an open and inclusive platform for engaging all friendly partners. To this end, Singapore remains fully committed to the ARF and its role as a key pillar in the multi-layered regional security architecture.

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

Since time immemorial the Indian Ocean, stretching from the Strait of Hormuz to the Strait of Malacca and the Strait of Mandeb to the Lombok Strait, has been an important location in the strategic calculations of the great powers of the world. This is primarily due to the economic significance of the Indian Ocean energy and maritime trade in the East-West Maritime Trade. The Indian Ocean covers 20% of the earth and is ranked as the third-largest water coverage in the world. However, over the last decade, the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has emerged as a focus of international concern, not merely because of its strategic salience but also due to its enormous economic potential. Due to this, the IOR is increasingly becoming a global hotspot in both regional and international dialogue. Therefore, the Indian Ocean will remain a decisive region for the entire world.

Unlike the other states in this region, Sri Lanka is located strategically as an Island in the centre of the IOR. Sri Lanka's southernmost point is closer to the world's main Sea Lanes of Communication where more than thirty thousand vessels annually transport fuel, raw material and finished product from the West to the East and vice versa. Despite convenient positioning, Sri Lanka has not been immune to strategic calculations and speculations in the region. Therefore, maritime security and safety lie at the heart of Sri Lankan interests in the region and national security policies.

2. National Security and Defence Policy

Drafted National Defence Policy (NDP) of Sri Lanka has identified the defence capabilities of the country and the modernization efforts of military infrastructure with the future well-being of the defence forces in managing and deploying the Sri Lanka armed forces to maintain the peace and security and response to crisis and conflicts in time of necessity. The purpose of the defence policy is to ensure the attainment of its objectives clearly and consciously while respecting rule-based order. The defence policy is a part of the national security policy of the country where military power, intelligence and diplomacy are some of the tools of the instrument of national power which pursue national interests. The NDP has elaborated that, the safeguarding of huge water bodies is the responsibility of the country. The safety and security issues in the IOR cannot be addressed in isolation without the cooperation of regional and international entities. Timely responses during Search and Rescue (SAR) and the effective functioning of the Maritime Rescue Co-ordinate Centre (MRCC) is critical and has seen the value of regional cooperation in some of the past maritime-related emergencies.

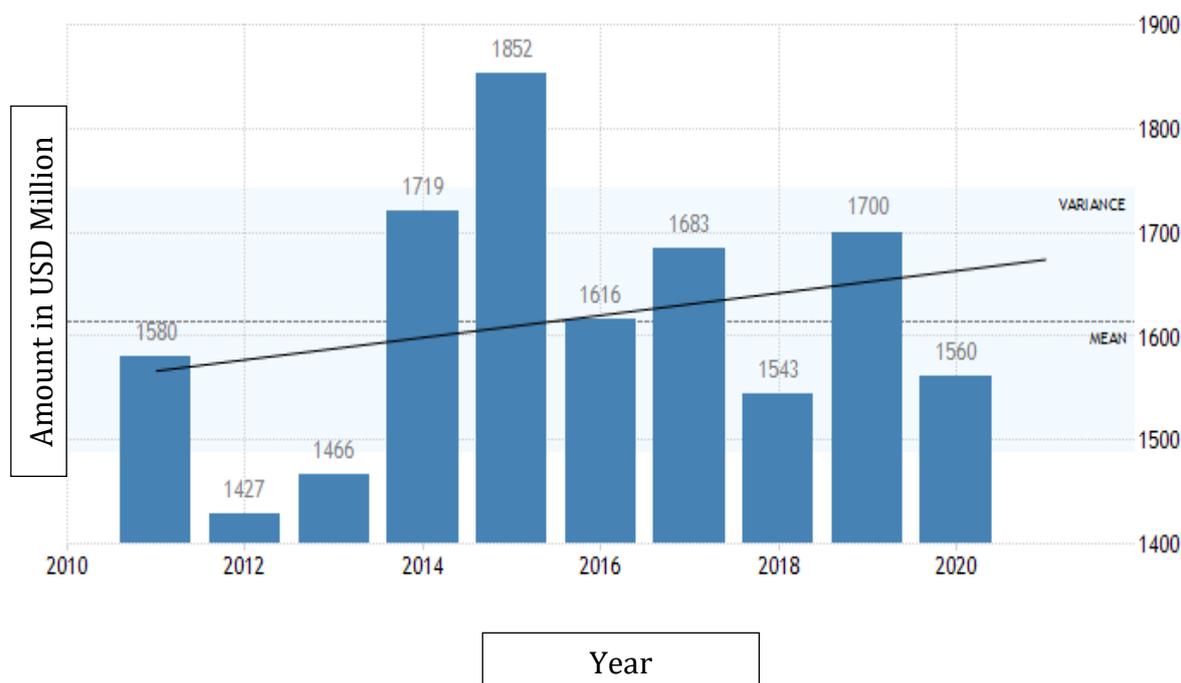
Core to Sri Lanka's Defence Policy is non-aggression and self-preservation. Cohesive defence, credible deterrence and assertive diplomacy are to be regarded as pillars of Sri Lanka defence policy. Sri Lanka focuses on eight core national security objectives:

- a. Protecting and preserving territorial integrity and sovereignty.
- b. Protecting Sea Lines of Communications (SLOC).
- c. Pursuit for sustaining economic prosperity.
- d. Strengthening partnerships/relations for regional and international security and stability.

- e. Upholding democratic institutions and advancement of good governance, preserving national values.
- f. Ensuring public safety and crisis response.
- g. Protecting, managing, preservation and development of natural and physical environment and national heritage sites.

a) Total Defence Expenditure on Annual Basis

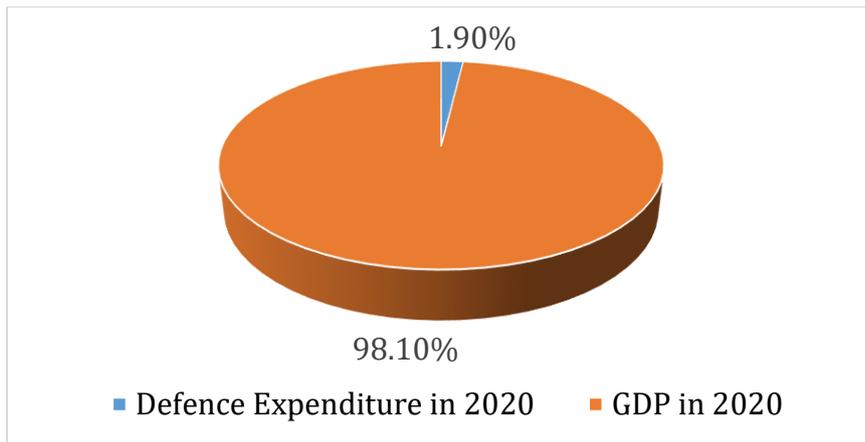
Military Expenditure in Sri Lanka averaged 1614.6 USD Million from 2010 until 2020, reaching an all-time high of 1852 USD Million in 2015. In the long-term, the Sri Lanka Military Expenditure is projected to average around 1800.00 USD Million in 2022.



Graph 1: Total Defence Expenditure on Annual Basis
Source: World Bank and Trading Economics

b) Defence Expenditure as a Percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a decline in the overall size of the economy to US dollars 80.7 billion in 2020 from US dollars 84.0 billion in 2019. Despite the overall contraction, the economy began to show strong signs of recovery during the second half of 2020, responding to the pro-growth policy initiatives across the fiscal and monetary policy fronts. In 2020, military expenditure as a share of GDP for Sri Lanka was 1.93 %. Though Sri Lanka military expenditure as a share of GDP fluctuated substantially in recent years, it tended to increase through the 1971 - 2020 period ending at 1.90 % in 2020. The defence expenditure of the country in 2020 as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is depicted in below pie graph:



Graph 2: Defence Expenditure as a Percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
Source: Central Bank, Sri Lanka

3. National Contributions to Promote Regional Peace and Security

The Indian Ocean has witnessed unparalleled maritime insecurity during the last decade such as the proliferation of arms, piracy, human trafficking, maritime terrorism and narcotics trafficking which in turn threaten the stability in the region. In this regard, Sri Lankan Government played a major role for nearly two decades to defeat maritime terrorism and further strengthened the maritime security and safety of Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs) in the Indian Ocean Region. Against this backdrop, the Government of Sri Lanka organized several international events aimed at strengthening regional maritime security and cooperation as well as discussed ways and means to address common challenges in the maritime domain. These initiatives have created a forum for the regional and global community to discuss and deliberate issues relevant to maritime security and safety with the participation of key stakeholders. The discussions made over a decade has produced promising results and has been able to bring scholars, experts, professionals from around the globe into one forum and share their well-researched knowledge and findings with the global community.

a) The Galle Dialogue International Maritime Conference

The Galle Dialogue International Maritime Conference was inaugurated by the Sri Lanka Navy in 2010 under the patronage of the Ministry of Defence. The purpose of this conference is to provide a common platform for stakeholders of a national and international forum to discuss and deliberate maritime-related issues. Moreover, specifically, enhance the cooperation of maritime security and sharing of knowledge and information amongst them. The participation of more than 100 foreign participants including high-level delegations was an illustration of the interest shown by regional and extra-regional stakeholders in maritime affairs in the Indian Ocean.

b) Colombo Defence Seminar

Security efforts in the 21st century are also generally characterised by their defensive or responsive measures to efficiently respond to unforeseen threats in real-time. In this context, the military is required to be prepared to take on the added responsibility as a defence

diplomat to build the foundations for regional cooperation which is based on mutual trust and confidence for a much broader range of competence on the ground. The Sri Lanka Army aspires to bring together a global network of defence partners for critical discussions towards formulating a collective and assertive approach to repel security threats on nations. The Defence Seminars has been organized as an annual event since 2011.

c) Colombo Air Symposium

The 'Colombo Air Symposium that was commenced in 2015 has become yet another one of significant discussion forum. It provides a knowledge-sharing platform to dialogue the outcomes of research and development of worldwide intellectuals in the field of aviation. The symposium is intended to reach a broader audience in preparing the research papers from a multitude of disciplines including sister services, the Ministry of Defence, national security think tanks, foreign service professionals of Sri Lanka and friendly foreign militaries stimulating a rich and far-reaching thought process, in realizing the challenges in the present and future in the IOR.

Sharing information is seen as a critical pillar in addressing a range of maritime security issues in the region. The vastness of the ocean space is a major challenge as no navy or coast guard is capable of conducting surveillance covering every square mile. Therefore, the navies and the coast guards have to depend on each other to share information. Therefore, Sri Lanka has made the following initiatives to share information with our neighbours.

d) IFC Colombo Sri Lanka

The establishment of an Information Fusion Centre (IFC) in Colombo Sri Lanka is being processed at Navy Headquarters as the Navy today stands at a threshold of being a partner to maritime safety and security. With home-made inventions of monitoring coastal waters real-time day and night, the networking benefits were soon reaped by the Navy with success at sea against the asymmetric threats. This plan to share information with the local authorities and stakeholders of the region will be commenced and subsequently, this will be expanded in the forthcoming years. The IFC Colombo intends to maintain a constant link with the IFC Singapore and IFC Indian Ocean Region (IOR) to facilitate robust information sharing and enhancing collaboration between partners to eradicate maritime security threats.

India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives launched the Trilateral Cooperation in Maritime Security in October 2011 at the first National Security Advisers (NSA-level) Trilateral Meeting on Maritime Security Cooperation in the Maldives. At the second meeting held in Colombo in July 2013, the three countries agreed on a road map for cooperation in maritime security, comprising the following three categories of activities;

- a. Initiatives to enhance Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) through access to systems run under the aegis of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), such as Long Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) services and sharing of Automatic Identification System (AIS) data.
- b. Training and capacity building initiatives in areas of MDA, Search and Rescue, and Oil Pollution Response.

- c. Joint activities including trilateral exercises, maintaining lines of communication on illegal maritime activities, formulation of marine oil pollution response contingency plans and cooperation in legal and policy issues related to piracy.

Sri Lanka has been a member of ReCAAP since the year 2010 and the Navy has been entrusted to discharge duties through sharing of information with ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) over the years. The SL Navy has appointed a Governor, Senior Focal Point and Focal Point officers to communicate with the ReCAAP ISC and other regional stakeholders whilst operating from Navy Headquarters in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Bilateral, trilateral and Multi-National exercises are enhancing the interoperability, mutual understanding and capacity and capability of respective nations. In addition, it ensures the readiness to face any security challenge of regional and global nature. The SLN also takes part in many bilateral, trilateral and multilateral naval exercises organized by the regional and extra-regional navies.

i. Bilateral Naval Exercises

The SLN take part in the following bilateral Naval exercises with its neighbouring countries:

- 1) **SLINEX**. The SLN and Indian Navy exercise conducted annually and alternatively in Sri Lanka and India.
- 2) **LION STAR**. The SLN and Pakistan Navy exercise conducted biennially in Pakistan and Sri Lanka when Pakistan Naval ships visit Sri Lankan ports.
- 3) **CARAT**. Cooperation Afloat Readiness And Training (CARAT) is biennially bilateral exercise conduct between the SLN and the US Navy to develop interoperability and professionalism of the members.

ii. Trilateral Exercises.

Sri Lanka, India and Maldives take part in Tri-Lateral exercise 'DOSTI' conducted by the Maldives National Defence Force for Coast Guards of respective countries in the Maldives biannually.

iii. Multinational Naval Exercises

The SLN takes part in the undermentioned Multinational exercise regularly.

- 1) Milan - Conducted by Indian Navy
- 2) Kakadu - Conducted by Australian Navy
- 3) Aman - Conducted by Pakistan Navy
- 4) IDEX - Conducted by UAE Navy
- 5) LIMA - Conducted by Malaysian Navy
- 6) IMDEX - Conducted by Singapore Navy
- 7) Komodo - Conducted by Indonesian Navy

Capacity building fosters a sense of confidence so that the participants gain greater control over the situation and act according to the rules and regulations. Keeping that in mind, Sri Lanka Military forces initiated several capacity building programmes for regional security

forces to share their hard-earned experiences gained over the conflict period and the experience at sea operations.

1) Counter Maritime Crime/Security Course

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) together with the SLN conduct Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) course at the SLN Base in Trincomalee. The exercise is part of a VBSS Boarding Officer training course for the officers of regional coastguards. Joined Combined Exchange Training (JCET) exercise have conducted with regional and extra-regional maritime security forces for sharing of the combat experiences/military performances and special forces knowledge in maritime interdictions and to strengthen the cooperation and coordination between the ARF member countries in respect to the maritime security.

2) Asymmetric Warfare Course

A twelve-week-long training engagement enables course participants from different parts of the world to get maximum exposure to SLN’s hard-earned Asymmetric Warfare experience.

Additionally, Sri Lankan Government provides replenishment facilities for the vessels belong to regional and extra-regional navies that were engaged in counter-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean. 11 vessels from Japan, Canada, France and Indonesia were replenished this year strengthening cooperation between the two nations.

e) Drug Trafficking

Threats posed by maritime drug traffickers is a serious challenge faced by maritime law enforcement entities. Due to Sri Lanka’s proximity to the ‘Golden Triangle’ and ‘Golden Crescent’, drugs traffickers are attempting to use the country as the major transit point for Heroin to Europe and other Western countries on an organized scale. Thus, SLN is playing a vital role to block the drug supply network on high seas. The SLN has dealt with more than 300 drug-related apprehensions in the year 2020.

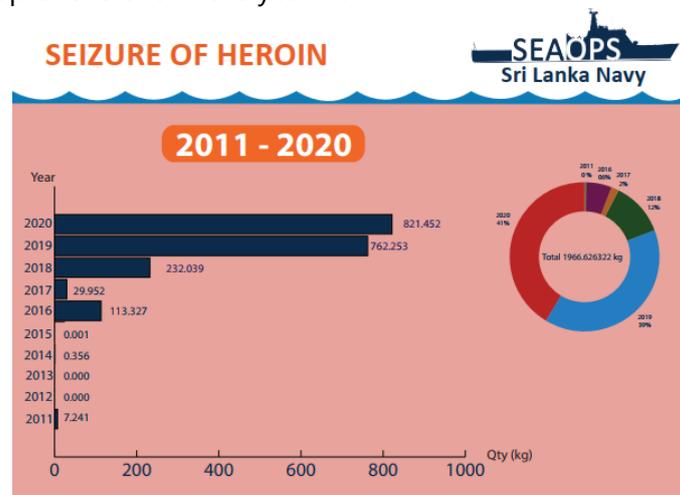


Figure 1: Seizure of Heroin from 2011 to 2020
Source: Sri Lanka Navy

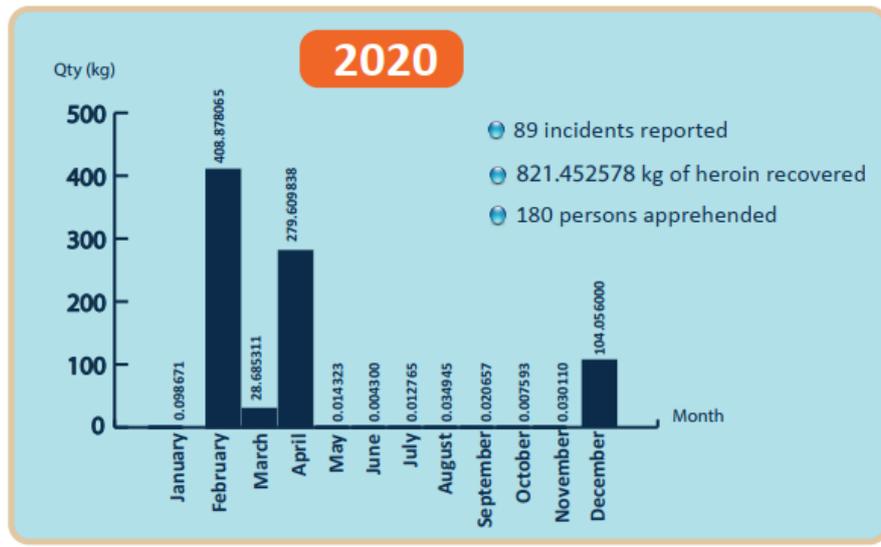


Figure 2: Seizure of Heroin in 2020

Source: Sri Lanka Navy

f) Human trafficking

Human Trafficking also has become a major issue in the South Asian region in the past few decades. In the South Asian Region, illegal human smuggling has risen to a considerable amount. Thus, the SLN has prevented 4750 illegal migration attempts to Australia from 2009 to 2020 which originated from the Sri Lankan shores. Zero incidents of human trafficking were reported in 2020 due to the effective counteractions and new sea patrolling strategies launched by the SLN.

g) Transnational Crimes

The significance of transnational organized crime as both a global and national threat has only recently been elevated. Following are the other key concerns of transnational crimes on regional maritime security;

1. Human trafficking and smuggling, including child sexual exploitation.
2. Firearms trafficking, including small arms, explosives and potentially, more sophisticated weapons
3. Environmental resource trafficking, including exotic and protected animal and plant species
4. Cybercrime, particularly ID theft and unauthorized access
5. Maritime terrorism
6. Maritime Piracy

h) Search and Rescue

Sri Lanka has been assigned to respond with maritime emergencies/SAR operations in the SAR region which is about 27 times its landmass. Maritime Rescue Coordinating Centre (MRCC) was established at Naval Headquarters in 2014. It has become a naval responsibility to respond quickly to any emergency alert whether military or commercial nature in the designated region

and react immediately to assist in the best possible way. During the year 2020, 309 distressed incidents were reported to MRCC Colombo and all the incidents have been handled swiftly with proven standard operating procedures. Out of the 309 incidents, 228 were reported by the Sri Lankan Fishing Vessels (SLFV) and 46 by the Merchant Vessels (MV). The strenuous efforts made by the MRCC Colombo was rewarded with the saving of lives of 117 seafarers in 2020. Mainly MRCC Colombo assisted and coordinated to douse the fire onboard MT New Diamond in the year 2020 and MV X-Press Pearl in the year 2021. In both events, MRCC rescued all crew members of MT New Diamond (except one member who went missing) and MV X-Press Pearl.

4. Role of the ARF

The ASEAN Regional Forum was established under the aegis of the ASEAN in 1993 and Sri Lanka is a member of the ARF since 2007. It is an important platform for providing a constructive security dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and concern in the Southeast Asian region. It provides a platform for members to significantly contribute to efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region. Sri Lanka recognizes the values of constructive dialogue, consultation and cooperation by all member states in maintaining peace and security in the region, called for collective efforts by the ARF member states to address traditional and non-traditional security threats.

The traditional and non-traditional security issues paint a picture that these issues are no longer confined to the geographical boundaries of a respective country. When tackling these issues, remedies by a single country is not sufficient, but a collective mechanism is needed to fight against these transnational crimes. In this regard sharing expertise, intelligence, best practices and technology are important. In this context, Sri Lanka expects to pay attention to regional stability and recovery, practical security cooperation, maritime and cybersecurity, counter-terrorism and transnational crimes and non-proliferation and disarmament. In this context, the future direction of ARF in Sri Lanka must strive to achieve these objectives through an all-inclusive approach. It is noted that ARF as a regional mechanism has dealt successfully in countering terrorism and transnational crimes and underscored that in tackling these problems, remedies by a single country is not sufficient and called for a collective effort to fight against these transnational crimes.

Conclusion

Establishing a sound security architecture in the IOR is critical in addressing transnational crimes, traditional and non-traditional threats is critical in keeping the IOR maritime space safe and secure. These security threats do not restrict to a particular state of the region. Therefore, a single country is unable to fight alone with these issues that come in global nature. At this juncture, a collaborative and cooperative mechanism is required to address these security threats effectively.

Due to the emerging strategic environment in the IOR, Sri Lanka has an enormous obligation to prevent transnational crimes, ensure the safe passage of merchant ships and prevent terrorist activities in the EEZ and beyond. As global economies develop, the greatest maritime challenge posed to the island would be the safety and surveillance of the SLOCs. With a large mass of water towards the southern end of the country, Sri Lanka is obliged to enhance its

capacity and capability in maritime safety and security. It needs to optimise itself to the level where it can lead such operations in the region along with other friendly nations. Therefore, Sri Lankan Government has initiated many individual and regional mechanisms to enhance its responsibility to establish safety and security in the region and stands ready and committed to actively engage with the ARF.

