



ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM

Annual Security Outlook 2025



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FOREWORD



The contemporary geopolitical landscape continues evolving with increasing complexity, presenting myriad new challenges for the ASEAN region and beyond. In the face of such challenges, the international community has no other recourse but to foster a more predictable, transparent, rules-based international order that places peace, security and prosperity at the heart of its endeavours.

Since its inception in 1994, the ASEAN-led, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has been an instrumental mechanism in promoting peace and stability through confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy. Moving forward, ARF should continue to serve as the main platform for dialogue and consultation where all participants can engage openly, manage differences responsibly, and pursue meaningful and practical cooperation that contribute to regional peace and stability.

In line with its 2025 ASEAN Chairmanship theme “Inclusivity and Sustainability”, Malaysia is committed to promote strategic trust and mutual confidence among ASEAN and its partners through continued dialogue, diplomacy and goodwill. We also seek to forge stronger partnership and reciprocal relations with our ASEAN partners in building an open, inclusive and a rules-based regional architecture.

As Chair of the 32nd ARF, Malaysia is pleased with the publication of the ARF Annual Security Outlook (ASO) 2025, which serves as a useful document to promote confidence, understanding and transparency among ARF participants. Highest appreciation to all ARF participants for their support and contributions to this year’s ASO.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'H' followed by a vertical line and a small flourish at the bottom.

DATO' SERI UTAMA HAJI MOHAMAD BIN HAJI HASAN
Chair of the 32nd ASEAN Regional Forum
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ASEAN Regional Forum Annual Security Outlook (ARF ASO) 2025 is issued under Malaysia's Chairmanship of the 32nd ASEAN Regional Forum, guided by the theme *"Inclusivity and Sustainability."* The ASO continues to serve as an important confidence-building measure, enhancing transparency and mutual understanding among ARF participants through the voluntary sharing of national perspectives on regional and global security developments.

This year's publication compiles contributions from **21 of the 27 ARF participants**, reflecting the continued commitment of the majority of members to openness and dialogue within the ARF framework. The contributions provide updates on the regional security environment, national defence and security policies, and practical measures undertaken to address both traditional and non-traditional security challenges.

Across the submissions, participants highlight an increasingly complex and dynamic security landscape shaped by geopolitical developments, strategic competition, and evolving transnational threats. Key issues addressed include maritime security, developments on the Korean Peninsula, the situation in Myanmar, conflicts in other regions, as well as the impact of climate change. Non-traditional security challenges such as cyber threats, terrorism and violent extremism, transnational crime, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, health security, and emerging technologies also feature prominently.

The contributions reaffirm support for the peaceful settlement of disputes, adherence to international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and the maintenance of an open, inclusive and rules-based regional architecture. Many participants underscore the importance of ASEAN centrality and ASEAN-led mechanisms in promoting dialogue and cooperation.

The ASO also documents national efforts in areas such as non-proliferation and disarmament, maritime cooperation, cyber security, space security, women, peace and security, and capacity building under ARF intersessional activities. These efforts reflect the ARF's evolving agenda in responding to emerging and cross-cutting security challenges.

As the longest-standing security dialogue platform in the Asia-Pacific, the ARF remains a valuable forum for confidence-building and preventive diplomacy. Through continued information-sharing and practical cooperation, the ARF ASO 2025 contributes to strengthening trust, transparency and collective efforts towards regional peace, stability and sustainability.

AUSTRALIA

Our region

Australia and the countries of Southeast Asia are deeply connected through our long history of friendship, cooperation and partnership. Australia and ASEAN share a vision for a peaceful, stable and prosperous region, with ASEAN at the centre. As ASEAN's first Dialogue Partner and a Comprehensive Strategic Partner, Australia is committed to continuing our unwavering support for ASEAN centrality, the ASEAN-led regional architecture and advancing the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.

The ASEAN–Australia 50th anniversary of dialogue relations in 2024 showcased the breadth and depth of our partnership. Australia is implementing the AUD500 million package of initiatives announced at the 2024 ASEAN–Australia Special Summit and the AUD2 billion Southeast Asia Investment Financing Facility. The ASEAN–Australia Centre, also announced at the Special Summit, is strengthening people-to-people ties across business, culture and education between ASEAN and Australia.

1) OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Our region is being reshaped, with sharpening strategic competition and internationally agreed rules and norms under increasing pressure. Compounding security and economic challenges have created a highly complex strategic environment. Australia is working with partners to maintain a region that is peaceful, stable and prosperous, with ASEAN and ASEAN-led institutions at the centre. Australia supports a stable region that upholds international law, where each country can pursue its own aspirations, and all countries respect sovereignty and international law.

Australia is contributing to a balance of power in the Indo-Pacific. Australia promotes a region in which disputes are settled peacefully and in accordance with international law, not by power or size, and in which countries work together to shape the region they want. Australia wants a region in which no country dominates, and no country is dominated. Australia is deploying all tools of national power to build regional resilience, support regional countries to promote their economic, development and security interests, and contribute to regional security.

Australia wants a region in which countries and peoples can cooperate, trade and thrive. We are committed to working together to build economic prosperity, security and resilience for all countries, underpinned by our commitment to open markets and an international rules-based trading system.

Strategic competition in Southeast Asia is playing out in military and non-military ways, including through economic and diplomatic relations. It is accompanied by an unprecedented pace and scale of conventional and non-conventional military build-up in our region. This build-up is increasing the risk of military escalation through misunderstanding or miscalculation, which could lead to conflict in our region.

It is the responsibility of all countries to ensure that strategic competition does not spill into conflict. Australia underscores with all countries our expectation of competition being managed responsibly and transparently, and the importance of dialogue and open channels of communication. Australia consistently calls on all countries to contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability, to commit to strengthening the regional conflict prevention architecture to reduce the risk of crisis and conflict, and to support our neighbours' sovereignty. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) have a key role to play in this shared endeavour.

Australia supports a region in which trade is unimpeded, and disputes are resolved peacefully and in accordance with international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Australia works with Southeast Asian states and ASEAN to support peace and stability in the South China Sea and adherence by all states to UNCLOS, the comprehensive legal framework for all activities in the oceans and seas.

Australia reiterates the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. We do not want to see any unilateral change to the status quo and remain concerned about rising tensions and the risks of accident or miscalculation. Conflict would be devastating for regional stability and prosperity.

Australia's cooperation with India, Japan and the United States through the Quad reinforces and supports our respective visions for the region. Quad partners are all Comprehensive Strategic Partners of ASEAN and steadfast supporters of ASEAN centrality and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. The Quad is committed to working with partners in the region, leveraging our combined resources to respond to the region's most pressing challenges.

The Quad is taking forward practical cooperation in areas including: strengthening maritime domain awareness and security; supporting regional connectivity through undersea cable cooperation and improved access to advanced telecommunications technology; collaborating on critical and emerging technologies and cyber security; building more secure and diverse supply chains; and mobilising in response to disasters across the region.

i. Myanmar

The 2021 military coup in Myanmar reversed years of democratic, economic and development gains. Australia remains deeply concerned about the worsening political, security and humanitarian situation, which has serious implications for regional peace and security and transnational crime. Australia continues to urge the military regime to end violence against civilians, release those unjustly detained, allow safe and unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance, and engage in dialogue with all parties.

The earthquake which struck central Myanmar on 28 March 2025 compounded the already dire humanitarian situation in Myanmar. In response to the earthquake, Australia sent more than 100 pallets of humanitarian supplies to support affected communities and provided AUD9 million to international organisations and NGOs for immediate relief. An Australian Medical Assistance Team and humanitarian specialists from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the National Emergency Management Agency were also deployed to Myanmar to assist response and recovery efforts.

Following the earthquake, the regime and various other parties agreed to ceasefires to allow for the distribution of humanitarian assistance. At the beginning of May, the regime unilaterally extended its ceasefire until the 30 May 2025.

We are concerned about credible reports that the regime continues to break the ceasefire it declared by conducting military operations, including air strikes in earthquake-affected areas, complicating already difficult relief efforts. Australia calls on the regime to adhere to its ceasefire commitment. We call on all parties to implement, extend and broaden these ceasefire measures.

We strongly support ASEAN's continued efforts to resolve the crisis. We call on the regime to implement the Five-Point Consensus and engage meaningfully and positively with ASEAN representatives, especially the ASEAN Chairs and Special Envoys. Australia is dismayed by the regime's continued disregard of its commitments under the Five-Point Consensus.

After careful deliberation, on 1 February 2024, Australia imposed further targeted financial sanctions on five entities with direct links to the military regime, designed to limit the regime's access to funds and military materiel. Australia continues to monitor the regime's actions. We urge the regime to return Myanmar to a civilian-led democratic government through genuine, inclusive dialogue.

Australia is committed to international efforts to pursue accountability for any war crimes, human rights violations and abuses and other atrocities committed in Myanmar, including those committed against the Rohingyas and other ethnic groups.

Australia will continue to support the people of Myanmar through the provision of sustained development and humanitarian assistance (AUD124.8 million in 2025–26). Australia's assistance is targeted toward meeting immediate needs and building community resilience to respond to future challenges, with a focus on the most vulnerable. We also support the promotion of peace and democratic values. Our assistance is delivered through trusted partners, including the UN and non-government organisations. Australia does not provide any funding directly to the regime, and takes proactive steps to ensure Australia's assistance does not confer legitimacy to the regime.

ii. DPRK

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) continues to present a grave threat to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and globally. Its wide range of provocative, escalatory and destabilising behaviour is contrary to Australia and the region's interest in a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific that operates according to international rules and norms.

The DPRK's apparent progress in its weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems program remains gravely concerning. Its maintenance of chemical and biological weapons programs and reports that it remains ready to conduct a seventh nuclear test are also deeply concerning for collective regional security. The DPRK's unlawful launches using ballistic missile technology continue to threaten the security of partners, including Japan and the Republic of Korea. The DPRK's malicious cyber activities have continued to expand in both scale and severity, which threaten peace and prosperity in our region.

The DPRK's deployment of troops to Russia is deeply concerning, and the continued export of arms and ballistic missiles by the DPRK to Russia is a further flagrant violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions. Australia will continue to support efforts to highlight contraventions of DPRK related UN Security Council resolutions by the DPRK and Russia, including as a member of the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team, to ensure greater accountability and transparency and uphold international rules and norms.

Australia continues to call upon the DPRK to comply fully with the UN Security Council resolutions which require the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of its nuclear, other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. Australia remains committed to taking action against the DPRK until such time. This includes through sanctions enforcement Operation ARGOS, Australia's contribution to multinational efforts to monitor and deter illegal ship-to-ship transfers of UN Security Council-sanctioned goods. Under Operation ARGOS, we have deployed a Royal Australian Navy vessel thirteen times and a maritime patrol aircraft on fifteen occasions.

iii. Ukraine

More than three years on, Australia continues to condemn Russia's illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine and is unwavering in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia's invasion is a violation of international law, including the UN Charter, by a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Russia's war also undermines the ASEAN principles of non-interference and respect for sovereignty and international law, as set out in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo Pacific. It violates the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, to which Russia and Ukraine are parties. DPRK's deployment of troops to Russia is a dangerous expansion of the conflict, with serious consequences for security in the Indo-Pacific.

Australia has contributed defence, economic and humanitarian assistance to support Ukraine's defence against Russia's aggression. Our assistance to date totals more than AUD1.5 billion, including more than AUD1.3 billion in military assistance. Australia has imposed a comprehensive suite of measures against Russia in response to its invasion. We continue to support international legal accountability mechanisms to hold Russia to account.

Australia also continues to closely monitor the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. In 2025, 12.7 million Ukrainians (36 per cent of the population) will likely require urgent humanitarian assistance. Nearly four million Ukrainians are internally displaced and almost seven million live abroad as refugees. Russia continues to target Ukraine's civilian infrastructure, leaving millions of Ukrainians without power, heating, clean water or adequate health care. Australia has provided AUD85 million in humanitarian assistance to Ukraine since 2022. Russia's war is exacerbating global food and energy insecurity, which is also having an impact in the Indo-Pacific region.

Australia supports meaningful progress towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. To this end, we have joined with others in urging those with influence on Russia – particularly China – to cease support to Russia's defence industrial base and end the war.

iv. Middle East

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is catastrophic, and the ongoing conflict undermines international security. Australia has been part of international calls for a return to a ceasefire, the immediate release of all hostages and for rapid, sustained and unimpeded aid. All parties must abide by international law and aid workers must be protected to enable their lifesaving work. Australia remains unequivocal in its condemnation of Hamas, and we have also been clear that Palestinian civilians cannot continue to pay the price for Hamas' actions.

Since 7 October 2023, Australia has committed more than AUD100 million in humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza and Lebanon. Australia opposes any actions that undermine the prospects of a two-state solution, including Israeli settlements in the West Bank, which are illegal under international law. Australia will continue working with the international community towards a two-state solution, which offers the only pathway to a secure and prosperous future for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Australia welcomed the ceasefire agreement which brought an end to the escalation in hostilities between Israel and Hizballah, and we continue to call on all parties to respect the ceasefire and fully implement it.

Syria faces significant challenges in its post-Assad transition. Australia continues to advocate for inclusive governance and lasting political change to deliver peace and stability. Sectarian violence and ongoing military clashes and airstrikes within Syria's territory threaten the ability to unify and stabilise the country.

Escalations in Iran's nuclear program are a threat to regional and international peace and security. Australia welcomes efforts to address Iran's nuclear program through dialogue, and urges Iran to return to full compliance with all legal obligations under its safeguard's agreement. Australia continues to be deeply concerned about Iran's support to armed proxies and supply of drones and missiles to Russia for its war against Ukraine. Australia has supported defensive strikes against the Houthis who have killed civilians, taken hostages and severely disrupted navigational rights and freedoms around the Arabian Peninsula, undermining maritime security and global prosperity. In May 2024, the Australian Government listed the Houthis as a terrorist organisation under Australia's Criminal Code.

v. South China Sea

The South China Sea is a vital waterway for the entire international community. All States have a substantial interest in peace and stability, freedom of navigation and overflight, unimpeded trade, and adherence to international law, particularly UNCLOS.

Australia recognises the value of ASEAN and the ASEAN-led architecture. Australia and the region listen when ASEAN speaks about matters of peace, security and stability. We will always pursue a world where differences are settled through dialogue and other peaceful means and in accordance with international law – not by force or coercion.

Australia is gravely concerned about the risk of escalating tensions and the safety of life at sea in the South China Sea. We are concerned about a pattern of dangerous actions by China's vessels against Southeast Asian states' vessels and

crew in the South China Sea, including at Sabina Shoal, Scarborough Shoal, Second Thomas Shoal and near the Paracels. These actions include dangerous manoeuvres, sideswiping, ramming and water cannoning of vessels, which have resulted in injuries to fishers and crew. We will continue to express serious concern about unsafe and destabilising actions in the South China Sea, including the dangerous use of coast guard vessels and maritime militia and interference with routine maritime operations. We are also concerned about the ongoing militarisation of disputed features, efforts to disrupt other countries' legitimate resource exploration and exploitation activities, and interactions between aircraft in the South China Sea, including unsafe and unprofessional incidents. These actions endanger the peace and security of the region, threaten lives and livelihoods, and create risks of accidents and miscalculation.

Australia is also deeply concerned about unsafe and unprofessional actions towards Australian Defence Force aircraft and vessels. The Australian Defence Force conducts activities professionally and in accordance with international law and expects all other militaries to do the same.

Australia is concerned about efforts to undermine UNCLOS, which is the comprehensive legal framework for all activities in the oceans and seas. It provides the legal foundation for peace, security and stability in the maritime domain. Australia will continue to exercise rights and freedoms under international law, including freedom of navigation and overflight, and will continue to respect the right of others to do the same. All maritime claims and activities, including those in the South China Sea, must be consistent with international law, particularly UNCLOS. All disputes must be resolved peacefully and in accordance with international law. The 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award is final and binding on the parties.

The ARF is a central pillar of the regional security architecture. All ARF members have a responsibility to promote dialogue and to support measures that reduce the risk of conflict and miscalculation, including by setting expectations for regional stability and providing a forum for engagement and cooperation. Australia will continue working with ASEAN Member States and Dialogue Partners to promote peace and stability in the maritime sphere, particularly through promoting conflict prevention, confidence building measures and preventive diplomacy.

Australia is not a party to negotiations between ASEAN Member States and China on a Code of Conduct for the South China Sea. However, Australia has a clear interest in ensuring an open maritime environment and upholding international law, particularly UNCLOS. Australia considers that a quality Code of Conduct should: be comprehensively and carefully considered; not prejudice the rights of States, including third States, under international law, particularly UNCLOS; reinforce existing inclusive regional architecture; and strengthen States'

commitments to cease actions that would complicate or escalate disputes, notably the militarisation of disputed features.

vi. Climate Change

Climate change is a shared existential, systemic, long-term global challenge. It threatens economic prosperity, security and livelihoods of our shared region. It is a global crisis that is disrupting trade, causing food, water and energy shortages, increasing the risk of pandemics, conflict and displacement, and reversing progress in the fight against poverty and gender equality. International cooperation is key to addressing this collective challenge. Australia is working closely with regional partners to accelerate ambitious climate action, build new clean energy industries, promote new net zero-related trade and investment opportunities and ensure energy security.

Australia is committed to demonstrating global leadership on climate change, including through our bid to host the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change COP31 in partnership with the Pacific, leading in multilateral climate negotiations and decarbonising our economy. We look forward to driving greater ambition through COP31 including to: accelerate global action and unlock the economic opportunities from the clean energy transition; and secure global action and investment to keep global temperatures to safer limits and help build resilience to climate impacts. Australia seeks to deliver a COP that brings profile to the unique climate challenges faced by the region, and to accelerate global action to address them.

Australia is committed to working with ASEAN under our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership to deepen cooperation on regional efforts to transition to net zero. In 2023, Australia, Vietnam and Laos co-chaired the inaugural ASEAN–Australia High-Level Dialogue on Climate Change and Energy Transition in Hanoi. The Dialogue identified opportunities for climate and energy cooperation under our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with ASEAN and strengthened Australia’s credentials as a trusted partner on climate and energy transition. At the ASEAN–Australia Special Summit in March 2024, the Climate and Clean Energy track brought together regional stakeholders to focus on practical cooperation for meeting the region’s climate priorities, including in clean energy trade and investment. It built on the green transition priorities highlighted in *Invested: Australia’s Southeast Asia Economic Strategy* and announced policy initiatives designed to advance regional energy transition.

At the 2024 Special Summit, Australia’s Prime Minister announced an Energy Cooperation Package under the Aus4ASEAN Futures Initiative to enhance ASEAN-led regional energy policy and planning, including implementation of the ASEAN Strategy for Carbon Neutrality. The package will support the ASEAN Centre for Energy and the establishment of an ASEAN Centre for Climate Change in Brunei

Darussalam. The Prime Minister also announced establishment of the Southeast Asia Investment Financing Facility (SEAIFF) to provide up to AUD2 billion in loans, guarantees, equity and insurance for projects that will boost Australian trade and investment in Southeast Asia, particularly in support of the region's clean energy transition and infrastructure development. The first SEAIFF investment approved is an AUD75 million investment in the Singapore Government's Financing Asia's Transition Partnership to support the region's clean energy transition.

Australia recognised the national security implications of climate change and is taking steps to address the risks. The 2024 National Defence Strategy, and preceding 2023 Defence Strategic Review, consider the role of climate change in the region and on defence capability. The Strategy and Review recommended the development of national resilience and response measures at local levels for adverse climate change and to accelerate Australian Defence clean energy transition to increase national resilience. Further, the Australian Government's first pass report for the National Climate Risk Assessment, released in March 2024, identified nationally significant climate risks to Australia including defence and national security. These assessments identified the expected pressures of concurrent disasters likely to be experienced in Australia and the region, and the Government's capacity to effectively respond. These nationally comprehensive views of Australia's climate risks allow a better understanding of where we need to focus our efforts going forward.

In 2024, the ADMM-Plus agreed on the requirement to incorporate issues on resilience and response to climate-related and other national disasters into the seven thematic ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups (EWG). Australia is working closely with our EWG co-chair, Cambodia, to address the impact of climate change on cybersecurity through practical defence cooperation.

vii. Health security

Australia works at national, regional, and global levels to support partner countries to: achieve their ambitions to deliver equitable access to quality, essential health services; help to prevent and respond to communicable and non-communicable diseases; and advance sexual and reproductive health and rights. We work with governments, civil society organisations and Australian, regional and multilateral partners to respond to our shared health challenges – including the risk of pandemics, antimicrobial resistance and the health impacts of climate change. Our health assistance supports inclusive health systems that aim to meet the needs of women and girls, people with a disability and other groups experiencing marginalisation.

Australia is investing AUD620 million in our region's health security to improve health outcomes and promote prosperity and stability through the Partnerships for a Healthy Region initiative, a five-year program (2023–27). This initiative

supports technical expertise to build resilience in our region and provides funding for research and development of vaccines, drugs and diagnostics for diseases that affect Southeast Asia and the Pacific. We also support global efforts to ensure the world is prepared to prevent and manage future disease outbreaks through our funding to the World Health Organization. In response to growing global uncertainty and cuts to development support in the region, Australia has committed an additional AUD81 million for a regional health resilience package over the next three years.

Australia is supporting the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases, which will enhance regional capacity to prepare for, detect and respond to pandemics. We are also supporting ASEAN to build capacity to reduce the risk of pandemics from zoonotic diseases.

As co-chair of the ADMM-Plus EWG on Military Medicine for the 2021–24 cycle, alongside Brunei Darussalam, Australia supported practical military medicine cooperation in military operations other than war, with a strong focus on pandemics and health security in the region. A Project Based Community Medical Deployment/Medical Aid Provision was conducted in General Tinio, the Philippines, from 14–27 October 2023. Australia maintains its role in health security in the region through continued participation in the ADMM-Plus EWG, and through multilateral and bilateral arrangements. Australia supports civil-military collaboration for health emergency preparedness in our regional and beyond.

viii. Counter-Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism

Terrorism and violent extremism continue to threaten the collective security of the region as new risks emerge and threats evolve globally. Regional cooperation remains a crucial component in disrupting offshore terrorist actors, restricting operations and financing as well as outlining trends and patterns. ASEAN mechanisms play a critical role in mitigating risks and addressing the underlining conditions, essential to continued region-wide security and prosperity. Key themes for cooperation include the disruption of offshore terrorist and criminal activity, countering terrorism financing, preventing and countering violent extremism, intelligence and information exchange, preventing and countering online radicalisation, and building resilient communities.

ASEAN Member States are driving positive programs and interventions, enabling disengagement and effective deradicalisation, leveraging civil society as well as enacting key reforms in law enforcement coordination and the justice sector, and adopting whole-of-region, whole-of-society approaches in line with National Action Plans on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.

ix. AUKUS

In September 2024, AUKUS Defence Ministers reaffirmed that Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States seek to maximise the strategic benefits of the AUKUS partnership to support security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. Australia is transparently investing in a capable military, defence industry and partnerships, including through AUKUS, to be a reliable security partner for the region. Australia's acquisition of a conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability (AUKUS Pillar I) and development of advanced military capabilities (AUKUS Pillar II) are a necessary response to the rapidly evolving strategic environment in our region. Strengthening our trilateral defence capabilities and our industrial capacity will enable AUKUS partners to deter coercion or aggression in the region more effectively. No additional partners will be invited to cooperate on the AUKUS Pillar I initiative.

AUKUS partners remain committed to progressing Australia's acquisition of conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines in a way that sets the highest non-proliferation standard. Australia does not have and will not seek to acquire nuclear weapons. Australia will continue to meet its non-proliferation obligations and commitments, including under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone (Treaty of Rarotonga) and its safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). While Australia is not party to the Treaty of Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (the Bangkok Treaty), Australia will continue to work in a manner that is consistent with its basic principles.

2) NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

i. Overview

Australia's updated defence policy, planning, capabilities and resourcing are outlined in the 2024 National Defence Strategy (NDS) and the 2024 Integrated Investment Program (IIP). The NDS will be updated biennially. The move to a biennial NDS cycle allows policy, strategy, planning and reform efforts to keep pace with the rapidly evolving strategic environment.

As set out in the NDS, Australia's security and prosperity is inextricably linked to developments in the Indo-Pacific, and the defence of Australia lies in the collective security of the region. Australia will continue to strengthen defence engagement with Indo-Pacific partners, embracing opportunities to support mutual interests, build trust, deepen cooperation and maintain peace, security and prosperity in the region. The NDS reaffirms that Australia wants to see a regional order with ASEAN at its centre, providing an essential stabilising influence.

Against the backdrop of intensifying strategic competition, and in concert with Australia's other tools of statecraft, the NDS seeks to deter any actions that could lead to conflict, military coercion or direct action against Australia or our interests. To support this, Australia has adopted a Strategy of Denial. The Strategy of Denial seeks to: deter any conflict before it begins; prevent any potential adversary from succeeding in coercing Australia through force; support regional security and prosperity; and uphold a favourable regional strategic balance.

The NDS reiterates the Australian Defence Force's five key tasks. These are to: defend Australia and our immediate region; deter through denial any potential adversary's attempt to project power against Australia through our northern approaches; protect Australia's economic connection to our region and the world; contribute with our partners to the collective security of the Indo-Pacific; and contribute with our partners to the maintenance of international rules and norms.

The IIP sets out the specific capabilities Australia will invest in to give effect to the NDS. It provides a generational uplift in Australia's capabilities and shifts the Australian Defence Force to an integrated, focused force. The Australian Government has reset its defence capability investment priorities to deliver this fundamental change.

ii. Data Contribution to ARF Arms Register

We are also deeply committed to transparency. 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 UNARM (un-arm.org). Detail on the total number of personnel in the Australian Defence Force is published in the Department of Defence Annual Reports, available at www.defence.gov.au. Australia further reports on its international transfers of conventional arms each year to meet its obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty (thearmstradetreaty.org).

3) NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL SECURITY

i. Counter-Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism

As Australia's future is inherently intertwined with the region, our collective efforts seek to protect our citizens and build a region free of violence by building peace. Regional transnational crime cooperation through ASEAN mechanisms is crucial to disrupt offshore transnational terrorist and violent extremist activity, especially as our region becomes more connected, including through people-to-people links. Australia recognises ASEAN's role in protecting citizens by emphasising prevention and building on the strengths of civil society, while developing polices which enable heightened resilience. Australia's counter-terrorism engagement with

ASEAN proactively responds to emergent, cross-cutting issues, drawing from successes while openly looking to improve practices and policies.

In May 2025, Australia and Indonesia co-chaired the fourth ASEAN–Australia Counter-Terrorism Dialogue (CT Dialogue). The CT Dialogue demonstrates Australia and ASEAN’s commitment to counter-terrorism, and preventing and countering violent extremism, in line with the Memorandum of Understanding between ASEAN and Australia on Cooperation to Counter International Terrorism (2018). The CT Dialogue aims to support proactive analysis of counter-terrorism risks which the region faces collectively, and seeks to develop closer regional cooperation, including through information exchange and sharing best practice, rooted in the application of international best practice, human rights and international law.

Australia supports implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (Bali Work Plan) 2019–25. Activities delivered under the Bali Work Plan support the ASEAN Plus Australia Senior Officials’ Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC Plus Australia) and ASEAN objectives under the SOMTC workplan. This has included a number of workshops delivered in collaboration with Indonesia. In March 2025, Australia and Indonesia co-chaired the ASEAN–Australia Counter-Terrorism Workshop on the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and their Families. SOMTC has endorsed an additional workshop for delivery in late 2025, which seeks the participation of youth as the next generation of counter-terrorism practitioners. Australia also supports the ADMM-Plus EWG on Counter-Terrorism, co-chaired by Malaysia and India during the 2024–27 cycle.

Australia works closely with our ARF partners on counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism, including through the ARF ISM on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC ISM). Post-COVID-19 pandemic, the CTTC ISM has been reinvigorated, with the inclusion of a new priority area of Border Security Management in the ARF CTTC Workplan 2024–26. Discussions at the most recent ISM in Dhaka focused on the nexus between terrorism and transnational crime, particularly on anti-money laundering and countering terrorism financing. Australia supports ARF workshops and initiatives focused on countering the use of unmanned aerial systems, supporting victims of terrorism, and rehabilitation processes.

As Australia and ASEAN look to the future and to the evolving counter-terrorism landscape, recalling the inherent transnational nature of global terrorism, our partnerships grow stronger through capacity building, joint training, sharing of capabilities and innovative exchange. Our focus remains on maturing our partnerships and continuing our work in the mutual interests of the region. Programs such as Peacebuilding in Conflict-Affected Mindanao, the Australia–Indonesia Partnership for Justice and the ASEAN–Australia Political Security

Partnership are key regional investments that address the root causes of violence. These projects and programs emphasise our commitment to ASEAN centrality and collective action in addressing the region's most pressing security threats, including countering terrorism and violent extremism.

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

Australia is committed to a world without weapons of mass destruction. We work with others to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and welcome Vietnam's chairing of the 2026 Review Conference. Australia is co-chairing with the Philippines and New Zealand the ARF Intersessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ISM on NPD) from 2025–27. The 16th ISM on NPD engaged in dialogue to take forward shared goals.

Australia supports the entry into force and universalisation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and urges progress on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator the Hon Wong chaired the ministerial meeting of the Friends of the CTBT and spoke at the launch of the FMCT Friends Group at the United Nations General Assembly High-level week in 2024. As current chair of the Asia-Pacific Safeguards Network (APSN), Australia will host the 16th annual general meeting in late 2025. APSN facilitates the practical exchange of knowledge and best practice between nuclear safeguards practitioners.

In line with Australia's commitment to gender equality and women's leadership, we are hosting a training program for women in nuclear science through the IAEA's 2026 Lise Meitner Fellowship, and funding scholarships for women in our region under the IAEA Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme.

As permanent Chair of the Australia Group (AG), Australia plays a leading role in preventing the spread of chemical and biological weapons. 2025 marks the 40th anniversary of the AG's significant contribution to global non-proliferation. Many ARF members use the AG's Common Control Lists in their national export control frameworks to ensure trade in sensitive items does not contribute to weapons of mass destruction proliferation. Australia hosted the annual Proliferation Security Initiative's Asia-Pacific Exercise Rotation – Exercise Pacific Protector in September 2024, which enhanced regional counter-proliferation capability, coordination and interdiction techniques.

Australia supports the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. We are a founding donor of the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, which has funded several projects in Southeast Asia. Australia congratulates Cambodia on successfully hosting the 5th Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) in November 2024. Australia will work with APMBC member states to implement the Siem Reap

Angkor Action Plan. Australia also looks forward to working with Laos, which will assume the presidency for the Convention on Cluster Munitions and host the 2026 review conference.

Australia is committed to building a shared understanding of the opportunities and risks associated with Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS), through constructive participation in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons' Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal AWS. Australia supports the GGE in developing a shared understanding of how international humanitarian law regulates the development, acquisition and deployment of AWS. In March 2025, Australia co-hosted a third Expert Meeting on legal review of AWS.