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THAILAND

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic since early 2020 has forced the Asia-Pacific region to reconsider much of its domestic and foreign policies. The weight of lives lost has been compelling, and the fear generated by the unrelenting pandemic created a perilous situation in which free movement of labour was hampered, xenophobia increased, and discrimination over access to health system was rampant. This unprecedented non-traditional security challenge has severely threatened human security, particularly human health, and entailed far-reaching socio-economic impacts. On the eve of 2021, around 50 countries launched their COVID-19 vaccination programme, creating a hope that the year 2021 is a transition phase towards post-COVID recovery. The World Bank predicted that the global economy is expected to expand 4 percent in 2021 after a 4.3 percent contraction in 2020, assuming an initial COVID-19 inoculation becomes widespread. However, at the time of writing, many countries are encountering a new wave of infections or mutation of new variants of concern.

From a security perspective, COVID-19 has evidently heightened existing tensions between the major powers in the Asia-Pacific region. In fact, strategic competition of major powers has gone beyond trade, technology, cyberspace and climate change to include global public health issues, securing medical supply chains, and vaccine diplomacy.

Recognising that “no one is safe until everyone is safe” underlines the significance of multilateral cooperation more than ever. For ASEAN, the pandemic has presented a litmus test to regionalism and multilateralism, as well as an opportunity to enhance partnerships and forge closer cooperation. Positive and concrete developments include the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund and the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF). The Response Fund, pooling resources from the ASEAN Development Fund, ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Fund and Cooperation Funds with each Plus-Three country as well as individual ASEAN Member State and external partners’ contributions and pledges, will be used to strengthen ASEAN capacity in addressing the pandemic. The ACRF aims to support the region’s robust recovery in a holistic manner in areas such as health security, digitalisation, social protection, access to finance and sustainable development. Other important ASEAN’s initiatives on COVID-19 response include the Travel Corridor Arrangement Framework and the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases.

ASEAN, as a regional grouping comprising small and medium sized countries, has been able to work with major powers and play a central role in building strategic trust and confidence to avoid resumption of conflicts, and focus global efforts on socio-economic recovery in the post COVID-19 era.

On Thailand’s part, the Royal Thai Government places health security as top priority and enforces more stringent disease control measures to curb the recent outbreak which started in April 2021. In addition, the Government has been accelerating the COVID-19 vaccine roll out and announced vaccination against the pandemic a national agenda. The aim is to acquire 100 million doses to inoculate 70 percent of the population, or approximately 50 million people, by the end of 2021. It has prioritised inoculation for healthcare workers and other

frontline workers who are at high risk of contracting the virus, people who are over 60 years old, and those who have chronic illness or reside in high-risk areas.

The Government continues to promote a whole-of-society approach to overcome this pandemic. More than one million village health volunteers nationwide remain a strong force while the private sector will collaborate on efforts to tackle the outbreak, be they vaccine distribution and logistics, communications and extra vaccine procurement, and boost economic recovery. The Bio-Circular-Green Economy, or the BCG Model, is made Thailand's national agenda and will be the main strategy for economic recovery and development for the post-COVID era.

a) ASEAN Centrality in the Evolving Regional Architecture

The COVID-19 crisis together with the rivalries between major powers offers ASEAN an opportunity to recalibrate the ASEAN-centred regional architecture. The strengthening of such architecture is supported by shared norms and principles of international law, as embodied in key instruments such as the ASEAN Charter, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), Declaration of the East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations, among others. With wider recognition of its governing principles in inter-state relations in response to security challenges in the uncertain geo-political environment, the TAC has become ever more valid and relevant. Reinforcing the TAC and its principles will strengthen regional norms and the promotion of peace and stability.

The long-term goal is to realise a Strategic New Equilibrium that will be conducive to peace, security and prosperity for all in the Asia-Pacific region, and from the Pacific Ocean to the Indian Ocean. The 34th ASEAN Summit in Bangkok in November 2019 adopted the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) which is "ASEAN's Vista" on the evolving regional geo-strategic landscape anchored on existing norms and principles including those enshrined under the TAC, and on engagement with its dialogue partners. It aims to promote win-win cooperation in areas that are mutually beneficial, based on the principle of inclusiveness and the 3Ms: Mutual Trust, Mutual Respect, and Mutual Benefit.

The ASEAN-centered regional architecture comprising the ASEAN Plus One, the ASEAN Plus Three, the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has provided ASEAN with a strong regional convening power and a multi-layered platform to establish rules and norms for a regional order. These fora have provided venues for key players to engage in dialogue for the enhancement of strategic trust, the strengthening of confidence-building measures and the promotion of preventive diplomacy, focusing on win-win cooperation and concrete deliverables. They will ultimately contribute to attaining "sustainable security" within the ASEAN region and beyond.

b) Regional Security Environment

Asia Pacific's strategic landscape has become more volatile as a result of more intense competition between major powers in the region. Geopolitical uncertainties and confrontations could potentially affect regional peace and security as well as undermine peace, security and prosperity in the region, especially efforts to recovery from COVID-19 and long-term sustainable growth.

On the South China Sea, growing tensions and provocative incidents have undermined the positive momentum gained in 2019, including the completion of the first reading of the Single Draft Negotiating Text (SDNT) of the Code of Conduct (COC). Strategic trust should be nurtured through practical confidence-building measures and continued dialogue. In this regard, the Paper on “Best Practices and Non-Binding Guidelines for Cooperative Activities on Marine Environmental Protection in the South China Sea”, which ASEAN and China’s Foreign Ministers took note on 9 September 2020, signals a positive development for a win-win cooperation which will ultimately transform the South China Sea into a Sea of Peace, Stability, Prosperity and Sustainability. The ongoing step-by-step resumption of COC negotiations is welcomed and the recent consensus to restart negotiations on the less contentious parts of the SDNT via virtual format is an important step forward.

Meanwhile, all parties concerned should exercise self-restraint to create an environment conducive to the peaceful resolution of disputes, consistent with international law, including 1982 UNCLOS. It is pertinent to pursue full and effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and properly implement measures, thus ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea.

In the maritime domain, maritime security and cooperation have assumed greater importance for Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific. Therefore, challenges that would compromise safety and security of Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) need to be countered effectively. Other increasingly crucial maritime issues, such as marine resources management, including combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU Fishing), transnational crime at sea, piracy and armed robbery, people smuggling and wildlife smuggling also require closer cooperation. To complement these efforts, practical cooperation, maritime domain awareness (MDA), information-sharing and intelligence exchange must also be enhanced.

The region continues to be vulnerable to the threats and exploitation of transnational organised crime groups, including trafficking in persons and people smuggling, irregular migration and particularly, illicit drug trafficking. Illicit drug markets in the region have expanded and diversified and appear to be largely unaffected by the pandemic outbreak. This landscape requires ASEAN to enhance its border management cooperation through enhanced coordination in all aspects, from information sharing and intelligence exchange, implementing appropriate measures to ensure safety and security from land, air and sea border challenges, to catalysing joint action to help address multifaceted dimensions of transnational crime. Nevertheless, there is a need to ensure a balanced approach between safety and security, including health security, and cross-border trade facilitation and the seamless movement of goods and people.

More dependence on digital economy has increased the importance of cooperation in cybersecurity to prevent transnational organised crime groups from taking advantage of the pandemic. The Establishment of ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee (ASEAN Cyber-CC) and convening of the 1st ASEAN Cyber-CC meeting in November 2020 has led to several initiatives and activities aimed to strengthen cross-sectoral regional coordination on cybersecurity, including implementation of a list of voluntary, practical norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace to promote an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment. Equally important is cybersecurity training and capacity-building, and this is where the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC) plays an important catalytic role to enhance the capacity of cybersecurity experts and specialists in the region.

In spite of the declining regional trend of terrorist attacks due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic, terrorist groups are likely to reactivate their activities and strengthen their organizations once the situation has improved. Meanwhile the use of social media and online platforms to disseminate violent extremism and racism to the public have drastically increased along with growing risks of potential lone-wolf terrorist attacks. Most terrorist incidents in Southeast Asia in 2020 took place in limited areas where local terrorist groups are present, especially those associated with the Islamic State (IS). This trend is expected to continue in 2021.

The situation on the Korean Peninsula remains a pressing security issue in the region. Increased tensions could undermine denuclearisation and global nuclear non-proliferation efforts. Concerned parties should therefore insert their best efforts to resume dialogue and interactions with a view to continuing peaceful dialogue and work towards establishing lasting peace and stability in a denuclearized Korean Peninsula, including through the full and expeditious implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration and the Joint Statement by the leaders of the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Meanwhile, implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions remains an obligation of the international community. In this connection, the ARF, as an ASEAN-led platform, can be an appropriate platform for trust and confidence building and creating a conducive environment for peaceful dialogue.

Finally, the situation in Myanmar has put ASEAN in a unique position to contribute constructively in helping to bring about de-escalation and peaceful resolution and the return to normalcy for the interest of the people of Myanmar. The ASEAN Leaders' Meeting in Jakarta on 24 April 2021 is a testament to the important role of ASEAN on this issue. The Five-Point Consensus will form a basis for ASEAN's constructive engagement with Myanmar—a member of the ASEAN family. The most important thing now is to ensure that the outcome will be implemented in a timely manner. We also need to ensure that the process will be as inclusive as possible to reflect the diverse voices of the Myanmar society and take into account the complexity of Myanmar's historical and social aspects.

2. National Security and Defense Policy

a) Overview of National Security and Defense Policy

In relation to Thailand's national security and defense policy, the Ministry of Defense has published its policy statement in an effort to promote transparency and to enhance trust and confidence between Thailand and ASEAN Member States, as well as other partners within and beyond the Asia-Pacific. The mission of the Ministry of Defence covers wide range of issues including, among others, enhancing defense cooperation with neighbouring nations, ASEAN Member States and international organizations, both at bilateral and multilateral levels, enhancing the integration of strengths and capabilities with every sector, maintaining capability of the armed forces and national defense system, increasing armed forces capability in order to counter non-traditional threats and strengthening defense industry.

In addition, the Ministry of Defense attaches great importance to participation in cooperation frameworks which will provide opportunities for the armed forces of the region to engage in practical cooperation to promote mutual interest of participating countries and enhance capabilities for the future. The activities of the ADMM's initiatives and the ADMM-Plus Experts'

Working Groups include the enhancement of defence establishments' role in supporting border management to collectively respond to transnational challenges, and strengthening maritime security cooperation to build trust and confidence as well as practical cooperation in the maritime domain of the region.

The ASEAN Center of Military Medicine (ACMM), a subsidiary body under the ADMM, has contributed to the region's humanitarian assistance and disaster relief frameworks as well as complemented the work of the ASEAN Coordination Centre of Humanitarian Management (AHA Centre) in improving the region's response and coordination mechanism. During the COVID-19 outbreak, the ACMM has played an active role in monitoring and responding to the situation. Two table top exercises were conducted in May and August 2020 with focus on developing an action plan to enhance ASEAN Military Medical Services' readiness for emerging crises and COVID-19 Quarantine Camp Management.

3. National Contribution to Regional Security

a) Joint Exercise

Cobra Gold is one of the largest multinational exercises in the Asia-Pacific region which has been held annually in Thailand since 1982. It is known to be one of the largest theater security cooperation exercises in the Asia-Pacific which aims to strengthen military ties, and improve capabilities and interoperability of participating countries. The 40th iteration of the Cobra Gold theater exercises will take place in 2021, providing a light training for approximately 10,000 participants from 30 countries. Due to COVID-19, the Exercise is divided into two phases: phase one (CG 21-1) for command and control exercises (C2X), Humanitarian Civic Assistance (HCA), and Field Training Exercise (FTX), held during 20 February-5 March 2021, and phase two (CG 21-2) for field exercise scheduled to be convened during 2-13 August 2021.

b) Peacekeeping

Thailand has been a steadfast troop-contributing country to UN peacekeeping missions since 1950. Over 27,000 Thai military and police personnel, men and women, have served in more than 20 peacekeeping and related missions of the UN. At present, Thailand contributes an engineering company of 272 personnel to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), as well as military and police officers to three UN peacekeeping missions, namely UNAMID in Darfur, UNMOGIP in India and Pakistan, and UNMISS in South Sudan. Thailand has also been consistently deploying female military and police officers to UN peacekeeping missions worldwide. In 2021, 12 female military and police officers are being deployed in three UN peacekeeping Missions, namely UNAMID in Darfur, UNMOGIP in India and Pakistan, and UNMISS in South Sudan.

As part of UNMISS, the Thai Horizontal Military Engineering Company (HMEC)'s main responsibilities include road reconstruction and building infrastructure. Thai peacekeepers also endeavour to promote development initiatives and the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) initiated by the late King His Majesty Bhumibol Adulyadej to assist in achieving sustained peace which complements Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peaceful and inclusive societies, justice and accountable institutions. Previous missions in Timor Leste and Darfur were a case in point where SEP was successfully applied.

The Peace Operations Center (POC) of the Royal Thai Armed Forces (RTARF) has collaborated with other countries in exchanging trainers and instructors, and providing training courses, namely (1) UN Staff Officers Course (UNSOC) and (2) Child Protection Course for both Thai and foreign officers. In 2021, POC planned to promote the WPS agenda by increasing participation of female peacekeepers in the 3rd Rotation THAI HMEC, implementing the UN Triangular Partnership Project 2022-2023, and enhancing cooperation on capacity building and joint training. In addition, the POC plans to establish a Centre of Excellence on peacekeeping in ASEAN aimed to deploy ASEAN Peacekeeping Force in UN peacekeeping operation.

As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for the term 2021-2022, Thailand has actively helped facilitate and bridge gaps among relevant UN agencies, support enhancing role of ECOSOC in promoting peace as well as contribute 100,000 USD to the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), reaffirming Thailand's commitment to sustaining peacebuilding efforts.

c) Counter-terrorism

Despite the overall decline in terrorist attacks due to travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, terrorist groups are likely to reactivate their activities once the situation is improved.

An increase in the use of social media and online platforms for disseminating violent extremist and racist content along with growing risks of potential lone-wolf terrorist attacks remains a critical concern.

Most terrorist incidents in Southeast Asia took place in limited areas where local terrorist groups have presence, in particular those associated with the Islamic State (IS). In 2020, IS has begun to carry out attacks, relying on a financial resource of an estimated over 100 million USD, parts of which are kept as reserve fund while others were invested in both legal and illegal businesses. Likewise, Al-Qaeda (AQ) has recently reemerged as a significant global terrorism threat by expanding branches and sympathisers, reconnecting with other terrorist groups in Southeast Asia, and staging more attacks. In this context, issues to be monitored and properly addressed include threats from IS-associated groups in the region, repatriation or relocation of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs), act of terrorism by lone actors, wolf packs, and radicalised women and youth, and spread of violent extremism via social media.

Thailand underscores the importance of a comprehensive and sustainable solution to terrorism. Such solution focuses on addressing the root causes of terrorism, encouraging international cooperation, and promoting interfaith dialogues and values of moderation and peaceful coexistence in multicultural societies. In this regard, Thailand strongly supports the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and enacted 5-year National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2017-2022) of which the concepts of prevention, response, and rehabilitation are core approaches, as well as ratified 12 out of 19 existing conventions and protocols related to counter terrorism under the UN framework.

The Counter-Terrorism and Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Financing Act B.E. 2559 (2016) remains Thailand's key legislative framework that sets out measures to prevent and suppress actions considered as a terrorist financing offence and allows UNSC lists of terrorism and WMD-related entities to be incorporated into the Thai law. Further, the draft Preventing and Countering Terrorism Act is being considered by the Parliament which once

adopted, it will provide preemptive and defensive counterterrorism measures and designate officials, based on categories and levels, to receive requisite training before assuming duties. A national plan of action to prevent and counter violent extremism is being drafted.

At the regional level, outcome documents which lay groundwork for regional efforts to enhancing capacity in counter-terrorism in ASEAN include (1) Terms of Reference (TOR) of Our Eyes Initiative, aimed at promoting strategic information exchange on terrorism which was adopted at the 13th ADMM on 11 July 2019 (2) ARF Statement on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism (VECT) and ARF Work Plan for Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime 2019-2021 adopted at the 26th ARF meeting on 2 August 2019, and (3) Work Plan to implement the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2018-2025 adopted at the 13th AMMTC on 27 November 2019.

d) Non-proliferation, Counter-proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

Thailand upholds the policy not to develop, acquire or proliferate any kind of WMD and their means of delivery, as well as fully observes commitments and obligations on non-proliferation of WMD.

On nuclear disarmament, as one of the first three countries to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on 20 September 2017, Thailand welcomes the entry into force of the TPNW on 22 January 2021, which marks a historic milestone and the triumph of multilateralism. Given that 86 states have signed the TPNW and 54 states are parties to the Treaty at the time of writing, it is crucial to promote further ratification and accession to the TPNW, so as to achieve inclusiveness and universality of the Treaty. In this regard, Thailand looks forward to participating actively in the First Meeting of the State Parties to the Treaty to take place in Vienna in January 2022. At the same time, Thailand reaffirms the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone for nuclear non-proliferation and recognises the complementarity between the TPNW and the NPT, as both share the common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Notably, the TPNW is fully in line with the obligations on nuclear disarmament under the Article VI of the NPT, which requires States to pursue negotiation in good faith on general and complete disarmament.

With the Nuclear Energy for Peace Act enacted in February 2017, Thailand is pursuing ratification and accession to all relevant nuclear non-proliferation treaties and conventions. To date, Thailand has ratified or acceded to the Additional Protocol to the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Its 2005 Amendment, the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Most recently, Thailand has ratified the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) on 2 May 2019.

At the regional level, Thailand played a leading role in the establishment and the implementation of the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) or the Bangkok Treaty of 1995, and in initiating the cooperation of the ASEAN Network of regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM). Thailand is committed to supporting and advancing both initiatives, including with the Nuclear Weapon States on the signing of the SEANWFZ Protocol

and with ASEAN Member States and friends on cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology, as its contribution to promote ASEAN non-proliferation efforts.

Thailand welcomes the UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament under the 'Securing Our Common Future' concept and its three outlined priorities on the control and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons, and remaining vigilant of new and emerging technologies and their effects on peace and security. In this connection, Thailand looks forward to tangible cooperation and meaningful engagement between all UN agencies, Member States, and other stakeholders in realising this Agenda. Thailand stands ready to facilitate the exchange of views and best practices on disarmament and non-proliferation issues and will continue to act as a bridge-builder between ASEAN and other regional and international groupings to bring about a safer and more secure world.

e) Transnational Crime

The Asia-Pacific region continues to encounter threats posed by transnational organised crime groups who exploit higher degree of interconnectedness amongst countries and regions as well as the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Cybercrime, in particular, has become more sophisticated and wide-spreading due to technological advancement and the growing need to rely on internet as daily necessities and platforms for communications as well as financial transaction in the post COVID-19 era.

In this connection, key priorities have been given to an eradication of transnational crimes that could be used to support or facilitate terrorist activities, namely money laundering and supplying of illegal weapons and counterfeiting travel documents. The implementation of the Strategy to Prevent and Combat Transnational Organised Crimes (2015-2021) plays a central role in Thailand's efforts to combat transnational crimes, particularly in five identified priority areas, namely, terrorism, illicit trafficking of wildlife and timber, infringement of intellectual property rights, trafficking in persons and drug trafficking.

Thailand continues to engage with ASEAN Member States in the development of the Concept Paper entitled "ASEAN Border Management Cooperation Roadmap". Thailand has a firm belief that this document will help lay an important groundwork in advancing cooperation on border management as well as addressing transnational crime in ASEAN as reflected in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 with the ultimate goal being the establishment of an ASEAN-wide border management cooperation arrangement to ensure border security and facilitate trade in tandem. The Concept Paper will be submitted to the 24th Meeting of the ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM) for further consideration in 2021.

Thailand pursues a zero-tolerance policy in prosecuting human trafficking offenders, ensuring the safety and protection of victims, and implementing preventive measures to protect various vulnerable groups from human trafficking. Providing assistance and protection for all victims of trafficking is in accordance with Thai laws and the victim-centred and trauma-informed approaches, which include assigning inquiry officers of the same gender as the victims, preparing victim impact statements as part of witness and evidence gathering, and organising advanced witness hearing as requested. In addition, the protection center has implemented anti-epidemic measures for new and existing victims, including the 14-day quarantine measure and COVID-19 screening test before transferring victims to the protection facility.

As a major country of transit and destination for irregular migration, Thailand has been affected by mass influx of irregular migrants from within and outside the region. Although Thailand is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, Thailand has long been committed to humanitarian cause and will continue to work closely with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Illicit drug trafficking remains a grave challenge for ASEAN due to an increase in opium cultivation, heroin production and methamphetamine tablets and crystalline methamphetamine manufacturing in the Golden Triangle. Thailand is therefore fully committed to implementing the 4-year Mekong Drug Control Joint Operation Plan (2019-2022), in collaboration with Lao PDR, Myanmar, Cambodia, Viet Nam and China. The Plan is a continuation of the Safe Mekong Operation launched in 2015, aimed to comprehensively address illicit drug production and distribution in the Golden Triangle area. Thailand also hosts Safe Mekong Coordination Center (SMCC) in Chiang Mai and together with Australia established the "Taskforce Storm" in 2016 to oversee joint operations in suppressing illicit drug trafficking, money laundering and transnational crimes. This Taskforce has succeeded in arresting several drug syndicate criminals and seizing their proceeds of crime. The mandate of this taskforce has been extended until 2021. As a lead shepherd for illicit drug trafficking, under the SOMTC, Thailand will continue to promote cooperation and activities in a concerted manner according to the ASEAN Cooperation Work Plan to Tackle Illicit Drug Production and Trafficking in the Golden Triangle (2017-2019), which has been extended until 2022 by the decision of the 6th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters.

The Royal Thai Government has continued pursuing "Thailand 4.0" policy embracing a value-based and innovative economy to reap the full benefits of digitalization. In 2019, Thailand enacted two new laws to support Thailand's digital economy, namely Cybersecurity Act B.E.2562, leading to establishment of the National Cybersecurity Committee (NCSC) and other frameworks to prevent and respond to cyber threats against Critical Information Infrastructures (CIIs), and Personal Data Protection Act B.E 2562, aimed to standardise mechanisms and supervisory measures to protect online personal information both in the government and private sector.

Depending more on ICTs during working from home (WFH) period, it is imperative for ASEAN to enhance cyber capabilities and strengthen common understanding to reduce cyber risks. On this note, Thailand welcomes the establishment of the ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee (ASEAN-Cyber CC) and the adoption of its TOR, aimed to enhance regional cybersecurity cooperation across three pillars of ASEAN Community, as approved by the 19th ASEAN Telecommunications and Information Technology Ministers Meeting (TELMIN) in October 2019. By 2021, Thailand looks forward to finalising the ASEAN's Plan of Action on the Implementation of Norms of Responsible States Behavior in Cyberspace to ensure effective and practical implementation of norms recommended in the 2015 UNGGE report, including in the areas of CERT cooperation, protection of CIIs and mutual assistance in cybersecurity.

The ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC) has continued to serve as a training centre for authorities and information infrastructure operators in ASEAN on three issues: Cyber Defence Exercise with Recurrence (CYDER), digital forensics and malware analysis. As of February 2021, the AJCCBC has already organized 14 training courses, including four online courses since COVID-19 outbreak. Following approval of the budget for step 2-2,

the Centre will continue 10 technical training sessions and one Cyber SEA Game during the period of April 2021 to November 2023.

f) Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) and its newly adopted Work Programme 2021-2025 form the basis for cooperation among ASEAN Member States to prepare and respond to disaster emergencies in concerted manner. The signing of the "ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response" in 2016 confirms that AADMER is the common platform for the Declaration. Thailand, as a Party to the AADMER and a member of the Governing Board of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), will continue to strengthen ASEAN's efforts in the area of disaster management and reaffirm its support to an active role of the ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) and other ASEAN tools to deal with HADR challenges. As Co-Chair of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) Working Group on Prevention and Mitigation, Thailand will strengthen the work of the Working Group to further enhance ASEAN's efforts in disaster prevention and mitigation.

Thailand supports regional efforts to enhance capacity in disaster response and disaster management in line with the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Disaster Health Management, adopted at the 31st ASEAN Summit in Manila. The Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) launched on 7 December 2012 is a key mechanism to allow for swift provision of relief items to ASEAN Member States facing post-disaster emergency situations. DELSA's establishment and operations have been supported by the Government of Japan, while the AHA Centre works closely with WFP - UNHRD on logistics technical aspects. According to the ASEAN Joint Disaster Response Plan (AJDRP), DELSA relief items are handled based on an analysis of disaster risks, divided into three phases: (1) standby phase for imminent danger (yellow alert), (2) active response phase within 6 hours (red alert), and (3) active response phase within 48 hours (red alert). As AHA Centre's monitoring status is elevated to "yellow alert" which indicates an imminent danger, the AHA Centre's logistics team would ready relief items for mobilisation and place them on standby. DELSA resources can be mobilised prior to the response phase if required.

During the 34th ASEAN Summit in June 2019, Thailand by the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation officially launched the ASEAN Satellite Warehouse in Chai Nat Province. The Warehouse serves as a stockpile during emergencies in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Viet Nam and Thailand. Recently, the Warehouse delivered 2,900 Personal Hygiene Kits to support COVID-19 response in Cambodia in 2020 as well as 500 family tents, 2,000 mosquito nets, and 1,500 personal hygiene kits to Thailand in 2021.

g) Maritime Security and Cooperation

The Asia-Pacific region continues to face maritime security challenges, including piracy, armed robbery against ships and various forms of transnational crime as well as issues related to marine environment and IUU fishing. An increase in the number of incidents in 2020 in comparison to 2019 reflects that piracy and armed robbery against ships remains a prevailing security concern. Such incidents are the result of active criminal activities in several areas and vulnerability of important sea lines of communication, notably the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, which connect two major waterways, namely, the Indian Ocean and the South

China Sea. Tensions between regional powers also pose challenges to international trade and maritime connectivity.

Given the complex and wide-ranging nature of maritime security issues, Thailand enacted the Maritime National Interests Protection Act B.E. 2562 (2019) to promote better coordination and consolidate responses to deal with emerging threats. Under the Act, Thai Maritime Enforcement Coordinating Center has been upgraded to become Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Center (THAI-MECC) with augmented role and greater authority in managing maritime security-related affairs. The Center participated in the National Crisis Management Exercise 2020 (C-MEX 20) to articulate understanding amongst relevant agencies in preparation for interception of WMD, addressing water pollution, and tackling IUU fishing. Since October 2019, THAI-MECC has joined efforts on COVID-19 prevention and control in maritime transport, including through National Single Windows (NSW) for reporting formalities from ships arriving in and/or departing from ports.

Thailand has participated in regional efforts such as the Malacca Straits Coordinated Patrols since 2008, the air patrol "Eyes in the Sky" since 2009, as well as the secondment of rotating officers to the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP ISC). Moreover, Thailand has actively taken part in regional maritime security and cooperation fora such as the EAS, the ADMM-Plus which Thailand is currently co-chairing with the US the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security under the theme "Strengthening Maritime Security Cooperation for Sustainable Development of ASEAN Member States' Economies", the ARF, the ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) and the Expanded AMF (EAMF) with a view to paving the way towards substantive cooperation, particularly in the areas of capacity building, maritime domain awareness and maritime connectivity.

Thailand has embarked on a comprehensive reform of the fishery sector, resulting in the European Union's lifting of a yellow card for import ban of seafood products from Thailand in 2019. Building on such success, Thailand welcomed the establishment of the ASEAN Network for Combating IUU Fishing (AN-IUU) in 2020. The 1st AN-IUU meeting was held on 21-22 December 2020 in Bangkok via videoconference. As a follow-up, Thailand has developed the online interactive platform of the AN-IUU as a tool for information exchange on the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) system against IUU fishing activities in the ASEAN region. Thailand has also developed the AN-IUU Data Dictionary comprising the necessary information related to the fishing vessel, incident and timeline that can be included in the interactive platform.

On forced labour, Thailand has undertaken a significant step as part of the effort to improve labour protection standards in the fisheries sector by ratifying the International Labour Organization (ILO) Work in Fishing Convention No. 188, 2007 (C188) on 30 January 2019, becoming the first country in Asia to ratify the Convention. The Convention has come into force since 30 January 2020. This underscores Thailand's strong commitment in the prevention and suppression of forced labour, ensuring that the working conditions in domestic fishing industry meet ILO standards.

Thailand has remained committed to promoting marine environmental protection, particularly on marine debris issue. Following the adoption of the ASEAN Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris (ASEAN RAP) at the Meeting of ASEAN Senior Officials on

Environment on 1 March 2021, Thailand by the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources sought approval for the ASEAN RAP from the National Policy and Plan Committee on Marine and Coastal Resource Management on 5 April 2021. The ASEAN RAP will be further submitted for Cabinet's approval prior to seeking ad referendum approval from ASEAN Ministers on Environment. By Q3/2021, Thailand will co-chair with the United States and China the "ARF Seminar on Marine Debris – Solid Waste Management and Scalable Solutions", aimed to raise awareness on components of developing, financing, and implementing solid waste management plans, and share best practices and case studies on scalable solutions to address regional marine debris challenges.

At the national level, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has developed a Roadmap "Plastic Waste Management 2018-2030" as a policy framework for the national plastic waste management. The Roadmap's main objective involves strengthening collaboration among all stakeholders in preventing and addressing plastic waste problem in an integrated manner to reduce and stop using certain types of plastic, such as plastic wrapping and water bottle lid within 2019 and plastic bag, Styrofoam container, plastic cup, and plastic straw within 2022. Several activities under marine debris management project have also been organised, such as "Everyday Say No to Plastic Bags" campaign in cooperation with private sector to end distribution of single-use plastic bags by department and convenience stores.

4. Role of the ARF

a) National contributions to enhance the ARF and regional security

The ever-challenging global situation has provided an opportunity for the ARF to demonstrate its relevance and efficiency as a primary forum for constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. The newly adopted Ha Noi Plan of Action II (2020-2025) (HPoA II) at the 27th ARF in 2020 covers a period of 5 years, unlike the previous PoA which covered 10 years. Thailand has therefore spared no efforts in actively implementing the HPoA II and related Work Plans of each Inter-Sessional Meeting. Further, Thailand has followed the Guide to ASEAN Regional Forum Processes, Procedures, Practices and Protocol, approved at the 53rd ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, in conducting ARF initiatives and activities.

Amidst the pandemic, Thailand together with Indonesia and Canada co-chaired the ARF Workshop on Women, Peace and Security on 2-4 March 2021 via videoconference. This Workshop achieved its objectives in advancing the WPS agenda at regional and global levels and strengthening the ARF as a regional coordination mechanism, including in mainstreaming the WPS agenda into ARF activities in a sustained manner.

As for the inter-sessional year 2020-2021, Thailand looks forward to co-chairing the following activities in accordance with ARF's purposes and principles: (1) ARF Enhancement Training on Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Capacity Building and Comprehensive USAR Drill to be held via videoconference in two parts: webinar meeting on 5-17 July and online training on 15-24 July 2021 and (2) ARF Training on Ferry Safety Capacity Building to be held via videoconference on 22-25 June and 5-9 July 2021. Regarding the ARF Seminar on Marine Debris – Solid Waste Management and Scalable Solutions, it will be postponed to the next inter-sessional year. Further, Thailand is co-sponsoring the Concept Paper of the ARF on the Series of Workshops

on Countering the Use of ICTs for Criminal Purposes and looks forward to co-chairing a Workshop in the inter-sessional year 2021-2022.

b) Future of the ARF

With the diverse expertise of the Participants, the ARF can serve as an inclusive platform for concrete and practical cooperation on issues affecting regional security, ranging from public health emergencies, cybersecurity, maritime security, transnational crime, terrorism, and disaster relief. In the past year, despite the pandemic, it has been encouraging that Participants deliver on activities, express high interest in undertaking co-chairmanship of Inter-Sessional Meetings (ISMs), propose new concrete activities, and develop new ISMs Work Plans. It is even more encouraging that there has been progress on issues which Participants may have divergent views, but able to discuss and seek practical way forward by consensus, making progress at a pace comfortable to all.

The HPoA II comprises shorter implementation period than the first PoA which on the one hand, allows ARF Participants to be adaptable to emerging challenges. On the other hand, it requires Participants to be more focused and effective in its implementation. Utilising the work of national and regional think tanks as well as ARF Experts and Eminent Persons is underscored in the HPoA II. Engaging and networking directly with other actors such as Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), and ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS), including regional and international organizations, and listening to voices that embody diversity and inclusivity will help advance the HPoA II implementation as well as enhance the ARF's relevance.

In realising the ARF's full potential and objective, greater attention should be given to reviewing the ARF Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy adopted in 2011, with a view to identify gaps and challenges in moving the ARF process forward from Stage I - Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) to Stage II – Preventive Diplomacy (PD), as well as enable a more efficient and effective policy response to emerging challenges. It is imperative to increase the capacity and capabilities of the ARF in the area of PD which includes helping prevent disputes and conflicts from arising between states and minimise the impact of such disputes and conflicts on the region. PD measures/mechanisms must be subject to a step-by-step approach, non-coercive, voluntary and conducted in accordance with universally recognised norms and principles of international law, and inter alia, in line with the UN Charter and the TAC.

Moving forward, the ARF needs to continue positioning and revitalising itself to address emerging challenges in a holistic manner. A novel idea should be explored so that the ARF can truly serve as a platform for constructive dialogues on security issues affecting the region. Maintaining the ARF relevance and significance as an action-oriented forum is also imperative. In this regard, the ARF needs to enable its work to be synergised with other ASEAN-led mechanisms such as ADMM-Plus and the EAS, as well as to promote cooperation with other regional and international bodies such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). In so doing, the ARF will remain relevant and credible in bringing regional players and stakeholders together in constructive dialogues and security cooperation in the region.

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

The current regional security landscape is very challenging due to its complex and unprecedented nature. The development of regional geopolitical tensions between strategic powers and domestic political dispute within ARF participants might have been destabilizing the regional security in the last twelve months. This complex and unprecedented regional security situation is even more aggravated by the impact of the *force majeure* of global Covid-19 pandemic. Without diminishing the importance of other regional security issues, Timor-Leste views three most pressing regional security issues to be observed by ARF participants namely the Covid-19 pandemic and the geopolitical and security tensions emerged in the region.

The COVID-19 pandemic is now the overriding challenge for the region and the world. Its humanitarian and socio-economic impacts threaten to reverse development gains, delay economic activities and also lead to instability in some countries and increase vulnerability to other security risks. Timor-Leste shares the view that due to the global nature of the COVID-19 and its magnitude that no country can overcome this unprecedented challenge alone but to cooperate to respond the challenge effectively.

Timor-Leste has reported increasing number of cases early this year and it continues to address COVID-19 impacts with the support of other nations. Timor-Leste highly appreciates the generous assistance from countries from the region and beyond to fight the pandemic. Timor-Leste acknowledges the support from the United Nations (WHO) and from some ARF participants namely Australia, USA, China, ASEAN and others. Timor-Leste stands ready and will cooperate with regional partners to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic and to support ARF participants' efforts in building resilience to respond to the pandemic towards regional economic recovery.

Timor-Leste is following closely the development of political crisis in Myanmar where cases of fatalities and escalation of violence have attracted a world-wide attention. To strengthen regional solidarity and resilience in the region, Timor-Leste is of the view that the political stability in ASEAN Member States is essential to achieving a peaceful, stable and prosperous ASEAN Community. Hence, it is imperative to maintain the unity, centrality, and relevance in the region and to collectively address common challenges. Timor-Leste, therefore, calls for all parties concerned to seek an immediate solution for the crisis.

Timor-Leste highly appreciates the initiative by ASEAN Leaders to find a solution for the political crisis in Myanmar at the ASEAN Leaders Meeting convened in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 24 April 2021. The statements of the ASEAN Leaders from this meeting marked an important step for the resolution of the crisis. The meeting was conducted at the right time to negotiate a solution through trust building and confidence building measures for a peaceful solution for the crisis guided by the principles of preventive diplomacy and ASEAN Charter.

Timor-Leste is confident that ASEAN under the leadership of Brunei Darussalam as the current chair of ASEAN, will play positive and constructive role in facilitating a peaceful solution in the interest of the people of Myanmar. Timor-Leste shares the view that the implementation

of the “Five-Point Consensus” agreed in the ASEAN Leaders’ Meeting is an important step to facilitate dialogue, reconciliation and the return to normalcy in Myanmar since it is in line with the ASEAN Charter’s democracy principles.

Relevantly, Timor-Leste is deeply concerned about the escalation of tensions in the region especially concerning the intensified militarization in the South China Sea and the military build-up and exhibition of military powers over the dispute. Timor-Leste views that as the tensions and militarization escalates, it might inevitably pose security dilemma for countries involved in the dispute. Moreover, the failure to navigate this geopolitical challenge effectively may cause countries in the region be locked up in a strategic tug-of-war that could destabilize the whole region’s security.

Timor-Leste continues to support the ASEAN member States’ commitment to sustain united strong position towards the dispute. Timor-Leste commends ASEAN to take the leading role in the resolution of the dispute as it has been in the top of the agenda of ASEAN since 2014. The fact that ASEAN is seen as the only legitimate regional counter-balance force against the disputants over the issue and therefore, ASEAN has the authority to navigate this geopolitical challenge effectively to reach a peaceful resolution.

Above all, Timor-Leste continues to uphold the principle of rules based international order in its international relations’ conduct through dialogue to maintain peace, security and stability, and freedom of navigation and over-flight in the region. Timor-Leste, therefore, encourage all parties to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities and avoid excessive actions that may lead to open conflict. Timor-Leste reaffirms the importance of disputes being resolved peacefully in accordance with international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Timor-Leste also supports the negotiations between ASEAN and China towards a conclusion of Code of Conduct and the importance of the Code being effective, substantive, and consistent with international law, in particular UNCLOS. Timor-Leste commends the leadership of ASEAN and the parties involved in the dispute in pursuing a peaceful solution to the dispute.

2. Overview of National Security and Defense Policy

Timor-Leste has established its National Security and Defense Policy guided by principles enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic opting for an Integrated National Security System. In 2020, the National Security Law was promulgated by the President of the Republic as the legal basis for Timor-Leste’s National Security and Defense Policies formulation. The law establishes a comprehensive and integrated approach to defend Timor-Leste’s sovereignty - the Integrated National Security System of Timor-Leste.

Confronting today’s challenging global and regional security situation where the transnational threats are asymmetrical, scattered, multidirectional and difficult to assess, Timor-Leste is required to develop an integrated approach to defend the essential elements of the State. The national security system is mandated to act under a democratic control and to approach national security matters in a holistic and integrated way. To complement the national security system three other laws are established namely National Defense law, Internal Security Law and Civil Protection Law under the National Security Law.

The integrated national security system justifies its relevance in today's security context by integrating Timor-Leste's defense and security policies and enhancing Timor-Leste's ability to respond to the full range of security threats in the coming decades. This approach recognizes that the security and independence of our nation depends not only on strengthening Timor-Leste's military and security forces capabilities, but also on strengthening Timor-Leste's civil society, building respect for the rule of law and human rights, supporting good governance and establishing strong and effective civil institutions.

Timor-Leste's integrated national security system is composed by three main entities namely:

- a. The supervisory, control and advisory body comprising the President of Republic, the National Parliament, the Superior Council of Defense and Security, the Government and Judiciary;
- b. The coordination, command and control body comprising the Inter-ministerial Commission for Security and Integrated Crisis Management Center led by Prime Minister;
- c. The Operational components of the national security system comprising the defense forces, internal security forces and civil protection elements.

The President of the Republic is the Supreme Commander of the armed forces and has the power to oversee the implementation of national defense and security policies by the Government. The National Parliament based on article 95th of the Constitution, has the legislative power to define defense and security policies, and has the competence to supervise the implementation of national defense and security policy. The Human Rights and Justice Ombudsman is the State's organ, in collaboration with National Parliament, civil Society and media, monitor and control the acts of security and defense in order to protect and promote human rights based on the citizens' complaints.

The Government is the entity is in charge of national security policy execution through its relevant institutions and operational components. The Operational Components of the integrated national security system is classified featuring the following agencies:

- a. Defense Force – F-FDTL (FALINTIL Forca da Defesa de Timor-Leste);
- b. National Police of Timor-Leste – PNTL (Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste);
- c. National Intelligence Services - SNI (Servico Nacional de Inteligencia);
- d. Civil Protection National Authority including Firefighter Corps and Civil Protection.
- e. National Maritime Authority;
- f. Civil Aviation Authority;
- g. Detention services;
- h. Migration Services;
- i. Civil Security;
- j. Customs;
- k. Municipal Security Councils;
- l. Quarantine Services.

Timor-Leste's national security system guarantees synergies and efficiency and effectiveness in the execution of competence and in the use of resources in a rational way by its components. The law also regulates clearly the intervention of each component of the security

system which is determined by the dimension of threats regulated by its own organic law. The system is therefore operated based on the principle of complementarity and subsidiarity.

a) Cooperative Security

Timor-Leste adopts a cooperative security policy to respond to contemporary security challenges. It is in the best interest of Timor-Leste to work cooperatively with its neighboring countries including ASEAN through various platforms and mechanism to address common security challenges faced by the region. Timor-Leste's cooperative security is guided by the National Strategic Concept for Defense or National Defense White Paper adopted in 2015.

As a young State of the millennium, Timor-Leste continues to develop and modernize its defense capabilities to meet regional and global demands. The F-FDTL (Falintil - Forças de Defesa de Timor Leste) which was established in February 2001, is the military body responsible for the defense of Timor-Leste. F-FDTL comprises two infantry battalions, small naval and air components and several supporting units.

In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic, Article: 146 the mission of Defense Force is to guarantee national independence, territorial integrity and the freedom and security of populations against any external aggression or threat, while respecting the constitutional order. In addition to its main mission, the F-FDTL may be employed in other missions in support of civilian authorities, within the framework of the Integrated National Security System, under the Law on National Security, as well as in support of the State's foreign policy, in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

Moreover, in line with the complementary role mandated by national integrated security system, the National Defense Force is also body responsible operationally to tackle crimes such as maritime piracy, IUU Fishing and other maritime related transnational crime. The Defense Force also takes the leading role for the National Maritime Authority which is in charge of addressing transnational crimes such as piracy, human trafficking, drug trafficking, people and goods smuggling, IUUF (Illegal, Unregulated, Unreported Fishing) and other maritime related crimes.

Due to the multidimensional, diffuse and complex nature of the current global security challenges, Timor-Leste has established partnership and cooperation with various partner countries in the region and beyond at the bilateral levels and actively engage in various regional and global security and defense mechanism such as ARF, Shangri-La Dialogue, Xiangshan Forum, DSA Defense Services Asia and Putrajaya Forum, Tokyo Defense Forum, Moscow International Security Forum and Army International Games.

3. National Contributions to Promote Regional Peace and Security

Timor-Leste understands the importance of establishing of strong and mutual benefit cooperation with different countries both in the region and outside to have a collective response to promote security and stability in the region. Equally, a strong collective response to the threats requires an effective response capacity to be developed. Accordingly, Timor-Leste is committed to contributing effectively in existing cooperative arrangements in Asia-Pacific region based on its own capacity.

a) Counter-Terrorism (CT) and Transnational Crime (TC)

Terrorism and transnational crime is a common security concern posing unforeseen challenges for all in the Asia Pacific region. Due to its vast and diverse geographic nature, the region has been a permanent target spot for terrorists or criminals to operate both as their transit and destination points. Albeit the existing cooperation between ARF countries in the region have been strengthened to suppress and prevent the crime but it is still evolving along each country's borders. The threat is even more challenging since terrorists and criminals have well-organized structures and networks benefiting from the opportunities provided by globalization and regional integration changes. These have made the criminals' movement along the national border easier capitalizing on the atmosphere where the flow of human, finance and technology from one country to another becoming free and much easier. Criminals have also made use of the sophisticated and rapid development of the information and technology to ease their communication and their activities, has even posed greater risks for countries to counter and control these crimes effectively.

Timor-Leste has established cooperation with relevant agencies and countries in the region including ARF Participants to fight terrorism and transnational crimes. The ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism is important framework provided for regional cooperation to counter, prevent and suppress terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and to deepen cooperation among law enforcement agencies and relevant authorities of the parties in countering terrorism.

Timor-Leste has developed its legal frameworks and policies for Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crimes to align with regional and global legal frameworks. Timor-Leste has ratified the United Nations Convention on elimination of financing terrorism in 2014, which requires that Timor-Leste must comply with the guiding principles of the convention resembling the seventh principles of ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism. Timor-Leste has criminalized the acts of terrorism through its Penal Code of June 2009 stipulating provisions applicable for fighting terrorism including definition of terrorist organization, penalties for terrorism, funding of terrorism and money laundering.

Timor-Leste has also ratified the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Additional Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air and the Additional Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in persons, especially Women and Children". The National Parliament has also approved Laws to Combat Drug Trafficking and Prevent and Fight against Human Trafficking on 23rd of January 2017.

Furthermore, Timor-Leste has adopted counter terrorism measures in accordance with Global Standards on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Financing of Terrorism (AML/CTF). Approval of Law no. 17/2011, 28 December on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Financing of Terrorism (AML/CTF) defining prevention and combating measures; and the creation of Financial Information Unit (FIU) and its roles and responsibilities of reporting entities and supervisory authority and administrative sanctions.

Timor-Leste's National Police Force (PNTL) plays the role for preventing and combating organized crimes and terrorism in coordination with other national security forces including the defense force and the national intelligence services (SNI). PNTL has a special counter-terrorism unit for special operations including a bomb squad to respond to extreme violence

by terrorist attacks. This special unit is supported by its maritime unit force in charge of prevention of illegal fishing, human trafficking, drugs and piracy crimes and also supported by border control unit with specific missions, the migration services and criminal investigation unit.

Another important law enforcement agency for counter terrorism including transnational crimes investigation was established in 2014 was the Scientific Police for Criminal Investigation (PCIC) under the tutelage of Ministry of Justice. PCIC will be the main agency representing the country and expertise to contribute to cooperation to combat transnational crime, particularly on priority areas of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC)/Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC)/ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM) and the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD)/ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD).

The National Maritime Authority which is under the direction of Defense Force, is also tasked to address transnational crimes such as terrorism, piracy, human trafficking, drug trafficking, contraband, IUUF (Illegal, Unregulated, Unreported Fishing) and other maritime related crimes. In terms of drug and human trafficking, PCIC, PNTL, Custom, F-FDTL and Immigration are collectively responsible to address this issue.

b) Counter Terrorism and transnational cooperation

Timor-Leste continues to maximize its efforts to enhance the existing cooperative arrangements with ARF participating countries and other countries in the region and beyond.

The National Police (PNTL) has established cooperation with relevant law enforcement agencies by engaging actively with its regional law enforcement agencies both from its proximate neighboring countries and the region. PNTL has been participating actively in annual meetings on border security issues with its counterparts from Australia and Indonesian National Police (POLRI) and its counter-terrorism units. Since 2002, PNTL has been supported by Australian Federal Police and New Zealand Police. PNTL has worked closely with the US Federal Law Enforcement Agency – DEA, Inter Pol, Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). PNTL has also been actively participating in annual Asia Pacific Group on money laundry forums and engaged in ASEANPOL meetings and in United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) meetings.

For capacity building purposes, PNTL unit for investigation of organized crimes and transnational crimes participated in various levels of courses provided by some ARF member states including International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) and Jakarta Centre for Law and Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) of Indonesia. The cooperation has extended over the years to include ore agencies namely APMLA (Asian Pacific Medico Legal Agency), INPALMS (Indo-Pacific Association of Law, Medicine & Science), AFSN (Asian Forensic Sciences Network), and JRR (Justice Rapid Response) in corporation with Institute for International Criminal Investigations (IICI).

Timor-Leste is also a member of Asia Pacific Group (APG) since 2008 and has participated actively in annual plenary meetings by sharing of typologies information across the global; and been subjected to mutual evaluation to assess the level of compliance with FATF

standards. Timor-Leste has attended the its first Mutual Evaluation of 2011/2012 and will be participating in the next Mutual Evaluation of 2021/2022.

To foster the international legal cooperation in this issue, the Decree-Law No.10/2019 and the Organic Law of Minister of Justice define the competence and function of the Ministry of Justice. It is the primary agency to elaborate on all laws related to criminal matters. It is also responsible for international legal matters in close coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste (MoFAC-TL).

Timor-Leste continues to build its capacity to respond to transnational crimes with the cooperation with ARF participating countries. The table below indicates the on-going security cooperation between the Ministry of Interior/ immigration/PNTL of Timor-Leste and the ARF Member States (as of 31 March 2021):

ARF Country Partners	Areas of Cooperation
Australia	Training in the areas of English Languages, Fraud document, passenger assessment.
China	Narcotics and anti-hijacking
European Union (EU)	Human Trafficking
Thailand	Transnational crime, human trafficking and corruption
Malaysia	Training in the area of Fraud document
Singapore	Border control training on management

Timor-Leste is committed to strengthen cooperation in the region on preventive measures such as information sharing and capacity-building in countering the threats of counterterrorism and transnational crime. Timor-Leste continues to support the existing work of the ARF ISM on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) as a framework to address regional terrorism, transnational crime and other emerging transnational crime and enhance exchange of best practices in the field of law enforcement, and strengthen cooperation, including in the area of border management.

c) Non-proliferation, Counter-proliferation, arms control and disarmament

The Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste clearly stipulates that Timor-Leste shall conduct its foreign policy aiming at the peaceful settlement of conflicts, the general, simultaneous and controlled disarmament. Consistently, Timor-Leste is a State Party to the Non-Nuclear Proliferation Treaty, the Mine Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Having acceded to The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, on the 5th of May 2003, Timor-Leste is committed to support international efforts on non-proliferation and disarmament.

Timor-Leste's position on this issue is entirely consistent with its long held advocacy of peace to prevent the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons to happen. Timor-Leste was one of 122 of the United Nations 192 Member States to endorse a landmark Draft treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons in September 2017. Timor-Leste strongly supports the work to prohibit nuclear arms with the view that all efforts must be exerted to eliminate the threat of these weapons of mass destruction.

Considering the catastrophic effects of a nuclear weapon detonation, whether by accident, miscalculation or design cannot be adequately addressed, Timor-Leste, therefore, is committed to undertake to never under any circumstances develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

At the regional level, Timor-Leste has participated in ARF meetings and events on nuclear risk reduction to share and exchange of views to realize its commitments on the issue. Timor-Leste shares the view that nuclear disarmament remains the end goal (or objective) and promoting global cooperation for risk reduction can be an interim measure before total nuclear disarmament is achieved. Nuclear risk reduction shall not be in any way stop, delay or undermine the efforts for nuclear disarmament.

As a Non-Nuclear Weapons State (NNWS), Timor-Leste strongly believes in the role played by ARF in gathering efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy which can contribute to nuclear risk reduction as a collective endeavor of all parties both NWS and NNWS including Timor-Leste. The involvement of NNWS in the discussion of the risk reduction of matter through political dialogue and confidence-building among States may assist in the non-escalation of conflict and therefore eliminate the reason to use lethal weapons.

Timor-Leste is interested in being part of the process to ensure that the measures that will be adopted are meaningful to achieve the objective of risk reduction. However, it shall also be recognized that such a process will have to strike the balance of the needs of NNWS to access the information and the interest of NWS.

Timor-Leste stands ready to support the work of the ARF ISM on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (NPD) as a framework to address issues of non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear technology towards the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction to realize the goals of ARF Hanoi Action Plan.

d) Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Timor-Leste occupies a region prone to droughts, cyclones, earthquakes, floods, storms and landslides, still facing the growing risk of rising sea levels, which cause serious accidents and catastrophes with a high number of victims, damages and financial losses and materials. The recent destruction caused by 'Cyclone Seroja' early April 2021 accentuates this vulnerability and fragility of Timor-Leste facing such a natural calamity.

Timor-Leste extends its gratitude to ARF participants who have contributed to alleviate the suffering and the loss caused by the recent natural disaster by providing humanitarian assistance both bilaterally and multilaterally. This assistance is also showcase of how ARF participants can cooperate to respond to disaster through its mechanisms. Timor-Leste supports ASEAN as an important organization in order to develop together with other countries in the area of disaster management and relief, especially in developing the strategies of mutual support in case of catastrophe that affects any of these countries. It is essential to develop cooperation in the various areas, be it joint training, or in the preparation of joint support that is immediately available to the country that suffers a catastrophe.

Timor-Leste has its Institutional set-up and policies to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in line with the national security system. Under the national integrated security system, the Secretary of State for Civil Protection (CP) is the institution responsible for the design, coordination and implementation of all policies defined and approved by the Council of Ministers in the area of civil protection. Timor-Leste's Government continues to develop its capacities in disaster management and emergency response (DMES) within the purview of Civil Protection.

The National Parliament of Timor-Leste has approved the Civil Protection Law. The law defines and orientates civil protection policies with emphasis on the definition of National Civil Protection System, and the Civil Protection Authority (CPA) as the entity that is responsible for all regulations and coordination related to the civil protection initiatives operationally at the national, regional and municipal level.

Timor-Leste's main policy on disaster risk management is the National Disaster Risk Management Policy (NDRM Policy) which was adopted in 2008. The central approach is that disaster risk management shall be inclusive (involvement of relevant actors, including the local authority and community) and integrated (coordination and cooperation between relevant authorities in responding to disaster). The NDRM Policy covers four pillars, which are prevention, mitigation, response to emergency, and recuperation.

In order to achieve the policy objectives under the NDRM, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste continues to improve its capabilities by collaborating with bilatera and multilateral partners. With the support of some ARF participants namely Japan, Indonesia and Thailand, the Government has in place an Early Tsunami Detection System and cooperates with these countries to obtain information related to disaster risk. Timor-Leste has established cooperation with Indian the Ocean Tsunami Information Center on information pertaining to tsunami disaster preparedness. Moreover, Timor-Leste's Secretary of State for Civil Protection has signed an agreement with Australia Humanitarian Partnership and the focusing on cooperation in the area of capacity building, prevention, mitigation and resilience.

Therefore, Timor-Leste is committed to support existing mechanisms by actively engaged in the established ARF framework and the work of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief. Timor-Leste stands ready to support and contribute to the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response Work Programme and the operationalization of the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response and the 2018 ARF Statement on Disaster Management Cooperation through concrete, practical and enhanced activities.

Timor-Leste is committed to support the ARF Hanoi Action Plan to strengthen cooperation on humanitarian and disaster relief responses. Timor-Leste looks forward to strengthening its cooperation with emphasis on practical cooperation with ARF participating countries in various activities such as civil-military coordination that enhances regional capacity and strengthen preparedness and response, holding of regular trainings/activities among ARF Participants, development of tools and common standard operating procedures, sharing of best practices and lessons learnt with other international bodies dealing with disaster risk reduction and disaster relief, public health emergencies, climate change adaptation such as the United Nations (UN), and other regional mechanisms and information sharing and capacity building for an effective regional disaster response.

e) Maritime Security

Timor-Leste is positioned in the strategic triangle between two oceans of the Indian and the Pacific and located at the confluence of important and busy international maritime routes, along with the growing use and exploitation of the sea. This unique geographic position has placed Timor-Leste in a pivotal position between the two important regions of the Asia-Pacific and South East Asia, somewhat has increased Timor-Leste's political and strategic potential.

In September 2015, Timor-Leste launched its National Strategic Concept for Defense and Security with special focus on maritime security. This is in line with the long-term strategic plan for the Timor-Leste Defense Force which highlighted Timor-Leste as a maritime nation. In that respect, Timor-Leste should focus on sustaining and reinforcing its maritime domain.

Timor-Leste is well aware that lack of useful maritime security capabilities not only impacts on the nation's security but will also affect the safety in and around its waters. The high volume of maritime traffic in the region and rise in illegal activities such as piracy, maritime terrorism, human trafficking, organized crime, and other non-traditional security threats that have been on the rise has even complicated the mission of any modern maritime security forces and has increased the need for cooperation among states to combat these threats.

This raises particular challenges for the defense of Timor-Leste and for the development of the F-FDTL. Timor-Leste will need to develop its naval capacity to deal with these maritime security threats as well as contributing to broader regional efforts to tackle maritime threats. Therefore, Timor-Leste has to build the capacity of F-FDTL and its naval component (CFNL) to undertake monitoring, surveillance, police and rescue activities in maritime zones under our national jurisdiction, while ensuring that these activities are supported by an adequate legislative framework through the maritime authority system.

Timor-Leste shares the global view that that cooperative security is unattainable without the security of the seas and is committed to develop its maritime security capabilities to have a stronger naval force, more efficient and more professional to defend the sea. To date, Timor-Leste has established partnership and cooperation with Indonesia, Australia, China, Japan and India, the United States and other countries in the region.

To further strengthen the maritime institutional framework for better coordination, Timor-Leste Government through the Council of Ministers, On the July 15, 2020 approved a draft Decree-Law concerning the creation of the Maritime Authority System (SAM). This Diploma aims to affirm national sovereignty and project the State's authority in waters under Timorese jurisdiction, in line with the Strategic Concept of Defense and National Security in force. SAM is the institutional framework for the coordination of entities, bodies or services at the central and peripheral level that, with coordination, executive, advisory or police functions, exercise powers of State authority over maritime spaces under national sovereignty or jurisdiction. With this Decree-Law, the National Maritime Authority (AMN) is also created, which is, by inertness, the Chief of Staff-General of the Armed Forces. The Directorate of the Maritime Authority and its services with SAM competences are also established.

Timor-Leste is committed and stands ready to cooperate with ARF participants in developing institutional arrangements and capacities to address maritime security issues such as piracy,

people smuggling, drug trafficking and the protection of the marine environment. Timor-Leste also underscores the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, freedom of navigation and over flight in the region, at the same time emphasizing the importance of upholding international law, particularly the 1982 UNCLOS.

4. Role of the ARF

Timor-Leste joined ARF in 2005 after restoration of its independence in 2002. Timor-Leste is of the view that since its founding in 1994, the ARF has become a key and inclusive Forum working towards peace, security and stability in the region. ARF continues to be a relevant regional forum for participating nations to foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and concern and to make significant contributions to efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region. Timor-Leste is, therefore, committed to work with its ARF partners to bring about a more predictable and constructive pattern of relations in the region to ensure that ARF could become an effective consultative Asia-Pacific Forum for promoting open dialogue on political and security cooperation in the region.

Timor-Leste acknowledges that ARF has made notable progress in fostering dialogue and cooperation as well as mutual trust and confidence among the participants. The Ha-Noi Plan of Action II (2020-2025) has been the guide for the ARF's cooperation, development and activities for the next 5 years. However, on the future role of the ARF, Timor-Leste shares the hope that the ARF, building on the existing achievements, could do more to reach its potential and become action-oriented, with more concrete activities implemented on the ground and responsive to new realities in the region. Being one of ASEAN-led mechanisms, Timor-Leste strongly supports the role of ASEAN as the primary driving force in steering the ARF to develop further as a central pillar in the evolving regional security architecture.

Timor-Leste would hope to see the Inclusive Processes for Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution is implemented in ARF expanding the commitment in section 1.6 of the Hanoi Plan of Action II (2020-2025) that is to encourage the effective implementation of the Joint Statement on Promoting the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to promote women's empowerment in political and security processes. Building on the commitments of the Hanoi Plan of Action II (2020-2025), adopted at the 27th ARF Ministerial Meeting on 12 September 2020 in Hanoi, Vietnam, it is also relevant to enhance the inclusion of nongovernmental actors and youth in the ARF processes.

Finally, Timor-Leste is committed to working with ARF Participant countries to promote security and peace and to promote an open, inclusive and prosperous region defined by respect for international law, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. ARF remains the relevant ASEAN led-mechanism; therefore, Timor-Leste stands ready to support ASEAN to play its central role in supporting the rules and norms that have underpinned regional security and prosperity for more than 50 years.

UNITED STATES

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

For over 20 years, **the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)** has worked to advance stability and cooperation within the **Indo-Pacific** region. Traditional and non-traditional security concerns continue to pose a challenge to peace and stability in the region, making ongoing engagement through the ARF valuable. The ARF has been successful over time using open dialogue, tangible cooperation, civil society, **inclusivity, and results-driven initiatives** to find common understandings and solutions to emerging challenges. Through our membership in the ARF, **the United States affirms its commitment to finding inclusive and consensus-based solutions in accordance with respect for international law, human rights, and mutually shared values. ASEAN centrality** plays an essential role in the ARF process, and the United States fully supports a constructive action- and results-oriented ARF with ASEAN at its core. Furthermore, the United States believes that clearly defined, proactive approaches in the ARF process will yield the largest benefits to long-term **regional stability**. Therefore, we pledge to support the ARF to advance its goal of advancing from **Confidence Building to Preventive Diplomacy to Conflict Resolution**. Furthering coordination between the various ASEAN-centered multilateral fora and streamlined and focused engagements will continue to help the ARF progress to achieve its goals. Therefore, the United States urges all ARF participants to **engage with deliberation, understanding, and vision** to deepen our cooperation and advance peace in the **Indo-Pacific region** for decades to come.

The United States-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security is a cornerstone of our strategic engagement in the Indo-Pacific. The U.S.-Japan Alliance codified by this treaty advances a shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific. We are committed to peacefully resolving disputes and to opposing coercion and cooperate on a wide range of regional and global security issues. The close cooperation between Japan and the United States in responding to the region's natural disasters demonstrates the importance of our relationship and our exceptional capabilities to respond quickly. We have taken steps to expand our security cooperation by revising the Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation to ensure that the bilateral alliance continues its vital role in deterring conflict and advancing peace and security. We are also moving forward with the Government of Japan to implement our military base realignment and consolidation plan. Progress on force realignment will help us to establish a geographically distributed, operationally resilient, and politically sustainable force posture in the Indo-Pacific region – critical to U.S. national interests and to ensuring peace and stability in the region. We continue to work closely with the Japanese Government to address emerging challenges in space and cyberspace, and to strengthen our missile defense capabilities to counter threats from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). In the ARF, Japan has played an active leadership role on Information Communication Technology (ICT) and cyber issues, including as a co-chair of the ARF Intersessional Meeting on Information and Communications Technology Security (ARF ISM on ICTs Security). The United States commends Japan for its strong commitment to add the collective voice of the influential G7 nations to discussions on maritime security challenges, humanitarian and disaster relief efforts, peacekeeping operations, global economic resiliency, climate change, cyber policy issues, global health system improvements, the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, and human rights policies in the Indo-Pacific.

Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK) is the linchpin of regional security and represents our ironclad commitment to the defense of the ROK. We will continue to enhance ongoing work within the Alliance to deepen our comprehensive strategic partnership based on our common values and mutual trust. In the past year, we continued diplomatic efforts to achieve the denuclearization of the DPRK and bring a lasting peace to the Korean Peninsula. We continue to make progress in advancing U.S.-Japan-ROK trilateral cooperation and enjoy well-established cooperation in missile defense. We continue to support trilateral information sharing on DPRK missile and nuclear capabilities. The United States has also prioritized efforts to implement the multiple UNSCRs on the DPRK, while leading a multinational effort to counter illicit North Korean maritime activity. The U.S.-ROK relationship has evolved into a global partnership. We are working together, not only on the Korean Peninsula and in the region, but also in places such as Lebanon, South Sudan, and off the coast of Somalia. This collaboration includes global health security, peacekeeping activities, stabilization and reconstruction activities, WPS, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) efforts.

Australia is one of our most important regional partners. The Australia-New Zealand-United States (ANZUS) security treaty is the foundation of defense and security cooperation between the United States and Australia. This in turn is the anchor to security for likeminded countries in the South Pacific. Australia is committed to ensuring the Indo-Pacific and its security, economy, and media remain free and open, and regional partners look to Australia for leadership in the Pacific. AUSMIN (the Australia-U.S. Ministerial Consultations) is an annual “2+2” dialogue among the U.S. Secretaries of State and Defense and their Australian counterparts. Interoperability with U.S. forces is a foundational part of Australia’s military modernization across all domains (Air, Sea, Land, Space, and Cyberspace). Rotations of U.S. Marines and U.S. Air Force aircraft in Australia’s Northern Territory improve interoperability and capacity through bilateral and multilateral training and exercises in the region. Marine Rotational Force – Darwin (MRF-D) has evolved from a bilateral training activity into a platform for conducting multilateral engagement with countries such as Tonga, Fiji, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, and Sri Lanka. Discussions during AUSMIN 2020 produced a Statement of Principles on Alliance Defense Cooperation and Force Posture Priorities in the Indo-Pacific that looks to build on the landmark agreement from 2011 establishing MRF-D. The Force Posture Working Group is developing new recommendations that will advance force-posture cooperation in the Indo-Pacific to deter coercive acts and the use of force. The United States-Australia-Japan Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (TSD) – which met at the minister level in August 2017 and again in August 2019 – also plays a positive role in enhancing regional stability and security, and Australia’s October 2020 participation in Malabar naval exercises laid the groundwork for additional maritime security cooperation in the Indian Ocean with India Talisman Sabre 2019, the largest ever bilateral defense exercise at more than 34,000 troops, showcased the breadth and depth of the U.S.-Australia mil-to-mil relationship and featured a ship visit to the USS Ronald Reagan by Prime Minister Morrison. The biennial exercise is set to take place again in 2021 despite the challenges of operating in a pandemic environment.

The United States-New Zealand bilateral relationship continues to strengthen and mature. Following the November 2016 visit of the USS SAMPSON, the first United States military vessel to pull into port in New Zealand in thirty years, the United States continues sending ships to New Zealand, most recently the USCGC POLAR STAR in early 2020. Our two nations conduct joint military exercises more frequently and we continue seeking new opportunities to increase our interoperability, augmented by New Zealand’s decision to purchase five Lockheed Martin C-130s and four Boeing P-8s. The annual Strategic Dialogue is the United States’ top-level regular policy discussion with New Zealand and was last held in July 2020. The two sides began holding formal defense policy dialogues in 2013 – most

recently meeting in December 2020. The United States continues to value its partnership with New Zealand in advancing the ARF's capacity to address regional security challenges through Preventive Diplomacy; New Zealand's leadership on this issue is critical to maintaining the ARF's effectiveness and relevance as a regional security body. New Zealand is also a critical WPS partner for the United States.

The United States-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty continues to promote stability and security in the Indo-Pacific region. 2021 marks 70 years since the United States and the Philippines signed the agreement. Our bilateral cooperation continues to contribute to regional peace and stability, with particular focus in the areas of maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, counterterrorism, countering violent extremism, and non-proliferation. The United States-Philippines Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, signed in 2014, supports a joint commitment to advancing mutual security interests by increasing our interoperability, supporting the Armed Forces of the Philippines' defense modernization plans, and improving our ability to respond to natural disasters in the region. The United States will continue to advance this enduring strategic alliance through high-level dialogues, such as the Bilateral Strategic Dialogue. Opportunities for progress also exist where we share a common interest in expanding regional defense and security cooperation through the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM)-Plus and other vehicles. The United States continues to support Philippine participation in joint exercises with other partners in the Southeast Asia and Pacific regions, as well as encouraging the Philippines to invite participation by neighboring countries in bilateral military exercises, such as Exercise BALIKATAN. The Philippines is also a party to the Budapest Cybercrime Convention, a multilateral treaty that addresses computer-related crime that is an essential international tool for law enforcement.

The United States and Thailand have been treaty allies for over 60 years, and we continue to collaborate to address humanitarian and security issues such as counterterrorism, counter narcotics, disaster relief, health and infectious diseases, nonproliferation, and maritime security. The United States is committed to our enduring friendship with Thailand and the Thai people, and we welcome Thailand's role in Southeast Asia and the Mekong region. Our security partnership with Thailand is bilateral and regional in scope. The U.S.-Thailand Joint Vision Statement 2020, signed by the two defense leaders last November, outlines the joint strategy between the two militaries to achieve our mutually shared goals into the next decade. In support of this strategy, Thailand and the United States co-host Cobra Gold, the Indo-Pacific region's largest annual multilateral military exercise. Since 1950, Thailand has received U.S. military equipment, essential supplies, training, and assistance in the construction and improvement of facilities. As part of our mutual defense cooperation, we have developed a joint military exercise program that engages all the services of each nation and counts an annual slate of more than 400 military exercises and engagements.