Australia participates in complementary efforts that consider the breadth of applications of artificial intelligence (AI) and autonomy in the military domain. Australia endorses the 'Political Declaration on Responsible Military Use of AI and Autonomy' and the Responsible AI in the Military Domain (ReAIM) Summits 'Call to Action' and 'Blueprint for Action'. In 2024, Australia attended the second ReAIM Summit in Seoul, as well as the ReAIM Regional Consultations in Singapore. In May 2025, Australia was pleased to participate in the second set of regional consultations in Seoul.

iii. Transnational Crime

Australia works closely with ASEAN partners to manage transnational crime threats in the region. This includes operational engagement, information sharing and capacity building. Deterring, disrupting and prosecuting the criminals who profit from these activities is one of Australia's highest priorities in the region. We continue to engage on key issues through the CTTC ISM, the SOMTC and the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters – Australia Consultation. We provide technical assistance and other support through activities under these mechanisms, as well as programs such as the Mekong–Australia Partnership on Transnational Crime, which has now entered Phase 2, and the ASEAN–Australia Political Security Partnership.

Australia has increased its engagement in the ASEAN region to help combat the proliferation of cyber-enabled fraud and scam centres in Southeast Asia, largely along the borders of Myanmar and Thailand, and in the Special Economic Zones of Laos and Cambodia. These centres are driven by sophisticated transnational crime syndicates that are involved in a variety of illicit activities including money laundering, human trafficking, forced labour, cyber-crime and sex trafficking.

Australia continues to counter human trafficking in Southeast Asia through the ASEAN–Australia Counter-Trafficking program (ASEAN–ACT), an AUD80 million investment over 10 years from 2018–28. ASEAN–ACT supports ASEAN Member States to implement and report on their obligations under the ASEAN Convention

against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Since 2015, Australia has supported the Tripartite Action to Enhance the Contribution of Labour Migration to Growth and Development in ASEAN program (TRIANGLE in ASEAN), which promotes safe and fair labour migration in the region and works to protect and promote the rights of migrant workers, reducing their vulnerability to being trafficked. The current phase is a AUD24 million investment, implemented by the International Labour Organization. Given the success and positive outcomes of TRIANGLE, Australia is considering funding a successor program to continue our support to ASEAN on safe and fair regional labour migration.

Australia seeks to disrupt and dismantle smuggling and trafficking networks through information sharing, coordinated action and joint operations. Australia is co-chair, with Indonesia, of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. The Bali Process continues work to implement the priorities in the 2023 Adelaide Strategy for Cooperation, as agreed by members at the 8th Ministerial Conference of the Bali Process, and Third Government and Business Forum, in February 2023. This includes strong regional commitments to combat trafficking into online scam operations; address the impacts of technology on irregular migration; and further strengthen Bali Process engagement with civil society and the private sector.

The global illicit drug trade continues to present a significant threat to the stability and security of the region. The Australian illicit drug market remains a lucrative and attractive target for transnational serious and organised crime groups who use the Southeast Asian region as a source and transit location. Australia is particularly concerned about the growth in synthetic drug manufacturing, particularly methylamphetamine and its precursors, although heroin, cocaine and synthetic opioids also remain a threat. 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.

iv. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Australia is committed to strengthening cooperation with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) through practical support and sharing information with ASEAN partners to improve future humanitarian responses. The Australia Assists program has provided humanitarian specialists to support ASEAN Member States, including in Indonesia, Laos and the Philippines. The AHA Centre are working to continue this support in 2025–26.

In response to the March 2025 Myanmar earthquake, Australia provided humanitarian support to the people of Myanmar, including support to the AHA Centre for the procurement of relief supplies, transport costs and operational costs,

delivered in partnership with humanitarian stakeholders. Australia continues to be a strong supporter and contributor to the ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR and participates in the ARF ISM on Disaster Relief.

v. Maritime Security

Australia is committed to supporting the implementation of the maritime pillar of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and the ASEAN Maritime Outlook. The Melbourne Declaration agreed by ASEAN and Australia at the ASEAN–Australia Special Summit in 2024 underscored our joint commitment to address maritime security challenges, and recognised that it is critical that we maintain peace, stability, and maritime security in our region through the consistent adherence to, and application of, international rules and norms. The Melbourne Declaration reaffirmed the importance of the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS. In March 2024 Australia announced an investment of AUD64 million over four years to enhance Australia’s Southeast Asia Maritime Partnerships.

Australia continues to be a strong supporter of, and contributor to, ASEAN maritime forums, including the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), ARF Intersessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ARF ISM MS), and the ADMM-Plus EWG on Maritime Security (ADMM EWG MS). Australia is working with the Philippines as co-sponsor to implement two projects – adopted by ASEAN Member States in March 2023 – to strengthen the institutional capacity of the EAMF. We also continue to prioritise the implementation of items agreed under the ARF ISM MS Work Plan 2022–26. In the 2024–25 ARF intersessional year, Australia co-chaired the 6th ARF Workshop on Implementing UNCLOS and other International Instruments to Address Emerging Maritime Issues alongside Vietnam, New Zealand, Canada and the European Union. In July 2024, Australia co-chaired the 6th East Asia Summit Conference on Maritime Security with Indonesia and India.

Australia continues to work with regional partners to enhance maritime domain awareness; combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; disrupt maritime transnational crime threats; uphold international law, particularly UNCLOS; improve maritime safety; sustainably manage marine resources; and respond to marine environmental challenges. In February 2025, Indonesia, Singapore, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Australia jointly delivered a 1.5 Track Seminar on ASEAN’s Role in Cable Connectivity and Resilience under the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. Australia has worked closely with partners to support regional efforts to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea, including through the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia. In 2025, Australia will host the 21st Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM) in Sydney. Australia supports HACGAM initiatives to bolster regional civil maritime security by strengthening agency-to-agency cooperation and promoting information sharing to achieve mutual outcomes.

vi. Cyber Security

On 22 November 2023, Australia released its 2023–30 Australian Cyber Security Strategy together with its Cyber Security Action Plan. Priority areas for the new Strategy include Australia's ongoing international cyber engagement and capacity building efforts to enhance the collective cyber resilience of our region and work with global partners to meet the evolving challenges of cyberspace.

Australia recognises that cyberspace and critical technology play an important role in our vision for a peaceful, stable and prosperous region. Australia's Southeast Asia and Pacific Cyber Program (SEA-PAC Cyber) contributes to capacity building efforts in our region, including ASEAN countries, to harness the opportunities of cyberspace and critical technology, while mitigating the risks. SEA PAC Cyber will enhance cyber security and critical technology capacity and capabilities across Southeast Asia and the Pacific, to increase access to secure and trusted technologies. Under SEA PAC Cyber, Australia will support partner countries to reduce cyber risk, strengthen domestic and regional cyber resilience, and equitably manage and coordinate responses to current and emerging cyber needs.

Australia supports cooperation on advancing the agreed UN framework for responsible state behaviour in cyberspace, including through discussions of cyber issues in our region, such as the ARF Open-Ended Study Group on Confidence Building Measures to Reduce the Risk of Conflict Stemming from the Use of ICTs and the ARF Intersessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies. Australia continues to co-sponsor and manage the ARF Points of Contact Directory on ICT Security with Malaysia. Australia co-chairs the ADMM Plus EWG on Cyber Security with Cambodia for the 2024–27 cycle to support increased defence cooperation on regional cyber security challenges.

Under our SOMTC work plan, in February 2025 Australia co-chaired the ASEAN–Australia Workshop on the UN Norms of Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace with Malaysia and Singapore. In April 2025, Australia co-chaired the ASEAN–Australia Cyber Capacity Building Workshop on Investigating Online Child Sexual Exploitation with Singapore.

Australia is especially focused on efforts to enhance regional implementation of existing international law and the 11 agreed norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace. Australia continues to support, with Singapore and the Netherlands, Cyber Law International to conduct ASEAN-wide seminars and alumni workshops on the application of international law in cyberspace, tailored to the regional context.

Australia also demonstrates its commitment to advancing and implementing the framework of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace by continuing to support and promote the UN Institute for Disarmament Research's website for countries to self-assess against the Survey of National Implementation of the UN Group of Governmental Experts recommendations. Australia continues to look for opportunities to expand this work (including through capacity building) and promote elaboration of best practice guidance and practical assistance to help states implement the framework of responsible state behaviour.

In December 2024, after three years of negotiations, Australia welcomed adoption of the UN Convention against Cybercrime (the Convention) by the UN General Assembly. The Convention is the first UN-endorsed instrument addressing cybercrime and the collection of electronic evidence. Working with our regional partners in the UN Ad Hoc Committee (AHC) on Cybercrime, Australia was committed to negotiating a convention that was consistent with the existing international legal framework to address cross-border crimes. Australia's engagement in the AHC on Cybercrime was also reflective of the priority Australia places on combatting online child abuse, with the Convention establishing new global offences that address the significant harms caused by technology-facilitated abuse, such as child sexual exploitation and abuse material and the grooming of children online. Australia remains committed to working closely with our regional partners towards the long-term success of the Convention, including by supporting capacity building for countries to ratify the Convention.

vii. Space Security

Given the importance of space to all nations, there is a need to continue meaningful multilateral space security discussions to: enhance the governance of outer space activities; protect critical space infrastructure; and prevent an arms race in outer space. Australia supports further exploration and development of rules, norms and principles of responsible space behaviour, which can support international law, including the Outer Space Treaty and UN Charter. Australia welcomes the consensus report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space and looks forward to further substantive work being achieved in the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on the Prevention of an Arms Race in All its Aspects.

On 20 February and 12 March 2025, Australia and Singapore, with the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, hosted two virtual workshops to assist regional states with preparation for the OEWG on the Prevention of an Arms Race in All its Aspects. With 20 States participating, the workshops have built a better appreciation of the issues to be canvassed by the OEWG to the region and prepared States to actively engage and contribute. Australia supports further efforts within the ARF to enhance regional dialogue on

outer space security in line with the ARF's confidence building and preventive diplomacy agenda.

viii. Women, Peace and Security

Australia is a champion of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Australia's International Gender Equality Strategy, released in February 2025, outlines our work to support gender responsive peace and security efforts, which lead to longer-lasting peace that benefits everyone. Action on WPS is a commitment shared by governments in our region and ASEAN, as reaffirmed in the 2024 Melbourne Declaration. Launched in 2022, the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security is a critical step in ASEAN Member States' progress towards meeting their commitments to gender equality and the human rights of women and girls, along with promoting sustainable peace and security in the region.

Australia is working with ASEAN and other partners to design and deliver initiatives that support women peace mediator networks in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Australia provides technical support to governments to develop, implement and review national action plans and the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on WPS. We work in partnership to develop research, communication tools and digital platforms for engagement to support advocacy and accountability.

Australia supports bilateral and regional programming on WPS, including on cyber security and countering violent extremism. This includes support to the ASEAN–Australia Counter Trafficking program, through which capacity building activities focus on victim identification, protection and support, as well as the protection of persons in vulnerable situations. Australia is committed to identifying new opportunities to address contemporary challenges, such as climate change, cyber security, and space, as part of our future support for WPS.

Australia actively promotes the WPS agenda in the ARF. In March 2025, Australia, Vietnam and Canada co-chaired the second ARF Workshop to Recognise 25 Years of Women, Peace and Security in Ho Chi Minh City. Australia is also working to meaningfully advance the WPS agenda in the respective work plans of the ADMM-Plus EWG, in line with the 2023 ADMM-Plus EWG Joint Statement on WPS.

4) ROLE OF THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM

i. National contributions to enhancing the ARF and regional security

Australia remains committed to continuing its longstanding and active engagement with the ASEAN regional security architecture, including the ARF, East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ADMM Plus. 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 continues to engage constructively in the ARF, including by co-chairing ARF workstreams and delivering, in partnership with ARF members, workshops and seminars. Australia was pleased to co-chair the 16th ISM on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament in March 2025, with New Zealand and the Philippines. In 2025, Australia also co-chaired the 6th Workshop on Implementing UNCLOS and other International Instruments to Address Emerging Maritime Issues and the 2nd Workshop to Recognise 25 Years of Women, Peace and Security.

ii. Future challenges and prospects for the ARF

Australia supports Malaysia's efforts as ASEAN Chair to revitalise the ARF in a holistic and comprehensive manner to maintain its effectiveness, relevance and function as the leading regional security forum in the Indo-Pacific region. Revitalisation would enhance the ARF's leadership on current and emerging political and security challenges, including through its confidence building and preventive diplomacy mandate. As reflected in the ARF 30th Anniversary Statement, the ARF will continue to have a leading role in promoting constructive dialogue and cooperation on political and security issues in the region.

BANGLADESH

1) OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

From Bangladesh's security perspective, the contemporary regional security environment remains complex and dynamic, marked by a blend of traditional and non-traditional security challenges. Geopolitical rivalries, maritime disputes and the proliferation of emerging technologies contribute to strategic uncertainties. Concurrently, challenges such as great power competition, climate change, cyber threats, transnational crimes and extremism transcend national borders, necessitating collaborative approaches. The Rohingya crisis and the recent internal conflict in Myanmar have a spill over effect on the regional stability and an adverse impact on regional security environment.

As a peace-loving nation with strong commitments to multilateralism, Bangladesh advocates for peaceful coexistence, collective security and regional stability and cooperation through confidence-building measures, joint exercises, and participation in regional security dialogues under platforms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ADMM-Plus, and UN mechanisms. Bangladesh advocates for an inclusive regional order, emphasizing the importance of multilateralism and adherence to international law. The nation underscores the significance of information sharing, and cooperative mechanisms to address shared security concerns.

2) NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

a. Overview of National Security and Defence Policy

Bangladesh's defence policy is anchored in the principles of sovereignty, non-alignment, territorial integrity, and peaceful coexistence. The nation adopts a defensive posture, focusing on deterrence and the capability to address both conventional and unconventional threats. Bangladesh aims to enhance the operational efficiency of the armed forces through technological upgrades, capacity building, and improved interoperability among the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Emphasis is placed on maritime security, cyber defence, and disaster response capabilities. The Country's commitment to global peace is exemplified by its substantial contributions to UN peacekeeping operations, reflecting the nation's dedication to international stability and cooperation.

Bangladesh's defence orientation remains defensive, non-aligned, and capability-based. The armed forces are constitutionally mandated to support national interests and contribute to both internal and external peace and stability.

b. Data Contribution to ARF Arms Register:

i. Total Defence Expenditure (FY 2023-24)

Defence Expenditure : USD 3.6 billion (approximately).
Defence Expenditure as a Percentage of GDP: 1.0% (approximately).
Defence Expenditure per Capita : USD 24 (approximately).

ii. Total Number of Personnel in National Armed Forces

Active Personnel : 204,596 (approximately).
Army : 162,125 (approximately).
Navy : 25,081 (approximately).
Air Force : 17,390 (approximately).

Percentage of Total Population : Approximately 0.12%

3) NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL SECURITY

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

Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540:

Bangladesh is committed to UNSC Resolution 1540, focusing on preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) to non-state actors. Measures undertaken include:

- Establishment of a national framework to control the transfer, production, and use of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.
- Enactment of legislation aligning with international non-proliferation treaties and conventions.
- Collaboration with international partners to enhance export control systems and border security.

Non-Proliferation

Bangladesh is a signatory to key international treaties, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The nation actively participates in global disarmament forums and supports initiatives promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Efforts to strengthen national capacities

- Regular training programs for law enforcement and customs officials on WMD-related threats
- Public awareness campaigns to educate stakeholders about non-proliferation norms and engagement with regional partners to share best practices and enhance cooperative mechanisms.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Actions Taken in Adherence to the ARF Statement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response and the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER)

Bangladesh remains fully committed to advancing regional cooperation on disaster management and humanitarian assistance in line with the principles outlined in the ARF Statement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response and the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response. The country has undertaken the following actions:

Policy and Legal Framework Integration

Bangladesh has integrated international and regional disaster management frameworks into its national policies. The national disaster management legislation and operational guidelines provide the basis for coordinated preparedness, response, and recovery efforts that align with AADMER's priorities. The current national disaster management plan promotes risk-informed development, inclusive preparedness, and cross-border cooperation.

Institutional Strengthening and Coordination Mechanisms

The Government of Bangladesh has established and continues to enhance its disaster management institutions, including national and local-level coordination platforms. Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) are being institutionalized to ensure timely decision-making, interoperable communication, and unified command structures during emergencies. Efforts have also been made to improve civil-military coordination in humanitarian operations.

Capacity Building and Regional Engagement

Bangladesh actively participates in regional workshops, simulation exercises, and technical forums under the ASEAN Regional Forum and AADMER umbrella. These engagements aim to enhance interoperability, readiness, and mutual support

among participating states. Bangladesh has contributed to shared learning initiatives and knowledge exchange with ASEAN member states and ARF partners.

Emergency Response and Humanitarian Assistance

In keeping with the regional standards and protocols, Bangladesh continues to improve its national capacity to deliver humanitarian assistance in a timely and coordinated manner. Multi-agency response mechanisms are periodically tested through drills and functional exercises. Logistics, shelter management, and humanitarian supply chains have been prioritized in preparedness planning.

Community-Based Preparedness and Public Awareness

Bangladesh places strong emphasis on inclusive, community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR). Local government institutions and community volunteers are engaged in awareness raising, early warning dissemination, and evacuation processes. Such approaches are consistent with AADMER's people-centered and rights-based principles for disaster risk governance.

Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Risk Information

Bangladesh continues to invest in strengthening its multi-hazard early warning systems, with a focus on improving the accuracy, timeliness, and inclusivity of alerts. In alignment with the Early Warnings for All (EW4All) global initiative, the country is working to ensure that every person, particularly those in high-risk and underserved areas, receives timely and understandable warnings linked to early actions. National efforts have been directed towards enhancing forecasting infrastructure, expanding dissemination networks and integrating digital technologies for risk communication. By adopting a people-centered approach, Bangladesh seeks to close the gap between warning issuance and community response, thereby reducing loss of lives and livelihoods.

Anticipatory Action (AA) and Early Action Protocols (EAPs)

Bangladesh has increasingly prioritized Anticipatory Action (AA) and the development of Early Action Protocols (EAPs) to reduce disaster impact through timely, pre-emptive interventions based on credible forecasts. These protocols are designed to trigger predefined actions such as cash transfers, pre-positioning of relief, and evacuation support before hazard strikes. In coordination with humanitarian partners and technical agencies, Bangladesh has piloted EAPS for flood and cyclone scenarios, integrating scientific risk analysis with community preparedness. These efforts are in alignment with regional aspirations under AADMER to enhance forecast-based early warning systems and promote proactive humanitarian approaches across the ASEAN region.

Climate-Disaster Nexus and Resilience Building

Recognizing the growing complexity of climate-induced disasters, Bangladesh has integrated climate adaptation strategies with its disaster risk management framework. These efforts align with regional objectives to build long-term resilience and reduce disaster vulnerability in high-risk communities.

Bangladesh remains committed to contributing to the collective regional capacity on disaster preparedness and humanitarian response. The country supports continued cooperation, dialogue, and capacity sharing under ARF and AADMER frameworks to strengthen the ASEAN region's disaster resilience.

Maritime Security

Bangladesh reiterates its strong commitment to the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Statement on Cooperation against Piracy and Other Threats to Maritime Security. As a maritime nation with vital interests in the Bay of Bengal and the broader Indo-Pacific, Bangladesh has taken comprehensive measures to address piracy, armed robbery at sea, and related maritime threats in line with international law, including UNCLOS.

Strengthening Legal and Institutional Frameworks:

Bangladesh has modernized its maritime legal architecture:

- The Territorial Waters and Maritime Zones (Amendment) Act, 2021 enhances jurisdiction and enforcement capabilities in the EEZ and continental shelf.
- National laws and enforcement protocols now align with United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA Convention).
- The Maritime Affairs Unit (MAU) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinates international maritime security cooperation and handles issues related to maritime zones, high seas fisheries, international maritime law, and crimes committed at sea or in the air.

Operational Measures and Maritime Surveillance

- The Bangladesh Navy and Coast Guard regularly patrol coastal and deep-sea areas to deter piracy and transnational crimes.
- Surveillance capabilities have been enhanced through Radar, AIS (Automatic Identification System) and Vessel Traffic Management Systems (VTMS).
- Maritime air surveillance supports extended coverage of national waters and strategic sea lanes.

Regional and International Cooperation

Bangladesh actively engages in regional and bilateral platforms:

- Participates in ARF Inter-Sessional Meetings on Maritime Security and contributes to policy discussions on maritime threat response.
- Supports the IORA Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security and related IORA initiatives.
- Enhances maritime law enforcement cooperation through bilateral and multilateral arrangements with countries including India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the United States.
- Participates in multilateral naval exercises such as MILAN (Multilateral Naval Exercise), AMAN (Peace) Naval Exercise, and CARAT (Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training) to improve interoperability and response readiness.

Capacity Building and Training

- Officers of the Navy and Coast Guard receive regular specialized training on anti-piracy operations, search and rescue (SAR), and maritime interdiction.
- Institutions such as National Defense College, Defense Services Command and Staff College, Bangladesh Institute of Maritime Research and Development (BIMRAD), Bangladesh Maritime University etc. promote research and professional development on maritime security.
- Investment in Search and Rescue (SAR) and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) capabilities ensures resilience against natural maritime threats.
- Bangladesh has undertaken capacity development endeavor with UNODC on Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) specially focusing on the use of modern technologies such as satellite monitoring, radars, AIS, and UAVs for enhanced maritime surveillance.
- Bangladesh is enhancing its institutional and operational capacity to address Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, in line with international best practices. The Bangladesh Navy and Coast Guard, in coordination with the Department of Fisheries conduct regular patrols, licensing enforcement, and vessel monitoring.

Information Sharing and Maritime Domain Awareness

- Bangladesh contributes to regional maritime situational awareness through collaboration with IFC–Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and also maintains operational connectivity in case of need with Information Fusion Centre (IFC) Singapore.

- Supports information exchange under Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) and shares real-time incident reports.
- Promotes data integration, risk mapping, and early warning systems across national agencies.

Port and Infrastructure Security

- Security at Chattogram, Mongla, and Payra ports has been upgraded in line with the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS) Code.
- Port State Control (PSC) and digital inspection regimes are in place to detect non-compliance and deter unlawful maritime activity.
- Safety measures have been extended to key blue economy sectors, including fisheries and marine tourism.

Future Commitments of Bangladesh in Maritime Security:

- Develop and finalize a comprehensive National Ocean Policy which would include all relevant agencies and establish clear maritime security protocols.
- Expand capacity building and training programs for Navy and Coast Guard personnel focused on anti-piracy, search and rescue, and cyber security.
- Strengthen participation and cooperation in regional and multilateral frameworks such as ARF, BIMSTEC, IORA, and ReCAAP, including participation in maritime security workshops.
- Upgrade port security infrastructure with smart technologies and strict enforcement of the ISPS Code to protect maritime trade and infrastructure.
- Promote public-private partnerships with shipping companies, port operators, and coastal communities to enhance maritime security awareness and vigilance.
- Enhance Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) capabilities for efficient maritime emergency and disaster response.
- Foster bilateral and multilateral maritime law enforcement cooperation with neighbouring and partner countries through joint exercises and information sharing.
- Commit to ongoing modernization of maritime assets and legal frameworks to keep pace with evolving threats to maritime security.

Bangladesh continues to pursue a cooperative approach to regional maritime security. In line with ARF objectives, the Government remains dedicated to ensuring safe, secure, and open sea lanes through national resilience and regional cooperation. We stand ready to deepen engagement with all ARF partners to combat piracy, uphold international maritime law, and promote peace, stability, and shared prosperity across the Asia-Pacific region.

ICT and Cybersecurity

In line with its commitment to strengthening regional peace, security, and cyber resilience, Bangladesh-through its National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) and the BGD e-GOV Computer Incident Response Team (CIRT) is actively contributing to regional and international efforts aimed at enhancing information sharing and cyber threat intelligence exchange.

- The National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) of Bangladesh serves as the principal body responsible for implementing the country's cybersecurity strategy and enforcing its cyber law. Bangladesh places strong emphasis on collaborative engagement with foreign counterpart teams and organizations in the field of cybersecurity, including the exchange of information, logs, and forensic data. It also promotes bilateral exchange of cyber threat intelligence within the framework of global threat intelligence cooperation.
- The Bangladesh e-Government Computer Incident Response Team (BGD e-GOV CIRT), currently functioning as the National Computer Emergency Response Team (NCERT), acts as the technical arm responsible for cyber incident detection, response, and cyber threat intelligence sharing.
- BGD e-GOV CIRT is a full member of Asia-Pacific Computer Emergency Response Team (APCERT) and OIC-CERT, actively participating in cross-border cyber drills, contributing to joint cyber simulations and sharing malware indicators, threat signatures, and vulnerability alerts with CERTs across ASEAN and the broader Asia-Pacific region. Bangladesh engages in structured sharing of threat indicators and Indicators of Compromise (IOCs) with regional and global partners, thereby contributing significantly to the global threat intelligence ecosystem.

Bangladesh remains committed to advancing regional cybersecurity and combating transnational cyber threats through robust partnerships with foreign CERTs. By institutionalizing cooperation, fostering trust-based exchanges, and deploying secure infrastructures for information sharing, Bangladesh supports the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) vision of a peaceful, stable, and cyber-resilient Asia-Pacific.

4) ROLE OF ARF

a. National contributions to enhance the ARF and regional security

Bangladesh joined the ASEAN Regional Forum in 2006. Since then, Bangladesh has been playing an active role in ARF and participating in various meetings and programs of ARF. Bangladesh is working to strengthen its engagements with

ARF Member States in areas of mutual benefits such as regional security, combatting terrorism, promoting trade and investment, combating climate change, return of forcibly displaced people, cyber security, etc. To express solidarity with the ASEAN initiative of peace and cooperation through its Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, Bangladesh acceded to the Treaty in 2007.

During the 30th ARF Ministerial Meeting, Bangladesh, for the first time, became co-chair of two Inter-Sessional Meetings (ISM) of ARF, namely, Counter Terrorism Transnational Crime (CTTC) and the Disaster Relief (DR). Bangladesh hosted and co-chaired the 21st ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting (ISM) on CTTC in Dhaka from 09-10 April 2025. The meeting brought together diplomats, government officials, experts from the ARF participant countries and discussed illicit drug, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) matters, preventing and countering violent extremism, trafficking in persons and border security management. Bangladesh will also host and co-chair the 24th ARF ISM on DR in Dhaka next year.

b. Future of ARF

Like many other multilateral forums ARF too is facing challenges due to prevailing global geopolitical complexities. The ARF Participants play critical role in global economy and global supply chain thus making them vulnerable to geopolitical competitions. Bangladesh considers ARF as a very important platform for continued regular dialogues to address these common challenges. Bangladesh remains active in ARF programs and is willing to contribute in any future endeavour aiming at preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution.

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

1) OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The Asia-Pacific region continues to face many interwoven security concerns, ranging from the complexities of major power rivalries to the looming spectre of the global climate crisis amidst the backdrop of rapid technological advancements. These multifaceted challenges resonate across diverse fields, underscoring the intricate interplay of issues in shaping the landscape of the region's future.

As such, the fluidity of existing security issues reiterates the continued need for effective and viable approaches to address challenges affecting the region. With the current global order being widely perceived to have shifted towards multipolarity, such changes have presented significant challenges to the conventional models of multilateral cooperation. Efforts to enhance confidence-building measures, promote transparency, establish practical cooperation as well as mechanisms for crisis management continue to be important components of both bilateral and multilateral approaches towards reducing tensions and fostering trust among countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Further to this, the impacts of traditional and non-traditional security challenges alike also underscore the need for a holistic approach with wider involvement from all sectors and levels of society.

While the region has witnessed the proliferation of security cooperation, emerging challenges such as competition for political and economic influence has implicated the region's stability and security, as well as ASEAN itself. Over the years, ASEAN has faced increasing pressure, both internally and externally, to adapt and evolve towards better positioning itself to effectively manage and/or resolve problems within the region - intrastate crisis in member states, regional territorial disputes, post-pandemic inflation and standard of living crisis, as well as how it chooses to manage the current wave of major power competition.

Acknowledging ASEAN's growing importance in the geopolitical scene, there has been an increasingly intense competition among the major powers to gain (more) influence in the region. Henceforth, ASEAN needs to continue leveraging its convening power to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with not only major powers but also middle powers in the Asia-Pacific region, in efforts to uphold multilateralism on all fronts. Hence, as an active and committed member of ASEAN, Brunei Darussalam remains resolute in its efforts to ensure the continued relevance and credibility of the ASEAN-led regional architecture as an anchor of regional security, stability and prosperity.

a. Traditional Security

i. Evolving Geopolitical Environment

The ongoing variations in the geopolitical and geo-economic landscapes have brought about a wide range of security challenges. In ensuring international peace and stability; managing tensions or conflicts diligently is required and remains vital to maintain balance against the backdrop of evolving regional architecture and power dynamics. Nonetheless, while the region has witnessed the proliferation of multilateral and regional security cooperation, emerging challenges such as competition for political and economic influence has implicated the region's stability and security.

ii. South China Sea

One of the primary challenges facing ASEAN is the long-standing territorial claims in the South China Sea. ASEAN and China remain committed to continuing to promote maritime security and safety, enhance mutual trust and confidence, and maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea. They have reaffirmed their commitment to the freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea, to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability. Underscoring the heightening tensions in the South China Sea, it is more imperative than ever for all involved parties to reaffirm their commitment to fully implementing and concluding the negotiations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC), to mitigate further escalation of conflicts between warring parties.

Brunei Darussalam reaffirms the importance of upholding and adhering to international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), remains committed to the maintenance of peace, stability, and prosperity in the region, and maintains its two-step approach in addressing the South China Sea. Working in tandem with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, practical defence cooperation aims to increase mutual trust and confidence, as well as enable dialogue and engagement at the highest level among ASEAN defence officials. It also reaffirms its commitment to the full and effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC). These actions contribute to providing a positive and conducive environment towards achieving peaceful resolutions of disputes, and at the same time, enable close cooperation to ensure the maintenance of peace, prosperity, and stability of the region.

iii. Korean Peninsula

The Korean Peninsula remains a region of complex political and security dynamics. North Korea continues to develop its military capabilities, including advancements

in missile technology and satellite launches, which have drawn international attention. Diplomatic efforts and dialogues between North Korea, South Korea, and other regional powers have seen periods of both engagement and tension.

South Korea maintains close security cooperation with the United States and other allies, focusing on deterrence and regional stability by engaging in joint military exercises and diplomatic initiatives to address security concerns in the region. At the same time, efforts toward peaceful reconciliation and denuclearisation face ongoing challenges, including differing political priorities and security concerns. Overall, the Korean Peninsula remains a focal point for regional security, with continued international attention on efforts to maintain peace and stability.

b. Non-Traditional Security

While lingering traditional security issues remain, the region has also seen growing non-traditional security challenges that are increasingly complex, cutting across different sectors, in turn undermining prosperity, progress, as well as the well-being and livelihood of its people.

i. Terrorism, Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

The global reach of terrorism and the spread of violent and extremist influence in societies remains a top concern for countries worldwide. Islamic State group attacked of a concert at Crocus City Hall in the outskirts of Moscow in March 2024, proved that large-scale terrorist threats still occur, not just within its traditional domains (Middle East, South Asia, Sahel etc.), but also in developed and well-secured countries. The attack confirm that IS continues to fuel terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism, not excluding towards our region. Such threats can be compounded by weak governance, political dissatisfaction, local dynamics and geopolitics. Terrorism threats are far from static, particularly with the use of technological advancements; the use of cryptocurrency and Dark Web as finance and recruitment methods; misinformation for dissemination of their ideology and propaganda; and the use of AI and drones for surveillance, spying and attacks.