The United States and Indonesia are closely aligned in addressing strategic challenges as partners. In 2015, the United States and Indonesia forged a Strategic Partnership to expand cooperation on shared strategic interests in the region. As part of this partnership, the Secretary of Defense and the Indonesian Minister of Defense signed a Joint Statement for Comprehensive Defense Cooperation that serves as a guide to expand defense collaboration. The statement covers maritime cooperation, peacekeeping, HA/DR, defense joint research and development, countering transnational threats, and military professionalization. To commemorate the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2019, the Secretary of Defense and the Indonesian Minister of Defense signed a Joint Statement that underscored our continuing strong partnership. To build capacity and readiness, the United States and Indonesian militaries conduct regular exercises, such as the Army-to-Army Exercise Garuda

Shield, Air Force fighter jet exercise Cope West, and the Navy-to-Navy exercise Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) in Indonesia. The United States also participates in the Indonesia-hosted multilateral naval exercise Komodo. In 2020, both countries agreed to hold 200 bilateral activities. The United States military values its close partnership with Indonesia in areas that closely align with United States security interests, such as maritime security, counterterrorism, and HA/DR. Indonesia continues to focus its professional military education on sending students to the United States National and Service War Colleges, United States Service Command and General Staff Colleges, and Maritime Security and Defense Professionalization courses. Over the last five years, the United States has invested over \$5M in institutional capacity building, providing over 1,000 hours of workshops and engaging 3,000 military and civilian officers to improve defense strategy, planning, budgeting, and acquisition processes. For several years, the United States Coast Guard and Indonesian Maritime Security Agency have been working together closely on maritime security. As we look to the future, the United States aims to invite Indonesia to joint training with the Australians in Darwin and continue to provide top-of-the-line United States military equipment to fulfill Indonesian requests. In 2021, Indonesia will become the United States' country coordinator for ASEAN, and we look forward to close collaboration.

Singapore is a strong partner of the United States and an active participant —regionally and globally — to ensure peace and stability. Our two countries have close and long-standing defense ties with our militaries participating in several bilateral and multilateral exercises each year. In addition, Singapore hosts the rotational deployment of U.S. military aircraft and ships to conduct a variety of maritime patrol activities to counter piracy and terrorism, as well as provide HA/DR in the region. Singapore trains approximately 1,000 military personnel in the United States each year. Singapore was the first and only Asian country to have contributed both assets and personnel to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. Additionally, the Singapore Navy has commanded Combined Task Force 151 in the Gulf of Aden on numerous occasions. In 2019, we made significant progress in our bilateral relationship, including renewing the 1990 MOU governing U.S. presence in Singapore; signing the Guam MOU to establish Singapore's training presence there; and notifying the Congress of Singapore's planned F-35 purchase. In 2018, we further broadened our relationship by renewing a memorandum of understanding for the Third Country Training Program (TCTP), an ASEAN capacity-building initiative jointly managed by the United States and Singapore. Aimed at bridging development gaps in the region, the TCTP has provided technical assistance and training to over 1,200 officials through more than 40 workshops since its inception in 2012. The TCTP curriculum includes non-traditional security threats such as cybersecurity and cybercrime. At the head of government-level meeting in October 2017 and again in September 2019, the United States and Singapore reaffirmed the strong and enduring partnership between our two countries. Recognizing the transboundary nature of cybersecurity threats, the two leaders commended the progress made under the 2016 MOU on Cybersecurity Cooperation and celebrated progress under Singapore's 2018 ASEAN chair year to secure the digital economy as a key engine for future economic growth. In the ARF, Singapore has played an active and strong leadership role on ICT and cyber issues, including as a co-chair of the newly established ISM on ICTs Security. As a like-minded partner on counterterrorism issues and as a co-chair of the ADMM-Plus Expert Working Group on Counterterrorism along with Australia, Singapore plays an important role in facilitating regional efforts against terrorism and violent extremism. As the world's largest transshipment port, we work closely with Singapore on trade security and counter proliferation efforts, and Singapore continues with its trial of the World Customs Organization's Cargo Targeting System (CTS).

The relationship between the United States and Malaysia has reached new heights in recent years, and the United States is eager to continue working with our Malaysian partners to increase regional and global security. A robust slate of bilateral and multilateral

military exercises has enhanced our respective capabilities to promote regional security and respond to humanitarian disasters. The United States values Malaysia's past contributions to the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan, and we are working closely on maritime security and counter terrorism issues, including stopping the flow of foreign terrorist fighters joining ISIS. Malaysia is also an important counterproliferation partner and the United States seeks to increase cooperation. The United States looks forward to working closely with Malaysia in advancing our shared priorities and interests in the context of promoting regional cooperation, peacekeeping capacity building, respect for international law, ASEAN centrality, and the maintenance of peace and stability. In the ARF, Malaysia has played an active and strong leadership role on ICT and cyber issues, including in the newly established ISM on ICTs Security. Malaysia also plays an active role in the ISM on Counterterrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC), and hosted a United States-funded ARF workshop on aviation security and information sharing in July 2019.

United States-Vietnam relations have undergone a dramatic transformation since we normalized ties in 1995, and Vietnam has emerged as one of our strongest partners in the Indo-Pacific. Our robust partnership with Vietnam on political, security, economic, and people-to-people ties through a healthy set of annual dialogues continues to grow spanning issues from human rights to security and defense relations, the United States and Vietnam are cooperating in areas such as security, peacekeeping operations, trade, nonproliferation, health, the environment, science and technology, education, WPS, and human rights. Defense ties have grown rapidly over the past several years, embodied by the lifting of the lethal weapon sales ban in 2016 and the historic March 2018 and March 2020 visits of United States aircraft carriers to Danang. In August 2020, as part of the U.S. Department of Defense Excess Defense Articles program, the United States officially transferred a second high endurance cutter to the Vietnamese Coast Guard. In 2019, the United States and Vietnam signed an MOU strengthening cooperation and joint efforts to combat wildlife trafficking as a serious transnational crime. Criminal justice sector ties have also developed rapidly since 2016, with numerous trainings, exchanges, and workshops to increase Vietnam's capacity and interoperability to combat transnational crime, effectively and fairly prosecute crimes, and enhance maritime security in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific.

The **United States-India** global comprehensive **strategic partnership stands upon shared values and complementary visions of a free and open Indo-Pacific region.** The United States government views India as a leading partner in safeguarding a free and open Indo-Pacific. The United States holds regular consultations with India on a range of political, economic, and security issues in both bilateral and multi-country formats. The October 2020 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, led by the Secretaries of State and Defense alongside their Indian counterparts, significantly deepened bilateral defense and strategic cooperation that has continued to expand under the Biden-Harris Administration. The United States convened a Leader-level Summit with India, Australia, and Japan in March 2021. Cabinet-level engagements and leader-level meetings and teleconferences are underpinned by more than 30 additional high-level dialogues and working groups, including climate, defense, regional security, counternarcotic, counterterrorism, peacekeeping, trade, energy, oceans, health, cybersecurity, and education. Secretary Austin's March 2021 visit further catalyzed defense cooperation. Since India's designation as a Major Defense Partner in 2015, we have finalized four major defense enabling agreements to facilitate closer military-to-military cooperation and interoperability, including greater MDA information sharing. The scope, complexity, and frequency of bilateral military exercises has increased, including through the joint services TIGER TRIUMPH exercise which was held for the first time in 2019. The annual MALABAR naval exercise regularly features joint maritime reconnaissance operations, carrier operations, and anti-submarine warfare exchanges, and in 2020 included Australian participation alongside India, the United States, and Japan. India has deepened its involvement with the biennial Rim-

of-the-Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise hosted by U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, and the United States intends to participate in future iterations of the MILAN multilateral exercise. We also look forward to working with India and likeminded partners to deepen humanitarian and disaster relief cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and joint peacekeeping capacity-building efforts. India is also an active participant in the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus mechanism.

The United States seeks a constructive, results-oriented relationship with China. We seek cooperation with China where our interests align, such as establishing a fair and reciprocal trade relationship. In other areas, we will compete to defend American interests and values like transparency, the rule of law, market-based economic competition, freedom of navigation and overflight, human rights, and religious freedom. We remain concerned with China's articulated national strategy of military-civil fusion, which seeks to develop the Chinese military into the world's most capable military, in part through exploitation of its access to the international science, technology and innovation ecosystem, to develop the hard power capabilities to press its regional agenda. China has openly committed to upholding these and other principles that underpin security and prosperity for the Indo-Pacific. The United States asks that China stand by its word and protect the rights of its people, rather than detaining over one million ethnic Muslims in Xinjiang, repressing ethnic minorities throughout the country, violating international obligations in Hong Kong, making unlawful maritime claims in the South China Sea, and engaging in disruptive trade practices. With regards to the South China Sea, the United States has a vital national interest in ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight and other lawful uses of the sea, respect for international law, unimpeded lawful commerce, and peace and stability. The Chinese military's provocative reclamation and militarization of disputed outposts in the South China Sea, its attempts to coerce and intimidate, and planned deployments of floating nuclear power plants in areas of competing maritime claims, threaten the sovereignty of other nations and undermine regional stability. The United States urges all claimants, including China, to manage and resolve disputes peacefully and in accordance with international law as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention. The United States-China economic relationship is very important, and the United States is committed to reaching meaningful, fully enforceable commitments to resolve China's structural issues.

United States defense engagement with Brunei remains robust. Despite the challenges introduced by COVID restrictions on in-person exercises and exchanges, Brunei continues to prioritize our bilateral defense relationship. In addition to continuing our annual bilateral Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) exercise, our annual multilateral naval exercise Southeast Cooperation and Training (SEACAT), and sending a ship to the biennial Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) multinational maritime exercise last year, Brunei agreed to establish Airman-to-Airman Talks and a Sea Surveillance Exercise beginning in 2021. United States military officers have attended the Royal Brunei Armed Forces Staff College since January 2014, with the eighth student, a United States Marine Corps officer currently enrolled. We continue to look for ways to expand our military-to-military cooperation, including through pursuing agreements that would accommodate deeper levels of defense cooperation. On the back of diplomacy and defense cooperation, the promising United States-Brunei relationship aims to help secure mutual security interests in Southeast Asia.

The United States has cooperated with the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) in areas of mutual concern ranging from international peacekeeping, defense reform and professionalization to humanitarian assistance and disaster response. In early 2017, the Royal Cambodian Government suspended all military-to-military exercises with the United States. Since then, they have conducted three joint military exercises with the People's Liberation Army. In response to democratic backsliding, we suspended the delivery of four Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats (RHIBs) and have carefully considered the pace of restoring our

military-military relationship until we see progress. In January 2019, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Felter participated in a Defense Policy Dialogue in Cambodia. In March 2019, INDOPACOM hosted the most recent Bilateral Defense Dialogue laying out the plans for limited cooperation in HA/DR as well as peacekeeping. We continue to cooperate in peacekeeping operations, humanitarian mine action, medical research, and United States Missing in Action personnel accounting.

United States has suspended defense engagement with Burma since the coup. All engagement with and assistance to the Burmese military has been suspended since the February 1, 2021, coup d'état. The United States has reprogrammed aid that had been previously intended to assist the Burmese government to humanitarian, pro-democracy and other efforts that show our continued support for the people of Burma. Nevertheless, the United States continues to use public and private channels to urge the military to cease the violence, release all those unjustly detained, and restore Burma's path to democracy.

Laos' chairmanship of ASEAN and the signing of a Comprehensive Partnership between the United States and the Lao PDR in 2016 provided new opportunities for bilateral engagement. While we continue to address legacy issues, like the important Prisoners of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) accounting mission and helping Laos manage contamination from unexploded ordnance (UXO), we are building a new relationship for the 21st century. The many facets of our cooperation—which include health, law enforcement, trade, education, environmental protection, military issues, cultural preservation, disaster preparedness, trafficking in persons and illegal drugs, entrepreneurship, energy, rule of law programs, and more—address the country's most critical and systemic needs. Laos has served as the United States' country coordinator for ASEAN from 2018-2021 and provided a vital link to the organization.

The United States values defense cooperation with Timor-Leste in areas of mutual concern ranging from HA/DR response to maritime and border security to defense reform and professionalization. During the 2018 Bilateral Defense Discussion, Timor-Leste's Minister of Defense requested United States assistance with rehabilitating Baucau Airfield. An MOU for this multi-million dollar project was signed in June 2020 and a groundbreaking ceremony was held on July 12, 2021. Timor-Leste demonstrated commitment to regional security by participating in a number of multinational exercises. In 2018, Timor-Leste participated in Pacific Angel with the United States Air Force, which included medical and engineer civil action projects. Timor-Leste also participated in Cooperation and Readiness Afloat (CARAT), which enhances their maritime security efforts. The Hari Hamutuk exercise enhances Timor-Leste's interoperability by partnering the F-FDTL with the United States, Australia, and Japan. In 2019, Timor-Leste participated in Pacific Partnership with the United States Navy, which included a HA/DR simulation exercise and symposium. A Navy Seabee detachment has an enduring presence in Timor-Leste since 2009 and partners with the F-FDTL, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Education. The detachment recently completed its 95th construction project. The United States hosts a number of military officers and ministerial civil servants as part of the International Military and Education Training (IMET) program. This year, Timor-Leste will celebrate its first United States Army Command and General Staff College graduate. Timorese IMET graduates continue to fill roles of prominence and enhances defense professionalization. Additionally, the United States sponsors an English language-training course in Timor-Leste, which trains 40 military personnel each year. Timor-Leste has applied to join ASEAN and the United States supports their application.

Papua New Guinea (PNG)'s strategic location makes it a critical partner for the United States and allies in preserving the freedom of navigation in the South Pacific and in advancing other priorities of the Indo-Pacific Strategy. PNG possesses the land area,

population, and endowment of natural resources and relatively diversified economic base to serve as a policy bellwether within the South Pacific. PNG's security challenges include maritime domain awareness; border security; logistics and resourcing; and policing in districts experiencing high rates of crime, gender-based violence, and/or intercommunal violence. Since the successful and peaceful conclusion of the 2019 Bougainville referendum the United States has continued to engage with partner countries, civil society organizations, and government officials as the National Government and the Autonomous Bougainville Government negotiate the referendum's results. Since Papua New Guinea hosted APEC in 2018 and the security cooperation it engendered between PNG and the United States, military forces from both countries have participated in regional exercises, worked to locate missing U.S. World War II personnel, and advanced opportunities to plan for unexploded ordnance (UXO) removal. United States military personnel continue planning and coordination with the PNG Defence Force to build and develop a variety of facilities at the naval base in Lombrum, Manus. Exchange opportunities ranged from conferences and workshops on common priorities like fisheries enforcement and port security – PNG will host an upcoming port security training as part of an ASEAN Regional Forum series – to exploratory talks between national law enforcement agencies in each country to develop capacity building training programs. In 2019, the United States Department of Defense established a permanent Defense Attaché Office at the United States embassy in Port Moresby and will further expand defense cooperation capacity with the establishment of an office for defense cooperation in 2021. Papua New Guinea sent its first cadet to the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York in 2019 and has five candidates under consideration for the United States Naval Academy for the next academic year. Actions taken under the Indo-Pacific Strategy's security pillar complemented other activities that focus on economics (developing a welcoming climate for United States investment and development initiatives) and promote shared Western values (including advancing gender equality and women's empowerment; implementing people-to-people education and cultural exchanges; supporting the fight against HIV and polio; protecting environmental equities in PNG's rich biodiversity; and encouraging resiliency and disaster risk reduction). The United States also aided Papua New Guinea's COVID-19 response through the provision of ventilators and training, including support for isolation, containment, and critical care management; risk communication and community engagement; infection prevention and control; and case detection, surveillance, and lab support. Technical assistance for vaccine deployment will support communication and demand generation; policy, planning, and coordination; health workforce support and training; and service delivery.

The United States and the European Union are deepening collaboration with Asian partners to advance regional security and development, and to build regional institutions and support for the rule of law. The United States and the EU share common goals to promote human rights, freedom of navigation and overflight and other lawful uses of the sea, and respect for international law in the East China Sea and South China Sea. We are working together to encourage China to deepen its engagement with the international community, act in accordance with international law and standards, and participate responsibly in the global economic order. We are also coordinating our messages to condemn potential DPRK provocations, uphold UNSC Resolutions, and pressure the regime to address its egregious human rights abuses. United States-EU cooperation has also played a critical role in supporting Myanmar's ongoing democratic transition, we joint-sponsored in March a UNHRC resolution calling for the creation of a fact-finding mission. We regularly collaborate with the EU through the Friends of the Mekong mechanism as well as other senior-level forums. As Co-Chair of the ARF Intersessional Meeting on Maritime Security, the EU demonstrated a commitment to strengthening a regional MDA architecture using technology and fusions centers to counter IUU fishing and to strengthen the international maritime rules-based order; these efforts are aligned with United States capacity building and policy goals in

Southeast Asia. As we rebalance our interests and investments to the Indo-Pacific, we look forward to continually expanding our coordination with the EU through the ARF and other regional fora.

The **DPRK's UN-proscribed nuclear and ballistic missile programs remain a serious threat to international peace and security.** The DPRK's sophisticated sanctions evasion tactics continue to allow it to abuse the international financial system, generate revenue, and procure items for its unlawful WMD and ballistic missile programs. The United States remains in close contact with the ROK and Japan to coordinate our DPRK engagement; our alliances remain ironclad and ensure peace and stability in the region. All UN Member States must do more to prevent the DPRK from undermining the UN Security Council resolutions aimed at peaceful denuclearization in order to protect international peace and security.

Additional global security issues, such as transnational crime (including drug, human, and wildlife trafficking and other conservation crimes), the security situations in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Afghanistan, the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters and violent extremists returning from the conflicts in Iraq and Syria, and global climate change, all continue to threaten regional and international stability. Many of these issues are transnational in nature and require concrete multilateral and national responses from ARF participants. Results-oriented cooperation has proven to be the best course of action for promoting peace and prosperity in the region. The continued strengthening and growth of the ARF's institutional capacity, enhanced bilateral and multilateral relationships, and burden-sharing efforts provide the best solution to these security concerns.

U.S.-Bangladesh relations have strengthened under the Indo-Pacific Strategy, which has increased U.S. support for maritime security. The United States is the largest donor in the Rohingya crisis response, providing \$1.2 billion since 2017. U.S.-Bangladesh counter terrorism cooperation has improved security within the country, and the United States also continues to support Bangladesh's considerable contributions to international peacekeeping. There are four annual dialogues between the United States and Bangladesh -- the Partnership Dialogue and the Security Dialogue led by the Department of State, Trade and Investment Cooperation Forum Agreement led by USTR and the Defense Dialogue led by INDOPACOM. In December 2019, then-Assistant Secretary of Defense Randal Schriver expanded the defense policy exchange as the highest ranked U.S. defense official to visit Dhaka in many years. The ARF is an important forum for the United States and Bangladesh to raise the welfare of one million Rohingya in Cox's Bazar and push for the establishment of conditions for voluntary, safe, and dignified returns when conditions allow.

The U.S.-Sri Lanka security and economic relationship continues to grow. Key security activities include U.S. Navy port calls, a partnership with the Sri Lanka Navy to establish a Sri Lankan Marine Corps, and exercises with the Sri Lankan Navy and Air Force to build cooperation on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and maritime security issues toward a safe and prosperous Indo-Pacific. Following the tragic 2019 Easter bombings where ISIS-inspired terrorists targeted international hotels and churches and killed over 250 people, the United States assisted Sri Lanka to investigate and prosecute those involved and strengthen counterterrorism cooperation more broadly to prevent recurrence. Additionally, former U.S. Coast Guard cutters, now SLNS Samudura and SLNS Gajabahu play a vital role in combating illegal narcotics trade and protecting Sri Lankan sovereignty. U.S. advisors and assistance continues to assist Sri Lanka in promoting transparency procurement processes, enhance the rule of law, and support government and civil society efforts to promote good governance, accountability, justice, reconciliation, and human rights. Sri Lanka is also a party to the Budapest Cybercrime Convention, a multilateral treaty that addresses computer-related crime that is an essential international tool for law enforcement.

The United States worked to strengthen our engagement with Mekong countries through the Mekong-U.S. Partnership (MUSP). The U.S. strives to build on the development assistance-focused Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI) to broaden cooperation across a range of strategic areas, to focus U.S.-Mekong cooperation under a single whole of government umbrella, and to work with like-minded partners and allies on a commitment to the subregion's security and prosperity. MUSP-supported water data transparency tools, such as the Mekong Dam Monitor, are helping shine a light on unilateral uses of the waters of the Mekong River and its tributaries and are benefitting governments and communities. Cooperation to address the scourge of transnational organized crime in the Mekong subregion has also intensified. Also, this year the **Friends of the Mekong** celebrates 10 years and welcomed new member the Mekong River Commission (MRC) Secretariat. The Friends include the United States, Cambodia, Laos, Burma, Vietnam, Thailand, Australia, EU, Republic of Korea, Japan, New Zealand, Asian Development Bank, World Bank, and Mekong River Commission Secretariat.

2. National Security and Defence Policy

In March 2021, the White House released the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance (Interim Guidance) that will guide the United States' national security and defense policy until the National Security Strategy is published. The Interim Guidance recognizes that preserving America's security requires a whole-of-government approach that leverages a broad range of instruments of national power. The military has a critical role to play in protecting the security of the United States, particularly as it relates to deterring and if necessary, fighting wars, but it is only one instrument of foreign policy. Diplomacy, development, economic measure, and other forms of statecraft—backed by highly capable armed forces that are equipped to deter our adversaries and defeat threats that emerge—are the tools of first resort to advance America's interests globally.

Secretary Austin's Message to the Force, released March 4, 2021, is aligned with the Interim Guidance and provides the overarching strategic framework to inform DoD's near-term efforts. China poses the greatest long-term challenge to the United States, and DoD will prioritize addressing the threat posed by China and its military modernization as its pacing challenge. A combat-credible Joint Force will underpin a whole-of-nation approach to deterrence and ensure the Nation leads from a position of strength. DoD will continue to modernize its forces, global posture, and operational concepts to ensure U.S. armed forces are capable of deterring and defending against aggression that undermines the security of both the United States and our allies.

The United States must also balance competing challenges that stem from advanced and persistent threats to global security. DoD will remain fully ready to deter and, if necessary, respond to aggression stemming from Russia, Iran, and North Korea, and will continue to disrupt violent extremist organizations that pose threats to the U.S. homeland, threats to U.S. forces overseas, and to our allies and partners.