Years of counter-terrorism effort have also led to new modus operandi – the rise of terrorist groups' affiliates, such as those that are responsible for the Moscow's concert hall attack. Now, terrorist threats are most likely to come in the form of small cells or individuals inspired by larger terrorist organisations and violent extremist ideologies, including the Palestinian plights in Gaza, to conduct attacks.

ii. Climate Change

The climate crisis is aggravating conflicts, destabilising societies and adversely affecting peace and stability around the globe. Extreme weather events and critical

change to Earth systems are considered as the greatest concerns facing the world over the next decade. Worryingly, cooperation on these issues is still considered insufficient. From the security lens, recurrent climate extremes are threatening the health and well-being of humanity, and creating greater displacement, migratory movements, pandemics, social unrest, instability and even conflicts. Our armed forces are also confronted with the changing and challenging operational conditions due to climate change. Climate change is a threat multiplier that could intensify resource scarcity and worsen existing social, economic and environmental factors. Dealing with the worsening consequences of climate change may swamp the capacity of governments to take the transformative action on the root cause of the crisis itself, and many of the countries that are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change already are among the most politically and economically fragile.

It is particularly alarming that political movements or policies that advocate climate change efforts is becoming unpopular in the present day. Oftentimes, the majority within many countries favours policies that would tangibly, often temporarily alleviate individual economic woes that is detrimental to the natural environment. As such, it is imperative that a comprehensive climate and environmental policy, aligned to the needs and well-being of the people and communities should be implemented, as climate change has long been proven to be an existential threat to humanity itself and have worsened day by day.

iii. Emerging Technologies

The post-pandemic era has been marked by the rapid emergence and advancement of new technologies. In the defence sector, emerging military technology has the ability to reshape conventional ideas of security and military tactics, altering battlefield in terms of connectivity, lethality, autonomy, and sustainability. There is a growing reliance on the use of artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and the Internet of Things (IoT) in optimising defence operations and enhance military efficiency. However, this emergence also comes with a new set of challenges that are constantly developing and becoming more complex, particularly in the cybersecurity domain.

The establishment of the Cyber Defence Unit (CDU) in 2021 under the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) shows Brunei Darussalam's commitment in ensuring the security of its cyberspace, tackling cyber threats, and in progressively building its capacity in cybersecurity. In addition to strengthening national cybersecurity capabilities, Brunei Darussalam actively contributes to promoting security in the regional cyberspace domain. This year, Brunei Darussalam and other ASEAN member states have adopted the Joint Statement by ASEAN Defence Ministers on Cooperation in the Field of Artificial Intelligence in the Defence Sector during ADMM Retreat in February 2025, which marks a significant milestone in the proper utilisation of AI as one of the emerging technologies in the field of defence.

2) NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

a. Overview of National Security and Defence Policy

Brunei Darussalam's fourth Defence White Paper published in May 2021, continues to be a blueprint and guidance for its national security and defence policy. Brunei Darussalam's defence policy has consistently focused on comprehensive, robust, and integrated efforts to protect and promote the nation's peace and stability. The defence strategy aligns with the national development agenda in the National Vision 2035 and aims to uphold sovereignty and stability. This strategy emphasizes three core priorities: deterrence and response, defence diplomacy, and holistic defence.

Brunei Darussalam is dedicated to enhancing its armed forces to effectively address security challenges. The country is also focused on fostering strong relationships with defence establishments and armed forces globally. A comprehensive defence strategy involves local agencies working together to maintain peace and security, which in turn supports the nation's political and economic progress and development.

3) NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO PROMOTE REGIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

Brunei Darussalam is committed to cooperating and engaging with other countries in the region to protect its interests and fulfil its responsibilities as a member of the international community. By participating in multilateral regional platforms like the ARF, ADMM, and ADMM-Plus, Brunei Darussalam has the opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue and collaborate on addressing common security challenges.

Defence and Security Achievements and Initiatives

The ADMM and ADMM-Plus have added value by strengthening Brunei Darussalam's defence and military capacity and capability development. In its commitment to contribute to regional security, Brunei Darussalam initiated three proposals of cooperation during its ADMM Chairmanship in 2013, which have significantly progressed at various stages. These include:

i. Logistics Support Framework

The ADMM Logistics Support Framework (LSF) aims to enhance logistics cooperation among military forces in the ASEAN region to tackle non-traditional security challenges, including Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), Search and Rescue (SAR), Peacekeeping Operations (PKO), and anti-piracy in a coordinated and effective manner. Following the validation and verification of LSF

in a Table-Top Exercise (TTX) by all AMS in January 2016, the LSF was endorsed by the ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting (ADSOM). Looking ahead, Brunei Darussalam aims to further integrate with other ADMM initiatives such as the ASEAN Military Ready Group (AMRG) and potentially expand in the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups (EWGs).

ii. ASEAN Direct Communication Infrastructure

Recognizing 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 aims to provide a permanent, rapid, reliable, and confidential means by which any two ASEAN Defence Ministers may communicate with each other to make mutual decisions in handling incidents or emergency situations. This communication platform aims to prevent or defuse misunderstandings and misinterpretations, thereby preventing escalation and promoting quick response cooperation in emergency situations.

The ASEAN Direct Communication Infrastructure (ADI) is being implemented in phases. The first phase, in the form of an IP-based mechanism, was launched on 24 October 2017, after the ADMM-Plus Meeting in Clark, Pampanga, Philippines. An ADI Exercise was conducted on 21 February 2019 to test the system's functionality and operationalize the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). The second phase is currently under discussion among the ASEAN Member States (AMS) co-chaired by Brunei Darussalam and the Philippines. The initiative to expand the ADI to Plus countries was adopted by the 13th ADMM in 2019, aiming to promote open communications among member states and enhance regional and wider confidence and security-building measures. During the 15th ADMM in June 2021, the ASEAN Defence Ministers agreed to adopt the Concept Paper on Enhancing the Usage of ADI as Defence Communications Architecture in the ADMM Process. This Concept Paper will provide the policy and technical parameters for Phase 2 of the ADI, including the expansion of user cases and routine exchange of information.

iii. ASEAN Defence Interaction Programme (ADIP)

Brunei Darussalam considers interactions among its defence and military officials crucial for fostering enduring relations among future leaders of ASEAN. The ADIP also serves as a platform for knowledge sharing and fostering cooperation on emerging defence issues. The inaugural ADIP took place in Brunei Darussalam in 2014, with Malaysia hosting the second iteration in January 2018. To ensure continued engagement, the revised Concept Paper on the ADIP was approved in the 15th ADMM in June 2021. The paper aims to make the ADIP more sustainable while strengthening regional unity and identity among ASEAN defence establishments through respect for diversity, equality, and mutual understanding.

Continuing the momentum, Brunei Darussalam hosted the third iteration of ADIP in November 2021, focusing on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Cambodia chaired the 4th ADIP in October 2022, focusing on the Youth, Peace and Security agenda, followed by Indonesia, who hosted the 5th ADIP in March 2023. Lao PDR hosted the 6th ADIP in June 2024 by bringing to the fore, the militaries' roles in contributing to climate change response, whereas Malaysia is set to conduct the 7th ADIP in 2025.

iv. ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups

The progress of the seven ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups (EWGs) in the areas of HADR, Military Medicine (MM), Maritime Security, Counter-Terrorism, Peacekeeping Operations (PKO), Humanitarian Mine Action and Cyber Security manifests the maturity of practical cooperation under the ADMM-Plus. Brunei Darussalam remains 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 in 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. Brunei Darussalam, together with Australia, have recently concluded the co-chairmanship of the EWG in MM for the 2021-2024 cycle. Born during Brunei Darussalam's Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2021 with the theme of "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper", the EWG on MM undertook a component of Project-based Community Medical Deployment (PCMD), Medical Aid Provision (MAP) which aims to address the concerns around the pandemic.

As for the new cycle of co-chairmanship of EWGs (2024-2027), Brunei Darussalam has been working closely with China as co-chair of the ADMM-Plus EWG on PKO. Through this partnership, both countries are focused on enhancing regional cooperation and capacity-building in peacekeeping efforts. The collaboration involves sharing best practices, conducting joint training exercises, and developing frameworks to support United Nations peacekeeping missions. This cooperative initiative aims to strengthen the effectiveness and professionalism of peacekeeping forces within the ASEAN region and beyond, contributing to regional stability and international peace.

Overall, the EWGs' work has garnered understanding and promoted capacity building and interoperability in all member states. More importantly, these have contributed to deeper trust and fostering stronger military-to-military relations among the ADMM-Plus's armed forces. 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 has been increasing integration of

HADR in the broader ASEAN disaster response mechanism with efforts for closer coordination between military and civilian responders.

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 375 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 2024. Throughout the sixteen years of RBAF's involvement in the UNIFIL, eleven female members of the RBAF served in the peacekeeping operations. [2024 update]

Brunei Darussalam has also deployed personnel for the International Monitoring Team (IMT) in Mindanao, southern Philippines since 2004, and in the 2021-2022 peacekeeping mission, there are four (04) RBAF personnel and one (01) Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF). The deployment of IMT has been halted since 2022. Further to this, Brunei Darussalam 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 Headquarters, wherein three of them serve as Verification, Monitoring and Assistance Team (IDB VMAT) in Cotabato, Mindanao, Southern Philippines.

Initiatives at the operational theatre level offer exposure and insight into operating in conflict environments for the personnel involved. The engagements between RBAF and its foreign counterparts and organizations further enhance Brunei Darussalam's defence diplomacy. These initiatives also highlight RBAF's reputation as a professional force capable of making meaningful contributions. In the context of Brunei Darussalam, this also demonstrates substantial support for regional and global endeavours aimed at promoting peace and stability.

Countering Terrorism, Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

The global reach of terrorism and the spread of violent and extremist influence has exacerbated and remains one of the top concerning issues for countries globally. The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2024 report highlighted that deaths from terrorism increased by 22%, with 8,352 deaths, and are now at their highest level since 2017. Despite the increased number of deaths, incidents have fallen with total attacks dropping to 22% in 2023. The rise in deaths but fall in the number of incidents portrays how terrorism is becoming more concentrated and lethal. Recorded as the largest single terrorist attack in 2023 was the 7 October 2023 attack by Hamas-led militants.

Significant improvements in terrorism are in Iraq and Afghanistan. Iraq was ranked outside of the worst ten countries in the index for the first time, with less than a hundred deaths from terrorism recorded in 2023. Daesh remained the deadliest terrorist group globally for the ninth consecutive year, recording both the highest number of attacks and deaths from terrorism. Although the group is still highly active, its impact has been falling over the nine years altogether. Violent conflict remains the primary driver of terrorism, with over 90% of terrorism deaths in 2023 taking place in countries in conflict. Moreover, countries that were most impacted by terrorism in 2022 were also involved in an armed conflict.

Although the terrorism threat remains relatively low for Brunei Darussalam, region-wide and global terrorist activities have not excluded Brunei Darussalam entirely from its implications. Previous reports and investigation highlighted how preparators are utilising Brunei Darussalam as a transit point, financial hub and harbour greater support for their activities. This was apparent through arrests of four individuals linked to Daesh in 2017. In 2018, an arrest was made on an individual with possession of Daesh propaganda-related materials, deliberately construed to garner sympathy and radicalise. Such cases amplify the serious risks posed by social media and the cyber domain in the circulation of extremist ideologies and terrorist-related movements which has become one of the main mediums for terrorist activities.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

The National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) was established as a focal point for disaster management in ASEAN and to enhance the nation's capacity for disaster management and response. The NDMC is administered under the Ministry of Home Affairs. According to the Disaster Relief Order 2006, there are two documents that guide efforts toward disaster management, namely the National Standard Operating Procedure (NaSOP) and Strategic National Action Plan for Risk Reduction (SNAP).

The NDMC looks at all aspects of disaster management ranging from prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery through policies, strategies, and practices. It serves to coordinate multi-agency cooperation along with the Fire and Rescue Department (FRD) in events that require disaster relief mitigation. The Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) has played a significant supportive role including in the contribution of assets to the NDMC.

Brunei Darussalam has actively supported regional HADR efforts and closer coordination between military and civilian responders aligned with the broader ASEAN disaster response mechanism particularly through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Centre). On 27 October to 5 November 2024, Brunei Darussalam through the Ministry of Defence conducted a HADR mission named the Badai Taduh Operation and contributed humanitarian

aid to the Republic of Philippines following the impacts of Tropical Storm Kristine. On 11 April 2025, Brunei Darussalam delivered humanitarian aid to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar following the impact of the earthquake that struck the country on 28 March 2025.

These contributions following the command of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, demonstrates Brunei Darussalam's commitment to ASEAN solidarity and people-to-people linkages within the ASEAN Community.

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

Brunei Darussalam, as a small nation, recognizes the significance of upholding non-proliferation, counter- proliferation, arms control, and disarmament efforts. The country has signed various multilateral and global agreements related to non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control, and disarmament, particularly those pertaining to weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Brunei Darussalam will uphold its commitment to non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control, and disarmament, as it believes that reaching a consensus and universalizing these agreements is crucial to ensuring peace and stability, not only within the nation but also globally.

Brunei Darussalam demonstrates its dedication by engaging in confidence-building measures and activities, expressing support as necessary, submitting reports to promote transparency, and enhancing its capabilities through technical assistance and training. In relation to United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1540, Brunei Darussalam endorsed the resolution and consistently updating the UNSCR 1540 matrix to ensure the resolution's implementation.

Brunei Darussalam is also extensively involved in regional initiatives for non-proliferation, counter- proliferation, arms control, and disarmament, including active participation in ASEAN and ARF, as well as in the international sphere within the United Nations and its affiliated organisations.

Transnational Crime

Brunei Darussalam faces various types of transnational crimes. It is a small country in terms of both size and population, which reduces some of the attractions for transnational criminal activities. Although data generally show minimal cases of transnational crimes, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed vulnerabilities in controlling certain forms of transnational crime. Specifically, the country has witnessed an increase in drug and other related contraband trafficking and distribution.

Brunei Darussalam is committed to collaborating with regional partners bilaterally and multilaterally, particularly with other ASEAN Member States (AMS) to enhance international and regional cooperation in addressing transnational crimes, recognizing the cross-border nature of this challenge. This commitment includes utilizing the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) as the primary platform for strengthening cooperation with regional and international partners. The AMMTC is currently engaged in the implementation of the 'Work Plan of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2019 – 2025)', which aims to establish a framework guiding ASEAN sectoral bodies in conducting necessary activities and effectively monitoring radicalization and violent extremism prevention. The ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transnational Crime (2016 – 2025) is an ASEAN-led initiative aimed at fostering close cooperation among AMS to prevent and combat transnational crimes. It also seeks to enhance ASEAN's capacity to effectively and promptly address transnational crimes. Additionally, guiding documents such as the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025 are crucial in strengthening political and security cooperation. They also play a vital role in enhancing the capacity of AMS to respond to both traditional and non-traditional security threats through defense cooperation and confidence-building measures.

Maritime Security

Brunei Darussalam is a small coastal state that lies on the island of Borneo which is situated in the middle of the South China Sea. Although small in size Brunei has gained its fortune by having a large resource in the form of natural oil and gas which a number of companies have been exploring and extracting within its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). As oil and gas makes up a huge percentage of the country's economy, securing its maritime domain remains a top priority for Brunei Darussalam, and this task has been largely given to the Royal Brunei Armed Forces and Ministry of Defence. There are a number of security concerns that relate to maritime security from the perspective of Brunei but however, in recent years issues such as Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU Fishing), Transnational Crime, Piracy and the presence of foreign vessels within its EEZ's vicinity are the top security concerns that has been envisaged by the country.

4) ROLE OF THE ARF

The ARF, being the primary forum in the Asia-Pacific region for discussing peace and security matters, remains a crucial platform for security discussions in the area. Aligned with its objectives of building confidence, engaging in preventive diplomacy, and resolving conflicts, the ARF supplements the efforts of the East Asia Summit and the ADMM-Plus. In addition to its formal processes, the ARF has also acknowledged the importance of informal exchanges through the ARF-Experts Eminent Persons (ARF EEPs) system, which brings together recognised

professionals and experts in specific areas. The EEPs are expected to offer new and practical ideas and suggestions related to the ARF's three stated goals.

The defence-related platforms within the ARF have contributed to a deeper understanding of the diverse perspectives on regional security concerns among its members. The ARF Defence Officials Dialogue (DOD) and ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC) have been instrumental in providing a platform for defence and military officials to establish networks, foster confidence, and promote mutual trust. Moreover, the ARF Heads of Defence Universities, Colleges, and Institutions Meeting (HDUCIM) has played a significant role in promoting best practices in military education and facilitating exchanges of research on security issues.

a. National Contributions to Enhancing the ARF and Regional Security

During its co-chairmanship of the ARF DOD with Australia in May 2021, Brunei Darussalam suggested that the ARF DOD should have a regular agenda item focusing on the sharing of updates on other regional defence cooperation, such as the ADMM and ADMM-Plus, as well as any other relevant initiatives aimed at promoting confidence building and the exchange of best practices. The proposal, in accordance with the Guide to ARF Processes, Procedures, Practical and Protocol and the ARF Ha Noi Plan of Action II, aims to support the advancement of defence and security dialogue and practical cooperation to strengthen regional peace, security, and stability, including the enhancement of synergy between ARF and the ADMM- Plus.

The ARF's various levels of involvement highlight the commitment to fostering discussions and consultations. Brunei Darussalam is dedicated to the ARF processes, aiming to enhance mutual understanding and collaborate to tackle regional security challenges. Given the uncertain regional security landscape, engaging in dialogue, cooperation, and collaboration at both bilateral and multilateral levels is essential for effectively addressing future risks.

b. Future of ARF

The ARF plays a crucial role in promoting peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region by supporting various political, security, and economic processes for its member states and the broader regional environment. It has been instrumental in capacity building, fostering mutual trust through Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), and facilitating dialogue among the Foreign Ministers of its member states. By ensuring ongoing dialogue, the ARF helps maintain a secure regional environment amid increasing external challenges.

However, as the ARF expands its activities and scope, there may be a need to review its initiatives to avoid redundancy and streamline its significant thematic contributions. Recognizing the growing impact of non-traditional security threats,

Brunei Darussalam encourages the ARF to give greater attention to issues such as climate-related risks, cyber security, responsible use of AI and pandemic response — all of which have important implications for regional stability.

CAMBODIA

1) OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The global geostrategic landscape is in a constant state of fluctuation and remains fragile, requiring vigilant monitoring, assessment, and recommendations due to rapid developments in both traditional and non-traditional security situations. Currently, the world is facing significant challenges, with conflicts and tensions escalating in various regions such as Europe, the Middle East, and the Asia-Pacific. This underscores the importance of a proactive and informed approach to understanding and navigating the complexities of the international security environment.

The Asia-Pacific region is presently encountering a phase of increased uncertainty and evolving security challenges in international affairs. While the likelihood of direct military conflict in the region remains low, there is a growing concern regarding unintentional conflicts and escalation risks, particularly due to existing hotspot issues and potential miscalculations. It is crucial to acknowledge the increasingly interconnected and interdependent nature of the global and regional strategic environment. Conflicts occurring in one part of the world can have widespread effects on other regions. Evidently, the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East have direct and indirect impacts on many countries around the world, affecting areas such as energy prices, food security, and overall economic stability. Moreover, the Asia-Pacific region also grapples with a wide range of non-traditional and human security vulnerabilities, including those related to transnational issues such as climate change, water resources, energy, disease, terrorism, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and smuggling. Concurrently, this region is becoming more interconnected and reliant on emerging and disruptive technologies. These technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and cyberspace, both offer great benefits, and also pose significant challenges. The impact of cybersecurity challenges is multifaceted and consequential, affecting various aspects of military operations, strategy, and national security. These challenges have substantial implications for regional stability and necessitate a comprehensive and coordinated approach.

Amid this complex and evolving geopolitical landscape, it is imperative to uphold the principles of sovereignty, independence, and cooperation for all states. Cambodia emphasises the significance of multilateralism framework, including within international and ASEAN-led organizations, to foster cooperative mechanisms that produce mutual benefits for all states, with the aim of reinforcing enduring peace, security, and prosperity.

2) NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Cambodia prioritises firstly border defence, addressing challenges from land demarcation, maritime concerns, and cross-border issues such as the pandemic. The focal points include enhancing political and security consultation and dialogue, conducting joint exercises, and developing infrastructure along border areas. The Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) focuses on diplomacy and military preparedness, modernizing its forces and equipment.

Secondly, Cambodia emphasises internal security, countering subversion and remaining vigilant against terrorism, adopting a preventative approach rather than combating terrorism head-on. Cambodia cooperates internationally, sharing information to prevent extremism and address cybersecurity and emerging technological threats. The RCAF aims to enhance preparedness in responding to natural disasters as well as pandemics.

Over the next decade, the RCAF will undergo military reforms to refine its structure, command and control systems, personnel management, budget, military modernisation, defence industries, and training.

Lastly, the RCAF is dedicated to enhancing defence cooperation and international security through partnerships based on independence, neutrality, and mutual respect. The RCAF intends to bolster bilateral and multilateral relations through defence diplomacy, supporting regional security frameworks like the ADMM, ADMM Plus, and ARF. Having transitioned from receiving to contributing peacekeeping forces globally, Cambodia emphasises the role of women's participation in peace process and peacekeeping operations, and has contributed to de-mining and peacekeeping efforts, showcasing its commitment to humanitarian assistance and global aid.

Cambodia remains in step with these evolving dynamics and concurrently in sync with the 7th mandate of the Royal Cambodian Government's Pentagonal Strategy. Last year, the Ministry of National Defence of Cambodia released 2024 Defence Strategic Update and is in the process of formulating the Defence Strategic Update 2026 to ensure that Cambodia's defence posture is adaptive to the changing environment.

3) CAMBODIA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL SECURITY

i. Counterterrorism

Cambodia has taken a significant step to fight against terrorism. Although the security scope has been shifted over to the world long stretching pandemic (Covid-19) since 2020, combatting the international terrorism has again taken its shape in our government and the National Counter-Terrorism Special Forces is in ready

posture, for both trainings and operations. Cambodia has planned for national and international exercises with counterparts to strengthen its skills, information sharing and fighting capabilities in order to contribute to a peaceful region through preventing terrorist activities; deterring and combatting terrorism and to maintaining peace, stability, security and promoting cooperation in the region and in the world.

In response to growing these threats, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has taken several important steps which include:

- Fighting for information and sharing them to our operational partners, both nationally and internationally.
- Support external partners' efforts in all levels on various counter-radicalization initiated by the government such as educational programmes and local community supports, spreading soft approach agendas, nesting local community regardless of their religions, races or colours by encouraging them to share, to talk and to understand each other as a measure of preventing them from being radicalized.
- Enhancing maritime security and cooperation via the empowerment of National Committee for Maritime Security and its maritime CT components, by conducting joint trainings and exercises, and sending relevant individuals for joint planning exercises, information sharing workshops, seminars and many other educational programmes. All these activities can assure that Cambodian CT elements are better equipped with knowledge and skills.
- Implementing appropriate measures to improve land and sea border security as well as closely cooperate with partners in strengthening response capabilities on cross-border management through monitoring and tracking terrorist movements, activities and networks as well as supporting resources and supply routes.

Thus far, Cambodia can conduct fully self-reliant trainings and operations among its Special Operation Forces. RGC has increased our operational capabilities to respond simultaneously across the country, gaining control over any unforeseen and foreseen situations required quick released and respond forces.

The RGC on the other hand has been participated in different cultural, traditional, and religious celebrations of the communities to show that the government is here to support everyone equally for all cost and that everyone is part of the society, sharing the same land, celebrating each other traditional, cultural and religious events. Doing this to let everyone know that their cultures and traditions are fully accepted and respected within this country.

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

a. **Overview**

In accordance with Article 54 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia “Production, use and stockpiling of nuclear, chemical or Vatrano (biological) weapons are absolutely prohibited”.

To support the global movement on non-proliferation of WMD, Cambodia has ratified various international conventions and treaties to combat against the use of WMD and become a party to several organizations and treaties.

Cambodia has committed to a range of capacity-building for non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control and disarmament in regard to national laws and legislations as well as regional and international legal instruments on disarmament and non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

b. **National Authority for the Prohibition of Chemical, Biological, Nuclear and Radiation Weapons (NACW)**

- Royal Kram No. នស/រកម/១២០៩/០២៣, 3 December 2009 on Law on the Prohibition of Chemical, Nuclear, Biological and Radiological Weapons

- Royal Decree No. សន/រកត/០៦០៦/២៧៥, 27 June 2006 on the establishment of the National Authority for the Prohibition of Chemical, Nuclear, Biological and Radiological Weapons

The RGC established the National Authority for the Prohibition of Chemical, Nuclear, Biological and Radiological Weapons (NACW) to serve as a national central point for effective liaison with national ministries and agencies, international organizations and States Parties in disarming and in combating the proliferation of CBRN weapons. NACW is also tasked to disseminate, educate and raise public awareness of national and international laws. The followings, among others, are national legal frameworks of Cambodia to combats against the WMD:

- The Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia (1993)
- Law on Customs (2007)
- Law on Counter Terrorism (2007)
- Law on the Prohibition of Chemical, Nuclear, Biological and Radiological Weapons (2009)
- Law on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (2020)
- Law on Combating the Financing of Proliferation of WMD (2020).

c. **Conventions and Treaties related to WMD**

The Kingdom of Cambodia has become a party to various international conventions and treaties to combat the use of WMD as below:

1. Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)
2. Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)
3. Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ)
4. Treaties and Convention related to Radiological and Nuclear Weapons
 - Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)
 - Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)
 - Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)
 - International Convention for the Suppression of Act of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT)
 - Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS)
 - Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM)
 - Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident
 - Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
5. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 – UNSCR 1540 (2004) and many more.

d. International and Regional Engagement

1. The United Nations
 - The United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)
 - The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
 - The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)
 - 1540 Committee
2. Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)
3. The Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)
4. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
5. ASEAN CBR Network of Defence Experts
6. ASEANTOM
7. EU CBRN Centres of Excellence (EU CBRN CoE)
8. International Security and Emergency Management Institute (ISEMI)
9. The Federal Office of Economics and Export Control (BAFA)
10. INTERPOL
11. The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)
12. Vienna Centre for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP)
13. Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCoC)
14. United State Embassy in Cambodia on The Export Control and Related Border Security Assistance (EXBS)
15. Others relevant International-Agencies and the Regional States Parties

e. Activities of Cambodia in Preventing and Mitigating Risks Associated with Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

- **2024:**

Cambodia cooperated with international institutions to host 17 programmes that were attended by over 700 participants from 22 national relevant agencies and over 50 countries, namely:

1. Meetings, workshops, and training programs related to Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) aspects – 4 programmes.
2. Regional meetings related to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) – 1 programme.
3. National workshops related to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) – 2 programmes.
4. National workshops related to biosafety under Project 81 of the EU CBRN Centres of Excellence (EU CBRN CoE) on enhancing biosafety in Southeast Asia (BIOSEC) – 4 programmes.
5. National introductory workshop on the development of a national action plan for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR 1540) – 1 programme.
6. National train-the-trainer program in the radiological and nuclear sector within the CONTACT-Southeast Asia project – 1 programme.
7. National Workshops and Training Programs hosted – 2 programmes.
8. National workshop of EU CBRN CoE Project 106 – 1 programme.
9. Southeast Asian regional workshop under the UNICRI project – 1 programme.

Furthermore, Cambodia has also appointed senior officials, experts, and delegates to participate in a total of 47 international programmes conducted abroad, encompassing various meetings, workshops, and training initiatives pertinent to the prevention and mitigation of risks associated with Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

- **2025:**

In the first semester of 2025, in collaboration with international institutions, Cambodia has successfully conducted six national meetings and workshops, engaging a total of over 300 participants from 22 national institutions, as follows:

1. Workshop on Biosecurity Legal Framework under the Project 81 (in collaboration with the EU CBRN CoE).
2. Evaluation Meeting for the Implementation of Project 61 (in collaboration with the EU CBRN CoE).

3. Meeting between the General Secretariat of the NACW and INTERPOL and NSDD
4. Meeting between the General Secretariat of the NACW and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA).
5. National Workshop on the Development of a National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) (in cooperation with UNODA).
6. Discussion Meeting on the Implementation of Project 98 (in collaboration with the EU CBRN CoE).

In addition, Cambodia has also appointed senior officials, experts, and delegates to participate in a total of 12 international programmes conducted abroad. These initiatives encompass various meetings, workshops, and training endeavours pertinent to the prevention and mitigation of risks associated with WMD.

f. Conclusion

The RGC remains steadfastly committed to supporting and actively participating in the strengthening of cooperation with international organizations and institutions. This concerted effort is directed towards the more effective implementation of conventions, treaties, and resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, thereby contributing to the reduction of risks and the prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferation, and ultimately ensuring peace and security regionally and globally.

iii. Transnational Crime

Transnational crime is a common concern and poses a complicated challenge in the Southeast Asian region, including Cambodia. Currently, transnational crime has not yet decreased—which poses a threat to stability, security, economic development and public order of each country in the region. Although there has been cooperation between the countries in the region to suppress and prevent crime, it is still evolving along each country's borders. Furthermore, criminal groups have well-organized structures and networks. At the same time, globalisation and regional integration have made the movement along the national borders, the flow of people, finance and technology from one country to another become free and much easier. Moreover, the rapid development of the information technology is a factor that eases those criminals' communication and their activities.

There are various types of transnational crimes, most notably:

1. Cybercrime: is a crime in information technology era which includes spreading fake news against legitimate government and hacking to steal important data

from public institutions and private companies, including online scams which causes significant financial losses. This crime is now a contentious issue that also presents a serious challenge.

2. 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 weapons they got from illegal trade to attack on government forces.

3. Drug Trafficking: is still a challenge that needs to be carefully monitored, particularly in the countries along Mekong River. Local authorities have seized the illegal drugs that were planned to export outside the region and the number of seizures 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 means. Provinces along the border, especially in the northeast, remain vulnerable to drug trafficking despite crackdowns on major cases and criminal organizations. Furthermore, it is challenging for the RGC to monitor the situation as criminals attempt to use small entry points to illegally cross the borders. Nowadays, illegal drug production and trafficking trends across the world continues to rise, especially the production of synthetic drugs (ATS), which a major threat in every region, including Cambodia.

4. Human Trafficking and Labor Exploitation: Tens of thousands of victims have been trafficked along the borders and deceived by the middle persons to work without payment. Some women have been forced to work overtime or being sexually exploited. Cambodia remains concerned about cases of people being trafficked through illegal entry points along the borders.

5. Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing: is a common concern in the region and the world because syndicates and terrorist groups always launder their money through transferring, trading and doing business from one country's bank to another. Cambodia is among the countries that are vulnerable to money laundering and terrorist financing. Therefore, the RGC has closely monitored these matters.

Measures and Cooperation to Suppress the Transnational Crimes

1. Cybercrime

The RGC has both legal and institutional mechanism such as:

- The adoption of Digital Government Policy 2022-2035 on 28 January 2022, which also focuses on the development of Digital Government Infrastructure and Cyber Security.
- Law on Anti-Cybercrime (finalized drafting stage).

- Sub-Decree on National Internet Gateway (NIG), which took effect on 16 February 2021, will allow the authority to maintain and protect the security and safety of the internet in Cambodia.
- Established Department of Anti-Cybercrime under the General Commissariat of National Police, Ministry of Interior, to suppress all offences related to cybercrime.

2. Illegal Arms Smuggling

- Strictly enforce measures in checking and monitoring all flows of goods in all target zones and border checkpoints 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.

3. Drug Trafficking

- Enforce the capability to check and find narcotic substance by providing modern equipment for law enforcement institutions.
- Raise awareness and educate the population, especially the youths, about the risk and harmful impact of consuming drugs.
- Impose control measure on dual-use chemicals, which can be used as precursors to produce illegal drugs, and plan to draft law to control chemicals substances that can be used to produce illegal drugs.
- The issuance of the seventh “one-year campaign strategy” in 2022 to “10th anti-drug campaign” in 2025 to combat illegal drugs in Cambodia in all successfully by collaboration across multiple ministries and institutions to curb illegal drug activities and foster a safer, drug-free society since the first launched of campaign.
- International cooperation with bordering countries.
- All countries shall strictly enforce the law and punish the criminals.

4. Human Trafficking

- Raise awareness and educate the population to understand the laws and relevant regulations such as labour law, law on immigration, law on marriage with foreign national, and explain about the risks of illegal immigration so that they can protect themselves from being exploited by crooks or some brokers.
- Enforce the law on Immigration by the authority and strictly punish the criminals in accordance with the law.

- Strictly control of the borders as well as the corridors between the neighbouring countries are needed, and monitors the illegal crossing activities.

5. Combating against Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing

To combat against money laundering, Cambodia promulgated the law on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism on 27 June 2020. This law paves the way for effective enforcement of measures in combating against illegal activities terrorist groups. On 18 January 2022, the Ministry of Justice has formed a task force to fight money laundering and the financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, led by the minister of justice.

iv. Humanitarian Assistant and Disaster Relief (HADR)

At present, the global situation is under the influence of nations with powerful economies competing to maintain dominance over territorial integrity, sovereignty, geopolitical influence, economic, social, and religious power. This competition has led to significant challenges and security instability in the global system, especially posing serious threats and impacts on the livelihoods, safety, and stability of people both regionally and worldwide. These challenges and security instabilities have made it extremely difficult for many countries in the region and around the world to access and manage essential resources such as food, water, healthcare, shelter, energy, and education in daily life. These issues have been further exacerbated by the war between Russia and Ukraine, the conflict between Israel and Hamas, and economic competition between the U.S. and the People's Republic of China — pushing the world into increasing vulnerability, uncertainty, complexity, and crisis. In addition, both traditional and non-traditional threats — including, cybercrime, environmental destruction, illicit arms trafficking, human trafficking, drug trafficking, maritime piracy, and disasters such as pandemics, storms, typhoons, landslides, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, building collapses, droughts, wildfires, floods, flash floods, traffic accidents, and plane crashes — have been rising alarmingly due to the effects of climate change and human negligence. All of the issues mentioned above are of utmost importance as they heavily impact economic growth, security stability, and the daily well-being of humanity. As such, these traditional and non-traditional threats far exceed the capacity of individual governments, countries in the region, and the international community to address promptly, effectively, and in an organized manner, particularly in providing humanitarian assistance and disaster response.

In response to these threats and challenges, in providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, the RCAF and the Royal Gendarmerie of Cambodia have actively participated in bilateral and multilateral humanitarian and disaster response exercises with ASEAN military forces and regional military partners, in accordance

with ASEAN laws, treaties, protocols, and existing mechanisms. They have also pledged to support all forms of regional and global Defence cooperation activities initiated by ASEAN and regional armed forces to contribute to national, regional, and global security. The RCAF, especially the Royal Gendarmerie of Cambodia have implemented clear measures in disaster response operations, abiding by national laws and policies as well as legislation on disaster management.

Regularly, they have actively participated in command post exercises (CPX), field training exercises (FTX), seminars, and various training courses — strengthening the capacity of our armed forces in delivering better humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. For example, the Royal Gendarmerie of Cambodia participated in table top and field exercises of the “Golden Dragon” military drills organized by the RCAF alongside the People’s Liberation Army of China under a bilateral framework. Simultaneously, there have been table top and field exercises involving Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Furthermore, the ongoing efforts to strengthen ties and promote closer cooperation, as well as implementing practical Defence cooperation activities with ASEAN armed forces and regional partners, have helped establish progress, increase trust, professionalism, and build strong partnerships. Additionally, ASEAN armed forces and regional partners have the skills, expertise, and knowledge to respond to various timely challenges and be well-prepared for future crises. To achieve success, we must jointly mobilize and integrate all sectors of our capacity and knowledge while maintaining close cooperation with allies and partners. Moreover, readiness and preparedness in disaster response are key elements of ASEAN and regional partners’ strategic plans to address uncertainties, crucial for achieving success and turning visions into reality.

In conclusion, we firmly believe that promoting closer Defence cooperation and implementing practical cooperation activities with ASEAN Member States and partner countries through bilateral or multilateral exercises will further strengthen our military’s capabilities in strategic, technical, and operational domains — thereby enhancing national, regional, and global security, especially in promptly and effectively responding to disasters in both the region and the world.

v. Maritime Security

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. the RCN has been carrying out its international missions under the framework of the 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. To achieve a common goal of promoting sustainable maritime security the RCN continues to work closely with other ASEAN navies in strengthening cooperation through promoting constructive and collective participation including intelligence, education, joint patrol, operation , logistics,

exchange visits of high-ranking officials and organizing interaction platforms such as ASEAN Navy chiefs' Meeting (ANCM), ANCM-Staff Meeting, The 6th Japan-ASEAN and Timor-Leste Ship Rider cooperation Program 2024 (SRCP2024) ASEAN Navy Young officers' Interaction Program (ANYOL), ASEAN Cadet Seminar and ASEAN Cadet Sail, and International Liaison Officer (ILO) to be stationed at the Information Fusion Centre (ILC) to promote mutual understanding, effective working in solidarity, enabling its navy to adapt and respond positively when dealing with unexpected circumstances.

Cambodia has developed maritime security policy and has also joined in several initiatives to develop the global maritime policy. Especially, the NCMS and the RCN express their 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.

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4) ROLE OF ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM

Cambodia reaffirms its steadfast commitment to the ARF and recognises it as a foundational pillar within the broader architecture of regional security. Cambodia remains resolute in its support for ASEAN Centrality and ASEAN-led mechanisms,

particularly the ARF's indispensable role in upholding peace, security, and stability throughout the region. In alignment with these principles, Cambodia continues to contribute constructively to the ARF's objectives by promoting inclusive dialogue and consultation on political and security matters of shared concern, while also advancing efforts in confidence-building and preventive diplomacy.

In this context, during the 2024–2025 inter-sessional year, Cambodia had the honour of co-chairing the 26th ARF Heads of Defence Universities, Colleges, and Institutions Meeting (HDUCIM) alongside the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in January 2025. The meeting addressed the evolving challenges and opportunities confronting defence education systems in an increasingly complex and dynamic global security environment. Furthermore, Cambodia is proud to co-chair the 27th ARF HDUCIM in November 2025 with Canada, under the themes “The Geopolitical Impacts of Environmental Disruptions on Climate Security” and “The Role of Non-State Actors in Shaping Regional Security.” These contributions underscore Cambodia's proactive and enduring commitment to strengthening the relevance, effectiveness, and adaptability of the ARF in responding to emerging regional and global security issues.

5) INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY SECURITY

Cambodia recognises the transformative potential of digital technology but also understands that a digital economy and society also brings about certain risks, especially risks to cyberattacks. In order to leverage digital technology for safe, secured, and sustainable development, Cambodia has developed information and communications technology policies and legal frameworks, and actively participated in information and communications technology security mechanisms.

On 1 March 2024, the RGC issued the Sub-Decree on the Organisation and Functioning of the Digital Security Committee establishing the Digital Security Committee, which leads, facilitates and promotes the management of digital security to protect the interests of all social actors against all forms of attacks. This Committee is chaired by the Prime Minister with a General-Secretariat managed by the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications. The General-Secretariat has four units, namely: the Cambodia Cybersecurity Unit, the Anti-Cybercrime Unit, the National Cyber Defence Unit, and the Cyber Diplomacy Unit. The Digital Security Committee is the central command in charge of security management in the digital space, and coordinates the four units to direct, prepare, implement, monitor, and evaluate policies, strategies, measures, technical standards, and action plans related to security in the digital space.

The RGC is drafting a Law on Cybersecurity that shall serve as the legal framework for the protection of Cambodia's cyberspace. A robust cybersecurity regime will build confidence and trust in digital technology systems supporting the

development of Cambodia's digital economy and society. The law will allow for the RGC to determine critical infrastructures and raise their cybersecurity standards ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of their systems, as well as will enhance the capabilities of competent authorities to combat cybercrimes.

Safe, secured and sustainable development is not possible without collaboration, especially in this connected world considering the cross-border nature of digital technology. Cambodia is committed to multilateral cooperation and is an active member of various international mechanisms including ASEAN. For instance, Cambodia proactively engages with the ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee to tackle coordination challenges, promote cross-sectoral and cross-pillar cooperation, and strengthen cybersecurity in the region.

Cambodia hosted the 16th ASEAN Network Security Action Council (ANSAC) Meeting on 9 June 2025 in which member states discussed among others, national cybersecurity-related developments and initiative updates, activities of the ASEAN Cybersecurity Capacity Building, the operationalization of the ASEAN Regional Computer Emergency Response Team, as well as ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy 2021-2025 progress. As part of the development of the new ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy (ACCS) 2026-2030 approved by the 5th ASEAN Digital Minister's Meeting (5th ADGMIN), Cambodia hosted the Workshop for the Development of the New ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy (ACCS) 2026-2030 on 10-11 June 2025, back-to-back with the 16th ANSAC Meeting. The workshop served as a platform to discuss key cybersecurity dimensions, emerging threats, incident response mechanisms, and the strategic direction for ASEAN Member States for the period 2026-2030.

Over the past sixteen years, Cambodia has consistently made significant contribution to successful collaborative and cooperative efforts of ASEAN-Japan in the realm of cybersecurity. This cooperation encompasses a variety of collaborative actions, such as joint awareness initiatives, remote cyber exercises, tabletop exercises (TTX), critical information infrastructure protection (CIIP), voluntary mutual notification, capacity building, and ASEAN-Japan online communities.

In May 2025, Ministry of Post and Telecommunication of Cambodia conducted a national cybersecurity competition with more than 100 students and young professionals joining the competition. The overall initiative is to raise awareness, strengthen skills and knowledge, and foster the growth of digital capital in the field of cybersecurity and cultivate skilled cybersecurity professionals.

Under the technical cooperation project called "The Project for Improvement of Cyber Resilience" supported by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Cambodia has conducted many trainings and awareness raising activities targeted at the general public, cybersecurity personnels in the public and private sectors, and provided certification courses for personnels in the public sectors and critical

information infrastructure operators to build cybersecurity capacity in preparation for responding to cybersecurity threats and implementation of security measure, as well as to make Cambodia's cybersecurity landscape more in line with internationally-accepted standards.

In June 2025, through collaboration between Cyber Law International and the supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of Australia, Cambodia conducted a capacity building program on "International Law of Cyber" from 2-6 June 2025 to provide Cambodia cybersecurity, legal and diplomat professionals engaged at the intersection of international law and cyberspace as well as a to explore of how international legal frameworks apply to state behaviour in the digital realm.

CANADA

In 2024, Canada was pleased to strengthen our longstanding ties to ASEAN in our first full year as Strategic Partner. The Canada-ASEAN partnership is built on almost five decades of mutually beneficial collaboration. We reaffirm our strong support for ASEAN centrality and shared commitment to advancing cooperation in line with the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. Working with partners in the region, Canada will continue to take an active part in, and help strengthen, ASEAN-led mechanisms.

Canada firmly believes that when ASEAN is stronger and more effective, all benefit from its increased ability to promote regional peace and stability.

1) OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The Indo-Pacific region plays a critical role in shaping Canada's future. Encompassing 40 economies, over four billion people and \$47.19 trillion in economic activity, it is the world's fastest growing-region and home to six of Canada's top 13 trading partners. The Indo-Pacific is rapidly becoming the global centre of economic dynamism and strategic challenge. Every issue that matters to Canadians—including our national security, economic prosperity, respect for international law, democratic values, public health, protecting our environment and human rights—will be shaped by Canada's relationships with its Indo-Pacific allies and partners.

Our ability to maintain open skies, open trading systems and open societies, as well as to effectively address climate change, will depend in part on what happens over the next several decades in the Indo-Pacific region. The Indo-Pacific region, with a strong ASEAN at its core, is important to Canada. That is why Canada continues to implement its Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) for which ASEAN is central. Canada's IPS, which that we launched in 2022, outlines plan for Canada's increased engagement in the region over the next decade.

The Strategy outlines five interconnected strategic objectives: to promote peace, resilience and security;

1. to expand trade, investment and supply chain resilience;
2. to invest in and connect people;
3. to build a sustainable and green future; and
4. to position Canada as an active and engaged partner to the Indo-Pacific.

Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy is supported by dedicated new investments totalling nearly CA\$2.3 billion to enable unprecedented engagement in the region. For more information about Canada's IPS, please visit: <https://www.international.gc.ca/transparency-transparence/indo-pacific-indo-pacifique/>

Stability in this region directly impacts the safety, prosperity and security for all Canadians. Canada is investing in an enhanced military presence, along with intelligence and cyber security, to promote security in the region and ensure the safety of Canadians.

A. Korean Peninsula

North Korea's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missile programs are a violation of UN Security Council (UNSC) 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.

Canada is deeply concerned by North Korea's repeated ballistic missile launches including launches of inter-continental ballistic missiles and military satellites, and by the possibility of a resumption in nuclear testing. Canada deeply regrets that stability on the Korean Peninsula and in the broader region has been further undermined by North Korea's military cooperation with Russia. Russia's procurement of North Korean ballistic missiles and other weapons and its deployment of thousands of North Korean troops fuels its war against Ukraine and contravenes UN Security Council resolutions. .

Canada calls on North Korea to cease all malicious cyber activities and to comply with international law, as well to implement the eleven agreed upon UN norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace, endorsed by ASEAN, and are further reflected in the ASEAN Check-list for the implementation of the Norms of Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace. Canada has committed CA\$2.6 million in 2023 and 2024 for projects to build capacity to counter North Korea's cybersecurity threats, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.

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. Canada also remains gravely concerned by North Korea's human rights violations and the basic denial of freedoms of North Korean citizens.

Given the significant implications of this threat for the Indo-Pacific region, Canada believes that the North Korean nuclear issue should be a central focus of the ARF's work, including at all relevant inter-sessional meetings. Canada is committed to working with ARF members and the broader international community to ensure effective and coordinated implementation of UNSC sanctions against North Korea.

B. Terrorism and Violent Extremism

Canada believes that effective and sustainable counterterrorism (CT), and preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) efforts require a global approach that combine both domestic, bilateral and multilateral efforts. These efforts must be guided by the principles of respect for human rights, the rule of law, and must be partnership-driven. 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, and the international rules-based order, as well as integrating gender considerations and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda into CT and P/CVE initiatives.

Canada's CT efforts link domestic and international efforts, including intelligence, policing, criminal justice, diplomacy, military assistance, as well as development and capacity-building. Canada supports international CT efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism, encompassing not only security-based CT but also preventive measures to address the underlying conditions that drive individuals to join violent extremist groups. Terrorism and violent extremism are global phenomena, not tied to any particular religion, ethnicity or ideology. Canada remains supportive of the UN's Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS), while also being open to alternative approaches - such as an action plan grounded in inclusivity, human rights and gender equality, and the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

Canada maintains strong bilateral relationships and is active in international fora that addressing issues related to CT and P/CVE, including: the UN, the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), Global Coalition Against Daesh, 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 is deeply concerned with the rise of Ideologically-Motivated Violent Extremism (IMVE), both at home and abroad, and the increased use of technology by IMVE threat actors. By exploiting online spaces, IMVE threat actors can operate in a decentralized manner with global reach and under relative anonymity. This poses a major challenge to law enforcement's early detection and prevention efforts. Furthermore, Canada shares many countries' concerns about the rise in terrorist and violent extremist content (TVEC) online. Threat actors are leveraging AI and new technologies to create, amplify and disseminate propaganda tailored to varied target audiences, and are increasingly targeting young people with radicalizing and hateful messaging.

Canada will continue to build on its partnerships domestically and internationally to counter the threats posed by terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms. Addressing the root causes and key drivers of radicalization to such threats is essential. Public Safety's Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence (the Canada Centre) leads the Government of Canada's efforts to counter radicalization to violence and efforts to address TVEC. Canada's primary engagement with technology companies on TVEC is through the Christchurch Call Foundation and the industry-led Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT). Canada is one of seven governments on the GIFCT's Independent Advisory Committee.

The Canada Centre supports partnerships and innovation in countering radicalization to violence through its grants and contributions program – the Community Resilience Fund (CRF). In the realm of TVEC, the CRF supports research initiatives, positive interventions and efforts aimed at building digital literacy. For example, Canada has provided funding to Moonshot, an organization that partners with psycho-social services to provide “redirect” interventions online when individuals search websites and forums identified for radicalization and misinformation. Canada also provided CA\$2.9 million to Tech Against Terrorism to support the development of their Terrorist Content Analytics Platform – a secure online tool that automates the detection, notification, and analysis of verified terrorist content. Since 2022, there has been a significant increase in Terrorist and Violent Extremist Content (TVEC) online.

C. East and South China Seas

Canada is concerned by escalatory and destabilizing actions in the East and South China Seas. Activities such as the militarization of disputed features; the use of naval, coast guard and maritime militia vessels to intimidate and threaten other states; and the unilateral declaration of administrative authority over disputed areas escalate tensions and put regional stability at risk. The past year has seen several instances of violence and coercion, including vessel ramming, boardings, unsafe intercepts and the use of water cannons. Canada calls for the peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with international law.

Canada reiterates that the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Tribunal ruling is final and binding on the parties. This ruling continues to be a significant milestone and a useful basis for peacefully resolving disputes in the region.

Canada continues to urge that China and ASEAN Member States make concerted efforts to implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC). Canada is encouraged by progress in negotiations between ASEAN Member States and China to develop a Code of Conduct (COC) for the South China Sea. We call for transparency in the negotiations and reiterate that any agreement

must be consistent with international law, and uphold the rights enjoyed by all states to the peaceful use of the seas.

Canada also reiterates its steadfast commitment to maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. The Taiwan Strait is indispensable to security and prosperity of the international community, and it is in the interest of all parties to maintain the peaceful and accessible nature of this waterway.

2) NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

A. Overview of National Security and Defence Policy

Canada is committed to strengthening peace and security and to enhancing its defence relations and engagement in the Indo-Pacific. Under our Indo-Pacific Strategy, Canada is committed to seeking membership in the ADMM-Plus, strengthening our diplomatic presence in the region and increasing security cooperation with ASEAN and its members. The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Canadian Department of National Defence (DND) will continue to implement the Strategy under Operation HORIZON, with a focus on increasing engagement through persistent deployment of Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) ships, increased and diversified CAF participation in regional and multinational exercises and activities, tailored defence training to strengthen resilience and interoperability, advancing Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) initiatives, as well as cyber defence cooperation.

In June 2025, Prime Minister Carney announced a new defence funding package that will see \$9.2 billion dollars invested in National Defence, the Canadian Armed Forces, and partner organizations over the next fiscal year (by 31 March 2025). These investments will fortify the foundations of our defence – drive recruitment and retention, improve defence infrastructure, sustain core fleets, and strengthen our digital backbone. These investments will involve the accelerating of the acquisition of capabilities that we know are essential in modern conflict (such as counter drone capabilities), increasing the size of core army fleets (such as Armoured Combat Support Vehicles and Light Armoured Vehicles), and investing in ammunition production.

Canada updated its defence policy in April 2024, titled *Our North, Strong and Free* (ONSAF). ONSAF builds on commitments made through Canada's previous 2017 defence policy, *Strong, Secure, Engaged* (SSE), which outlined our intentions to deepen relations in the Indo-Pacific, and continues to bolster our commitments as made in the Indo-Pacific Strategy. ONSAF outlines how we will increase our defence spending to ensure our military has the tools, equipment, and training needed to keep Canada strong and resilient in an increasingly unstable global environment. It is focused on restoring credible deterrence at home in Canada and in North America and makes clear that our priorities for international engagement

are Europe, as a strong NATO Ally, and the Indo-Pacific, as an engaged and reliable partner. ONSAF commits to increasing engagement on WPS agenda in the Indo-Pacific region as one of the key objectives we share with many of our Indo-Pacific partners.

Through the implementation of the IPS, Canada has increased contributions to the peace and security of the Korean Peninsula. Ongoing personnel contributions to United Nations Command and consistent participation in regional humanitarian assistance and disaster-relief efforts are two tangible examples. Canada is actively strengthening defence relations and cooperation with partners in the Indo-Pacific, including through the expansion of its network of defence attaché offices, establishment of new defence policy advisors, maintenance of an enduring naval presence, and increase in its regional military contributions.

In recent years, Canada has increased its participation in regional military exercises and high-level defence forums, such as the Shangri-La Dialogue and its related Sherpa Meeting, the ARF Defence Officials' Dialogue and Security Policy Conference, and in 20203 and 2024-2027 as observers to the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) and Maritime Security. In 2026, Canada will host the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Heads of Defence Universities, Institutions, and Colleges (HDUCIM) meeting in Victoria, British Columbia. Canada has also taken key steps to support the deepening of cooperation with ASEAN Member States' defence institutions by moving to establish new Memoranda of Understanding, Terms of Reference, and defence policy and military staff talks with them.

Canada's defence policy also reaffirms our commitment to capacity building projects and mutual education, training, and assistance through the Military Training and Cooperation Program (MTCP). The 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 training, multinational operational cooperation and professional development training as well as defence institution-building in select cases. There are 13 MTCP members within the Indo-Pacific, with over 5,200 candidates in this region having received sponsored training to-date. In 2024-2025, the MTCP trained around 820 personnel from the Indo-Pacific.

Through the Indo-Pacific Strategy, the MTCP is dedicating 15.92M towards defence capacity building programming in the region, with 6.6M earmarked for promoting Women, Peace and Security (WPS) between 2023 and 2028. This expanded programming will focus on advancing joint priorities and increasing defence cooperation through the provision of specialized training, which may include the

provision of equipment, and generating platforms and opportunities to share knowledge, expertise and best practices.

Activities to date include an Integration of Women and Gender Perspectives in the Armed Forces workshop with high-level panel discussion conducted in the Philippines in 2023-24, and another to be conducted in Indonesia in 2024-25, as well as sponsorship of subject matter expert visits. The MTCP also launched two multi-year projects, one dedicated to supporting the Philippines in maritime domain awareness, and the second providing tailored WPS training courses, Gender Advisors roundtables and senior leadership workshops, and a WPS train-the-trainer course.

In Canada's 2021-2022 fiscal year, Canadian federal government departments, including DND, incurred a total of CA\$31,976 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\$).

B. Data Contributor to ARF Arms Registrar

Table 1. Canada's FY 2023-2024 military expenditure in millions of Canadian dollars (CA\$)

RESOURCE COSTS	Strategic Forces	Land	Navy	AF	Other	Sup& Comd	UN Peace keeping	Military Assistance and Cooperation	Emergency Aid to Civilians	Undistributed	Total
1. PERSONNEL	-	5,088.4	2,209.7	2,853.2	868.5	6,457.1	1.6	1.6	-	-	17,480.0
1.1 CONSCRIPTS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1.2 ACTIVE MILITARY PERSONNEL	-	2,891.4	1,113.1	1,712.9	497.7	2,320.7	1.3	-	-	-	8,537.1
1.3 RESERVES	-	478.2	132.9	144.1	32.3	324.0	0.3	-	-	-	1,111.7
1.4 CIVILIAN PERSONNEL	-	332.8	423.1	157.7	87.8	2,654.1	0.0	1.6	-	-	3,657.1
1.5 MILITARY PENSIONS	-	1,386.0	540.7	838.5	250.6	1,158.4	-	-	-	-	4,174.1
2. OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE	-	1,677.5	1,659.7	2,524.3	582.6	5,636.5	6.8	773.5	-	-	12,860.9
2.1 MATERIALS FOR CURRENT USE	-	524.8	409.2	477.0	142.9	335.1	1.7	0.1	-	-	1,890.8
2.2 MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR	-	148.9	375.5	1,171.0	4.9	228.4	0.0	-	-	-	1,928.7
2.3 PURCHASED SERVICES	-	849.7	776.0	788.4	307.4	1,914.6	2.8	0.4	-	-	4,639.3
2.4 OTHER	-	154.0	98.9	87.9	127.4	3,158.5	2.2	773.1	-	-	4,402.1
3. PROCUREMENT AND	-	1,000.2	2,609.7	2,270.3	87.6	1,259.4	-	-	-	-	7,227.2

RESOURCE COSTS	Strategic Forces	Land	Navy	AF	Other	Sup& Comd	UN Peace keeping	Military Assistance and Cooperation	Emergency Aid to Civilians	Undistributed	Total
CONSTRUCTION (INVESTMENTS)											
3.1 PROCUREMENT	-	741.2	2,488.2	2,058.6	41.2	1,006.4	-	-	-	-	6,335.7
3.1.1 AIRCRAFT AND ENGINES	-	-	-	1,720.4	-	11.7	-	-	-	-	1,732.1
3.1.2 MISSILES, INCLUDING CONVENTIONAL WARHEADS	-	0.1	3.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.4
3.1.3 NUCLEAR WARHEADS AND BOMBS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3.1.4 SHIPS AND BOATS	-	-	2,274.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,274.0
3.1.5 ARMoured VEHICLES	-	182.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	182.9
3.1.6 ARTILLERY	-	0.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.7
3.1.7 OTHER ORDNANCE AND GROUND FORCE WEAPONS	-	3.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.9
3.1.8 AMMUNITION	-	342.3	25.8	75.7	17.7	0.1	-	-	-	-	461.6
3.1.9 ELECTRONICS AND COMMUNICATIONS	-	91.9	36.0	166.6	-	64.0	-	-	-	-	358.6
3.1.10 NON-ARMoured VEHICLES	-	5.3	2.2	1.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.3
3.1.11 OTHER	-	114.2	146.8	94.1	23.4	930.6	-	-	-	-	1,309.1
3.2 CONSTRUCTION	-	258.9	121.5	211.6	46.4	253.0	-	-	-	-	891.5
3.2.1 AIR BASES, AIRFIELDS	-	-	-	159.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	159.2
3.2.2 NAVAL BASES AND FACILITIES	-	-	119.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	119.8
3.2.3 ELECTRONICS facilities	-	7.5	-	4.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	11.9
3.2.4 PERSONNEL FACILITIES	-	-	-	-	-	66.1	-	-	-	-	66.1
3.2.5 TRAINING FACILITIES	-	(0.1)	-	-	-	1.1	-	-	-	-	1.0
3.2.6 OTHER	-	251.5	1.8	48.0	46.4	185.8	-	-	-	-	533.4
4. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT	-	1.9	0.5	3.0	14.6	197.0	-	-	-	-	217.0
4.1 BASIC AND APPLIED RESEARCH	-	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.3	12.8	-	-	-	-	13.3
4.2 DEVELOPMENT, TESTING AND EVALUATION	-	1.8	0.4	3.0	14.3	184.2	-	-	-	-	203.7
5. TOTAL (1+2+3+4)	-	7,768.0	6,479.5	7,650.8	1,553.3	13,550.1	8.4	775.1	-	-	37,785.2

Figures reported in millions (\$CAD)

3) NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL SECURITY

A. Counterterrorism

Terrorist threats are complex, multifaceted and constantly evolving. They are not tied to any particular religion, ethnicity or ideology. Terrorist threats represent a global challenge that calls for flexible and forward-looking approaches that combine domestic and international efforts.

Countering violent extremism and terrorism requires a whole-of-society vision that puts partnerships, in particular with civil society, as one of its core pillars. Canada believes that long-term sustainable success in countering terrorism and violent extremism requires multilateral cooperation, civilian-led, evidence-based efforts that respect human rights, emphasize inclusion and diversity, and build on local strengths and capabilities. To be effective and sustainable, efforts must also be guided by the principles of respect for the rule of law and be gender responsive.

Canada is concerned about the evolving and increasing threat posed by violent extremists, including the use of the Internet to recruit, to encourage violence, and to spread hateful messaging. Canada supports international efforts to counter terrorism and prevent and counter violent extremism, encompassing not only security-based measures but also preventive steps to address the underlying conditions that drive individuals to join violent extremist groups.

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

Canada's steadfast efforts to advance non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament are grounded in its commitment to the rules-based international order and an inclusive, human-centred approach. As an active State Party to major international treaties and conventions, Canada will continue to work with ARF partners to promote their universalization and full and effective implementation. These include: the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Arms Trade Treaty, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT), the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and its Amendment (CPPNM/A), the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (Ottawa Treaty), the Convention on Cluster Munitions, as well as other arrangements such as The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation and the Missile Technology Control Regime.

Canada is a strong proponent of measures to prevent non-state actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, underpinned by UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540 and its successor resolution (UNSCR 1977). Canada also

continues to advocate the long overdue commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Finally, Canada supports the contribution of nuclear weapon-free zones, such as the Treaty of Bangkok, to regional security and nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Canada welcomes all efforts aimed at securing the signatures of the nuclear-weapon States to the Treaty of Bangkok.

Regional cooperation and national implementation to confront serious threats across the chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) spectrum is an ongoing priority. There are extremist groups active in the region, known and emerging high-consequence infectious diseases of proliferation concern, and potential proliferation risks posed by improperly secured radioactive sources. Canada supports regional efforts to counter CBRN threats through its Weapons Threat Reduction Program (WTRP): Canada's flagship contribution to the G7-led, 31-member, Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. WTRP programming engages ASEAN Member States and the ASEAN Secretariat to strengthen capacity and cooperation on WMD threat reduction in the region, including through the ARF.

Since 2013, Canada's WTRP has delivered more than CA\$79.3 million in programming in the ASEAN region. Activities have focused on: strengthening biosafety, biosecurity, disease surveillance and diagnostic laboratories; enhancing health security preparedness and response; establishing or strengthening national regulatory infrastructure for nuclear security, as well as physical protection measures at facilities housing nuclear and radiological material; building the competencies of nuclear security personnel; bolstering regional capacity and information sharing to counter the illicit trafficking of nuclear materials; and enhancing partner capacity to meet international obligations set out in UNSCR 1540.

One area of enduring and successful collaboration between Canada's WTRP and ASEAN is the Mitigation of Biological Threats (MBT) in the ASEAN Region Program, which has substantially strengthened ASEAN capacities to prevent, detect, deter, and respond to all manner of biological threats, whether natural, accidental or deliberate in origin (over CAD \$36 million since 2014). The MBT Program is currently in Phase III (2024-2028), which is advancing critical biosafety, biosecurity and disease surveillance initiatives and providing targeted support for the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases. Through the MBT Program, Canada was pleased to support the development and adoption of the landmark [ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Strengthening Regional Biosafety and Biosecurity](#) (ALD) at the 44th and 45th ASEAN Summits in October 2024. In 2025, WTRP will support development of an ALD Plan of Action, which will prioritize expanded multi-sectoral engagement at the health-security interface to address biological threats. 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, in full cooperation with the IAEA. Canada strongly believes that implementation of the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol (AP) constitute the safeguards verification standard. Through signing and ratifying the AP, ARF members and Dialogue Partners can support transparency and confidence in the peaceful nature of their nuclear applications. Canada believes that the ARF can help promote the universal implementation of the AP in the Indo-Pacific region. Many specialized partners delivering nuclear security assistance (IAEA, INTERPOL, World Institute for Nuclear Security) have also benefited from Canada's support for their lines of effort in the ASEAN region. One such initiative is a four-year, \$9.46 million project launched in 2024 with the IAEA to strengthen regulatory infrastructure for nuclear security and radiation safety in 28 countries in the Indo-Pacific region, including ASEAN member states.

Further to the G7 Charlevoix Foreign Ministers' Declaration on Maritime Security and Prosperity, Canada also provides capacity building assistance in the ASEAN region to detect and deter maritime sanctions evasion networks linked to North Korea's illicit weapons programs, as well as to counter the illicit trafficking of CBRN materials. Since 2017, WTRP has programmed over \$35.5 million towards identifying and responding to North Korea's sanctions evasion networks and other illicit activities that finance its WMD programs.

Efforts toward the prohibition of anti-personnel mines in the region support Canada's Indo Pacific strategy. Through the WTRP, Canada was pleased to support Cambodia in its role as president of the Ottawa Treaty's (Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention - APMBC) 5th Review Conference in November 2024 and the adoption of the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan (2025-2029) for the universalization and effective implementation of the APMBC. To strengthen regional mine action capacity, Canada's WTRP has partnered with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining on a project (\$1 million, 2025-2027) supporting the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) as an expert hub for ASEAN member states to share good practices on mine action. Canada also provides demining assistance in Cambodia and Laos to restore livelihoods to affected communities, in partnership with HALO Trust and the UNDP respectively.

C. Transnational Crime

Canada is committed to working with Indo-Pacific partners, including through the ARF, the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC), and the Bali Process, to counter threats to governance and stability arising from the activities of transnational crime groups in the region, including cybercrime. Canada is also committed to enhancing capacity building assistance in the region to support Indo-Pacific countries, including ASEAN Member States, in their efforts to reduce threats from transnational organized crime and international terrorism.

Cybercrime: Cyber scam Operations

Canada is very concerned over the proliferation of cyberscam centers across Southeast Asia, which has emerged as a critical transnational security challenge – impacting Canadian citizens along with many others globally – requiring urgent multilateral attention.

The scale of this phenomenon is substantial, with financial losses from cyber-enabled fraud estimated to be between \$18 billion and \$37 billion in East and Southeast Asia in 2023 alone. Criminal syndicates operating these sophisticated operations generate revenues that rival legitimate economic sectors.

The human dimension is equally concerning, with credible reports suggesting that hundreds of thousands of individuals may be involved in forced scamming operations across the region – raising serious concerns about trafficking in persons for the purposes of forced criminality operations.

Illicit Drug Trafficking

Organized crime groups are continually developing new synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals with the intent to avoid detection at the border. These substances often have complex chemical structures that can be easily modified whereby altering their chemical makeup even slightly, can result in the creation of a new substance that may not be subject to international control and be more difficult for detection tools to identify.

Canada remains concerned about the trafficking of illicit drugs in the Golden Triangle region, where porous borders, corruption, and limited law enforcement capacity are routinely exploited by organized crime. According to UNODC reporting, Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar are at the centre of this illicit trade in Asia, with transnational organized crime syndicates playing a dominant role.

The region has seen an unprecedented increase in the production and trafficking of synthetic drugs, particularly methamphetamine and some ketamine, marking a significant shift from its historical focus on opium and heroin cultivation.

Trafficking Persons

Canada recognizes the substantial efforts being undertaken through ASEAN and ARF frameworks and believes enhanced cooperation within these mechanisms offers the most promising pathway forward. Building upon the existing ASEAN Regional Cooperation Roadmap to Address Transnational Organized Crime and Trafficking in Persons, Canada supports strengthening intelligence-sharing mechanisms through the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime and expanding collaborative efforts with the INTERPOL ASEAN Cybercrime Operations Desk. Canada also underscores the need to address the misuse of digital technologies, online platforms, and encrypted communications by

traffickers, and supports efforts to build the capacity of law enforcement and judicial actors to respond effectively to these evolving threats.

Most importantly, Canada believes the establishment of multilateral accountability frameworks, combined with robust protection for civil society organizations documenting these activities, would create the necessary deterrent effect while maintaining ASEAN's foundational principles of non-interference and peaceful cooperation in addressing this shared regional security challenge.

Illicit Financial Flows

In addition, the movement of funds generated by these operations poses direct challenges to both “traditional” financial institutions and networks in relation to money laundering, but as these enterprises have rapidly evolved into complex criminal ecosystems incorporating advanced technologies including artificial intelligence and deepfakes, with AI-driven criminal activities demonstrating exponential growth throughout 2024 – it raises further serious concerns about generally weakly regulated cryptocurrency and crypto exchanges – with potential additional transnational linkages to organized crime on other continents and potential linkages with terrorist organizations.

Organized crime has demonstrated considerable sophistication and adaptability, exploiting jurisdictional gaps and varying cybersecurity capabilities across borders. The transnational nature of these operations has resulted in their expansion and inter-connection beyond Southeast Asia into South America, Africa, and the Pacific islands, indicating that localized enforcement actions alone are insufficient.

The integration of these criminal networks with legitimate financial systems and their utilization of emerging technologies pose significant risks to global financial stability and cybersecurity frameworks.

Canada emphasizes the importance of a “follow the money” approach, including enhanced financial intelligence and the targeting of proceeds of crime, to disrupt the business model of trafficking networks and hold perpetrators accountable.

Canada understands that the challenges in confronting this phenomenon are multifaceted and require coordinated international response. The ARF is an ideal starting point and forum to discuss such cooperation.

D. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

The increasing intensity and frequency of natural disasters underscore the importance of strengthening practical cooperation among Indo-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 (HA/DR) issues can serve to improve the delivery of such capabilities in the future and strengthen coordination, which is particularly relevant in a region which can see multiple ARF members responding to the same disaster.

The health-security capacity that Canada has helped to build in the ASEAN region has meaningfully strengthened the capacities of ASEAN partners to respond to all manner of biological threats, including COVID-19 and other emerging infectious diseases. This includes support to the ASEAN Emergency Operations Center Network, the ASEAN Plus Three Laboratory Network, and the ASEAN Biodiaspora Virtual Centre. Canada is committed to further bolstering health-security capabilities through targeted investments in the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases. Additionally, Canada is helping to build sustainable capacity in Laos to detect, diagnose and respond to emerging viral pathogens of bioweapons and bioterrorism concern.

Reiterating the importance of enhancing our response mechanisms through close collaboration and exchange of best practices, Canada was pleased to co-chair the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ARF ISM-DR), together with Lao PDR and China from 2019 to 2023. During this time, Canada reiterated the importance of finding synergies between the numerous disaster relief initiatives in the region and underlined the importance of adopting a gender-sensitive approach in all aspects of disaster management, from preparedness through responses and recovery.

Since then, Canada continues to encourage 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.

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.

E. Maritime Security

Canada, as a maritime nation with the longest coastline in the world, recognizes the critical importance of the maritime domain for global prosperity and security. Guided by a strong commitment to international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Canada actively promotes the lawful use of the seas and a rules-based international order. In the Indo-Pacific region, maritime security is a cornerstone of Canada's engagement, both through multilateral forums like the ASEAN Regional Forum and through bilateral partnerships. Canada is dedicated to contributing to a free, open, and inclusive maritime domain.

With the G7 Presidency in 2025, Canada spearheaded a G7 Foreign Ministers' Declaration on Maritime Security and Prosperity. The declaration recognizes that maritime security and prosperity are fundamental to global stability, economic resilience, and the well-being of all nations, and the conservation and sustainable use of ocean ecosystems is essential to all life on Earth. The statement also places a strong emphasis on the Indo-Pacific region, acknowledging its central role in global maritime stability and economic resilience. The declaration reaffirms the G7's commitment to a free, open, and rules-based maritime order in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS. Canada and the G7 welcome regional initiatives like the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and pledge to work with partners to strengthen maritime governance, secure undersea infrastructure, and support coastal states in enhancing their maritime law enforcement capabilities.

The Canadian Armed Forces play a vital role in this effort by strengthening defence partnerships, enhancing regional capacity, and upholding the rule of law at sea. Canada has also significantly advanced efforts to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing under the \$84.3 million Shared Ocean Fund, part of the Indo-Pacific Strategy. In 2023–2024, Canada expanded high-seas patrols in the North Pacific, conducting vessel inspections that uncovered illegal shark finning, closed-season fishing, and marine pollution. Complementary aerial surveillance missions, in collaboration with Japan and South Korea, visually inspected over 400 vessels. Canada also played a key role in strengthening international fisheries governance through regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), helping to adopt enforceable conservation measures. On the enforcement front, Canada partnered with the Philippines and multiple Pacific Island Countries to deploy Dark Vessel Detection (DVD) satellite technologies, enhancing maritime domain awareness and strengthening responses to illicit maritime activities.

F. Cybersecurity

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

theft of money, and other malicious activity. In recent years, cyber security has become a growing concern. Critical infrastructure is a prime target for both cybercriminals and state-sponsored actors. Ransomware incidents are publicized on an almost daily basis both in Canada and around the world. Essential services are being disrupted, from hospitals and schools to municipalities and utility providers. Personal and financial data are being stolen, traded, or leaked online.

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) on ICTs in 2016 was undertaken to support the process specifically on ICT (cyber) issues. To this end, Canada is Co-Chairing the ISM on ICTs, along with the Philippines from 2024-2026, and held the 7th ISM on ICTs in Manila in March 2025.

The ARF has also put in place an Open-Ended Study Group (OESG) on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) to Reduce the Risk of Conflict Stemming from the Use of ICTs. The ARF's work on cyber CBMs, including the establishment of an ARF Points of Contact Directory for Security of and in the Use of ICTs, and information exchanges on the protection of critical infrastructures have 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 the UN norms for responsible state behaviour in cyberspace, and the implementation of CBMs. Canada welcomes the efforts undertaken by the ARF to support the implementation of the UN norms, and to develop and implement CBMs that will enhance transparency and dialogue while reducing the risk of misunderstanding, miscalculation and conflict in cyberspace. Canada also welcomes the adoption of the ASEAN Checklist for the Implementation of the Norms of Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace, and the operational launch of the ASEAN Regional Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT).

Internationally, Canada collaborates with close allies and a wider coalition of countries that share our vision for a free, open and secure cyberspace that 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, as part of the Indo-Pacific Strategy, Canada has launched three projects in the region to

improve the capacity of recipient states to reduce threats posed by malicious cyber activity. These projects are: a CAD\$1.7M project on Understanding the Risks and Designing Effective Responses to Malicious ICT Tools, delivered in partnership with the UN Institute on Disarmament Research (UNIDIR); a CAD\$880K project focused on Building Capacity to Implement Cyber Norms and Law in the Indo-Pacific, implemented in partnership with the Stimson Center; and a CAD\$3.9M project with the BlackBerry Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence (CCoE) in Malaysia, to support the design, development and delivery of cybersecurity courses for Malaysian trainees, as well as ASEAN member states, over the course of 2025-2027.

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.

G. Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Programs in Asia

In alignment with *Foundations for Peace: Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security* and *Our North, Strong and Free: a Renewed Vision for Canada's Defence*, Canada's Military Training Cooperation Program (MTCP) objectives include promoting Canadian democratic principles, including respect for diversity and gender equality. To achieve these objectives, Canada is funding a variety of Women, Peace and Security capacity building projects in the Indo-Pacific region.

Through the MTCP, Canada is funding a project delivered by the Kingston Leadership Team Inc. that aims to enhance WPS capacity in the national armed forces of Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam, as well as enhance regional capacity and cooperation on Indo-Pacific WPS objectives. The project's first component focuses on enhancing WPS capacity at the national level through tailored WPS training courses, Gender Advisor (GENAD) roundtables and senior leadership workshops, and a WPS train-the-trainer course for Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The Malaysian Armed Forces will be the first partner of focus for this component. The second builds off the first component, expanding the project regionally by delivering international gender advisor training and WPS senior leader workshops where regional partners can share national perspectives and learnings while creating a regional WPS community of practice.

In addition, Canada is supporting a country-specific WPS network in the Philippines delivered by aXXelerate LLC that aims to work with the Philippines to create a defence-focused WPS Expert Network with self-sustaining mentorship programs, a WPS Points of Contact Directory, and regular reporting on the status of regional and national WPS implementation in the Philippines. Project activities include several in-person and virtual meetings per fiscal year between October 2024 - March 2027. The primary purpose of the Philippines WPS Expert Network is to foster and expand a network of defence sector personnel who encourage and

report on the implementation of WPS in the defence sector and work effectively with local civil society, thereby contributing to defence institution building.

Canada is also supporting a project delivered by UN Women in partnership with UNDP to support Vietnam's Ministry of Defence in implementing the WPS agenda, specifically focusing on women's leadership, reducing gender barriers in armed forces, gender responsive management of disasters, and promoting women's talent pipeline management to support women's participation in peacekeeping operations. Activities include knowledge exchange visits with Canada and Singapore, workshops, curriculum development, training and technical assistance.

4) ROLE OF ARF

A. National contributions to enhancing the ARF and regional security

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.

In the 2024-2025 inter-sessional year, Canada continued its active support to the ARF agenda across all lines of effort. In March 2025, Canada was proud to co-chair three key ARF workshops: the 6th Workshop on Implementing UNCLOS and Other Instruments to Address Emerging Maritime Issues, alongside Vietnam, Australia, the European Union, and New Zealand; the 2nd Workshop Recognizing 25 Years of Women, Peace, and Security, with Vietnam and Australia; and the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the use of Information and Communications Technology (ISM on ICTs Security), co-chaired with the Philippines.

For the 2025-2026 Inter-sessional year, Canada is proposing an ambitious list of initiatives. Canada will be co-chairing the second ISM on ICTs Security with the Philippines, and has proposed a workshop on "Lessons Learned in ICT Governance" along with Japan and Thailand. In addition, Canada is also seeking to co-host the 27th ARF Heads of Defence Universities, Colleges, and Institutions Meeting (HDUCIM) alongside Cambodia; an ARF workshop on Enhancing Climate Security and Peace through Environmental Confidence-Building Measures, with the Philippines and the European Union; and an ARF workshop on Supporting Victims of Terrorism, in partnership with the Philippines.

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.

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 activities and exchanges between members. The ARF had the most success through bringing together policy practitioners and experts to address and share knowledge on specialized security issues that require interagency cooperation across borders.

The ARF's inclusive membership highlights the importance of the ASEAN and broader Indo-Pacific region and the interconnected nature of the global security environment. Canada believes it is essential for the ARF to maintain a global perspective on the evolving security challenges affecting the region, including to condemn with one voice Russia's illegal and unjustifiable invasion of Ukraine. The consequences of Russia's egregious violations of international law and the rules-based international order extend well beyond Ukraine's borders, affecting regional and global stability, including in the Indo-Pacific region.

Canada would like to conclude our contribution to the 2025 Annual Security Outlook by thanking the ARF and ASEAN for its tireless work on all the important issues discussed above, and for contributing to a positive, inclusive and harmonious ASEAN and Indo-Pacific region. Canada is pleased to have contributed to the development of the ARF community that works together to protect the region's vitality and continued economic growth.

CHINA

1) OVERVIEW OF THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC

In 2024, Asia maintained overall stability and development, with its role as a global growth engine and an anchor of stability becoming even more prominent. The regional economy continued recovering, and regional cooperation accelerated. China and ASEAN fully concluded the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area 3.0 upgrade negotiations, and the China-Japan-ROK cooperation resumed. Countries in the region demonstrated a stronger commitment to stability, cooperation and development. At the same time, challenges facing Asia grew more complex and severe, with instability, uncertainty and unpredictability increasing. The Cold War mentality is resurging, geopolitical tensions are escalating, hotspot issues remain complicated and difficult to resolve, and non-traditional security threats such as terrorism, transnational crimes, food and energy crises, and natural disasters still persist. Individual extra regional countries continued to create division and confrontation in the region. They stepped up military deployment, formed various exclusive blocs, brought nuclear proliferation and arms race risks into the region, imposed arbitrary, sweeping tariffs, and pursued “decoupling”, disruption of industrial and supply chains and “small yards, high fences”, seriously disrupting the peace, stability, economic security and development environment of the region.

The defining reality in today's world is that all countries have intertwined interests and rise and fall together, and the only way to address challenges is through mutual assistance and win-win cooperation. Safeguarding peace and stability and promoting development and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific remains an arduous task, and requires greater collective efforts from all parties. The year 2024 was the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, and 2025 will mark the 80th anniversary of the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War, the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations (UN), and the 70th anniversary of the Bandung Conference. All parties should jointly uphold the UN-centered international system, champion the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and the Bandung Spirit of solidarity, friendship and cooperation, advocate an equal and orderly multipolar world, practice true multilateralism, uphold the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and pursue the model of sharing weal and woe, seeking common ground while shelving differences and prioritizing dialogue and consultation, so as to safeguard the hard-won peace and stability in Asia, and continue to contribute to peace, security, prosperity and progress of the region and the wider world.

2) CHINA'S DEFENSE POLICY AND MULTILATERAL MILITARY DIPLOMACY IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

China firmly pursues a national defense policy that is defensive in nature. China's nature as a socialist country, its strategic decision to follow a path of peaceful

development, its independent foreign policy of peace, and the peace-loving tradition of the Chinese culture determine China's unswerving commitment to the defensive national defense policy. Never seeking hegemony, expansion or spheres of influence is a salient feature of China's defense in the new era. China has the best record on peace and security among major countries in the world. In recent years, the Chinese military has been actively providing public goods on security to the international community in such fields as peacekeeping, maritime escort and epidemic response. History has and will continue to prove that the Chinese military is always a staunch force for world peace.

China conducts active defense. It adheres to the principles of defense, self-defense and post-strike response. China pursues coordinated progress of national defense and economic development, and decides on an appropriate scale of defense expenditure. In recent years, in a bid to safeguard China's sovereignty, security and development interests and to better fulfil China's international responsibilities and obligations as a major country, the Chinese government has in general kept a reasonable and steady growth of defense expenditure on the basis of sustained and sound economic and social development, so that its national defense capabilities and economic strength grow in sync. In 2025, RMB 1.81 trillion yuan is earmarked as defense expenditure in China's general public budget.

Through international military cooperation, the Chinese military contributes to defending China's sovereignty, security, and development interests, to safeguarding world peace and stability, and to building a community with a shared future for mankind. The Chinese military faithfully acts on the Global Security Initiative (GSI). It strengthens military exchanges and cooperation with Russia under existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, further deepening mutual trust between the two militaries; it maintains overall stability in the military-to-military relations with the United States, and urges the US side to work in the same direction with China in implementing the common understandings reached by the two presidents, keeping lines of communication open, addressing disputes and differences properly, and strengthening crisis management; it actively conducts international cooperation on the implementation of arms control treaties, resolutely safeguards national strategic interests, and upholds global strategic stability. China sent a high-level military delegation to the Shangri-La Dialogue, and hosted the 11th Beijing Xiangshan Forum.

3) CHINA'S EFFORTS IN PROMOTING SECURITY IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

1. Relations with Major Countries and Cooperation Mechanisms in the Region

(1) China-ASEAN Cooperation

China always takes ASEAN as a priority in its neighbourhood diplomacy. It firmly supports ASEAN's community building, supports ASEAN centrality in East Asian cooperation, and supports ASEAN in playing an even greater role in regional and international affairs. China has organized friendly exchanges between defense think tanks and middle-aged and young military officers from China and ASEAN, actively participated in the exercises, training activities and assistance projects of various expert groups of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), and helped ASEAN strengthen its capacity building in such fields as counter-terrorism, demining, disaster relief and military medical science.

(2) China-Russia Relations

China and Russia are each other's biggest neighbour and comprehensive strategic partner of coordination for the new era. As the world's two key major countries and permanent members of the UN Security Council, China and Russia enjoy a relationship grounded in a clear historical logic, driven by strong internal dynamics, and based on non-alliance, non-confrontation, and not targeting any third party. It has become a fine example for a new type of major-country relations.

The year 2024 marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Russia. President Xi Jinping and President Vladimir Putin had three in-person meetings in Beijing, Astana and Kazan respectively, and maintained close contact through phone calls, correspondence and other means, jointly steering China-Russia relations into a new historical stage of higher-quality development and deeper integration. President Xi and President Putin jointly signed the Joint Statement on Deepening the China-Russia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Coordination for the New Era on the Occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Ties Between the Two Countries. The two countries have maintained close coordination on the global stage, firmly upheld the UN-centered international system and the international order underpinned by international law, actively safeguarded security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, and made positive contributions to promoting multipolarity and democracy in international relations and advancing reform of the global governance system.

(3) China-US Relations

On 1 January 2024, President Xi Jinping exchanged congratulatory messages with then US President Joe Biden to mark the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the US. On the evening of April 2, President Xi took a phone call from President Biden. On April 26, President Xi met with then US Secretary of State Antony Blinken during the latter's visit to China. On August 29, President Xi met with then US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan during the latter's visit to China. On November 7, President Xi sent a congratulatory message to Donald Trump on his election as President of the United States, stating that China and the United States stand to gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation, and expressing the hope that both sides would follow the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation, strengthen dialogue and communication, properly manage differences, expand mutually beneficial cooperation, and find a right path for China and the United States to get along in the new era. On the afternoon of November 16, President Xi met with then US President Biden in Lima, Peru. During the meeting, President Xi summarized seven inspirations from China-US engagement in the years before, and stressed that China's goal of a stable, healthy and sustainable China-US relationship remains unchanged; China's commitment to mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation as principles for handling China-US relations remains unchanged; China's position of resolutely safeguarding its sovereignty, security and development interests remains unchanged; and its desire to carry forward the traditional friendship between the Chinese and American peoples remains unchanged. On the evening of January 17, 2025, President Xi took a phone call from US President-elect Donald Trump, emphasizing that China and the United States share extensive common interests and broad space for cooperation. The two countries can become partners and friends, contribute to each other's success, and advance shared prosperity for the good of the two countries and the whole world. It is natural for China and the United States to have some disagreements, but the important thing is to respect each other's core interests and major concerns, and find a proper solution. On the evening of June 5, 2025, President Xi took another phone call from President Trump. President Xi pointed out that recalibrating the direction of the giant ship of China-US relations requires the two presidents to take the helm and set the right course. It is particularly important to steer clear of the various disturbances and disruptions. The two sides need to make good use of the economic and trade consultation mechanism already in place, and seek win-win results in the spirit of equality and respect for each other's concerns. The two sides should enhance communication in such fields as foreign affairs, economy and trade, military, and law enforcement to build consensus, clear up misunderstandings, and strengthen cooperation. The two presidents

agreed that their teams should continue implementing the Geneva agreement and hold another round of meeting as soon as possible.

In 2024, the United States stepped up sanctions and suppression against China in the fields of economy, trade and technology, and continued to scale up restrictions on China in areas such as semiconductor chips, artificial intelligence and data in the name of national security. China responded firmly and defended resolutely its national interests and industrial security. Meanwhile, China and the United States achieved some positive progress in such areas as diplomacy, military-to-military relations, economy and trade, finance, counter narcotics, law enforcement, science and technology, climate change, and people-to-people exchanges. A bilateral counter narcotic working group was established; government-level dialogues were held on tourism and artificial intelligence; special envoys on climate change paid mutual visits; the China-US Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement was extended for another five years. The two sides institutionalized information exchanges in various sectors through mechanisms such as the economic working group, and maintained communication between their law enforcement agencies. President Xi's initiative to "invite 50,000 young Americans to China on exchange and study programs in the next five years" delivered encouraging results. President Xi sent letters, replies and messages to various related events to encourage such exchanges, and more than 16,000 American youths came to China under this initiative throughout the year. Since February 2025, the United States has imposed sweeping tariffs on all its trading partners, including China, under various excuses, and launched a trade war and tariff war against China through tariff hikes and trade and investment restrictions. China firmly opposes these actions and has taken countermeasures to resolutely safeguard its own rights and interests. From May 10 to 11, China and the US held a high-level meeting on economic and trade affairs in Geneva, Switzerland. The two sides had candid, in-depth and constructive discussions, and issued the Joint Statement on China-US Economic and Trade Meeting in Geneva.

(4) China-Japan Relations

China and Japan are close neighbours, and both are important countries in Asia and the world. The China-Japan relationship bears an important significance that transcends the bilateral scope. In 2024, China-Japan relations showed a momentum of improvement and growth. On 15 November 2024, President Xi Jinping met with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba on the side-lines of the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Lima. The two leaders reiterated their commitment to the principles and direction stipulated in the four political documents between the two countries, agreed to comprehensively advance the strategic and mutually beneficial relations between China and Japan, and committed to building a

constructive and stable China-Japan relationship that meets the needs of the new era. The meeting charted the course and provided impetus for the further development of bilateral ties. On 10 October 2024, Premier Li Qiang met with Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba on the side-lines of the leaders' meetings on East Asia Cooperation in Vientiane. The two sides agreed to strengthen dialogue and communication, and deepen cooperation across various fields.

On 25 December 2024, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Foreign Minister Wang Yi held talks in Beijing with Japanese Foreign Minister Iwaya Takeshi. The two ministers also jointly attended the second meeting of the China-Japan High-Level Consultation Mechanism on People-to-People and Cultural Exchanges. The two sides reached extensive consensus on deepening cooperation in areas such as youth, education, culture, tourism, sports, media, film and television, subnational exchange and women's affairs. In March 2025, Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Japan to attend the China-Japan-ROK Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting. During the visit, he met with Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru, Foreign Minister Iwaya Takeshi, Secretary General of Japan's National Security Secretariat Okano Masataka, and other high-ranking and senior government officials of Japan. Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Foreign Minister Iwaya Takeshi also co-chaired the sixth China-Japan High-Level Economic Dialogue. Heads of 15 government departments from both sides attended the meeting and had in-depth discussions on topics including macro policy, trade and investment, digital economy, green development, ecological and environmental protection, people-to-people exchange and regional cooperation. The two sides reached consensus on 20 items.

(5) China-India Relations

In 2024, China-India relations witnessed improvement and development. High-level exchanges guided the development of bilateral ties, and coordination and cooperation were carried out on both bilateral and multilateral fronts. In October 2024, President Xi Jinping met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the side-lines of the BRICS Summit in Kazan. President Xi emphasized that China and India should enhance communication and cooperation, increase strategic mutual trust, maintain sound strategic perceptions, and work together to chart a right and bright path for neighbouring major countries to live in harmony and develop side by side. In July, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar in Astana and Vientiane. Foreign Minister Wang Yi stressed that the two sides should strengthen communication, properly handle differences, and ensure that China-India relations move forward on the track of steady and sound development. In November, Member of the

Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar in Rio de Janeiro. Foreign Minister Wang Yi noted that the successful meeting between President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Kazan not long ago marked a restart of China-India relations, which serves the fundamental interests of the two peoples, meets the expectations of Global South countries, and aligns with the right direction of historical progress. In December, the 23rd round of Special Representatives Talks on China-India Boundary Question was held in Beijing. It was the first meeting between the Special Representatives of the two sides in five years. Chinese Special Representative Wang Yi and Indian Special Representative Ajit Kumar Doval, who is India's National Security Advisor, guided by the important common understandings reached by the two leaders in Kazan, held substantive discussions with a positive and constructive attitude on the boundary question, and achieved positive outcomes. In February 2025, Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar in Johannesburg. Foreign Minister Wang Yi noted that restoring mutual trust and achieving win-win cooperation meets the common expectation of the two peoples. The two sides should follow the fundamental guidance provided by the two leaders' common understandings, and ensure that bilateral relations remain on the right track.

In 2024, China and India held four Meetings of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on China-India Border Affairs, and two rounds of Corps Commander Level Meetings. The two sides also maintained communication and coordination at multilateral fora such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), BRICS, and the G20.

(6) Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Since its establishment more than two decades ago, the SCO has remained committed to upholding regional security and stability and advancing the common development of all nations. The Organization has sustained a sound and steady growth momentum. Guided by the Shanghai Spirit, member states have continued to expand cooperation in the political, security, pragmatic, people-to-people and cultural fields, and actively engaged in external exchanges. The big family of the SCO continues to expand and grow, and the organization's global influence has risen significantly. Among all regional organizations in the world today, the SCO covers the largest geographical area and population. It has set an example of building a new type of international relations.

In July 2024, President Xi Jinping attended the 24th meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization held in Astana and delivered an important speech. He proposed building a common home

of solidarity and mutual trust, peace and tranquillity, prosperity and development, good-neighbourliness and friendship, and fairness and justice, and announced that 2025 would be designated as the SCO Year of Sustainable Development. The meeting adopted a declaration and 26 outcome documents covering areas including economy, finance, security, people-to-people exchange and institutional development. The leaders of the member states jointly signed a resolution granting Belarus the status of a full member. After the summit, China took over the rotating presidency of the SCO for 2024–2025. In October 2024, Premier Li Qiang attended the 23rd meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Islamabad. The meeting adopted and issued a joint communiqué and approved a number of resolutions concerning SCO development.

2. Cooperation on Non-Traditional Security

(1) Cooperation on Disaster Relief

China has actively promoted multilateral and bilateral cooperation on disaster relief in the Asia-Pacific region and established the Belt and Road International Cooperation Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Management (BRIDRREM). In May 2023, China co-hosted the 21st ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief with Laos and Canada. In April 2025, China co-hosted the ARF Workshop on Risk Reduction, Preparedness and Disaster Response with Indonesia, the European Union and Thailand. China has also conducted bilateral exchanges and cooperation on disaster relief with countries including Russia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. The South China Sea Tsunami Advisory Center (SCSTAC) operated by China has continued to provide stable and efficient 24/7 tsunami early warning services. Starting from January 2024, it has issued 14 tsunami warning bulletins, all of which were disseminated promptly to countries around the South China Sea and ASEAN members. The Maritime Silk Road Navigational Safety Information Service Platform and the High-Resolution Marine Environmental Forecasting and Disaster Warning System for Southeast Asia have continued to enhance the disaster response capacities of ASEAN countries and neighbouring regions.