Both the Interim Guidance and Message to the Force also recognize that many of the greatest threats to American prosperity and security—including the climate crisis, global pandemics, cyber threats, and nuclear proliferation—are borderless challenges that require collective action. In order to, address those challenges, the United States must display global leadership and leverage the support of our allies and partners worldwide. In particular, the United States will look to reinvigorate and modernize our approaches and relationships with alliances and partnerships around the world, including both our core alliances in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and East Asia, and our partners in South and Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands. America's network of allies and partners is a unique and powerful competitive

advantage, and one that will help the United States tackle shared challenges, from the climate crisis to China-related defense priorities.

DoD must work by, with, and through our allies and partners to advance shared interests, deter key threats, and help our friends effectively defend their sovereignty, based upon a foundation of mutual respect and accountability. Through our defense relationships, the Department will further its strategic objectives that include sustaining Joint Force military advantages globally; maintaining credible deterrence to prevent aggression against our vital interests; defending allies from military aggression and bolstering partners against coercion; and ensuring common domains remain open and free. By working with allies and partners to align our defense priorities, the United States is better positioned to protect its security interests, deter aggression, support a free and open international order, and foster the conditions for democratic values and economic growth.

Resources:

- a) Interim National Security Strategic Guidance: https://nssarchive.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021_Interim.pdf
- b) DoD Secretary Austin's Message to the Force: <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Mar/04/2002593656/-1/-1/0/SECRETARY-LLOYD-J-AUSTIN-III-MESSAGE-TO-THE-FORCE.PDF>
- c) A broad range of data is publicly available from the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller) at <https://comptroller.defense.gov/Budget-Materials/>

Annual defense expenditures

Figure 1.1. Department of Defense Budget

<i>\$ in billions</i>	FY 2020 Actuals	FY 2021 Enacted	FY 2022 Request	FY21-FY22 Change
Base*	704.6	703.7	715.0	+11.3
Emergency	18.6	--	--	--
Total	723.2	703.7	715.0	+11.3

The President’s FY 2022 Budget Request includes \$715 billion for the Department of Defense. The Budget Request represents an \$11.3 billion or 1.6 percent increase over the FY 2021 enacted level. While this increase slightly less than the anticipated rate of inflation for FY 2022, this funding level, coupled with the tough choices the Department made to realign resources and divest legacy systems, enables DoD to –

- Sustain and advance readiness;
- Protect investments in critical deterrent capabilities such as long range strike, next generation air, advanced munitions, and maritime response;
- Reallocate resources to fund climate resiliency, clean energy, and research and development in advanced technologies; and
- Fund both military and civilian pay raises to ensure that the Department can attract and retain top talent.

Further information regarding the DoD National Defense Budget can be found at:

<https://comptroller.defense.gov/Budget-Materials/>

Total number of personnel in national armed forces

Table A-5. Active Component End Strength (in Thousands)

Service	FY 2021¹	FY 2022	Δ FY21 – FY22
Army	485.0	485.9	+0.9
Navy	342.5	347.8	+5.3
Marine Corps	184.7	184.1	-0.6
Air Force	333.8	327.3	-6.6
Space Force²	38	6.4	+6.4
TOTAL	1,346.0	1,351.5	+5.5

¹FY 2021 reflects projected end strength levels Numbers may not add due to rounding.

²FY 2021 Space Force end strength included in Service numbers (non-add)

Table A-6. Reserve Component End Strength (in Thousands)

ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM ANNUAL SECURITY OUTLOOK 2021

Service	FY 2021 ¹	FY 2022	Δ FY21 – FY22
Army Reserve	189.5	189.8	+0.3
Navy Reserve	60.2	58.8	-1.4
Marine Corps Reserve	38.5	38.5	+0.0
Air Force Reserve	70.1	70.3	+0.2
Army National Guard	336.0	336.5	+0.5
Air National Guard	107.7	108.1	+0.4
TOTAL	801.9	802.0	+0.1

¹FY 2021 reflects projected end strength levels. Numbers may not add due to rounding

3. National Contributions to Regional Security:

The United States remains committed to promoting peace, stability, and consensus in the region by contributing support and participating in a broad range of security activities. The United States specifically focuses on contributing to the following regional issues:

i. Counterterrorism

The United States is actively engaged in multilateral and regional efforts to strengthen regional partners and allies and to promote continued regional cooperation on counterterrorism measures. The human atrocities and extreme acts of violence committed by ISIS are not isolated to the Middle East. ISIS has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to direct and inspire attacks in Europe and Asia, including the horrific attacks in Indonesia, Philippines, and Sri Lanka. It is critical that United States and coalition partners cooperate purposefully to counter ISIS and its violent extremist outgrowths. The Indo-Pacific is not immune to terrorist influence either; therefore, the United States seeks to encourage and support strategic counterterrorism policies in the region. This approach places a premium on building the institutional capacities of states to promote the rule of law and eliminate the underlying conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism.

The United States is deeply concerned about ISIS's continued influence in recruiting followers from Southeast Asia and the terrorist group's ability to inspire attacks in the region. We encourage ASEAN member states to increase both internal and external information sharing on known and suspected terrorists (KST), particularly by requiring the provision and use of Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record (API/PNR) data on all airline passengers and by connecting all points of entry to INTERPOL's I-24/7 global police communications system (I-24/7). To help ensure passenger screening against INTERPOL I-24/7 law enforcement databases, the United States is prepared to assist ASEAN member states in connecting priority ports of entry and automating the reporting of stolen and lost travel documents to INTERPOL. The United States encourages global commitment to implementing UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2396 on countering terrorist travel and addressing the challenges or returning and relocating 2396 on foreign terrorist fighters and their accompanying families, which includes obligations to strengthen border security, watch listing, and information sharing.

The United States encourages partner nations to implement the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy and the recommendations of the Secretary General's Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism, including developing national action plans to take a whole-of-society approach to combating this security threat. The United States works closely with regional partners at the United Nations and in regional fora such as the ARF, ADMM-Plus, Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), and APEC to strengthen counterterrorism capabilities. These include efforts to support regional implementation of the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy and international instruments related to countering terrorism. The United States also cooperates closely with many regional partners in the APEC Counter Terrorism Working Group (CTWG), which contributes to regional security by conducting capacity building projects on issues including countering foreign terrorist fighter travel, strengthening border security, critical infrastructure security and resilience and soft target security, and countering the financing of terrorism. The USG, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), supports ASEAN to establish a comprehensive, multidisciplinary work plan for the implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism under the Manila Declaration, called the PCRVE Work Plan (2019-2025). USAID provided technical experts to work closely with the Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime Working Group on Counterterrorism (SOMTC WG-CT) to draft

the work plan. The drafting process included two regional consultations amongst relevant ASEAN stakeholders (14 ASEAN Bodies) at a meeting in Bali, Indonesia April 4th -5th and amongst civil society organizations in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia July 2nd -3rd (involving 21 CSOs from the region).

The United States also serves with the Russian Federation as the Co-Chair of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT). The GICNT is a voluntary partnership of 89 nations and six official observers, and its mission is to strengthen global capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to nuclear terrorism. To advance its mission, the GICNT has conducted 11 senior-level meetings and more than 100 other multilateral activities, including workshops and tabletop exercises, across the GICNT focus areas of nuclear detection, forensics, and response and mitigation. Thailand and Australia successfully co-hosted a virtual GICNT engagement on nuclear forensics in 2020, and the United States will look to continue partnering with countries in the region to support future GICNT and regional efforts in countering the threat posed by nuclear terrorism.

The ARF Counterterrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) Work Plan contributes to regional security through work in its priority areas – Illicit Drugs; Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN); and Counter Radicalization. The United States is co-leading efforts to combat illicit drugs and CBRN. The United States will partner with the Philippines and ROK to conduct an ARF TTX on Response Capabilities to CBRN Incidents in 2022.

The U.S. Department of State works closely with the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the FBI-administered Terrorist Screening Center (TSC) to support its mission in protecting the United States by promoting effective aviation and border security screening with our foreign partners through enhanced information sharing. For example, an important effort in our counterterrorism work is Homeland Security Presidential Directive 6 (HSPD-6), an initiative on domestic and international information sharing signed following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Through HSPD-6, the State Department works with the TSC to negotiate the exchange of KST identity and encounter data with foreign partners to enhance our mutual border screening efforts. HSPD-6 arrangements establish institutionalized operational mechanisms for the reciprocal sharing of unclassified, biographic KST identities between the United States and select foreign partners. They also facilitate the reporting of encounters with these identities, such as consular and border screening events, between partners. Such arrangements mutually enhance United States and foreign partners' border security by helping prevent and interdict the travel of KSTs while further strengthening our counterterrorism cooperation at a strategic policy level in line with obligations established under UNSCR 2396.

The TSC, as the U.S. government entity that manages the U.S. watchlist, implements these arrangements once signed with foreign partners. These arrangements allow partners to screen identities against a subset of United States government sourced KST data, which can help detect and prevent terrorist travel by creating an extra layer of security on top of the data a country may otherwise use for screening. HSPD-6 arrangements are a pre-requisite to participate in the Visa Waiver Program. To date, the United States has almost 80 such arrangements in place. The U.S. Department of State also works closely with its partners at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to strengthen global aviation security by engaging foreign partners in bolstering aviation screening at last point of departure airports with direct flights to the United States to identify and prevent known or suspected terrorists from boarding commercial flights. The United States has also provided bilateral counterterrorism financing for capacity building assistance to several nations in the region, including the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia. The United States continues to support the

enabling of its partners and allies to secure the region effectively from potential terrorist threats.

ii. Non-proliferation, Counter-proliferation, Arms Control, and Disarmament

The United States will continue to fulfill its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to pursue the objectives of the NPT across its three pillars of nonproliferation, disarmament, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to strengthen the global nuclear nonproliferation regime. The United States will head off costly arms races and re-establish our credibility as a leader in arms control. That is why we moved quickly to extend the New START Treaty with Russia. Where possible, we will also pursue new arms control arrangements. We will take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, while ensuring our strategic deterrent remains safe, secure, and effective and that our extended deterrence commitments to our allies and partners remain strong and credible. The United States underlines the importance of commencing immediately negotiations of a treaty to ban production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, known as a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT), provided that negotiations are governed by consensus and all the key states participate. Since the early 1990s, the United States has maintained a moratorium on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons. Pending the conclusion of FMCT negotiations, we call on all states that have not done so to declare and maintain similar moratoria.

The United States supports the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and is committed to work to achieve its entry into force, recognizing the significant challenges that lie ahead in reaching this goal. In line with the goals of the CTBT, the United States continues to observe its zero-yield nuclear explosive testing moratorium and calls on all states possessing nuclear weapons to declare or maintain such a moratorium.

In the Indo-Pacific region, the substantial projected growth in the PRC's nuclear arsenal, especially when viewed in the context of China's more aggressive and assertive foreign policy, is a key concern for the United States and its allies and partners. As China's nuclear arsenal continues to expand, it will increasingly undermine the security of the United States, our allies, and our partners in the region and may force the United States or other countries to reevaluate the sufficiency of their defense postures. China's nuclear arsenal does not need to equal the U.S. arsenal to fuel an arms race, nor is symmetry between U.S. and Chinese nuclear forces a precursor for China to practice mutual transparency and restraint. The United States will pursue arms control to reduce the dangers from China's growing nuclear arsenal. We hope that Beijing will come to see that arms control is in its security interest. It is not a trap designed to weaken China's defenses, but a mechanism to reduce the risk of military crises and manage the threat of destabilizing arms races, something that should be in the interest of both countries.

The NPT remains critical to our common security. Looking toward the tenth NPT Review Conference, we are encouraging NPT Parties to focus on their common interests in each of the treaty's three pillars of nonproliferation, disarmament, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We seek the universalization of the Additional Protocol to ensure that IAEA safeguards remain effective and robust, both to provide credible assurances that states are fulfilling their NPT obligations and to uphold the Treaty's integrity by addressing noncompliance.

The United States supports practical efforts to advance the global capacity for nuclear disarmament verification. A key effort in this vein is the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV). The IPNDV brings together more than 25 states with and without nuclear weapons under a cooperative framework to further understanding of the

complex challenges involved in the verification of nuclear disarmament and to identify potential solutions to those challenges.

In 2020, representatives from 43 countries participated in the first two meetings of the United States organized Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND) Working Group. During these meetings, the participants deliberated on ways to address challenges in the security environment and improve prospects for disarmament negotiations. As a result of these deliberations, CEND participants established three subgroups to identify ways to improve the international security environment to overcome obstacles to further progress on nuclear disarmament. The United States supports practical efforts to create an environment conducive to further progress on nuclear disarmament and fashioning a world in which nuclear weapons are no longer necessary to deter aggression and maintain global strategic stability. The CEND Working Group provides a forum for the meaningful and realistic dialogue that is necessary to address the underlying security concerns that cause countries to rely on nuclear weapons for their security and to pursue effective measures that will help create such an environment. The United States does not support the TPNW, which will not lead to the elimination of a single nuclear weapons, or enhance any state's security, and therefore is not an "effective measure" as envisioned by the NPT. The five NPT nuclear-weapon states (P5) have met regularly to discuss nuclear policy, promote mutual confidence, and discuss issues related to the fulfillment of the NPT.

The United States supports the expansion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy in conformity with the NPT and according to international standards of safety, security, and nonproliferation) and believes it can be a clean, reliable source of energy for states seeking to meet increasing energy demands. Such efforts must be conducted in accordance with high standards for international safeguards and in full cooperation with the IAEA. The next generation of reactors, including small modular reactors (SMRs), offer a new nuclear power pathway for countries. These technologies have economic and safety advantages, can be right sized for the grid capacity, and offer a range of applications beyond electricity generation. The United States will continue its technical outreach and partnership to raise awareness of SMRs' benefits, diverse applicability and related nuclear security, safety, and safeguards considerations. As part of this effort, the United States will continue to raise awareness among regional partners of nuclear nonproliferation and security concerns, including but not limited to the anticipated deployment of floating nuclear power plants in the Indo-Pacific region. The United States is engaged in capacity-building cooperation with agreed ASEAN partners in this topical area as part of the Foundational Infrastructure for Responsible Use of SMR Technology (FIRST) program. The United States intends to co-host with Vietnam an ARF-approved workshop on *Nuclear Nonproliferation Safety and Security Standards and the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Technology* and is conducting a series of remote engagements with select ASEAN Member States considering including SMRs in their nuclear power programs.

The IAEA also supports work to promote the non-power application of nuclear science and technologies to help countries achieve national development priorities. The United States is the largest contributor of extra-budgetary funds to IAEA work in peaceful uses of nuclear energy, an important demonstration of our longstanding commitment to global peaceful nuclear cooperation consistent with our obligations under Article IV of the NPT. U.S. extra-budgetary contributions to the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Program and Peaceful Uses Initiative (PUI) support IAEA activities that assist in building national capabilities to apply nuclear techniques to meet national development goals in areas such as human and animal health, food security, and water resource management, and to address environmental issues such as climate change. Last year, the United States announced a new contribution of \$50 million to the IAEA's PUI through 2024, bringing U.S. contributions to the IAEA's PUI to a total of more than \$117 million. To date, the PUI has supported nearly 200 IAEA projects that benefit

people in more than 150 IAEA Member States. In the past few years, U.S. contributions have been allocated to support IAEA programs such as the Women's Cancer Partnership Initiative and the Program of Action for Cancer Therapy, and regional projects in Asia on seafood safety, the development of electron beam and x-ray technology to enhance food safety and security and sustaining a network of veterinary diagnostic laboratories in Asia.

We believe that adopting the IAEA's Additional Protocol (AP) to a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement is an important step that states can take to strengthen IAEA safeguards and the global nuclear nonproliferation regime. We call upon all ARF participants who have not yet done so to sign and ratify the AP and, as appropriate, to modify or rescind any Small Quantities Protocol based on the original outdated model. We stand ready to help states build capacities to fully implement the AP. As noted in the November 2013 Joint ASEAN-United States Leader's Statement, the ARF also can play an important role in helping states comprehend the AP and overcome any challenges to its implementation.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery, as well as illicit spread of related materials, threaten the security of the entire international community. The United States seeks to strengthen partner capacity development and implementation of strategic trade control (STC) systems, detect and target illicit procurement networks that utilize regional ports to obtain strategic goods. Principally, the United States will continue to build key relationships and partner capacity on implementing sanctions implementation, enforcing export controls to secure the strategic supply chain, securing key ports of entry/transit, and disrupting illicit activities in the financial, cyber, and maritime shipping arenas. The United States continues to support regional workshops for ASEAN countries to help each government make tangible enhancements to the legal-regulatory foundations of their STC systems that can positively contribute to STC licensing and enforcement, as well as nonproliferation sanctions implementation. These improvements will help reduce risks of illicit proliferation in each country and throughout Southeast Asia.

An additional avenue that the United States uses to support regional approaches in addressing global proliferation challenges is raising awareness about UNSCR 1540 requirements. The resolution's provisions involve protecting WMD, their means of delivery, and related materials from unregulated acquisition by non-state actors and detecting the unregulated transfer of these goods between national borders. The United States and its main regional allies have taken measures to meet all their obligations under UNSCR 1540. These measures and their implementation continue to improve as witnessed in their submissions to the 1540 Committee and by the late 2020 updates to the Committee's National Matrices, a compilation of measures created by the Committee's experts. Additionally, the United States will continue to partner with other donor countries and entities to build capacity in those countries that request cooperation to implement UNSCR 1540. The United States has also supported efforts in the ARF toward this end and has promoted greater cooperation between the ARF and the UN Security Council 1540 Committee, to ensure that regional partners are able to fulfill their UN obligations.

One international effort that helps states to meet the goals of UNSCR 1540 is the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), which to date, 107 countries have endorsed. Many ARF participants have already endorsed the PSI, profiling their concrete commitment to regional peace and security to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), their delivery systems, and related materials in the region. Italy hosted a successful virtual Operational Experts Group (OEG) meeting in October of 2020. OEG members discussed upcoming PSI initiatives and potential multilateral opportunities with PSI endorsing countries. Singapore will be hosting, mostly virtual, the PSI Asia Pacific Exercise Rotation (APER) this fall in an ongoing effort to keep up the momentum on regional PSI efforts. The United States encourages all

countries concerned with the threat WMD proliferation poses to international peace and security to endorse the PSI.

The United States continues to encourage cooperation among ASEAN members; and ARF participants to strengthen efforts to prevent the use and reemergence of chemical and biological weapons and their proliferation. The United States calls on all States Parties of the Chemical Weapons Convention and Biological Weapons Convention to support the goals of these two treaties and comply with their obligations; and to hold accountable those States Parties who blatantly violate these provisions. The United States urges support for the OPCW and its work; as well as the BWC ISU, and to further support the Universalization of both the CWC and BWC. All ARF states must work together to preserve the international norm against the use of chemical and biological weapons; and to fully implement and adhere to the obligations under these two regimes.

The United States has partnered with ASEAN members in the past year to support implementation of UNSCRs through joint law enforcement investigations, information sharing, the exchange of expertise and best practices, and capacity building engagements. The United States has and will continue to engage public and private sector counterparts in ASEAN countries to establish and improve national- and institution-level measures to identify and disrupt illicit DPRK sanctions evasion activities, including its illicit shipping practices, abuse of the international financial system, cyber-enabled operations to steal fiat and virtual currencies, the acquisition of luxury goods, and illicit export of labor to fund its WMD programs.

iii. Transnational Crime

The United States augments the capabilities of regional actors and supports the region on a broad range of transnational crime issues through United States federal, state, and local experts and international and nonprofit organizations. These programs include capacity building for law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges to investigate and prosecute transnational crime cases, cooperate during interdiction efforts on land and in maritime environments, and to facilitate international legal cooperation. Capacity building efforts often focus on specialized topics such as combatting drug, human, and wildlife trafficking; corruption; money laundering; and financial crimes; as well as supporting reforms to implement international standards, such as the UN Convention against Corruption, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Budapest Cybercrime Convention. In addition, the United States has taken steps to protect the economic interaction in the region against cybercrime and intellectual property piracy, and to disrupt the financial activities of transnational criminals and facilitators.

The International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Bangkok, Thailand continues to deliver a platform for developing relationships with United States law enforcement officers through advanced training for civil law enforcement development to ASEAN member states and other members. The ILEA is an important platform to address areas of mutual concern, including transnational organized crime, cybercrime, financial crimes, corruption, and all forms of trafficking. The ILEA promote regional law enforcement networks among our partner states, builds relationships with the U.S. law enforcement community, and increases institutional capacity to address the threats and promote the rule of law. Alumni often serve at the respective countries' highest ranks in the criminal justice sector, including senior police and prosecutors, Supreme Court justices, and parliamentarians. Since 1998, ILEA Bangkok has trained over 20,000 criminal justice sector professionals throughout Southeast Asia, thus creating and strengthening international operational networks. The ILEA Bangkok alumni are part of a global ILEA alumni network of over 70,000. The United States also deploys law enforcement experts as part of a global network to deliver capacity building and strengthen

international cooperation in the fight against cybercrime and intellectual property theft. Three of these International Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property Advisors -- or ICHIPs -- are deployed to assist across the Indo-Pacific, including ASEAN countries, and are located, respectively, in: Bangkok, Thailand; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, People's Republic of China.

Illicit drug production and trafficking are also challenging for all ARF member nations. There are vast networks of highly organized drug trafficking organizations that span the region and threaten regional and U.S. national security through their production and trafficking of illicit synthetic drugs and their precursors. The U.S. government supports partner nation capabilities to disrupt the use, production, and trafficking of these substances by sharing best practices for demand reduction programs and providing training to improve capacity to detect and interdict them. These efforts ensure countries can fight international drug trafficking and related criminal activities in their home countries. In 2019, the East Asia Summit leaders reaffirmed their shared commitment to effectively address and counter the world drug problem through a statement on combating the spread of illicit drugs. We further encourage all countries who have not yet done so to implement the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, and the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, which constitute the cornerstone of the international drug control system.

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing has direct food, economic and environmental security impacts on coastal communities and their nations' rule of law, especially in the Indo-Pacific region. The Indo-Pacific region houses the world's most productive and biodiverse marine ecosystems that provide food and income to over 200 million people in the region; however, unsustainable fishing practices threaten the region's biodiversity, food security and livelihoods. IUU-fished seafood accounts for as much as 30 percent of the global seafood harvest. In Southeast Asia, severely overfished waters in the Gulf of Thailand have made it almost impossible for vessels to operate in their historic fishing grounds. Since 1961, the average catch in Thai waters has decreased by 81 percent. Fishing operations have moved increasingly farther out to sea — and remain there for longer periods. Fisheries depletion raises the cost of fishing and exerts downward pressure on wages. Fewer people are willing to work under these conditions, which promotes human trafficking for fishing operations.