China welcomes Asia-Pacific countries to jointly build the Belt and Road international cooperation mechanism for disaster risk reduction and emergency management. China stands ready to strengthen communication and coordination with all parties to promote the development of disaster management cooperation under the framework of the ARF and other platforms, support ASEAN in establishing a ministerial meeting mechanism on disaster management with China, Japan and the ROK, and continue to

promote the building of a Lancang-Mekong disaster management cooperation mechanism.

(2) Cooperation on Maritime Security

Peace and tranquillity at sea bears on the security and development of all countries. The maritime policy stance of the Chinese government is highly consistent and stable. China is firm in safeguarding its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, and committed to properly resolving differences through dialogue and consultation. It upholds the international rule of law in maritime affairs, and promotes the building of a maritime community with a shared future. China stands ready to continue to work with other countries in the region to deepen dialogue, exchange and practical cooperation, jointly address traditional and non-traditional maritime security challenges, and build oceans of peace, tranquillity, prosperity and sustainable development.

In 2024, China actively participated in maritime security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific and made positive contributions to the maintenance of maritime security in the region. China and ASEAN countries continued to fully and effectively implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), actively advanced consultations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC), and carried out practical cooperation at sea. China actively participated in meetings and activities on maritime security cooperation within ASEAN-led mechanisms. In April 2025, China hosted the 16th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security in Beijing. Nearly 100 representatives from ARF Participants attended the meeting online or in person.

China and the United States strengthened dialogue and communication on maritime affairs. In May 2024, the two sides held the second Meeting of the China-US Maritime Consultative Mechanism, during which they had an in-depth exchange of views on the maritime situation and related issues, and agreed to maintain dialogue and communication, avoid misunderstandings and miscalculations, and manage maritime risks. China and Japan held the 17th round of consultations under the High-Level Consultation Mechanism on Maritime Affairs. China and the ROK conducted the second Consultation on Maritime Affairs, the third Meeting of the Maritime Affairs Dialogue and Cooperation Mechanism, as well as the 12th and 13th Meetings of the Working Group on Maritime Delimitation Negotiations.

China attaches great importance to the security of sea lanes. It continued to take an active part in regional cooperation mechanisms including the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP). In January 2024, China dispatched a liaison

officer to the ReCAAP Information Sharing Center (ISC). In March, the Chinese delegation attended the 19th Governing Council Meeting of the ISC and discussed with member countries ways to combat piracy and armed robbery and ensure the security of sea lanes. In June, China co-hosted a capacity-building seminar with the ISC in Guangzhou.

China attaches high importance to the construction, development and protection of international submarine cables. In July 2024, China hosted the China-ASEAN Submarine Cable Cooperation Forum in Beijing, where officials, experts and business representatives from China and ASEAN countries had thorough discussions on cooperation on the construction and protection of international submarine cables, and reached extensive consensus. China always welcomes other countries and telecom companies to lay submarine cables in Chinese jurisdictional waters, and encourages and supports Chinese enterprises in conducting international cooperation on submarine cables. China stands ready to work with ASEAN countries and other members of the international community to deepen exchange and cooperation on joint construction and maintenance of submarine cables, and promote the development of universally recognized and binding international rules on submarine cables, with a view to enhancing global digital connectivity.

The South China Sea is a bridge of communication and a bond of peace, friendship, cooperation and development between China and its neighbours. Peace and stability in the South China Sea is vital to the security, development and prosperity of countries in the region and the well-being of the people in the region. Realizing peace, stability, prosperity and development in the South China Sea is the shared aspiration and responsibility of China and ASEAN countries. It serves the common interests of all countries.

In 2024, China carried out dialogue and communication with countries concerned in the South China Sea. They properly managed maritime differences and promoted maritime cooperation through bilateral maritime mechanisms, and worked together to uphold peace and stability in the South China Sea. China and the Philippines held the meeting between heads of the China-Philippines Bilateral Consultation Mechanism on the South China Sea (BCM) and the eighth and ninth meetings of the BCM, effectively managing the maritime situation. In December 2024, China and Viet Nam held the 17th Consultation of the Working Group on the Maritime Area beyond the Mouth of the Beibu Bay, the 14th Consultation of the Working Group on Maritime Joint Development, the 17th Consultation of the Experts Working Group on Cooperation on Low-Sensitivity Maritime Affairs, the fourth Consultation on the Agreement on the Sustainable Development and Cooperation of Fishery, and the eighth High-Level Talk between Coast Guards. The two countries advanced joint development and delimitation work in parallel, carried out cooperation in low-sensitivity areas, and steadily deepened maritime law

enforcement cooperation, jointly safeguarding maritime security and stability. In October 2024, China and Malaysia held the first Bilateral Dialogue on the Management of Maritime Issues in the South China Sea, and reached consensus on advancing practical cooperation at sea.

In the same year, China and ASEAN countries held one Senior Officials' Meeting on the Implementation of the DOC and four Meetings of the Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the DOC, producing a series of important outcomes. At the 22nd Senior Officials' Meeting on the Implementation of the DOC held in Xi'an in September 2024, all parties fully recognized the positive progress and sound momentum achieved since the launch of the third reading of the COC, and agreed to accelerate the consultation process in a flexible and innovative manner with a view to reaching an effective and substantive COC in compliance with international law at an early date.

(3) Counterterrorism Cooperation

China is resolute in combating all forms of terrorism. The international community should foster a sense of a community with a shared future for mankind, support the UN in playing a central and coordinating role, take a holistic approach and address both the symptoms and root causes of terrorism, and oppose double standards in counterterrorism and acts that politicize and instrumentalize counterterrorism. Since 2024, in its efforts to combat the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and other East Turkistan terrorist forces, China has continued to deepen and expand practical cooperation with neighbouring countries, and actively participated in multilateral cooperation mechanisms such as the UN, the SCO, BRICS, and the Global Counterterrorism Forum. China also participated in the 21st ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counterterrorism and Transnational Crime.

In 2024, as the rotating chair of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), China hosted the "Interaction-2024" joint counterterrorism exercise, which further consolidated the foundation of the SCO's security cooperation mechanism and represented China's contribution to strengthening law enforcement and security cooperation.

(4) Cooperation on Combating Transnational Crime

China attaches great importance to combating transnational crime. By fully harnessing bilateral law enforcement and judicial cooperation mechanisms and multilateral platforms such as the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, China has actively collaborated with other countries to prevent and combat transnational crime. Under multilateral frameworks such as the UN and INTERPOL, China has conducted in-depth law

enforcement and judicial cooperation with Asia-Pacific countries, and shared timely information on the trends and developments of transnational organized crime. In 2024, China joined the Southeast Asia Justice Network and participated actively in its online annual meeting, where it had in-depth exchanges with participating countries on cooperation, practices and experience, and suggestions and proposals of extradition and criminal judicial assistance. China continued to deepen cooperation with Asia-Pacific countries in combating and addressing online gambling and telecom fraud. It conducted multiple rounds of joint law enforcement operations with Mekong countries, Indonesia, the Philippines, among others, yielding positive results. In August 2024, the 9th Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) Foreign Ministers' Meeting issued the Joint Statement on Strengthening Cooperation in Combating Transboundary Crimes under the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Framework. Foreign ministers of China, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand held an informal meeting and had in-depth discussions on joint efforts to fight transboundary crimes. The Joint Operation "Safe Lancang-Mekong" was successfully launched, where the six countries worked together to crack down on online gambling, telecom fraud, drug trafficking, and other crimes. China has also leveraged bilateral and multilateral channels to carry out joint law enforcement operations and case-related intelligence verification, actively provide training, financial and technical support, and share China's enforcement measures and best practices, to help strengthen law enforcement capacity building and improve the investigation outcomes.

China is an initiator and staunch supporter of the UN Convention against Cybercrime. China and ASEAN countries maintained close communication and cooperation during the negotiations and jointly promoted the adoption of the Convention by consensus at the 79th Session of the UN General Assembly on 24 December 2024.

(5) Biosecurity Cooperation

China attaches great importance to biosecurity. It actively participates in global governance and works with the international community to address biosecurity and other global challenges. China vigorously promotes national biosecurity development, fully and strictly fulfils its biological arms control and non-proliferation obligations, calls for full compliance with and further strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and advocates negotiating a legally binding protocol with an effective verification mechanism.

Committed to both pursuing development and safeguarding security, China supports inclusive access to biological science and technology while ensuring effective prevention against biological weapons, and calls for real efforts to protect the rights of developing countries to peaceful uses in the biological

field. China advocates responsible bioscience research, and encourages all stakeholders to voluntarily adopt the Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines for Codes of Conduct for Scientists.

China actively carries out international cooperation on biosecurity. In October 2024, China and Laos, the Chair of ASEAN, co-hosted the First Regional Workshop on Implementing the Biological Weapons Convention and Promoting Biosafety and Biosecurity in Southeast Asia with the support of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, providing a platform for countries to promote exchanges and mutual learning and strengthen cooperation. Representatives exchanged practices on BWC implementation, shared progress on national biosecurity system development, discussed approaches to improving global biosecurity governance, explored ways to enhance practical cooperation, and jointly sought solutions to strengthening biosecurity.

(6) Cooperation on Cybersecurity

China has always been a builder of, defender of and contributor to global cybersecurity. China is working actively for a community with a shared future in cyberspace, and is committed to fostering a cyberspace featuring greater fairness, equity, openness, inclusiveness, security, stability and vitality. To this end, China has put forward the Global Initiative on Data Security, issued a China-League of Arab States Cooperation Initiative on Data Security, and reached the Data Security Cooperation Initiative of China+Central Asia (C+C5) with the five Central Asian countries. China also proposed the Global Cross-Border Data Flow Cooperation Initiative, with a view to building an open and win-win international cooperation framework for cross-border data flow. China stands ready to discuss and develop rules for global digital governance with other parties on the basis of these initiatives to jointly advance global governance on cyberspace.

China consistently supports the UN in playing a central role in the global governance and international rule-making of cyberspace. China supports the establishment of a single-track, State-led and consensus-based permanent mechanism on information security under the UN framework with broad participation of all States, and calls for formulating international rules governing cyberspace that are widely acceptable to all countries under the UN framework, and discussing the formulation of legally binding international instruments. China supports the UN in playing a leading role in global digital governance and rule-making, and worked for the adoption of the Global Digital Compact. China supports the efforts to foster an open, fair, inclusive, and non-discriminatory digital development environment, safeguard the integrity of global supply chains for digital products and services, and formulate globally interoperable common rules.

China actively engages in dialogue and cooperation with Asia-Pacific countries on cyberspace, with a view to jointly maintaining peace and security in cyberspace. It hosted the China-ASEAN Digital Governance Dialogue, the Cybersecurity Forum for Technology Development and International Cooperation at the 2024 World Internet Conference Wuzhen Summit, and the China-ASEAN Network Security Emergency Response Capacity Building Seminar in 2024 and 2025. China has actively promoted the cybersecurity processes of BRICS, the ARF and the SCO, deepened bilateral cooperation in this field with such countries as Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, and expanded practical cooperation with the rest of the world in such areas as digital technology and cyber infrastructure.

(7) Cooperation on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

China is committed to the path of peaceful development and a nuclear strategy of self-defense, and keeps its nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for national security. China firmly upholds the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime underpinned by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). China stands for and advocates the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, and undertakes not to use nuclear weapons first at any time or under any circumstances, and not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states and nuclear-weapon-free zones unconditionally. In July 2024, China submitted to the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the eleventh NPT Review Conference working papers on the No-First-Use of Nuclear Weapons Initiative and security assurances. In April 2025, China submitted a working paper titled “Give Full Play to the Role of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in Promoting Peace and Development in the New Era” to the third session of the Preparatory Committee.

China has maintained that nuclear disarmament should follow fundamental principles such as “maintaining global strategic stability” and “undiminished security for all” and proceed in a gradual manner. Countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should fulfil special and primary responsibilities in nuclear disarmament, and should further make significant and substantive reductions of their nuclear arsenals in a verifiable, irreversible and legally binding manner, so as to create conditions for attaining the ultimate goal of complete and thorough nuclear disarmament. China worked actively for the issuance of the Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races in January 2022, which emphasized that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, and reaffirmed the commitment not to target nuclear weapons at each other or at any other country.

China firmly upholds the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and believes that eliminating the risks of nuclear proliferation is crucial for international and regional peace and stability. China believes that the international community should pursue political and diplomatic resolution of regional hotspot nuclear issues, and reject double standards in non-proliferation. States Parties to the NPT should pursue nuclear policies that comply with Treaty obligations. States participating in the “nuclear sharing” and “extended deterrence” arrangements should take concrete measures to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national and collective security doctrines, including not upgrading current arrangements, not conducting nuclear exercises or exchanging nuclear information, and not replicating new “nuclear sharing” and “extended deterrence” arrangements. Nuclear-weapon states should withdraw their nuclear weapons deployed overseas.

The Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) is of great significance to strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and promoting regional peace and stability, and is in line with the fundamental security interests of ASEAN countries. As a comprehensive strategic partner and amicable and close neighbour of ASEAN, China has always firmly supported the SEANWFZ. China attaches great importance to the signing of the Protocol to the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, and supported the resolution on the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty) adopted at the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly and its First Committee and participated in the consensus-building process for the resolution. In July 2024, during the China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting and the ARF Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, China reaffirmed its readiness to be the first to sign the Protocol as a concrete step to support the building of SEANWFZ. China will continue to maintain close communication with ASEAN on this matter.

China has consistently advocated the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), including chemical weapons, and supports continuous efforts to enhance the validity, authority and universality of international legal instruments, including the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). China strictly fulfils its obligations under the CWC, remains committed to resolving hotspot issues in accordance with the CWC, opposes political manipulation of hotspot issues, and actively promotes international cooperation on peaceful uses of chemical science and technology. China urges Japan to cleanly and thoroughly destroy the chemical weapons it abandoned on the territory of China at the earliest date, and work with other parties to build a world free of chemical weapons.

China strictly fulfils its international obligations to non-proliferation, firmly upholds multilateralism, and supports the UN in leading international non-

proliferation efforts. China consistently maintains that rule-making and mechanism-building in non-proliferation should fully protect and promote the representation and right to participate of all countries, especially developing countries. China is deeply engaged in the implementation and comprehensive review process under UN Security Council Resolution 1540, and supports international and regional cooperation on non-proliferation export controls. China has worked with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs and the 1540 Committee to co-host in China four Training Courses for the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 Points of Contact in the Asia-Pacific Region, contributing to the implementation of Resolution 1540 in this region.

China has established a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework for export controls, with the Export Control Law of the People's Republic of China serving as the overarching legislation. This framework covers dual-use items (including nuclear, biological, chemical, and missile-related materials) and military products. This has brought about the legalization and standardization of export control governance. In December 2024, the Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Export Control of Dual-use Items and its Control List came into effect, further improving China's governance capabilities in dual-use item export controls.

China supports a balanced approach to development and security, and advocates promoting international cooperation on the peaceful uses of technology while preventing proliferation. It emphasizes safeguarding the development rights of developing countries and enhancing the fairness, rationality and non-discriminatory nature of the international non-proliferation regime. China opposes the abuse of export controls and unilateral sanctions under the pretext of safeguarding international security and non-proliferation, and rejects the use of export controls as a tool for "decoupling and disrupting supply chains". In October 2021, China and like-minded countries jointly submitted to the First Committee of the 76th UN General Assembly a draft resolution titled "Promoting International Cooperation on Peaceful Uses in the Context of International Security", which reaffirmed the inalienable right of all States to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for peaceful purposes, and called for the removal of undue restrictions imposed on developing countries. The resolution received extensive support. In December 2024, the 79th UN General Assembly adopted the resolution again by a large majority. China welcomes continued inclusive dialogue among all parties to facilitate the effective implementation of the resolution.

As a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), China advocates for the Group's work to be guided by the goal of strengthening the universality, authority and effectiveness of the NPT. China actively participates in

discussions on updating the NSG's control rules and lists. China supports the legitimate propositions of developing countries, as represented by the Non-Aligned Movement, and recognizes that universally negotiated, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements reached through multilateral consultations represent the optimal approach to addressing non-proliferation concerns. Consistent with the above position, China maintains engagement with mechanisms such as the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Australia Group, and the Wassenaar Arrangement, and encourages these regimes to maintain their technical nature and honor their commitments to not impeding peaceful applications and legitimate trade in relevant fields, so as to contribute constructively to common security and global development.

China actively advances regional cooperation on disarmament and non-proliferation. In May 2024 and March 2025, China participated in the 15th and 16th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, and expounded on its policies and propositions on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Japan's disposal of nuclear-contaminated water from the Fukushima nuclear plant is a concern for the global marine environment and public health. China's opposition to the discharge remains unchanged. On 20 September 2024, China and Japan reached a consensus on the ocean discharge of nuclear-contaminated water from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. Japan pledged to accept long-term international monitoring and independent sampling and monitoring by stakeholders including China as an effective measure to mitigate the risks associated with the ocean discharge. Japan also explicitly committed to faithfully fulfilling its obligations under international law, making its best efforts to avoid negative impacts on human health and the environment, and continuing dialogue with China to properly address related concerns. On 22 March 2025, at the 6th China-Japan High-Level Economic Dialogue, Japan reaffirmed its commitment to ongoing international monitoring and China's independent sampling and monitoring.

AUKUS and the cooperation in nuclear submarines and other cutting-edge military technologies initiated and advanced by the US, the UK and Australia represent typical Cold War mentality. This will only stoke arms races, undermine the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, and pose serious nuclear proliferation risks. It goes against the efforts to build the SEANWFZ, and jeopardizes regional peace and stability.

In recent years, the US has been intensifying its military forward deployments in the Asia-Pacific to serve nothing but its own agenda, deliberately escalating tensions, and provoking political and military confrontation. Its deployment of offensive weapons systems such as the Typhon Mid-Range Capability

missile system in the region is particularly dangerous as it fuels missile proliferation and arms races, undermines mutual trust among major countries, and heightens strategic risks. The US is staking regional security for its geopolitical ambitions. This threatens the interests of regional countries as well as China's strategic security. China is deeply concerned and firmly opposes these moves.

(8) Assistance and Cooperation on Mine Clearance

China has long been committed to promoting international humanitarian mine action assistance and cooperation and has made it an important part of implementing the Global Security Initiative and building a community with a shared future for mankind. To date, through donations, equipment aid, training, field instruction and other ways, China has provided over 40 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America with more than RMB 200-million-yuan worth of assistance, and trained over 1,000 mine clearance professionals. As China's good neighbours, good brothers and good friends, ASEAN countries have been the main recipients and partners of China's mine clearance assistance, and demining cooperation is an important part of the China-ASEAN comprehensive strategic partnership. In recent years, China has increased assistance to ASEAN and its Member States to help remove risks posed by mines.

In July 2024, during the China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the two sides issued the China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Joint Statement on Strengthening Humanitarian Mine Action Cooperation, which further outlined the direction and practical measures for future cooperation and injected fresh impetus into addressing landmine challenges in Southeast Asia and promoting regional peace and development. From July to September 2024, China hosted a three-month international humanitarian demining training course, where close to 40 deminers from Cambodia and Laos received training. In 2024, China and Cambodia signed a memorandum of understanding on mine-clearance cooperation, under which China provided over RMB 33 million yuan in cash assistance to support mine clearance in Cambodia. China also donated mine detection and clearance equipment worth RMB 2 million yuan to Cambodia and Laos. In addition, China has continued to send experts to the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center and four have joined the program in two batches.

(9) Global AI Governance

China is actively promoting the development of artificial intelligence (AI) for good and for all. China believes that AI is a shared asset of humanity and should not be turned into "a game for rich countries and the wealthy", still less be used as a tool to seek absolute advantages or maintain hegemonic

dominance. In July 2024, the World AI Conference & High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance was held in Shanghai. Premier of the State Council Li Qiang attended the opening ceremony and delivered a keynote speech. The Conference released the Shanghai Declaration on Global AI Governance, calling on all parties to govern AI for good and for all. Also, in July, China facilitated the consensus adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution on strengthening international cooperation on capacity-building of artificial intelligence. In September, China and the UN co-hosted the first Workshop on AI Capacity Building in Shanghai, and UN Secretary-General António Guterres attended the opening ceremony. In the same month, China proposed the AI Capacity-Building Action Plan for Good and for All as a concrete step to implement the above UN General Assembly resolution. In December, the Group of Friends for International Cooperation on AI Capacity-Building was officially established at the UN Headquarters. In the same month, China and Cambodia jointly held the Symposium on China-ASEAN Cooperation on AI Development and Governance in Phnom Penh. Participants exchanged views on topics such as the global AI governance landscape and future AI cooperation between China and ASEAN. The symposium released a report titled “China-ASEAN Cooperation on AI Development and Governance: Observations on Progress and Suggestions for Advancement”, which received strong support and positive response from ASEAN Member States.

On AI's military applications, China released the Position Paper on Regulating Military Applications of Artificial Intelligence under the framework of The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. The paper proposed pathways for the responsible development and use of AI in the military domain. China believes that strengthening the regulation of AI's military applications and preventing and managing potential risks will help enhance mutual trust among countries, safeguard global strategic stability, prevent arms races, and alleviate humanitarian concerns. It also contributes to building inclusive and constructive security partnerships, and to advancing the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind in the AI domain. The international community should uphold the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, act on the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind, and seek consensus through dialogue and cooperation on norms for AI. China calls for the establishment of an open, fair and effective global governance mechanism. China supports the UN in playing an effective role in this process, and opposes the creation of exclusive “small circles” or the deliberate erection of technological barriers.

4) CHINA'S VIEWS ON THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM

The ARF, as the premier ASEAN-led multilateral security dialogue platform in the Asia-Pacific, has made important contributions to maintaining regional peace, stability, and prosperity. China stands ready to work with all Participants to strengthen dialogue and exchanges, carry out cooperation in areas of shared interests, and inject greater vitality and momentum into confidence-building activities and preventive diplomacy across various fields through concrete actions.

1. Upholding the Vision of Peace

China is committed to multilateralism, inclusiveness, and accommodating the interests and concerns of all parties. China firmly upholds the international system with the UN at its core, the international order underpinned by international law, and the basic norms of international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. China resolutely rejects and opposes the Cold War mentality, unilateralism, bloc confrontation, and hegemonism, all of which run counter to the vision of enduring peace and prosperity in the region.

2. Adhering to the ASEAN Way

China advocates building trust through dialogue and promoting security through cooperation. The status of ASEAN as a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality should be respected, and regional rules recognized by all Participants—such as the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC)—should be observed. China supports an ASEAN-centered, open and inclusive regional architecture.

3. Deepening Practical Cooperation

China supports the ARF in revitalizing its momentum for cooperation and injecting greater vitality into confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy. Efforts should be made to address both traditional and non-traditional security threats in a coordinated manner, and to advance all inter-sessional processes in a balanced way. The Forum should also broaden its agenda, expand areas of shared security interests, and actively respond to emerging security challenges such as climate change, social security, and artificial intelligence.

4. Managing Hotspot Issues and Safeguarding Peace and Stability in the Asia-Pacific

China is committed to exploring solutions with Chinese characteristics to hotspot issues and upholds the peaceful settlement of differences and disputes among countries through dialogue and consultation. ARF Participants need to increase strategic communication, enhance mutual security trust, resolve disagreements, manage differences and eliminate the root causes of crises. All efforts that are

conducive to the peaceful settlement of a crisis should be supported, and all parties to conflict should be encouraged to build mutual trust, resolve disputes and promote security through dialogue.

EUROPEAN UNION

In 2024, the European Union underwent significant institutional renewal, with the election of a new European Parliament, the appointment of a new European Council President, and the reappointment of Ursula von der Leyen for a second term as President of the European Commission. Kaja Kallas, former Prime Minister of Estonia, has assumed the role of High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, signalling a continued commitment to principled and assertive European diplomacy.

Under President von der Leyen's second mandate, the Commission has outlined seven strategic priorities, including strengthening Europe's economic performance, launching a new era for European security and defence, and delivering a "Global Europe" through deeper cooperation with international partners.

This renewed agenda reflects the EU's sharpened awareness of its global responsibilities and the urgent need for strategic autonomy. It is shaped by the geopolitical consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, growing uncertainty in transatlantic relations, and the security implications of the accelerating climate crisis. Against this backdrop, the EU is advancing a more robust security and defence posture, reinforcing its role as a global actor, and forging closer partnerships with key regions, including ASEAN and the Indo-Pacific.

1) OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The regional and global security landscape has continued to deteriorate in 2024 and into 2025, driven by persistent and emerging challenges. Russia's ongoing illegal war of aggression against Ukraine continues to destabilize Europe and reverberate across global energy, food, and security systems. In Asia, the protracted crisis in Myanmar remains a source of acute humanitarian suffering and regional tension. Meanwhile, increased militarization and brinkmanship in the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea, coupled with sharpened US-China strategic rivalry, continue to elevate regional risks.

The Red Sea has become a renewed flashpoint for maritime insecurity due to intensified Houthi attacks, prompting EU and partner action to defend critical sea lanes. Hybrid threats, cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, and economic coercion are increasing in frequency and sophistication, affecting both traditional and non-traditional security domains.

Compounding these geopolitical pressures are climate-driven risks, from rising sea levels to extreme weather, which threaten regional stability, particularly in Southeast Asia. The EU reiterates its steadfast support for a rules-based

international order, upholding the UN Charter and international law, and promoting ASEAN centrality as essential to regional peace and stability.

Since becoming Strategic Partners in 2020, the EU and ASEAN have strengthened their cooperation. The 24th EU-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Brussels in February 2024 reinforced this momentum, deepening collaboration on maritime security, cybersecurity, climate resilience, and connectivity. The EU's Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific continues to guide our engagement, reaffirming the interdependence of European and Indo-Pacific security.

The EU remains concerned by unilateral actions that heighten tensions in the South and East China Seas and opposes any coercive attempts to change the status quo. We call for the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with UNCLOS and support open communication and confidence-building measures to avoid miscalculation.

The Strategic Compass, adopted in 2022, is now in full implementation. It aims to strengthen the EU's capacity to act in crises, invest in defence capabilities and innovation, and deepen cooperation with like-minded partners. The EU continues to scale up practical cooperation with ASEAN, including joint exercises, peer exchanges, technical assistance, and maritime domain awareness initiatives.

2) SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

The EU's security and defence posture has evolved significantly under the 2022 Strategic Compass for Security and Defence which remains our guiding framework through 2030. Russia's war against Ukraine has underscored the urgency of European strategic responsibility. The EU is reinforcing its capacity to respond swiftly to threats, counter hybrid aggression, and bolster partners' resilience.

In the Indo-Pacific, the EU promotes a vision of inclusive, rules-based multilateralism. We remain committed to ASEAN centrality and aim to advance regional peace through dialogue, connectivity, and sustainable development. The EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy supports stability, democratic governance, and the rule of law. It enables tailored engagement with ASEAN and individual Member States on issues from maritime security to clean energy.

In the Indo-Pacific, the EU aspires to act as a "Global Security Partner", building mutual benefits through deepened security and defence partnerships. This includes Security and Defence Partnerships (SDPs), which provide a political framework to structure and expand cooperation across key domains. We continue to roll out operational security cooperation with ASEAN through the EU-funded "Enhancing Security Cooperation in and with Asia" (ESIWA) project, covering maritime security, crisis management, counterterrorism, and cybersecurity.

The Global Gateway continues to expand EU connectivity investments, including in critical infrastructure and digital resilience. Our support also includes humanitarian aid and sustainable development financing to help partners build long-term capacity.

In energy security, the REPowerEU plan has helped reduce dependence on Russian fossil fuels, with parallel investments in renewables, energy efficiency, and critical raw materials partnerships. Cybersecurity of energy infrastructure remains a key focus.

The European Peace Facility (EPF), with a budget of nearly EUR 8 billion, continues to support partner armed forces and crisis response missions worldwide. The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) maintains a global presence through military and civilian missions. Following a strategic review, PESCO is being adapted to ensure it remains fit for purpose beyond 2025. The European Defence Fund (EDF) continues to drive collaborative innovation in key domains including cyber, AI, and space.

Framework Participation Agreements (FPAs) have allowed closer security cooperation with several ARF members, and the EU remains open to expanding these arrangements.

3) CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL SECURITY

Counter-Terrorism

The EU remains a steadfast partner to ASEAN on counter-terrorism and transnational crime. In 2024, the EU co-organized regional workshops on counter-radicalization and launched new projects to counter terrorist financing in Southeast Asia. We will be working with ASEAN on effective deradicalization and reintegration programs, and continue to promote Recommendation 8 of the FATF.

A new CT expert has taken up his post since June 2025 and is based in the EU Delegation to ASEAN in Jakarta and provide additional technical support to EU CT work across the region.

The EU is co-chairing, with Malaysia and the United States, a workshop on countering-violent extremism in the lead-up to the Intersessional meeting on counter-terrorism and transnational crime.

Non-proliferation, Arms Control, and Disarmament

The EU continues to advocate for universal accession to the key non-proliferation treaties and instruments. We regret Russia's withdrawal from the CTBT and

reiterate our support for the NPT and the Bangkok Treaty. EU-backed initiatives, including the CBRN Centres of Excellence and the EU P2P Export Control Programme, have deepened engagement with ASEAN partners. We co-hosted a major ARF workshop on CBR detection and response in Singapore in June 2024, advancing shared understanding of CBR threats.

Transnational Crime

The EU Drugs Strategy (2021–2025) remains a key tool in combatting drug trafficking and related crime. Cooperation with ASEAN has intensified, especially in light of emerging synthetic drug routes. The EU Roadmap to Fight Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime has driven joint actions and intelligence exchange. Anti-Trafficking and Anti-Smuggling partnerships have expanded, and the EU's Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling launched in 2024, promotes shared solutions with ASEAN partners.

The EU views scam centers in Southeast Asia as a growing and deeply concerning transnational crime issue with wide-ranging human security implications. These operations, often run by organised criminal networks, involve not only financial fraud but also serious human rights abuses, including forced labour, trafficking in persons, and detention of victims under coercive conditions.

Scam centers are increasingly linked to human trafficking, forced labour, and serious human rights abuses, with thousands of individuals — including foreign nationals — coerced into working in fraudulent operations under conditions akin to modern slavery. This convergence of cyber-enabled crime and trafficking presents a multi-dimensional threat that demands regional coordination and international attention.

The EU views the proliferation of scam centers as a direct challenge to the rules-based international order. These operations not only defraud individuals and institutions across the globe but also destabilize communities and corrode public trust in state institutions. The EU is particularly concerned by the complicity or inability of some local authorities to respond effectively, especially in conflict-affected zones and special economic zones where governance is weak.

Under its broader security cooperation frameworks — including the EU's Strategy to Tackle Organised Crime and the Global Facility on Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism — the EU stands ready to partner with ASEAN to disrupt financial flows, enhance investigative capacity, and support victim identification and reintegration. These efforts complement ongoing engagement under the EU-funded ESIWA project, which also addresses cybersecurity, counterterrorism, and maritime security.

Scam centers represent a major test for regional and international cooperation on transnational threats. The EU is committed to working with ASEAN and its Member States to ensure that this phenomenon is tackled with the urgency, coordination, and resources it demands.

Operational Support and Dialogue: Under initiatives like ESIWA (Enhancing Security Cooperation in and with Asia), the EU is expanding cooperation with ASEAN partners on countering transnational organised crime. Addressing scam centers would fit squarely within this framework and could be prioritised in joint dialogues or workshops.

Disaster Relief and Preparedness

The EU remains a leading partner in humanitarian assistance, disaster response, and preparedness across Southeast Asia. However, climate-related disasters are becoming more frequent and severe — from typhoons and floods to droughts and extreme heat.

In 2024, the EU allocated over EUR 50 million in humanitarian assistance to address urgent needs in Myanmar and support displaced Rohingya populations in Bangladesh and the broader region. The EU continues to mainstream anticipatory action into its humanitarian programming, acting before crises unfold by using early warning systems to mitigate human suffering and economic loss.

The EU's longstanding cooperation with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) continues through the EU-SAHA Programme, running from 2019 to 2025. The SAHA Programme extension for another year is currently under discussion. This includes support for preparedness, emergency response coordination, and regional training exercises.

The EU also contributes technical expertise and data to regional partners through participation in the Copernicus Emergency Management Service, which provides rapid satellite mapping for disaster response and risk assessment. This includes tailored support to the Philippines and other ASEAN Member States, enhancing real-time decision-making during crises.

The EU's Disaster Preparedness Strategy is aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and ASEAN's AADMER Work Programme (2021–2025). It focuses on strengthening community-level resilience, supporting localised response mechanisms, and ensuring that preparedness efforts are inclusive and equitable.

Recognising the geopolitical implications of climate change, the EU is also expanding its cooperation with ASEAN on climate security, including through

dialogues under the EU-ASEAN Plan of Action (2023-2027), Joint Ministerial Meetings and ARF forums. These discussions are essential to integrating climate risk into national and regional security planning.

As disasters intensify in scale and complexity, the EU reaffirms its commitment to working with ASEAN to strengthen regional early warning systems, disaster preparedness, and coordinated humanitarian action — in line with our shared vision for a safe, secure, and resilient Indo-Pacific.

Maritime Security

Both the European Union and ASEAN are committed to a rules-based international order and to promoting international stability and security. This shared commitment is reflected in our respective approaches to the Indo-Pacific — through the EU's 2021 Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.

In our 2022 Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, the EU reaffirmed its intention to intensify support for the global rules-based order, with the United Nations at its core, and to deepen cooperation with regional partners, particularly ASEAN. As the security landscape in both Europe and Southeast Asia becomes more complex and interconnected, our regions face shared strategic challenges. Rising tensions in regional hotspots — such as the South China Sea — have implications for the EU's security and prosperity. Approximately 40% of the EU's foreign trade transits through the South China Sea, making peace and stability in the region a vital interest.

The EU supports a rules-based maritime order aligned with international law, including UNCLOS and its dispute settlement mechanisms. We share ASEAN's concerns over increasing militarisation and destabilising actions in the South China Sea. In this context, the EU continues to support the 2016 South China Sea Arbitration Award as legally binding for all parties involved. The EU encourages peaceful resolution of disputes, welcomes bilateral efforts such as the 2022 maritime delimitation agreement between Indonesia and Vietnam, and looks forward to progress on a meaningful and legally sound Code of Conduct.

The EU is stepping up its engagement with ASEAN countries, including increased naval deployments and joint exercises in the region by EU Member States. The CSDP naval operation EUNAVFOR (Operation ATALANTA) has conducted joint exercises with Indonesia and other Indo-Pacific partners such as India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United States. Operation ASPIDES, launched in 2024, continues to safeguard maritime trade in the Red Sea.

The EU-funded CRIMARIO (Critical Maritime Routes Indo-Pacific) initiative plays a central role in maritime domain awareness. Its IORIS platform — used by over 200

authorities across 50 countries — facilitates secure maritime information sharing. The navies of the Philippines and Thailand are active users, and both have called for increased EU support for Malaysia's integration into the platform to boost trilateral and regional cooperation.

Malaysia, with its critical location between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, is a key partner. Should Malaysian authorities join the IORIS community, the EU stands ready to offer training, a non-binding trial, and full participation in governance and operational initiatives. All data exchanged via IORIS is compartmentalised and secure — in full respect of national sovereignty and EU data protection standards.

The EU views ASEAN centrality as vital to regional and global security and is committed to supporting ASEAN's role in advancing international law and the universality of the UN Charter. EU-ASEAN cooperation must also evolve to address non-traditional security challenges such as cybersecurity, disinformation, space, and emerging technology governance.

We welcome exchanges through the ASEAN Regional Forum and most recently appreciated the constructive engagements during the May 2025 Intersessional Meeting on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy and the Defence Officials' Dialogue in Kuala Lumpur. The EU also reiterates its interest in contributing to the East Asia Summit as a Guest of the Chair and to the ADMM+ and its expert working groups as an observer.

In short, the EU has a deep and growing stake in maritime security in Southeast Asia and stands ready to contribute meaningfully as a trusted and capable partner. The recent State of Southeast Asia Survey reflected this trust, ranking the EU as the region's second-most trusted partner (51.9%), after Japan and ahead of the United States.

4) ROLE OF THE ARF

The EU views the ARF as an essential platform for open and constructive security dialogue in the Indo-Pacific. In 2024, the EU actively contributed to ARF workshops on counter-terrorism and maritime security. The ARF complements the ASEAN-led security architecture and offers a flexible format to address both traditional and non-traditional threats.

As global tensions rise, the ARF's value as a confidence-building forum remains critical. The EU supports strengthening its institutional capacity, including the ARF Unit at the ASEAN Secretariat. We call for deeper coordination between ARF, ADMM+, and the East Asia Summit to ensure coherence in regional security frameworks.

The EU will remain an engaged and pragmatic partner to ASEAN and the wider Indo-Pacific through the ARF and beyond, both through attendance at the main Summits and through active engagement at the working level through the co-chairing of workshops and trainings in four of the five work streams.

In line with ARF Ministerial Guidance, the EU continues to advocate for making the ARF more "action-oriented." The EU supports the institutional strengthening of the ARF, including enhancing the capacity of the ARF Unit within the ASEAN Secretariat, improving information-sharing, and ensuring robust follow-up on ARF initiatives and recommendations.

The EU also sees merit in a more structured approach to cross-sectoral coordination among ARF, the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM+), and the East Asia Summit (EAS). Synergies between these fora could improve regional preparedness, resilience, and strategic coherence in addressing multifaceted security challenges—from maritime disputes and disaster relief to cybersecurity and climate-induced instability.

Looking ahead, the EU intends to further institutionalize its engagement with ARF by proposing joint initiatives on maritime domain awareness, cybersecurity norms, and crisis prevention mechanisms. The EU also supports greater youth and civil society engagement in the ARF process to reinforce inclusive, sustainable security cooperation.

The EU will remain a principled, pragmatic, and forward-leaning partner to ASEAN and the broader Indo-Pacific through the ARF and complementary ASEAN-led frameworks.

INDIA

1) OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

India's security is linked to the wider Indo-Pacific region, which is a seamless space from the western coast of North America to the eastern shores of Africa. The Indo-Pacific Ocean system carries an estimated 65 percent of world trade, 90 percent of world's energy and contributes 60 percent of global GDP. A significant part of India's foreign trade, including its energy supplies is carried across these waters. The evolving security challenges across the entire region are therefore key for India. Traditional security threats emanating from maritime disputes, territorial claims and claims over natural resources are a matter of particular concern. There are also global challenges that merit regional considerations. Chief among them are climate action and counter-terrorism.

The concepts of "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*" – 'the whole world is one family' and "*sarve bhavantu sukhinah*" – 'all be at peace' are at the core of India's values and traditions. The principles on which these concepts are based: inclusivity, equality and openness guide India's Indo-Pacific vision.

At the East Asia Summit (EAS) held in Bangkok in 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. These seven pillars are being progressed in cooperation with respective partners for each of these areas.

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 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. In recognition of the convergence between IPOI and ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), and for its implementation, ASEAN and India adopted the 'Joint Statement on Cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific for Peace, Stability, and Prosperity in the Region.

In 2022, India and ASEAN celebrated 30 years of dialogue relations and elevated ASEAN-India Partnership to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership at the 19TH

ASEAN-India Summit held in Cambodia, with focus on enhancing cooperation in Maritime domain, public health & traditional medicine, cyber security, fintech, disaster management, blue economy, connectivity, agriculture, renewable energy, people-to-people cooperation and economic engagement.

ASEAN-India Joint Statement on Strengthening ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for Peace, Stability and Prosperity in the Region in the context of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) with the support of India's Act East Policy (AEP) was adopted on the occasion of the 21st ASEAN-India Summit, held on 10 October 2024 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The Joint Statement focused on freedom of navigation and overflight in the region, and other lawful uses of the seas, including unimpeded lawful maritime commerce and to promote peaceful resolutions of disputes, in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS; on maritime security, maritime cooperation, counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, military medicine, transnational crime, defence industry, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and peacekeeping; and strengthening multilateralism and comprehensive reform of the multilateral global governance architecture, including the United Nations and international financial architecture, international financial institutions, and multilateral development banks, to make them fit for purpose, democratic, equitable, representative and responsive to the current global realities and the needs and aspirations of the Global South.

A Plan of Action (2021-2025) to further strengthen the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership in the next five years was adopted in 2020. As part of its implementation, planned activities seek to enhance India-ASEAN connectivity, support ASEAN community building objectives and expand cooperation in maritime domain. India has reiterated its support to ASEAN's Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC)-2025, the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan IV and agriculture development strategy. At the 20th ASEAN India Summit in 2023, ASEAN-India Joint Statement on Maritime Cooperation as a means to explore and promote maritime cooperation between ASEAN and India was adopted. To further strengthen the ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, ASEAN-India Plan of Action (2026-2030) is under development/ being negotiated.

India is actively engaged with various Indo-Pacific frameworks including, Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), East Asia Summit (EAS), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), 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 became an Observer at Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) in March 2020. India is also a part of various other multilateral constructs. Through participation in such fora, India contributes effectively to holistic maritime security of the Indo-Pacific Region.

The International Sea Lanes 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. India hopes 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 will lead to an outcome that is in keeping with all relevant international laws, including UNCLOS and that the negotiations are not prejudicial to the legitimate rights and interest of the nations that are not party to these discussions.

2) NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL SECURITY

i. Counterterrorism

India believes that terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, is the gravest global threat to international peace and security and it is important to isolate those countries, which harbour terrorists, provide them safe havens and use cross-border terrorism as a foreign policy tool. It is also in common interest that all the States must take credible, verifiable, irreversible and sustained action against terrorism and terror financing which are emanating from the territories under their control. The acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable; and therefore, the world must show zero tolerance for terrorism.

India has been actively participating in ARF activities related to Counter-terrorism and transnational crime pillar including participation in 20th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ARF ISM on CTTC), in May 2024.

India and ASEAN have endorsed a Work Plan on Cooperation to Combat Transnational Crime (2023-2027) and are in the process of its implementation.

During its UNSC membership in 2022, India, as the Chair of the UNSC Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC), hosted a special session of CTC on 28th October, 2022 in Mumbai and on 29th October, 2022 in New Delhi on the theme of countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes. After the meeting, 'The Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes' was adopted unanimously by the CTC.

The Delhi Declaration, inter alia, has emphasized the need for UN Member States to act cooperatively to prevent and counter the use of new information and communications technologies, and other emerging technologies for terrorism,

including recruitment and incitement to commit terrorist acts, as well as the financing, planning and preparation of their activities and stressed the importance of cooperation with civil society and the private sector in this endeavour.

India conducts various Joint Military Exercises with friendly foreign countries to share best practices in training and promote inter-operability in Sub-Conventional Military/ Counter Terrorism Operations under the UN Mandate of Chapter VII.

India and Malaysia are the co-chairs for the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus Experts' Working Group on Counter Terrorism for the current cycle (2024-2027). Under the co-chairmanship of India and Malaysia, 14th ADDM-Plus EWG on CT (maiden meeting of the current cycle for EWG on CT), was conducted in India on 19-20 March 2025. During the Meeting, the co-chairs, conveyed work plan for the activities planned for the cycle 2024-2027 and announced the conduct of Table-Top Exercise for EWG on CT in Malaysia in 2026 and Field Training Exercise in India in 2027. 15th ADDM-Plus EWG on CT is scheduled from 16-18 July in Malaysia.

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

India accords great importance to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540. With its longstanding commitment to global non-proliferation, India has established a strong law-based, national system to implement the provisions of Resolution 1540.

As a part of the latest comprehensive review of resolution 1540, UNSCR 1540 Committee reviewed India's matrix to the 1540 Committee that assesses national level implementation of UNSCR 1540 provisions; and it has been assessed that India fulfils the requirements of UNSC Resolution 1540 in terms of prohibitions, measures and controls in the relevant areas. Further, India participated actively in the consultations on the Comprehensive Review report related to status of UNSCR 1540 implementation and the UNSC Resolution 2663 that extended the 1540 Committee's mandate for another 10 years (till 30 November 2032).

India has also supported 1540 Committee's mandate and its work, wherever possible, by offering to share its knowledge and technical expertise in various areas as part of the Committee's assistance framework. Recognizing the role of the industry, academia and other key stakeholders in facilitating the States' implementation of resolution 1540, India has been organizing outreach events involving these stakeholders at the national level, and in the region. This includes India's annual National Conference on Strategic Trade Controls (NCSTC), organized in an expanded and revised format since 2024, which addresses issues related to Strategic Trade Controls (STC) and facilitates substantial dialogue through wider participation of various Government organizations, Industry stakeholders across relevant sectors, Academia & Research Institutions, and involvement of foreign delegates including from India's neighbourhood.

India and UNODA organized the first-ever Capacity Building Programme of its kind on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1540 and Strategic Trade Controls (STC) for Asia-Pacific Countries at National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics, Palasamudram from 25-27 February 2025. 24 government experts from 8 countries in the region, viz. Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Iraq, Lao PDR, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand had participated in the programme, where representatives of the UNSC 1540 Committee, UNODA and Indian government agencies & industry shared their implementation experiences and best practices on relevant aspects of the UNSC Resolution 1540 and STC.

With the pronounced threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and related materials, equipment and technology to the terrorist groups and other non-State actors, India is of the view that full implementation of Resolution 1540 assumes far greater importance now than when it was adopted in 2004.

India recognizes the important role of multilateral export control regimes in non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems and related materials, equipment and technologies, including to terrorists and other non-State actors.

India has been engaging actively in the multilateral export control regimes of WA, AG and MTCR, including by sharing of our best practices or implementation experiences in the area of export controls, participation in the development of guidelines for export controls and lists of materials, equipment and technologies regulated under these regimes. India was the Plenary Chair of WA for a period of one year from 1 January 2023 further establishing India's recognized credentials on export controls and non-proliferation matters.

As a responsible nuclear weapon State, India has a policy of maintaining a credible minimum deterrence based on a No First Use posture and non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States.

India remains committed to universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. India 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 (CD/1816) presented to the Conference on Disarmament in 2007 encapsulates this approach.

In line with its vision, India supports the commencement of negotiations on a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention at the Conference on Disarmament.

India's annual resolutions at the UNGA on the 'Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons' and on 'Reducing Nuclear Danger' are adopted with widespread support. Without prejudice to the priority attached to disarmament, India looks forward to commence negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty based on CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein.

India has participated in the meetings of the 25-member Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Nuclear Disarmament Verification (NDV) established by the UN Secretary General, and participates in the 'Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament' (CEND) initiative, and the ARF ISMs on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and related workshops and seminars.

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", adopted by consensus, mandates the UNSG to submit a report on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts.

As part of India's commitment to promote disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control education, and in order to equip young diplomats with knowledge and skills in these fields, Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service in collaboration with Disarmament and International Security Affairs Division organized the fifth edition of the Disarmament and International Security Affairs Fellowship for foreign diplomats from January 13-31, 2025. It saw participation of diplomats from 33 countries. The initiative fulfils the mandate of UNGA Resolution 'United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education' and is in line with the focus on 'Disarmament Education' in UN Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament 'Securing our Common Future'.

India values the role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in facilitating adoption of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and at the national level strengthening nuclear security and safety. India participates in the Review Meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

India believes that it is imperative to strengthen collective commitment to disarmament instruments including the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which is a unique instrument within the UN framework for progressive controls over certain categories of conventional weapons.

India is fully committed to the CCW and the humanitarian principles enshrined in the Convention and is a party to all the five protocols of the CCW. The Convention, while stipulating measures to mitigate humanitarian concerns arising from the use of specific weapons, strives to strike a balance with the military necessity of

such weapons. India has also been participating actively in the deliberations of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) within the framework of the CCW and recognizes the progress made in the discussions at the GGE on LAWS in recent years and reiterates its support to the eleven guiding principles adopted.

India is deeply concerned about the challenges posed by illicit transfers of conventional weapons as well as ammunition management, including small arms and light weapons (SALW), to unauthorized recipients such as criminals, terrorists and non-State actors, which pose a major threat to international peace and security. India accords high importance to the UN Programme of Action as the cornerstone of multilateral efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade in SALW. The full and effective implementation of the UN Progress of Action and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) is a priority for India, especially as a means for combating terrorism and transnational crime. Towards this, India put forth a futuristic vision for regional co-operation in the recent UNRCPD regional consultations on United Nations Programme of Action on SALW at Kathmandu, 23-25 January 2024 and also attended the preparatory Committee meeting for the 4th Review Conference on SALW from 12-16 February 2024. Indian women Army officers participated in “Fostering Gender-Responsive Small Arms Control: Perspectives from the Asia-Pacific Region on the UN Programme of Action (PoA) on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and the ATT”, held on 15 February 2024.

India is committed to refine the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG), wherein India has been recently added as the 11th member of the TRB (Technical Review Board) of IATG. Towards safer and secure ammunition management, India was an active participant in the OEWG on Conventional Ammunition (under the UN auspices) and was instrumental in the drafting of a Global framework on Ammunition Management to prevent diversion to unauthorized recipients, including criminals and terrorists. The global framework has been adopted by UNGA in the 78th session on November 2023. In line with the commitment towards women-led development, increasing number of women officers from India have contributed effectively in the field of global ammunition management

iii. Transnational Crime

India is fully supportive of all possible efforts to combat transnational crime. The access to and misuse of technology by terrorist organizations is a major concern for all. Cyberspace, encrypted chat applications and social media platforms are being used extensively for radicalization, misinformation, propaganda, terror funding, training, recruitment and execution of terrorist attacks. Rapid emergence of crypto-financing, access to Dark Web and other newer technologies will continue to have significant implications for counter terrorism efforts. The threat of ‘lone wolf’ radicalized attacks over the cyberspace has increased manifold in the

recent times. Another threat vector is the use of drones to carry out terrorist attacks.

India and ASEAN have endorsed a Work Plan on Cooperation to Combat Transnational Crime (2023-2027). The 11th SOMTC+India Consultation was held in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 28 June 2024, wherein both sides exchanged views on Counter Terrorism, Transnational Crime, especially Cyber Crime as well as training and capacity building among others.

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. Ransomware attacks have become sophisticated and pervasive over the last decade. They now have the potential of disrupting critical cyber infrastructure and government organizations. The ongoing Ad Hoc Committee to elaborate a comprehensive international convention against use of ICTs for criminal purposes is an important process under the aegis of the United Nations and India has been actively participating in it.

India and ASEAN have undertaken collaborative efforts in countering threats in the cyber space, including the ASEAN-India Webinar on Cyber Threat hunting conducted by CERT-In with ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre for Excellence (ASCCE) in November 2022 and ASEAN-India Virtual training course on Cyber Forensics was conducted in February 2024

Organized criminal groups have been operating in the ASEAN space since Covid-19 time. They managed to repurpose the underutilized hospitality industry to convert these into their operation headquarters. The scams involved recruiting young professionals and turning them into captives in a pathetic condition to run the online scams. A number of Indian young professionals also fell prey to these designs. These centres targeted a large number of countries globally. The Indian authorities have been in touch with the relevant ASEAN Member States for release of the Indian professionals who were kept as hostage, as well as in addressing the internet scams. A collective response and decisive action are required in this regard.

India successfully concluded the 3rd edition of 'No Money for Terror (NMFT)' Ministerial Conference on November 18-19, 2022 in New Delhi in which 78 countries and 16 multilateral organizations including some ARF members participated.

Participants in the NMFT Conference, discussed the issues like Countering Terrorist Financing using crypto-currencies, Virtual Assets, Crowd funding platforms, payment intermediaries, Dark Web etc. India has offered to set up a permanent secretariat for the 'No Money for Terror' Ministerial Conference.

India faces significant challenges in border security against Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) due to its geographical location, shared borders with countries with high organized crime rates, and poorly-monitored borders. These borders facilitate the movement of criminal networks, making it difficult for law enforcement agencies to control illegal activities in an effective manner. Geopolitical tensions with neighbouring countries also hinder cooperation in combating TOC, limiting intelligence sharing and collaborative law enforcement efforts.

Criminal organizations are increasingly using sophisticated technology for communication, money laundering and related operations, complicating law enforcement efforts.

India actively participates in regional and global bilateral and multilateral cooperation to address the issues related to TOC. India has signed a number of MoUs and Letters of Intent to encourage cooperation in capacity building, security and information exchange with partner nations and international organizations. Such cooperation is particularly manifested in India's relations with the UNODC and INTERPOL. Besides, with programmes like the "Look East Policy", India has improved its strategic, political and economic ties with the ASEAN countries.

iv. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

In keeping with its tradition of 'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam', and in resonance to its Act East Policy, Neighbourhood First Policy and SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), India has traditionally been the first responder to natural disasters in the region, especially in the immediate and extended neighbourhood with increasing frequency. India has also been a credible regional partner with demonstrated capabilities to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) materials for affected people. Indian Naval ships and aircraft are regularly deployed to facilitate security to Indian and international maritime community, provide HADR assistance and respond to any maritime incident in the region.

India continues to provide HADR to countries across the globe including Nepal in the aftermath of the earthquake of November 2023; Myanmar post cyclone Mocha through Operation Karuna; setting up of a hospital at Iskenderun, Hatay Province

following the earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria in February 2023; Papua New Guinea in the aftermath of volcanic eruptions of December 2023; medical assistance to Zambia and Fiji; and general and emergency medical aid to Malawi, Palau, Peru, Sao Tome & Principe, Suriname, Ukraine, Guatemala and relief materials to Afghanistan. India also sent humanitarian aid and disaster relief material to the Palestinian people in two tranches, comprising of medical aid and disaster relief material.

More recently, India provided emergency humanitarian assistance, through Operation Sadbhav, in the wake of the floods caused by Typhoon Yagi in September 2024 to Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam; humanitarian assistance to Myanmar was extended through Operation Brahma, following the devastating earthquake that struck Myanmar on 28th March 2025.

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, at the 21st ASEAN-India Summit (in 2024), has announced USD5 million for carrying out joint activities under HADR/ Disaster Resilience.

A Memorandum of Intent (MoI) between the AHA Centre and NDMA, India was signed on 24 October 2024 for furthering the cooperation under Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Management.

Annual Joint Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief Exercise (AJHE) – Chakravat 2023 was hosted by Indian Navy in Goa (Oct 2023). Representatives from 08 neighbouring countries were also present.

India participated at the 19th ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group (EWG) on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) meeting, which was held in Singapore from 25 to 27 November 2024.

v. Maritime Security

Maritime security is an important dimension of India's international engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. India supports freedom of navigation, over flight and unimpeded commerce based on international law as reflected in the UNCLOS. India believes that the 1982 UNCLOS is the basis for determining maritime entitlements, sovereign rights, jurisdictions and legitimate interests in maritime zones, and it sets out the legal framework under which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. This should be observed and respected by all countries. India stands for development, peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region, including maritime security due to the dependence of growing economies of the region on a stable maritime environment. There are diverse challenges to security in the region, including traditional and non-traditional threats to security, such as terrorism, piracy, contraband smuggling, irregular human migration, IUU

(Irregular, unreported, unregulated) fishing, hybrid threats, other transnational crimes and maritime safety incidents.

As the President of the UNSC in August 2021, India identified maritime security as the theme for high level debate, which concluded with a UNSC's Presidential Statement on maritime security. It emphasizes the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and suggests a broader approach to address common concerns of maritime safety and security. India also participated actively in the UNSC High-Level Open Debate on 'Maintenance of international peace and security - Strengthening Maritime Security through International Cooperation for Global Stability', held on 20 May 2025.

In the IOR, India is concerned about the proliferation of narcotics, originating from the Makaran Coast and from the Eastern edge of IOR. India continues to collaborate/cooperate with likeminded partners towards a secure and stable IP region.

Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) is a Maritime Security construct launched by India to address regional vulnerabilities. The IONS initiative is the largest in the region in terms of membership of countries, with 25 'full time' members and 09 'observers'. The 2022, edition of IONS Maritime Exercise (IMEX), was conducted by Indian Navy in the Arabian Sea (off Goa) from 20-28 March 2022. The last edition of the exercise was conducted in October 2024.

With the geographical location and national capabilities, India takes up efforts towards addressing the maritime challenges – both traditional and non-traditional. India has deployed naval ships (since 2008) to prevent piracy in the IOR and had been instrumental in removal of the HRA (High Risk Area) of Piracy. India has also deployed assets in the Gulf of Guinea to contribute to maritime security to prevent piracy and other illicit maritime activity in the region.

In the recent past, Indian Navy, including IFC-IOR (Information Fusion Centre-IOR), has been at the forefront of operations to monitor, share information and counter piracy incidents. India's involvement in the cases of MV Ruen, MV Lila Norfolk, MV Abdullah and rescue from Somalian Pirates of fishing vessels Al Naeemi, Iman and Omari and Al-Kambar 786 as well as fishing trawler Lorenzo Putha 04 are well known among many others. In addition, Indian Navy has executed, and continues to carry out, numerous boarding ops against suspicious vessels in the area to thwart piracy attempts. Over the last one year, in response to shipping attacks and rising incidents of piracy in the Western Arabian Sea, the Indian Navy has deployed over 35 ships in the region, carried out more than 1000 boarding operations and has responded to over 30 incidents. The credible and swift actions of Indian Navy saved more than 520 lives, irrespective of the nationality and crew. As of May 2025, Indian Navy had safely escorted over 312 Merchant Vessels, carrying over 11.9 million Metric Tons of Cargo, valued at over 5.3 Billion USD.

The inaugural ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise 2023 was an important milestone in engagement with ASEAN. Such exercises serve to hone skills, develop mutual confidence and create an environment to counter the flow of threats and challenges encountered at sea through inclusive and cooperative efforts. India is looking forward to the next edition in 2026 and seek support of ASEAN to take this trusted partnership further.

India participated actively in the 16th ARF ISM on MS co-chaired by China and Cambodia at Beijing, China on 24-25 April 2025 and shared perspectives on maritime security, including the successes achieved by Indian maritime security agencies, working independently as well as with likeminded partners in the region. India offers its wholehearted support for the ASEAN initiatives in the maritime domain. India also co-chaired the 15th ARF ISM on MS at Jakarta on 06 May 2024, along with USA and Indonesia. India would continue to work shoulder to shoulder with ASEAN, in line with the objectives laid out in the ASEAN Maritime Outlook (AMO). In the ISMs, India was also happy to put forth, and support, various proposals for knowledge sharing (ARF workshops for Maritime Law Enforcement, protection of critical infrastructure, dealing with climate change issues etc) as well as substantive initiatives (such as digital Best Practices Manual for ISPS code implementation), to fill in the gap between the pillars of Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution in the ARF calculus.

India had sent a ministerial delegation to Papua New Guinea to co-chair (with USA, Philippines and PNG) and train participants of the ARF ISPS Code training series 22-24 April 2024 to come out with a Best Practices Manual for the ARF countries.

As regards maritime safety, India has extended hydro-graphic support to safely chart the waters of the region. India is a partner in the maintenance of Aids to Navigation in the Strait of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS) through technical cooperation as well as annual financial contribution.

In IORA, India is currently the coordinating country for Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security (WGMSS) for ABNJ (Areas beyond National Jurisdiction) in particular. India is also poised to take over the Chairship of IORA in 2025.

As an observer in WPNS (Western Pacific Naval Symposium), India has had an excellent working relationship with ASEAN Member States. India hopes to continue the cooperation to achieve maritime security benefits for the region. India proposes to be part of the Working Groups in WPNS to be able to contribute more to the construct. India has also proposed some activities that could be organised in the future.

India participated in the 12th EAMF (expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum) scheduled at Lao PDR, 12-13 November 2024. India spoke specifically on the allocated topic

‘Land, River and Maritime Transport connectivity’. On request from Chair Lao PDR, India has also provided four nominations for an EAMF pool of experts for the project ‘A sustainable forum: Building research Capacity of the EAMF’. India hopes that the Indian nominations would be considered for inclusion.

India and Malaysia are co-chairs in the EWG on CT (Counter Terrorism) for current cycle. Co-chairmanship for EWG on CT (Counter Terrorism) has been allotted to India and Malaysia for current cycle. The latest meeting of the EWG on CT was scheduled at New Delhi on 19-20 March 2025.

India engaged bilaterally with countries around the world as well as regional bodies ranging from EAS, ARF, ADMM Plus, IORA, IONS, Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), Djibouti Code of Conduct-Jeddah Amendment (DCoC-JA), Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activities (CGIMA), G7 plus Friends of Gulf of Guinea (G7++FoGG), Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), Head of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meetings (HACGAM), and the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) etc.

India is an active member of ReCAAP (Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia) and contribute to the construct as an important stakeholder for maritime security in the region. India is humbled by the overwhelming support of ASEAN countries (in ReCAAP) for the Indian Executive Director (ED), Mr VD Chafekar at the ReCAAP ISC (Information Sharing Centre) as the next ED for the years 2025-28. India will continue its efforts, with increased vigour, for maritime safety and security of the ‘global commons’. India is honoured to collaborate with like-minded partners in this endeavour.

India’s Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), at Gurugram, has provided a useful platform for developing maritime domain awareness (MDA). India is happy that it has International Liaison Officers from ASEAN States in IFC-IOR. India in the process of facilitating the housing of more officers, especially from IORA countries, and others who have expressed their willingness to join to enable a broader collaborative architecture.

India is an active member of CGIMA (Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activities), Chair of EWG on MS (Experts Working Group on Maritime Security) in BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi- Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) and Observer in DCOC-JA (Djibouti Code of Conduct – Jeddah Amendment), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS). India is also a Friend in the G7++ FOGG (Friends of Gulf of Guinea) construct. India’s joining of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), based in Bahrain, as a Member, offers opportunities for greater cooperation in the region. India looks forward to leading the Combined Task Forces (CTFs) in CMF soon. India actively engage in ASEAN-

centric fora and initiatives such as Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), apart from Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI).