To further the fight against IUU fishing, the United States is working with international partners to improve global fisheries enforcement by strengthening efforts to detect, identify, interdict, and adjudicate illegal fishing activity and the illicit networks that support it through enhanced cooperation and information-sharing. In 2018 and again in 2019, the United States and Indonesia co-chaired workshops on law enforcement coordination and maritime data analysis tactics and techniques to identify unusual and potentially illegal fishing and vessel activity to enable countries to utilize analytical tools and processes to combat IUU fishing and crime that may be associated with IUU fishing. Another model of this type of effort is the Oceania Maritime Security Initiative (OMSI), a partnership between the United States Coast Guard, Navy, and local law enforcement agencies in Oceania. OMSI bolsters maritime domain awareness, increases law enforcement presence, and expands at-sea law enforcement capabilities by matching available Navy ships with Coast Guard law enforcement expertise and local enforcement authorities.

The Oceans project, supported by USAID, strengthens regional cooperation to combat IUU fishing, promotes sustainable fisheries and conserves marine biodiversity in the Asia-Pacific region. Through this project, the US works with public and private sector partners to strengthen electronic catch documentation and traceability (eCDT) that ensures fisheries resources are legally caught and properly labeled. The USG and partners trained over 1,200

regional stakeholders across 12 ASEAN and Coral Triangle countries in program technical areas, including electronic catch documentation and traceability, sustainable fisheries management, public-private partnership development, and human welfare and gender equity. The partnership has leveraged over \$1.4 million in public and private sector partner funding for increased sustainability of program interventions, including from the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch, Thai Union, and Inmarsat. In addition, the USG is conducting comprehensive research to identify and assess opportunities for ASEAN to support the advancement of a regional multi-sectoral strategy to address the challenges associated with forced labor in the fishing industry and to propose ways in which development partners might best support those opportunities. The report from the study is currently under review and it will be finalized this year so the consideration for recommended interventions for ASEAN can be proposed in 2021.

In collaboration with the Southeast Asia Fisheries Development Center, USAID supported a workshop to explore how existing catch documentation and seafood traceability data could be exchanged within the region to prevent illegitimate trade.

The United States commends progress on the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons (ACTIP), especially women and children, which entered into force on March 8, 2017 following ratification by the Philippines. We urge all remaining member states to follow the lead of those who have already ratified and promptly deposit instruments of ratification. We also encourage all countries to ratify and to implement the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. The United States and ASEAN enjoy a strong partnership on combating trafficking in persons – a partnership that we look forward to continuing. We seek to continue this partnership and have presented proposals for future collaboration to the SOMTC. We are still committed to assisting member states in developing and implementing victim compensation schemes and funds, as prescribed under ACTIP. The USG continues to support ASEAN on the implementation of the ACTIP through its technical cooperation on developing the ASEAN Regional Guidelines and Procedures to Address the Needs of Victims of TIP, which was launched in April 2019. In collaboration with the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), USAID supported the drafting of a Regional Model Toolkit (RMT) to provide guidance to practitioners across ASEAN. The RMT has been translated into six ASEAN countries languages (Burmese, Indonesia, Khmer, Laotian, Thai and Vietnamese) and presented at the ACWC in early 2020. The RMT in the AMS language will be the main source to conduct national-level capacity building efforts in select AMS start from this year.

Through the USAID Asia regional Counter Trafficking In Persons (ASIA CTIP) program and country-specific activities in Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, the USG addresses transnational and regional challenges to combat trafficking in persons, building upon existing USG-supported CTIP activities in the region. The program strengthens regional platforms for governments, NGOs, and service providers to effectively cooperate across borders and ensures that assistance and support can be provided and accessed in countries of transit and destination. USAID also partners with United States companies to promote industry-wide adoption of practices that reduce opportunities and incentives for cheap, exploited, and trafficked labor.

We encourage all countries to ratify and to implement the Protocol against Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

iv. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

ARF Dialogue Partners experience a variety of natural disasters, such as typhoons, floods, and earthquakes, as well as manmade crises, including civil conflict, which often result in significant financial and human costs. In response to these events, the United States continues to provide humanitarian assistance to affected populations in the region, while simultaneously working to reduce disaster vulnerability in communities and building national response capacities. In Fiscal year 2018, USAID's Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) responded to thirteen natural disasters in Asia, and to complex emergencies in three ARF countries, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Pakistan, and worked with agencies from across the USG to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable populations.

In Pakistan, USAID/Food For Peace (USAID/FFP) provided \$57 million to World Food Programme (WFP) for food assistance activities in Pakistan. Out of this total, WFP used \$13.5 million to support the local and regional procurement and distribution of food and \$43.5 million for 'twinning'—the milling, fortifying, and distribution of GoP-provided wheat. WFP assisted over 2.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), and returnees in northwestern Pakistan, including highly sensitive and volatile areas along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border. The U.S. Department of State provided more than \$22 million to support health and protection programs for conflict-affected Pakistanis. USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$14 million in FY 2015 for emergency relief in Pakistan, an ARF participant since 2004. Furthermore, USAID/OFDA provided \$5.7 million of funding for Responding to Pakistan's Internally Displaced (RAPID)—a response fund used countrywide to respond to disaster and conflict-related displacement. USAID/OFDA supported livelihoods, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance to drought and flood-affected people. USAID/OFDA also provided logistics, shelter, and WASH assistance to IDPs and refugee returnee populations.

In Myanmar, USAID/FFP supports WFP to distribute locally and regionally purchased food or cash based-transfers to approximately 172,000 conflict-displaced persons and other vulnerable communities in Rakhine, Kachin, and Northern Shan States. 146,000 beneficiaries are targeted with general food distribution and 26,000 beneficiaries will receive relief cash-based transfers in the areas with accessible markets and functioning cash infrastructure. USAID/FFP's support through WFP includes targeted distribution of fortified blended foods to children under five and pregnant and lactating women. In FY 2016 and 2017, USAID/FFP contributed \$13.4 million to WFP to support food assistance activities benefiting IDPs and vulnerable communities – including those affected by the Summer 2016 floods. In Myanmar, USAID/OFDA provided over \$18 million in FY 2018, which supported agriculture and food security, economic recovery, health, nutrition, protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) initiatives; distribution of relief supplies; and humanitarian coordination, information management, and logistics operations benefiting conflict-affected populations in Rakhine, Kachin, and northern Shan states. Between FY 2012 and FY 2018, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$49 million to address humanitarian needs resulting from the ongoing complex emergency.

To mitigate the effects of future disasters on vulnerable populations, the United States supports disaster risk reduction (DRR) programs aimed at saving lives; protecting livelihoods, assets, and infrastructure before, during, and after a disaster; and increasing community resilience to natural hazards. The United States supports regional and country specific DRR programs. The U.S. Department of State, INDOPACOM, and USAID/OFDA collaborate on support to the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management and the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance (AHA) Centre by building its capacity for disaster monitoring and response. In 2019, the USG through USAID/OFDA supported the AHA Center to establish and convene a working group for disaster management training and curriculum development, manage disaster-related information, develop assessment tools, and assist in the development of a Regional

Joint Disaster Response Plan. Instruction on the implementation of the incident command system (ICS) by the United States Forest Service strengthened the decision-making capabilities of partner countries. Supported by USAID Regional Advisors in Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines, this training focuses on building regional capacity through train-the-trainer courses. In 2019, regional DRR support includes emergency operations center (EOC) and multi-agency coordination trainings, basic and intermediate courses on ICS, the development of online training modules, and the adaptation of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The USAID/ASEAN office supported the AHA Center for an English Language Training for ASEAN on Disaster Management where 19 young disaster management professionals from all ten ASEAN Member States participated in the English Language Training in Jakarta, Indonesia from July 3rd through July 20th, 2019 to improve confidence and strengthen capacity in technical communication necessary to coordinate disaster response and management. This activity was conducted in partnership with the AHA Centre, OFDA, the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterrey, and the U.S Embassy Regional English Language Office - Jakarta.

The United States sponsors and/or participates in numerous HA/DR-related exercises with regional partners every year, including the ARF Disaster Relief Exercise, East Asia Summit (EAS) HA/DR Exercise, the ADMM-Plus HA/DR, exercise Cobra Gold with Thailand, exercise Balikatan with the Philippines, Gema Bhakti with Indonesia, and Angkor Sentinel with Cambodia. In addition, the United States sponsored Disaster Relief Exercise and Exchanges (DREEs) through the Lower Mekong Initiative, further enhancing multi-lateral coordination, communication, and cooperation among the United States, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam to enhance response readiness to natural disasters in the Lower Mekong region.

2019 culminated over three years of cumulative and collaborative efforts of the United States and Malaysia co-chairing the most robust exercise of its kind ever to be executed. The exercise tested a real-world scenario utilizing actual communications methods and coordination processes with a crosscutting group of civil and military stakeholders across the 18 ADMM-Plus countries, the humanitarian community, and regional and international organizations. As a result, the USG demonstrated its commitment to the Indo Pacific region, and tangibly and practically advanced One ASEAN One Response, alliances and partnerships. The United States remains committed to developing ASEAN HA/DR capabilities and streamlining the ASEAN response mechanism. As part of the United States commitment to advancing civil - military coordination in ASEAN and throughout the Asia Pacific region, we recognize the need to further synchronize the defense efforts of the ADMM and ADMM-Plus with the civilian-led efforts in the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) and by the AHA Centre. We see this as a critical step toward realizing the vision of 'One ASEAN, One Response,' and we look forward to furthering these efforts in collaboration.

The Pacific Partnership and Pacific Angel missions enhance regional disaster preparedness capabilities. Pacific Partnership and Pacific Angel strengthen relationships between civilian and military specialists from countries in the region to cooperate on medical and engineering projects and practice disaster response procedures. The United States Navy and the United States Air Force respectively recognize the effectiveness of establishing relationships and building capacity to respond to a disaster through training and education before a disaster strikes. In 2018, the hospital ship USNS Mercy visited Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Vietnam as part of Pacific Partnership while USNS Fall River visited Yap, Palau, Malaysia, and Thailand. Pacific Angel engagements are planned for: Suai, Cova Lima Municipality, Southwest Timor-Leste; Tam Ky, Quang Nam Province, Vietnam; Luganville, Espiritu Santo Island and Tanna, Tanna Island, Vanuatu; and Anuradhapura (North Central Province), Puttalam (Northwest Province), Vavuniya, (Northern Province), Sri Lanka. Pacific Partnership and Pacific Angel missions improve the ability of providers and subject matter experts from the United States working

side-by-side with counterparts from other countries to prepare for and better respond to disasters, such as pandemic illness, typhoons, earthquakes, and tsunamis. In 2018, Pacific Partnership supporting partners included more than 800 military and civilian personnel from the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, France, Peru, and Japan. Pacific Angel missions have in the past involved military personnel from New Zealand, Australia, France, the Philippines, Indonesia and Tonga. These two humanitarian missions underscore the United States' efforts in the Pacific region to aid and enhance disaster relief capacity.

Lastly, the United States is the permanent Secretariat of the Pacific Area Senior Officer Logistics Seminar (PASOLS). PASOLS provides a congress for senior logisticians to exchange and discuss best practices and lessons learned, review regional issues and initiatives, and exchange information that strengthen cooperation throughout the region. The majority of ARF participants attend the annual PASOLS Seminar. Heads and representatives of military logistics organizations from 28 countries took part in the 2017 PASOLS conference, including Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and the United States. PASOLS aims to promote open dialogue for military logistics chiefs in the Asia-Pacific region to further build Supply Chain networks and enhance cooperation towards a more consolidated response to common security challenges, particularly peacekeeping missions. PASOLS' regional presence and logistics focus is an ideal platform for ARF Participants to continue dialogue and strengthen regional cooperation and collaboration of disaster response efforts.

v. Maritime Security

The Indo-Pacific region and its maritime waterways are critical to U.S. security. Together with our interagency colleagues and regional allies and partners, the United States strives to ensure that the Indo-Pacific will remain open, free, and secure in the decades ahead. To protect free and open access, the United States focuses on three objectives: safeguarding the freedom of the seas, deterring conflict and coercion, and promoting adherence to international law and standards.

The United States has, throughout its history, advocated for the freedom of the seas and airspace. Freedom of the seas includes more than the mere freedom of commercial vessels to transit through international waterways. It also includes all the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea and airspace for military ships and aircraft as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention. The United States will continue to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows, as U.S. forces currently do all around the world.

For 70 years, U.S. military presence in the Indo-Pacific region has played a vital role in undergirding regional peace, stability, and security. We note several continuing trends, including rapid military modernization, growing resource demands, and territorial and maritime disputes, that have the potential to create instability. Many countries across the region are significantly enhancing their naval and maritime law enforcement (MLE) capabilities. Although most nations are using these capabilities in a responsible manner, ongoing provocative actions continue to heighten tensions in the region and raise concerns. Actions such as the use of MLE vessels to coerce rival claimants, and unsafe air and maritime behavior raise the risk of miscalculation or conflict. Maritime vessels are also increasingly being used to traffic terrorists and illicit materials. Increase screening measures and controls, such as those identified in UNSCR 2396 on foreign fighters, are needed to deter illicit and terrorist use of the maritime sector.

The tensions arising from maritime and territorial disputes in the Indo-Pacific are deeply concerning to the United States. The Indian Ocean, East China Sea, and South China Sea are all vital thoroughfares for global commerce and energy. Well over half the world's merchant tonnage flows through the South China Sea, and over 15 million barrels of oil per day transited the Strait of Malacca last year, with most of it continuing onward through the East China Sea to three of the world's largest economies – Japan, the Republic of Korea, and China.

Regarding the South China Sea, the United States has a vital national interest in ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight and other lawful uses of the sea, respect for international law, unimpeded lawful commerce, and peace and stability. The United States insists that such disputes should be resolved peacefully, without the use of force or coercion, and in accordance with international law. To that end, we urge claimant countries to conform all their maritime claims to international law as reflected in the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention.

China's efforts to assert its unlawful maritime claims in the South China Sea threaten the regional rules-based order and undermine international law. China's provocative reclamation and militarization of disputed outposts in the South China Sea, and its attempts to coerce and intimidate other nations undermine regional stability. The United States will continue to stand with Southeast Asian claimants in resisting the PRC's efforts through the People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia (PAFMM) to push its unlawful maritime claims and will continue to protest these claims in the UN and call out PRC actions that intimidate and bully other claimants from accessing their lawful marine resources. The United States urges all claimants, including China, to manage and resolve disputes peacefully and in accordance with international law as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention. The United States encourages all parties to employ diplomatic and other peaceful avenues for resolving disagreements, including the use of third-party dispute settlement, such as arbitration, negotiation, multilateral fora, or other peaceful international mechanisms. In this regard, the United States takes note of the importance of the July 12, 2016 arbitral tribunal ruling in the China-Philippines arbitration, and notes that it could serve as a useful basis for claimants to resolve their overlapping maritime claims.

On negotiations towards an ASEAN-China South China Sea Code of Conduct (CoC), we will continue to advocate for a meaningful CoC that is fully in accordance with international law. Although not all ASEAN Member States are South China Sea claimants, we support ASEAN's ongoing efforts to negotiate a meaningful and effective CoC that is fully in accordance with international law. We are concerned, however, at reports that China has been pressing ASEAN member states – behind closed doors – to accept limits on with whom states may conduct military exercises and offshore energy development. These proposals put at risk the autonomy of ASEAN states, and pose a direct challenge to the interests of the broader international community, including the United States. The United States urges all negotiating parties to ensure that rights and interests of third parties are respected and that any eventual CoC be crafted in full accordance with international law.

In the East China Sea, we remain concerned about the provocative behavior by the PRC. We support calls for diplomacy and crisis management procedures to avoid a miscalculation or a dangerous incident.

We further believe the ARF can help put in-place supportive diplomatic structures that lower tensions and help claimant states manage these disputes peacefully. This forum needs to play an increasingly important role in reinforcing international law and practice and in building practical cooperation among member states.

The United States is not standing still considering the challenges we face in the maritime domain. There should be no doubt that the United States will employ whole of government resources that includes maintaining military presence and capabilities to protect our interests and those of our allies and partners against potential threats in the maritime domain.

The United States Navy is pursuing a comprehensive strategy focused on four lines of effort:

- 1) Strengthen U.S. naval capacity to ensure the United States can successfully deter conflict and coercion and respond decisively when needed:
 - The United States Navy is investing in new cutting-edge capabilities, deploying our finest maritime capabilities forward, and distributing these capabilities more widely across the region.
 - The United States Navy will increase the size of the United States Pacific Fleet's overseas assigned forces by approximately 30 percent over the next five years to maintain a higher tempo of routine and persistent maritime presence activities across the Pacific region.
- 2) Work together with our allies and partners from Northeast Asia to the Indian Ocean to build their maritime capacity:
 - The United States Navy and Coast Guard are building greater interoperability and developing more integrated operations, actions, and activities with our regional allies and partners.
 - The United States Pacific Fleet is increasing the size, frequency, and sophistication of their regional exercise program, with a particular focus on increasing the operational exercise complexity with Southeast Asian partners and expanding the multilateral exercise program.
 - The United States Navy has also implemented a Southeast Asia Maritime Security Initiative that enable training and exercises, personnel support, and national level subject matter experts on maritime domain awareness to enhance capabilities for our partners in Southeast Asia.
- 3) Leverage defense diplomacy to build greater transparency, reduce the risk of miscalculation or conflict, and promote shared maritime rules of the road:
 - The United States Navy is actively seeking to mitigate risks in the Indo-Pacific region, both through bilateral efforts with China, as well as region-wide risk reduction measures.
 - Recently, the United States Navy and China's Ministry of National Defense concluded an historic Memorandum of Understanding on Rules of Behavior for Safety of Air and Maritime Encounters. This MOU currently includes annexes on ship-to-ship and air-to-air encounters.
 - United States Navy and People's Liberation Army-Navy (PLA-N) vessels have also successfully employed the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) during recent interactions, which reduce risk in the region and demonstrate cooperativeness on the seas.

- 4) Strengthen regional security institutions and encourage the development of an open and effective regional security architecture:
- The United States is enhancing its engagement in ASEAN-based institutions such as the ARF, ADMM-Plus, Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) and the EAS. The United States promotes candid conversations about ongoing challenges in the maritime domain, and encourages greater information sharing and cooperative solutions.
 - In addition to United States Navy and Coast Guard lines of efforts on the seas, the United States regularly conducts maritime exercises with regional partners to build confidence and to enhance regional maritime readiness. Cooperative activities such as the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) and the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise foster bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the region. In February 2017, the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Michael Murphy (DDG 112) participated in the Oceania Maritime Security Initiative (OMSI) with the United States Coast Guard's 14th District in the western Pacific Ocean. OMSI is a joint maritime security operation designed to enhance maritime domain awareness, increase law enforcement presence, and expand at-sea law enforcement capabilities throughout Oceania. During the exercise, sailors had the privilege of working side by side with an elite Coast Guard Law Enforcement team. The team provided invaluable training to Murphy's Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) team to include tactical team movements, tactical combat casualty care, and safe boarding techniques. These are just a few of several engagements aimed to develop cooperation, promote common seafaring practices, and enhance mutual trust.
 - Additionally, the United States participated in its fourth Governors' Council meeting with the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) since becoming the organization's 20th contracting party (member) in 2014. The United States has been proactive in assisting the development of a ten-year strategy plan for the future of ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) to become a Centre of Excellence by 2020. The United States is also working with regional partners to improve the safety and well-being of mariners through the Expanded ASEAN Seafarers Training on Counter-Piracy (EAST-CP) program. The United States is enhancing the capacity of the coast guards, navies, and law enforcement and judicial sectors of partner nations to address not only piracy, but also the broad scope of illicit maritime activity ranging from illegal fishing to the trafficking of arms, narcotics, and people. Training and technical expertise are delivered through a variety of cooperative training programs supported by the United States Departments of Defense, Justice, and State, NOAA, the United States Coast Guard, and USAID. The workshops incorporate the knowledge of technical experts in the maritime transport sector and regional survivors of piracy to address issues ranging from preparedness and survival, ransom negotiations, to post trauma care upon returning home.

vi. Information and Communications Technologies

The speed and efficiency of information and communication technologies (ICTs) are of great benefit to commerce and development. At the same time, ICTs introduce vulnerabilities that countries must proactively address, as the risks can impact national and regional security and economic prosperity – especially in Asia, where e-commerce is a significant and increasing portion of many developing countries' economic growth. In a cyber-incident of national

significance, the unique nature of the ICTs, including the lack of external observables of ICTs and the difficulty in determining the nation or entity responsible, may lead states to act precipitously, with significant consequences for strategic ICT stability and international security. To reduce the risk of conflict stemming from ICT incidents, practical confidence building measures (CBMs) are needed to enhance the predictability of state activities and reduce national security risks. This can be achieved by fostering transparency, increasing cybersecurity cooperation, and developing incident response capacity within and among states. These practical measures in the form of CBMs can help reduce the risk of conflict.

In the interest of increasing ARF's budding Preventive Diplomacy role and promoting regional cyber stability, the United States welcomes the establishment of the ISM on ICTs Security and supports continued ARF dialogue on enhancing international ICT stability via the 2015 ARF Work Plan on Security of and in the Use of ICTs. We support further institutionalization of cyber work within the ARF, the development and implementation of cyber CBMs in the ARF and continued ARF discussion on preventive diplomacy's role in cyberspace. The United States will cooperate with other ARF Participants on the development of relevant cyber workshops and projects in 2018 to support the ARF Work Plan.

4. Role of the ARF

a) National Contributions to Enhancing the ARF and Regional Security

The United States remains committed to building institutional capacity in the ARF and strengthening its role in the ASEAN-centered regional security architecture. The United States remains committed to the full and complete implementation of the Hanoi Plan of Action 2020-2025 and will work diligently with ARF participants to fulfill the ARF's mandate to advance from confidence-building measures, to preventive diplomacy, to effective conflict resolution.

The United States will also continue to work with ASEAN to strengthen and build capacity in the ARF Unit – a critical element of process sustainment and administrative protocol. A reinforced ARF Unit will benefit ASEAN members and all ARF dialogue partners as the engine of a credible and results-oriented organization.

b) Future of the ARF

The ARF serves as an important venue for senior-level security policy dialogue and working-level technical cooperation on regional security issues. The ARF's inclusiveness, maturing commitments, and growing experience position it to achieve success on a targeted agenda that addresses common issues of interest for all ARF participants. However, its participants should take deliberate steps toward shaping the ARF into an institution that faces important security challenges candidly and head-on, with the capability to conduct effective Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution, and inclusive of women, youth, and civil society. Furthermore, continued military assertiveness and militarization within the region highlight the urgent need for the ARF to go beyond just providing confidence-building measures. In this regard, the United States supports efforts to develop the ARF's Preventive Diplomacy capability together with the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR).

It is important to highlight the context of the ARF as one element of a broader regional security architecture that includes the EAS, ADMM-Plus, and the EAMF. The United States is committed to continuing its engagement to help shape a robust and coherent architecture in the Indo-Pacific region – including a key role for the ARF in promoting stability and prosperity – through a transparent and inclusive process. Developing rules-based frameworks for dialogue and cooperation will help maintain stability and economic growth while resolving disputes

through diplomacy are especially important in a region facing territorial and maritime disputes, political transformation, political and civil unrest, and pandemic disease response and recovery, and natural disasters. The United States is committed to building on its active and enduring presence in the Indo-Pacific region and working with its partners to support the ARF as an effective mechanism for confronting current and future transnational and emerging security issues troubling the region.

1. Overview of Regional Security Environment

The global and regional landscape in 2020 and early half of 2021 continues to be characterised by complexity and uncertainty, with a broad range of issues that directly impact security environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic is still raging on, causing severe disruptions in all aspects of life with profound socio-economic and security implications. No country is spared by this crisis. Cooperation has been forged at national, regional and global levels in containing and combatting the virus and mitigating the impact of the pandemic. While vaccines have brought a ray of hope, COVID-19 remains an unpredictable threat with its continued evolution and mutation, and the resurgence of new cases over many parts of the globe. It is, therefore, crucial to ensure equitable distribution of, and access to vaccines, so as to sustain the progress in the fight against the virus as well as in the recovery from the pandemic.

Since the onset of the outbreak, ASEAN has made remarkable efforts and led active role in the response and recovery process through enhanced cooperation and timely coordination, both among member states and with external partners. It is our hope that external partners, especially leading vaccine producers, will continue to render support and assistance to the production, distribution and access to vaccines in ASEAN, as well as to the implementation of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and other related initiatives.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also added new dimensions to the existing strategic competition among major powers. While their constructive engagement is welcomed, their intensifying rivalry has resulted in potential risks and adverse consequences to the regional security environment. Against this context, ASEAN has maintained its unity and centrality, and exercised a balanced approach to cooperation and dialogue with its external partners.

The situation in the East Sea (South China Sea) remains complicated with continued land reclamation, militarisation and other unilateral actions which may further erode trust, increase tensions and undermine peace, stability, maritime security and safety as well as freedom of navigation and overflight in the region. It is, therefore, important to uphold international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, which sets out the comprehensive legal framework under which all activities in the seas and oceans must be carried out. All parties concerned need to adhere to the principles of settlement of disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the international law and the 1982 UNCLOS, exercise self-restraint, not to use or threat to use force and refrain from any actions that would complicate the situation. ASEAN and China need to continue their efforts to fully and effectively implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), and work towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive COC that is consistent with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.

The recent incident in Myanmar has brought further international attention to the region. ASEAN has been following closely the developments in Myanmar and doing its utmost to assist Myanmar to overcome the crisis. The successful convening of the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting held in-person in Jakarta in April 2021 and the five-point consensus reached at the Meeting demonstrates ASEAN's cohesiveness and centrality in the response to the evolving

situation. While actively speeding up the implementation of the five-point consensus, ASEAN hopes that external partners will support ASEAN's role and efforts in this process in order to seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people of Myanmar.

Non-traditional security issues such as climate change, maritime security, water security, terrorism and violent extremism, etc. have also been the sources of threats to the regional security environment over the years. The scale and severity of the consequences resulted from these issues has been dramatic, especially to the sub-regions and remoted areas in ASEAN where COVID-19 has already wreaked havoc on. In this regard, addressing non-traditional security issues in ASEAN cannot exclude cooperation and support for sub-regional development as ASEAN advances toward a more sustainable and resilient future.

2. National Security and Defence Policy of Viet Nam

a) Overview of National Defence Policy

Guided by the direction to maintain a peaceful and stable environment for socioeconomic development, Viet Nam consistently pursues a national defence policy of peace and self-defence. Our defence policy embraces the principles of not joining any military alliances, not siding with one country against another, not giving any country permission to set up military bases or use its territory to carry out military activities against other countries and not using force or threatening to use force in international relations. Viet Nam resolutely and consistently settles all disputes and divergences through peaceful means on the basis of international law.

Viet Nam promotes defence cooperation with countries both inside and outside the region to improve its capabilities to protect the country and address common security challenges. Depending on the circumstances and specific conditions, Viet Nam will consider developing necessary and appropriate defence relations with other countries on the basis of respecting each other's independence, sovereignty, territorial unity and integrity as well as the fundamental principles of international law, cooperation for mutual benefits and common interests of the region and international community.

As a responsible member of the international community, Viet Nam is keen to fulfil its duties while actively cooperating with other nations to address emerging security issues, contributing to the preservation of peace and stability in the region and the world.

b) Data contribution to ARF Arms Register

Viet Nam builds its military potential based on a unified strategy and is sufficient for national defence and construction. Combat competency and readiness of the armed forces, which are reflected in their organisation, structure, weaponry, logistical and technical support, military art, and science and technology, are maintained, improved, and developed to meet the requirements of the people's war for safeguarding the Homeland.

With regard to defence expenditure, Viet Nam allocates a necessary portion of the State budget for defence expenses in general and for maintaining weapons and equipment for armed forces in particular. Currently, the annual average defence expenditure accounts for approximately 2.0 percent of the GDP.

3. National Contributions to the Regional Security:

a) Institutional Enhancement of the ARF

In 2020, in efforts to strengthen institutionalisation of the ARF, Viet Nam initiated the development of the first ever ARF Guide to ARF Processes, Procedures, Practices and Protocol. This Guide acts as a basis for Participants to identify possible enhancements or refinements for the ARF, which would contribute to a more holistic and comprehensive process of streamlining and strengthening the ARF in the years to come.

On defence cooperation, Viet Nam had proposed measures to revitalise the ASPC and strengthen defence cooperation within the ARF, which include: (i) assigning ARF DOD to assist and prepare the agenda of the ASPC; (ii) the APSC Chair to attend and brief the ARF Ministerial Meeting on the progress of defence cooperation within the ARF; and (iii) exploring the possibility of enhancing complementarity between the work of the ARF and that of other ASEAN-led mechanisms, especially the ADMM+ to avoid duplication of work.

b) Covid-19

Faced with the first year of the Covid-19 outbreak, Viet Nam, as Chair of ASEAN/ARF 2020, had to speedily adapt to the changing situation and play out its active guiding role within ASEAN and ASEAN-led mechanisms.

As ASEAN Chair 2020, Viet Nam had promptly taken the initiative to promote a coherent, multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder and whole-of-ASEAN Community approach in efforts to ensure ASEAN's timely and effective response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This approach included not only political commitment at the highest level, displayed through the Chairman's Statement on ASEAN Collective Response to the Outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (14 February 2020), the ASEAN and ASEAN+3 Special Summits on Covid-19 as well as the Joint Statements of the 36th and 37th ASEAN Summit, but also a series of specific, synchronous and interdisciplinary efforts implemented throughout all three pillars with medical cooperation at the core. ASEAN's response to the pandemic also stressed the importance of coordination and cooperation with Partners and in joint efforts with the international community.

Major ASEAN Initiatives on Covid-19 response and recovery have been adopted and implemented include: (i) the Covid-19 ASEAN Response Fund; (ii) ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies; (iii) ASEAN Strategic Framework for Public Health Emergencies; (iv) ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (AC-PHEED); (v) ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework; (vi) ASEAN Travel Corridor Framework.

As the ARF Chair 2020, Viet Nam had taken the initiative to issue provisional measures to maintain ARF's operation and activities in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Viet Nam had also timely proposed the ARF Ministerial Statement on Enhancing Cooperation to Prevent and Respond to Infectious Disease Outbreaks, which was co-sponsored by Australia and New Zealand and adopted by the 27th ARF in September 2020. As a basis for a collective and effective response against Covid-19, Viet Nam's proposal for the Statement underscored the important role of the ARF, building on its particular strengths as an inclusive platform for constructive dialogue and cooperation, confidence building and civil-military coordination

and also complemented efforts by ASEAN, other ASEAN-led mechanisms and the international community.

In the inter-sessional year 2021-2022, Viet Nam, the US and Canada will co-chair the ARF Workshop on Health Security and Pandemic Response and Recovery – Lessons Learned during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

c) Maritime Security

Over 2020, Viet Nam has made many outstanding steps in contribution to the maintenance and promotion of peace, stability and security in the East Sea (South China Sea); building and consolidating strategic trust among countries; actively supporting the promotion of a rules-based maritime order and the settlement of disputes through peaceful means on the basis of international law, especially the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); coordinating with other countries on the full and effective implementation of the DOC, actively participating in and substantively contributing to the process of developing the COC to work towards the early conclusion of a substantive, effective COC in line with international law, including 1982 UNCLOS.

Viet Nam continues to attach great importance to regional cooperation to ensure maritime security through many ASEAN-led frameworks such as the EAS, ARF, ADMM, ADMM+, AMF and EAMF. In December 2020, Viet Nam hosted the 10th ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF-10), the 8th Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF-8) and a Workshop commemorating the 10th Anniversary of the AMF. Through these events, participants discussed emerging issues related to maritime cooperation as well and explored measures to strengthen coordination among states.

Within the framework of the ARF, Viet Nam promoted maritime cooperation efforts by co-chairing the 3rd ARF Workshop on Enhancing Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation with Australia and the EU in March 2021 and the 3rd ARF Workshop on Implementing UNCLOS and other international instruments to address emerging maritime issues with Australia, Canada, the EU and India in May 2021.

Within the framework of ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security, Viet Nam regularly engages in multilateral cooperation including information sharing as well as through participation in forums such as the Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meetings, the Global Coast Guard Summit (Working Level Meetings), the Southeast Asia Maritime Law Enforcement Initiative Commanders' Forum (formerly known as the Gulf of Thailand Initiative (GoTI) on Maritime Law Enforcement Commanders' Forum), conferences and capacity building activities under the Regional Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP); capacity building and experience sharing activities among Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies in the framework of the Global Maritime Crime Program (GMCP) of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), etc.

Bilaterally, Viet Nam has been closely coordinated with maritime law enforcement forces of regional countries to conduct a number of practical cooperation activities, such as delegations exchange, fishery coordinated patrols, information sharing, joint training courses for capacity building, etc.

d) ICTs Security

Viet Nam attaches great importance to maintaining cybersecurity, especially given that in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the digital economy has been given an increasingly prominent role and criminal activities have become more rampant. Thus, in recent years, Viet Nam has enacted a number of policies to ensure cybersecurity domestically as well as engaged with external partners to promote cooperation in this respect. Since the adoption of the Law on Cybersecurity in 2018, a series of measures have been introduced to guarantee and protect the legitimate rights and interests of individuals and entities as well as combat against malicious acts in the cyberspace, including those targeted at misinformation acts related to the Covid-19 situation. Viet Nam also engages with external partners to ensure that its laws and policies are in conformity with international standards, including those related to data protection.

Viet Nam is actively participating in various forums for the purpose of establishing international norms in cyberspace, including those organised under the United Nations auspices. Through coordinated efforts, Viet Nam aims to enhance coordination and mutual assistance, establish modalities and arrangements for cooperation among relevant agencies and promote the sharing of information, intelligence and expertise, as well as technical assistance and capacity building among countries.

At the regional level, Viet Nam has actively participated in various cybersecurity-related activities under ASEAN-led mechanisms. Within the framework of the ARF, Viet Nam co-chaired the first ARF Workshop on Countering the Use of ICTs for Criminal Purposes with Russia and China. On 2 November 2020, the Ministry of Defence of Viet Nam, as Chair of ADMM and ADMM+ organised a virtual conference on "Cyber warfare and International Humanitarian Law: Regional Implications in the Context of Covid-19". On 28 December 2020, the Ministry of Public Security organised a conference on "Enhancing cooperation and coordination in cybersecurity and cybercrime prevention among ASEAN+3 countries.

e) Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR)

Viet Nam continues to promote regional cooperation in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) through various regional mechanisms. In a series of Special Summits between ASEAN member-states and ASEAN's external partners held in April 2020, Viet Nam called for bolstering national and regional epidemic preparedness and response, including the establishment of a network of experts on public health emergencies and strengthening the capacity of existing mechanisms, namely the ASEAN Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Network, the ASEAN Risk Assessment and Risk Communication Centre, the ASEAN BioDiaspora Virtual Center (ABVC) and the ASEAN Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), to enhance ASEAN's joint response to emergency needs. Apart from the exchanges at regional fora, Viet Nam carried out a lot of practical measures to step up regional cooperation in HADR, providing ASEAN countries and ASEAN external partners with ventilators, test kits, face masks and other medical supplies needed for tackling the pandemic.

With regard to HADR cooperation activities, Viet Nam actively participates in multilateral cooperation mechanisms including ASEAN Militaries Ready Group on HADR (AMRG on HADR), ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), the ARF

Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ISM-DR) and ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on HADR. In addition, Viet Nam attaches great importance to the coordination between the existing regional mechanisms, particularly the ARF ISM-DR and the ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR.

Viet Nam actively cooperates with regional countries to conduct and participate in disaster management training courses to improve management, coordination and response capabilities; establish mechanisms for coordinating and exchanging natural disaster warning and forecasting information, as well as enhance disaster response support among ARF Participants; strengthen the transfer of search and rescue facilities and equipment among ARF Participants; and continue to participate HADR exercises at different levels, training courses and other activities on disaster management and HADR.

f) Counter-terrorism

Viet Nam actively participates in UN international treaties on counter-terrorism and is a member of the ASEAN Convention on Counter-terrorism. Viet Nam has established and maintains a hotline to exchange information with partners on terrorist individuals and organisations as well as to coordinate on handling terrorist incidents. In efforts to effectively counter money-laundering and terrorist financing, Viet Nam has actively implemented the 2012 Law on Anti-Money Laundering and actively fulfilled its obligations as an official member of the Asia-Pacific Group on Anti-money laundering.

Viet Nam remains committed to contribute and advance international and regional efforts in counter-terrorism. In July 2020 during the UN Virtual Counter-terrorism week, Viet Nam, in the capacity of ASEAN Chair, attended the Session on "Member States' Counter-Terrorism Priorities in the Post-Covid-19 Environment". Viet Nam's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Dang Dinh Quy shared ASEAN's initiatives and practical cooperation in this area through the implementation of the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism and the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2018-2025). In August 2020 at the UNSC open debate on "Addressing the issues of linkages between terrorism and organised crime" chaired by Indonesia, Viet Nam's representative underscored the need to intensify regional and international cooperation in combating terrorism and organised crime, particularly terrorist financing and recruitment.

Regionally, Viet Nam participates in a proactive manner in mechanisms such as the ARF Intersessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM-CTTC) as well as the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Counter-Terrorism. As the Chair of ASEAN in 2020, Viet Nam hosted the ASEAN Defence Senior Officials Meeting (ADSOM) which adopted the Standard Operation Process (SOP) of "ASEAN Our Eyes" initiatives proposed by Indonesia as well as the Work Plans of the 4th cycle of 7 ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups (2021-2023) and the 3-year Work Plan of ADMM in 2020-2022.

g) Transnational Crime

Viet Nam has actively participated in regional and international cooperation frameworks in the field of transnational crime prevention and control and has achieved many positive results. As the ASEAN Chair, Viet Nam successfully hosted the 14th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) in November 2020 under the theme "Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN against Transnational Crime". In his opening speech at this meeting, Prime Minister

Nguyen Xuan Phuc reaffirmed Viet Nam's commitment to efficiently cooperating with ASEAN Member States in combating transnational crime as a significant part of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, stressing importance of the AMMTC as a key regional mechanism in tackling transboundary issues and ensuring regional peace, stability and security.

As the Chair of the 14th AMMTC, Viet Nam led discussions on the regional context and measures to implement the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime for the 2016-2025 and encouraged the promotion of confidence building measures and in-depth information exchanges between the law enforcement agencies of ASEAN Member States. The Joint Statement of the 14th AMMTC called on ASEAN to strengthen cooperation, in particular, the sharing of information and expertise in combating transnational crime in order to ensure security and safety for ASEAN citizens and prevent social uncertainties posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the framework of the AMMTC, Viet Nam put forth a number of initiatives, including the Establishment of a Direct Communication Link (DCL) to enable timely exchange of transnational crime information and cases and establish operational procedures to handle relevant incidents in emergency situations. Viet Nam also proposed to list combatting antiquities smuggling as a priority area of cooperation under the AMMTC and SOMTC.

At the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime 2020 (SOMTC 20) hosted by the Philippines, Viet Nam suggested a number of concrete recommendations to strengthen regional cooperation in tackling transnational crime, including that: (i) law enforcement agencies of ASEAN Member States should continue to maintain and boost cooperation, promote the exchange of information and experience, strengthen investigation coordination, and enhance the capacity of law enforcement officers; (ii) ASEAN Member States should finalise legal documents to create a framework for cooperation in preventing and combatting crime within ASEAN as well as between ASEAN and its dialogue partners; and (iii) there should be a specific roadmap to implement the agreements of the SOMTC and AMMTC.

In the field of combatting drugs and narcotics, Viet Nam successfully hosted the 3rd Meeting of the AIPA Advisory Council on Dangerous Drugs in June 2020 in virtual format under the theme "Turning Words into Actions towards a Drug-Free ASEAN Community", with the objective to promote strategic, long-term cooperation as well as collective efforts to achieve an ASEAN Community that is free of drugs. At the Meeting, Viet Nam stressed the importance of adapting strategies to the changing conditions brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic as well as emphasised the need to expand the scale and coverage of drug addiction treatment programs, including community rehabilitation programs to assist former drug users in reintegrating into society and leading a drug-free lifestyle. Viet Nam had suggested the implementation of evidence-based prevention policies to reduce demand and supply of illicit drugs and minimise the adverse public health and social consequences of drugs abuse.

In order to effectively address transnational crime, Viet Nam stresses the need for law enforcement agencies of ASEAN Member States to continue to maintain and further strengthen cooperation, promote information exchange, experience sharing on transnational crime prevention and control; strengthen cooperation on joint investigation, capacity building for law enforcement officers, researching and finalising related legal documents, create a framework for cooperation in preventing and combatting transnational crimes including

through cooperation on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters between ASEAN Member States and partners.

h) Non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control, disarmament

Viet Nam maintains a consistent stance on the non-proliferation, control and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction. Guided by the policy of proactively supporting and contributing to the common efforts of the international community for peace, security, and disarmament, Viet Nam remains committed to fulfilling its obligations of a member state of international conventions, agreements, protocol on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), other international conventions on disarmament and relevant UNSC Resolutions. Viet Nam also actively contributes to the joint efforts of ASEAN Member States through the obligations under the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone (SEANFWZ) to work towards building a peaceful, free and nuclear-free Southeast Asia. At present, Viet Nam is actively considering and making the necessary preparations for further participating in international conventions and treaties on national defence and security as well as welcomes initiatives to prevent the development, production, storage and use of WMD.

Domestically, Viet Nam has adopted a number of key documents, which act as the legal basis for taking action at the national and local levels in the efforts against the proliferation of WMD, funding for proliferation and other illegal acts on WMD. These include Decision No.104/QD-TTg dated 22 January 2019, issued by the Prime Minister of Viet Nam, approving the National Action Plan for Prevention, Detection and Preparation of Responding to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risks and Incidents in the period of 2019 – 2025 and Decree No. 81/2019/ND-CP dated 11 November 2019 of the Government of Viet Nam on Preventing and Countering Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Through a wide range of multilateral mechanisms, as ASEAN Chair 2020 and Non-Permanent Member of the UN Security Council 2020-2021, Viet Nam actively promoted the agenda of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament.

In July 2020, Viet Nam submitted the National Report containing information on the measures taken towards the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1540 (2004), which reaffirmed Viet Nam's adherence to legally binding instruments and membership of organisations in this regard.

On 2 October 2020, at the High-level Meeting of the 75th session of UNGA, Viet Nam's Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs Pham Binh Minh, in his capacity of ASEAN Chairman, reiterated ASEAN's commitment to maintain Southeast Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and collaborate efficiently with all parties in the implementation of the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ). Viet Nam also emphasised the need to respect the right of states to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

On 23 November 2020, at the Meeting of the 1540 Committee, the Deputy Chief of Viet Nam's Permanent Mission to the UN emphasised the need to strengthen international and regional cooperation in non-proliferation, particularly through information sharing and technological support for Member States in implementing UNSC Resolutions.

Regionally, within the framework of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Nuclear Proliferation and Disarmament (ISM-NPD), Viet Nam and the US will co-chair the ARF Workshop on Nuclear Non-Proliferation Safety and Security Standards and Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Technology in the Inter-Sessional Year 2021-2022.

4. Role of the ARF

Since its establishment in 1994, with a vast geographical footprint from Asia-Pacific to Europe and participation from civil to military, ARF has continuously provided tremendous value to the promotion of trust and confidence, and the enhancement of political and security dialogue and cooperation among countries in the region. ARF remains as one of the most important multilateral mechanisms in the region with ASEAN as the central driving force. The progress and achievements made in the implementation of the 2010 Ha Noi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement has contributed significantly to sustain the habit of dialogue and cooperation, enhance mutual trust and confidence as well as strengthen capacity to better respond to emerging challenges. Amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, ARF Participants have undertaken many creative and flexible measures to adapt to the new situation, thus maintaining the momentum of dialogue and cooperation.

As new challenges emerge, including those non-traditional such as maritime security, cybersecurity, terrorism and violent extremism, it has been well recognised that much remains to be done for the ARF to maintain its relevance and responsiveness. In this spirit, the 27th ARF in September 2020 adopted the ARF Hanoi Plan of Action II (2020-2025) (HPOA II) to chart out future directions and provide guidance for the ARF to grow further in the next five years. After the first year of implementation, initial encouraging progress has been made with 12/107 action lines implemented, accounting for 11.2%, especially taking into account the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In addition, we should continue our efforts to improve the ARF working methods to further enhance its effectiveness and efficiency. With the support of ARF Participants, last year Viet Nam successfully developed the first ever Guide to ARF Processes, Procedures, Practices and Protocol, which comprises all the processes, procedures and protocol that are being applied in the ARF. It is our hope that this Guide would act as the basis for Participants to identify possible enhancements or refinements for the Forum, which would contribute to a more holistic and comprehensive process of streamlining and strengthening the ARF in the years to come.

Looking forward, given rapid changes in the international and regional situation, it is crucial to exert greater efforts to promote the full and effective implementation of the HPOA II to move the process further forward, enhance the effectiveness of the ARF as well as maintain its relevance and responsiveness in the evolving regional security architecture; thereby contributing to the maintenance of peace, security and stability in the region.