India would like to develop with all interested partners the Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative (IPOI) announced by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 14th East Asia Summit on November 04, 2019 at Bangkok. The focus areas of IPOI include partnership on marine ecology; maritime security; marine resources; capacity building and resource sharing; disaster risk reduction and management; science, technology and academic cooperation; and trade, connectivity and maritime transport and marine ecology. India is happy that Singapore is co-leading the IPOI pillar on Science, Technology and Academic Cooperation, Thailand is co-leading the IPOI pillar on marine ecology and Indonesia is co-leading the IPOI pillar on Marine Resources. India would welcome other ASEAN Member States to co-lead chosen pillars of the IPOI to enhance the collaboration in the maritime domain.

India has been actively involved in capacity building, capability enhancement and training of the maritime entities of various countries in the region; providing Lines of Credit, patrol aircraft and helicopters, patrol vessels and boats for patrolling of their vast EEZs, training of personnel, deploying training teams for enhancing maritime security capacities, and providing hydrographic assistance to countries in the region. In the last years 2022, 2023 and 2025, India sent a ship on regular deployment into Gulf of Guinea (GoG) for preventing Illicit Maritime Activity (IMA) in the region. India also conceptualized and participated in the inaugural India-EU Maritime collaboration in the GoG which included exercises in the maritime domain and jointly held training for regional partners. India participated in the Plenary meeting of the Friends of Gulf of Guinea (G7+FoGG) from 05-07 December 2023 at Dakar, Senegal, where India's role in enhancing the maritime security in the region was appreciated, and also, participated in the stock taking meeting at Rome, Italy on 02-03 December 2025.

MILAN is one of the largest multilateral exercises in the IOR, hosted by Indian Navy biennially. MILAN 24 was conducted from 19-27 Feb 2024 at Visakhapatnam with participation of more than 50 countries.

India participated in all exercises and engagements under ADDM-Plus EWG on Maritime Security.

Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh led India's participation at the 10th ADMM Plus meeting in Indonesia from 16-17 November 2023 and at the 11th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) which was convened in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 21 November 2024.

India, along with Australian and Indonesia as Co-Chairs, hosted the Sixth East Asia Summit (EAS) Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation in Mumbai on 04-05 July, 2024.

3) ROLE OF ARF

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, and ASEAN's unity and centrality will further the objectives of ARF. 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 common challenges.

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 interaction and understanding 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 and contribute positively to the ARF processes.

INDONESIA

1) OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Indonesia recognises that the regional security landscape is being continuously reshaped by complex geopolitical dynamics. The region is increasingly exposed to the intensification of great power rivalries, arms race, as well as disruptive technologies, which poses strategic risks to regional peace, stability, and security. In this context, ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), must remain agile, inclusive, and proactive to navigate these mounting challenges effectively.

The ARF's role in fostering mutual confidence and trust, grounded in international law, is increasingly being tested amid heightened global and regional uncertainties. In such times, the collective commitment of ARF Participants becomes even more critical to ensuring that the Forum's mechanisms remain relevant, inclusive, and effective in addressing emerging threats.

Indonesia's regional security outlook is shaped by its strategic geographical location, its identity as an archipelagic state, and its expansive maritime domain. These characteristics inform its national defence posture, which places high priority on safeguarding sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity, while contributing actively to global peace. In line with these priorities, Indonesia is committed to strengthening the ARF's institutional capacity through enhanced coordination and cooperation among its members.

Central to Indonesia's approach is the continued promotion and implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP). The AOIP's strategic objective of building trust and fostering a paradigm of inclusive collaboration will be actively pursued across all pillars of the ASEAN Community to ensure peace and stability, further complementing this year's Malaysian Chairmanship theme on Inclusivity and Sustainability.

Maritime security is a foremost policy priority for Indonesia, consistent with its vision of becoming the Global Maritime Fulcrum. Potential conflicts, such as disputes arising from overlapping claims in the region, must be addressed in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Indonesia places great importance on peace and stability in the South China Sea, despite not being a claimant state in the territorial disputes in the area. It is crucial that all parties refrain from activities that may escalate tensions and fully and effectively implement the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC).

To further strengthen regional maritime governance, Indonesia actively supports the early completion of an effective and actionable Code of Conduct (COC) between ASEAN Member States and China. The COC is expected to provide a mutually agreed framework for responsible behaviour in the South China Sea. Indonesia will continue to provide leadership to advance substantive progress and facilitate discussions on various contentious issues in the negotiations.

Indonesia reaffirms that the freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea, along with other lawful uses of the seas, is a fundamental right of all States protected by international law, particularly UNCLOS 1982. It is paramount for all parties to uphold UNCLOS 1982 as the legal basis for determining sovereign rights and legitimate interests over maritime areas.

Beyond maritime security, Indonesia monitors developments in the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait with concern. Continued provocations and military build-ups in these areas underscore the urgency of sustained engagement and de-escalation. Indonesia advocates for the use of ASEAN-led platforms, including track 1.5 dialogues, to facilitate constructive dialogue and prevent miscalculations.

The ongoing conventional arms race in the region continues to pose significant challenges to regional cooperation. In this context, Indonesia underscores the importance of multilateralism as the cornerstone of global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. Through platforms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Indonesia advocates for arms control measures that are consistent with international legal frameworks, including the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty and United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1540.

Integral to these efforts is the role of independent and credible institutions like the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), particularly in verifying disarmament commitments such as those on the Korean Peninsula. Indonesia's participation in key international treaties—including the BWC, CWC, NPT, and CTBT—demonstrates its continued commitment to global disarmament norms.

Sanctions, meanwhile, must be seen as means rather than ends in addressing non-proliferation and disarmament issues. They must be well-targeted and reviewed periodically to be effective. In this regard, Indonesia is committed to implementing multilateral sanctions in accordance with its national laws and regulations, while not recognising unilateral sanctions. Indonesia asserts that Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), as defined by UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/3284-B, pose a threat to the existence of all nations, humanity, and global peace, security, and stability.

Further, the situation in the Middle East is of growing concern. The recent attack from Israel to Iran on 12 June 2025, can potentially escalate into regional conflicts and exacerbate tensions that could be detrimental to peace and stability in our region. At the core of Middle East instability lies the unresolved issue of the occupation of Palestinian territories and the worsening humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. Indonesia views such issues should be addressed as international concerns through inclusive and constructive engagement between the parties, in accordance with international law. Inclusive dialogue that is done in good faith needs to be the core component of the peace process between Palestine and Israel.

Indonesia has consistently urged all parties to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from actions that could exacerbate tensions. It reiterates that states bear a fundamental responsibility to resolve disputes through peaceful means and in accordance with international law. In line with this principle, Indonesia continues to provide humanitarian support for Palestine. This includes increasing its contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) from USD 200,000 in 2022 to USD 1.2 million in 2024.

In addition to traditional security issues, the region must address a growing array of non-traditional threats. Challenges such as pandemics, cyber threats, and climate-induced disasters are redefining the regional security agenda. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for resilient public health systems and enhanced coordination in disaster response. Indonesia supports deeper cooperation among ARF participants in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), as well as in capacity building and knowledge sharing.

Aligned with the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), Indonesia will continue to promote a rules-based, inclusive regional order. This order must be grounded in ASEAN Centrality, transparency, and international law, with cross-sectoral collaboration across the political-security, economic, and socio-cultural pillars, as well as other emerging areas of cooperation.

2) NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

A. Overview of National Security and Defence Policy

The interplay between global security and national defence is both reciprocal and multifaceted, encompassing asymmetrical and symmetrical dimensions. Indonesia recognises that its national policies must be dynamic and responsive to global shifts, acknowledging the intricate link between domestic conditions and the broader strategic environment.

Upholding its independent and active foreign policy, Indonesia views its neighbours as partners in maintaining regional peace and stability. A shared

regional perspective is essential to mitigate tensions and foster cooperation, both bilaterally and multilaterally. This principle underpins Indonesia's national defence posture, which is focused on preserving sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity, while contributing to global peace. The Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) operate under the Total Defence System (*Sishankamrata*), which integrates defence strategy with national capacity.

This total defence approach envisions every citizen and national resource playing a strategic role in national defence. This collective commitment, strengthened by synergy between the government and the public, forms a cornerstone of Indonesia's security resilience.

The 2020 Defence White Paper outlines strategic priorities, including modernising the defence industry, advancing the Minimum Essential Force (MEF) for the TNI, enhancing border security, and professionalising personnel. Indonesia is currently in the second phase of MEF implementation, with the aim of developing a credible, interoperable force by 2029. This transition toward the Optimum Essential Force (OEF) signals a broader commitment to enhanced readiness and modernisation.

Indonesia continues to strengthen international defence partnerships, including through its participation in multilateral platforms. The Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) actively participate in multilateral exercises, such as Super Garuda Shield 2025, involving 15 countries. These engagements enhance interoperability and demonstrate Indonesia's commitment to collective security.

Multilateralism remains a key tenet of Indonesia's defence diplomacy, as reflected in its active engagement with the United Nations. As a former non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (2019–2020), and a long-standing contributor to UN Peacekeeping Operations since 1957, Indonesia considers peacekeeping a central pillar of its defence agenda.

As of May 2025, Indonesia has deployed 2,775 peacekeepers—including 203 women—to eight out of 23 UN missions. Through its Peacekeeping Mission Center in Sentul and involvement in the ASEAN Peacekeeping Centres Network (APCN), Indonesia strengthens training capacity and champions the inclusion of women and civilians in UN operations. The participation of women is especially vital for effective community engagement and the protection of vulnerable populations.

This peacekeeping commitment is enshrined in the Preamble of Indonesia's 1945 Constitution, which mandates the promotion of a just world order grounded in freedom, lasting peace, and social justice. As of June 2024, Indonesia has contributed 2,717 personnel to eight out of 23 UN missions, including UNIFIL (Lebanon), UNSOM (Somalia), UNFICYP (Cyprus), MONUSCO (Democratic

Republic of the Congo), MINUSCA (Central African Republic), UNMISS (South Sudan), MINURSO (Western Sahara), and UNISFA (Abyei-Sudan).

Looking forward, Indonesia aims to deepen its contributions to UN peace operations by empowering host nations to achieve sustainable peace and development. Indonesia has also focused on enhancing its Peacekeeping Center in Sentul as an international hub for regional training and leveraging civilian capacities, including women's participation, in peacekeeping missions. Recent efforts include co-hosting the UNPM Preparatory Meeting on 4 - 5 February, 2025 in Sentul, Indonesia. This meeting aimed to improve the performance, safety, and security of UN peacekeeping operations through better training and capacity building.

Indonesia continues to encourage the inclusion of civilian experts in peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding missions to address the increasingly multidimensional nature of conflict situations. In this regard, Indonesia actively supports the development of civilian capacities (CivCap) at multilateral, regional, and national levels.

In the maritime and airspace domains, Indonesia emphasises the importance of upholding international law. Through Presidential Regulation No. 13/2022 and inter-agency coordination between TNI-AL, BAKAMLA, KPLP, and Polair, Indonesia strengthens enforcement within its territorial and jurisdictional waters. Indonesia's maritime defence is guided by the concept of Indonesia as the Global Maritime Fulcrum, which directs citizens in understanding national goals, interests, defence nature, defence systems, functions, and fundamental principles.

Indonesia's Defence Policy in the ADMM and ADMM-Plus

Indonesia actively promotes peace and enhanced cooperation in the wider Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions through the ASEAN Defence Ministerial Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus frameworks. It actively participates in the ADMM and ADMM-Plus mechanisms to enhance regional trust, dialogue, and interoperability. Notably, Indonesia co-chaired the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on HADR with India (2021–2024) and will co-chair the group on Military Medicine with the United States for 2024–2027.

Following its chairmanship in the ADMM and ADMM-Plus in 2023, Indonesia has successfully hosted a Maritime Cooperation and Connectivity Conference (MCCC) on 2-5 December 2024 in Jakarta, as a pilot project of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific from A Defence Perspective. The MCCC was attended by delegation from all ASEAN Member States, 7 (seven) Plus Countries namely Australia, China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russia, the United States, Timor-Leste, ASEAN Secretariat, External Partners from Canada, France, Italy, the Netherlands, UK,

European Union, and 8 (eight) Pacific Countries namely Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, and Samoa.

The conference serves as a unique platform to engage in meaningful dialogue, foster relationships, and explore practical solutions that will enhance collective efforts to maintain maritime security in the wider Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region. All countries in the Indo-Pacific region are urged to work together through the main principles of AOIP, namely strengthening ASEAN centrality, openness, inclusiveness and adherence to international law. Indonesia continues to encourage other ASEAN Member States and Plus Countries to initiate an implementation project of the AOIP from A Defence Perspective.

Indonesia also maintains its active contribution to regional counter-terrorism efforts through the ASEAN Our Eyes (AOE) framework. Indonesia will chair the 9th ASEAN Our Eyes Working Group Meeting in July 2025 in Putrajaya, hosted by Malaysia.

As the co-chair of the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group (EWG) on Military Medicine with the United States for the period of 2024-2027, Indonesia showcases its commitment to enhance regional preparedness and resilience in the military medicine domain. It continues to promote collaboration, consensus-building, and promoting long-term goals to strengthen ASEAN-led military medicine mechanisms.

B. Data contribution to ARF Arms Register

- i. The total number of active personnel in national armed forces, as of 2024 in aggregate is 404,500 (not including reserves) personnel consisting of 300,400 army personnel, 74,000 naval personnel, and 30,100 air force personnel.
- ii. The total number of reserve personnel in national armed forces, as of 2024 is 400,000 personnel.

3) NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL SECURITY

I. NATIONAL LEVEL

A. Counter-Terrorism

Indonesia's counter-terrorism strategy is embedded in a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. The National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (RAN-PE 2020–2024) that was adopted on 6 January 2021, enacted under Presidential Regulation No. 7/2021, comprises 135 action items across three pillars, which include (1) prevention, including national preparedness, counter-

radicalisation, and deradicalisation; (2) law enforcement, protection of witnesses and victims; strengthening national legislative framework; and (3) international partnership and cooperation.

Over the first four years of NAP implementation (2021–2024), 126 out of 135 actions (96.4%) have been successfully completed, with ongoing efforts to address remaining actions:

1. First Pillar (Prevention Efforts): 95.2% of actions related to national preparedness, counter-radicalisation, and deradicalisation have been implemented.
2. Second Pillar (Law Enforcement, Protection of Witnesses and Victims, and Strengthening the National Legislative Framework): 90.1% of actions have been completed.
3. Third Pillar (Partnership and International Cooperation): 97.5% of actions have been successfully implemented.

Additionally, to enhance local-level implementation of the NAP, eight provinces and eight cities/regencies have adopted Local Action Plans, known as Regional Action Plan on CVE (RAD PE). By 2024, 17 local action plans (RAD-PE) have been adopted by 8 (eight) provinces and 14 (fourteen) cities/regencies, reflecting localisation of national efforts.

As the first phase of RAN PE has been concluded in 2024, the National Counter Terrorism Agency (BNPT) is in the process of developing the second phase of NAP on PCVE for the period of 2025 – 2029 through a Presidential Regulation. In the second phase of RAN PE, the local governments will be mandated to develop a regulation on the implementation of RAN PE in their respective Provinces, Regencies, or Cities.

To strengthen the implementation of the NAP 2025-2029 to be launched in the third quarter of 2025, several follow-up actions will be pursued:

- 1) **Enhancing Local Implementation:** Expand the adoption of RAD PE in additional provinces and districts to ensure localised P/CVE strategies.
- 2) **Coordination with Key Agencies:** Continue coordination with Bappenas, Ministry of Law, Ministry Human Rights, and other relevant ministries/agencies to align the NAP with national policies and legal frameworks.

- 3) **National Resilience Programmess:** Enhance the National Resilience Programmess through strengthening the Priority Programmess of the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT).
- 4) **Comprehensive Evaluation:** Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of NAP implementation from 2020-2024 and formulate the next phase of the NAP for the period 2025-2029.
- 5) **Engaging Private Sector and Media:** Involve the private sector and media in preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE) efforts to strengthen the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, particularly in addressing the increasingly complex challenges.
- 6) **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Continue collaborating with all stakeholders, including CSOs, international organisations, and regional bodies like ASEAN, to advance various NAP 2025-2029 actions that are to be implemented.

Further to this, the priorities for the second generation of RAN PE will focus on a thematic approach centred around the concept of "Human Security". Building on the progress of the first generation of RAN PE, the next RAN PE adopts a broader and more strategic focus that aims to provide targeted solutions to violent extremism and terrorism. The strategic focus encompasses nine key themes that are derived from the approach of human security. The key themes include:

- 1) National Preparedness;
- 2) Community and Family Resilience;
- 3) Education, Skills, and Working Opportunities;
- 4) Protection and Empowerment of Women, Youth, and Children;
- 5) Strategic Communication;
- 6) Deradicalisation;
- 7) Human Rights, Good Governance, and Justice;
- 8) Witness Protection and Fulfilment of Victims' Needs;
- 9) Partnership and International Cooperation.

This enhanced framework emphasises resilience, inclusivity, and addressing underlying factors, ensuring a stronger and more sustainable impact.

Indonesia's elite counter-terrorism unit Densus 88 continues to lead operational interdictions, supported by BNPT's initiatives in de-radicalisation and rehabilitation. BNPT has launched seven national priority programmes, including prison-based interventions, community

resilience, and media literacy campaigns to counter online extremism narratives.

In the cyberspace domain, BNPT's I-Khub CTVE Outlook 2024: Misuse of Cyberspace for Violent Extremism that Leads to Terrorism highlighted some key findings on the potential threat, as follows:

- 1) Internet and social media are identified as the second most common channels for radicalisation;
- 2) Significant growth in propaganda targeting supporters in cyberspace. In Indonesia, the growth goes to 78,757 pieces of content detected in 2023, from 10,622 in 2022;
- 3) Vulnerable groups in cyberspace are identified as individuals with limited religious knowledge, those socially isolated (e.g., migrants), and individuals disconnected from their cultural or community roots;
- 4) Terrorist groups use traditional fundraising and financial technologies, including online platforms, making it easier to fund terrorism in cyberspace;
- 5) Women play a growing role in online terrorist networks, including forming identities and influencing operations; and
- 6) There is an increasing misuse of technology to advance terrorism through artificial intelligence, online propaganda and hacking capabilities.

The trends and findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive and collaborative efforts to effectively address violent extremism in cyberspace. Coordination among ministries and agencies to counter violent extremism in cyberspace remains suboptimal, requiring better synergy and integration.

B. Maritime Security

Maritime security remains a top strategic priority for Indonesia. As the world's largest archipelagic state, Indonesia safeguards more than 17,000 islands and maritime zones crucial to national and regional stability. Challenges such as illegal fishing, piracy, maritime terrorism, and jurisdictional encroachments necessitate sustained vigilance and cooperation.

Indonesia enforces maritime security through the synergy of BAKAMLA, TNI AL, KPLP, and POLAIR, supported by the Presidential Regulation No. 13/2022. In the North Natuna Sea, Indonesia asserts its sovereign rights under UNCLOS 1982 and actively monitors activities that threaten its EEZ, including foreign coast guard presence.

C. Non-proliferation and Disarmament

Indonesia's national implementation of UNSC Resolution 1540 is based on its recognition on the importance of Resolution 1540 to prevent non-state actors and terrorists from acquiring, developing, trafficking, or using weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Indonesia also underscores the importance of maintaining the balance of the aspects that regulate Member States' obligations and promote cooperation to assist Member States in implementing this Resolution.

Indonesia always strives to ensure its compliance and to improve its national legislative, regulatory, institutional, and enforcement frameworks to prevent the threats of WMD proliferation.

On institutional framework, Indonesia has designated specific agencies to ensure effective coordination in the implementation of the WMD regimes including the 1540, namely:

- The Nuclear Energy Regulatory Agency to coordinate the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT),
- The National Chemical Weapons Authority to coordinate the Chemical Weapons convention established in 2017, and
- The Ministry of Health is to coordinate the Biological Weapons Convention.
- The establishment of the National Counter-Terrorism Agency.

On the legislative and regulatory framework, Indonesia has undertaken several measures, such as:

- Ratified various international treaties relating to WMD, including the NPT, the recently-adopted TPNW, the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons (BWC), the 1998 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and the 2014 International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT)
- Enacted national laws to control exports, combat terrorism, and regulate the use of chemical substances
- Developed regulations for the safe use and control of radiological and nuclear materials to prevent theft and sabotage.
- Introduced regulations for the distribution and control of hazardous substances and scheduled chemicals.
- Established a government regulation on the licensing and reporting of scheduled chemicals and created a national inspection team for chemical weapons.
- Amended existing laws on infectious diseases to improve biological security.

Indonesia has installed radiation detection and monitoring devices at major seaports, airports, and cross-border posts. As of now, radiation portal monitors (RPM) equipment has been installed at five key locations: Tanjung Priok (Jakarta), Tanjung Emas (Semarang), Tanjung Perak (Surabaya), Bitung (Manado), and Soekarno-Hatta (Makassar). Regular inspections by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have also been conducted.

Enforcement actions in Indonesia include monitoring and controlling regulations and permits, conducting inspections, and implementing the nuclear material inventory accounting system managed by the Indonesian Nuclear Energy Regulatory Agency and other relevant agencies. These actions include routine inspections to verify inventory, as well as monitor quantity, location, ownership, and the movement of materials.

Indonesia also continues to enhance national capabilities in nuclear security and emergency preparedness through improved stakeholder coordination, training, technical support, and infrastructure development. Stakeholders coordination efforts are strengthened through the I-CoNSEP (Indonesia Center of Excellence on Nuclear Security and Emergency Preparedness), established in 2014.

In terms of addressing financing activities related to Resolution 1540, Indonesia became a full member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on October 27, 2023. This membership signifies international recognition of Indonesia's efforts to prevent the financing of terrorism and the proliferation of WMD. In this context, Indonesia has issued two joint regulations, prepared by related national ministries and agencies, on the establishment of national lists to combat terrorist financing and the proliferation and financing of weapons of mass destruction.

D. Transnational Crime

Indonesia continues to confront the complex challenges of transnational crimes, including drug abuse and illicit trafficking with a multifaceted approach. The country recognises that addressing these issues requires not only comprehensive strategies but also stringent and effective law enforcement measures against drug traffickers. The evolving nature of transnational organised crime, in addition to Indonesia's geographic challenges, underscores the urgency of these efforts.

Drug abuse in Indonesia remains high, with the 2021 national survey estimating 3.66 million users (1.95% prevalence). The National Narcotics Agency (BNN) applies a 'soft-hard-smart' strategy encompassing prevention, eradication, and digital monitoring. Notably, 91 new psychoactive substances (NPS) have been detected in Indonesia, out of 1,212 reported globally. Community-Based Intervention (CBI) programmes treated over 13,000 users in 2022.

Human trafficking remains a critical issue. A 2023 report identified 3,239 Indonesian nationals involved in online scam operations across Southeast Asia, highlighting the need for robust protective measures and regional cooperation.

D.1. Illicit Drug Trafficking

Since the COVID-19 pandemic the link between drug trafficking and other organised crimes, including human trafficking, corruption, and arms smuggling has intensified. The rising global trend to utilise dark web and social media platforms, also presents new challenges, as transactions are frequently conducted using cryptocurrencies and are hard to detect and trace. Indonesia remains committed to fulfilling its obligations under relevant conventions and the 2009 Plan of Action, employing robust law enforcement tactics to address these interconnected issues.

The national prevalence data for 2023 of drug abuse in Indonesia has shown a slight decrease compared to 2021. According to the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) and other sources, the national prevalence rate was reported at 1.73%, equivalent to approximately 3.3 million people aged 15–64 years using drugs. The trend from 2023 suggests a slight decline from the 1.95% (3.66 million people) reported in 2021. The 2023 data indicates a reduction of about 0.22% or roughly 360,000 fewer drug users compared to 2021.

As of July 2024, there are 1,239 types of new psychoactive substances (NPS) reported globally (according to EWA UNODC), an increase from the 1,212 reported in June 2023. The number has increased from 91 to 94 identified in Indonesia. Of these 94, 88 NPS are listed in the Ministry of Health Appendix Number 36 of 2022, as updated in 2024, while six others remain unregulated.

In 2024, Indonesian authorities reported transnational organised crime groups trafficking large volumes of drugs, particularly methamphetamine, marijuana, and ecstasy, where Indonesia remains a significant target market. From January to August 2024, Indonesia

Customs, in collaboration with BNN, the National Police, and the Indonesian Defence Forces, conducted 726 operations targeting narcotics, psychotropics, and precursors, with major smuggling routes originating from countries in Asia and Europe.

The Anti-Narcotics Desk, established in October 2024 under Decree No. 153 of the Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs, is a key initiative by President Prabowo Subianto within his Asta Cita (eight mission) framework, in particular the seventh mission which is to strengthen political, legal, and bureaucratic reforms while intensifying efforts to combat drug abuse and corruption. This initiative builds on existing legal frameworks, such as Law No. 35 of 2009 on Narcotics, and supports Asta Cita's vision of a just and prosperous Indonesia by tackling the societal and economic harms caused by drug abuse.

The desk's functions include promoting public awareness, dismantling drug networks, and supporting community-based rehabilitation, with collaboration among agencies like the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), police, and local governments. By integrating grassroots efforts and robust enforcement, the desk seeks to create a cohesive strategy to achieve a drug-free Indonesia, contributing to Asta Cita's broader goals of equitable development and governance reform.

D.2. Trafficking in Persons and People Smuggling

Combating trafficking in persons is a high priority for Indonesia due to the significant number of recorded victims, predominantly Indonesian migrant workers sent abroad through illegal channels, particularly in domestic work and the fisheries sector. Currently, technological developments have also had an impact on the variation of forms of TPPO in the form of online scams. In addition, indications of the involvement of trafficking crime syndicates have made Indonesia a target transit country.

In response, the Indonesian government has undertaken reforms to strengthen efforts against trafficking. Indonesia is a party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, since 2009.

Nationally, Indonesia has also enacted anti-trafficking legislation focusing on prevention, prosecution, victim protection, and international cooperation. The Task Force for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Persons, comprised of relevant government

agencies, employs approaches such as advocacy, public awareness, protection, and joint training.

E. Information Communication Technology Security

Indonesia continues to enhance its national cybersecurity through the strengthening of its legislative framework by adopting three key regulations: Law No. 27 of 2022 on Personal Data Protection, Presidential Regulation No. 82 of 2022 on the Protection of Vital Infrastructure Information and Presidential Regulation No. 47 of 2023 on the National Cyber Security Strategy and Cyber Crisis Management.

The National Cyber and Crypto Agency (BSSN) has played a crucial role in fortifying Indonesia's cybersecurity since its establishment in 2022. BSSN's role focuses on policy, operations, and capacity building, which are aimed to identify cyber threats, mitigate their probability and impact, and enhance protection against cyberattacks.

As part of its cybersecurity strategy, Indonesia, through BSSN, is developing the Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT) as outlined in the National Medium-Term Development Plan for 2020–2024, as stipulated in Presidential Regulation No. 18 of 2020. In addressing cyber threats and attacks in the ASEAN region, Indonesia supports the establishment of the ASEAN Computer Emergency Response Team (ASEAN-CERT). This initiative aims to facilitate cooperation with national CERTs or CSIRTs in ASEAN dialogue partner countries, thereby enhancing regional cybersecurity and positively impacting national security.

Additionally, Indonesia actively engages in collaboration with various stakeholders from both the public and private sectors to strengthen the role of cybersecurity and share information, contributing to a conducive national cybersecurity environment.

II. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

A. Counter-terrorism

Internationally, Indonesia remains an active member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), the ASEAN Our Eyes Initiative, and the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on CTTC. Indonesia also co-chairs several initiatives with dialogue partners, such as the ASEAN-Australia workshops on youth empowerment and rehabilitation of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs).

In October 2023, Indonesia achieved full membership in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), reflecting international recognition of its

robust anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing regime. From 2017 to 2023, Indonesia froze assets worth over IDR 790 million linked to terrorism, demonstrating commitment to FATF standards.

In April 2025, Indonesia improved its ranking in the Global Terrorism Index, moving to 30th place among 163 countries, reflecting effective counter-terrorism measures. However, challenges persist. Terrorist networks are adapting, with increased use of encrypted communications and decentralised structures. The National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT) emphasises the need for adaptive strategies and community engagement to address these evolving threats.

Indonesia as a voluntary lead shepherd on counter-terrorism issues in ASEAN continues to emphasise its commitment to implementing the Work Plan of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (Bali Work Plan) 2019-2025. This plan underscores ASEAN's dedication to fostering cross-sectoral and cross-pillar collaboration in combating terrorism and violent extremism, demonstrating the highest level of engagement from various sectoral bodies to date.

To encourage the implementation of the Bali Work Plan 2019-2025, SOMTC Indonesia, in cooperation with external parties and dialogue partners, successfully implemented several Projects in late of 2024, until the first quarter of 2025. Those Projects are in line with various indicative activities in the Bali Work Plan 2019-2025.

Throughout five years of its implementation (2019-2025), the 4th Bali Work Plan Multi-Sectoral Task Force (MTF) Meeting that was held in September 2024 recorded that 63 out of the 117 (53,85%) planned indicative activities have been implemented by relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies/Organs/Entities in the four pillars of the Work Plan.

The breakdown of progress by pillars is as follows:

1. In the First Pillar on "Prevention of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism", 35 activities out of a total of 70 planned activities (50%) have been implemented.
2. In the second Pillar is related to "Counter Radicalisation and Promote Deradicalisation", at least seven activities out of a total of 15 planned activities (46,67%) have been carried out.
3. In the third Pillar on "Law Enforcement and Strengthening National Legislation related to Countering Radicalisation and Violent Extremism", at least 13 activities out of a total of 22 planned activities (59,09%) have been completed.

4. The fourth pillar on "Partnership and Regional Cooperation", it has been recorded that eight activities out of a total of 10 planned activities (80%) have been implemented.

This progress is expected to increase as Indonesia anticipates further updates from several ASEAN sectoral bodies, organs, and entities that have expressed interest in reporting on their Bali Work Plan implementation. Furthermore, as both the ASEAN PoA PCVE and the Bali Work Plan will conclude in 2025, it is crucial to sustain ASEAN's collective efforts in addressing the root causes of violent extremism. The evolving landscape of extremism demands continuous and innovative approaches.

As new challenges emerge, ASEAN's collective resolve remains essential in safeguarding its communities. Therefore, ensuring the continuation and enhancement of key frameworks like the PoA on PCVE and the Bali Work Plan is imperative.

In this context, Indonesia, as the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) Voluntary Lead Shepherd for Counter-Terrorism and the Chair of the SOMTC Working Group on Counter-Terrorism (WG on CT), will lead the development of a renewed ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism (PoA PCVE) for 2025-2030 as a continuation of the existing PoA.

The development of its work plan will be conducted simultaneously to ensure a coherent process and effective outcomes. The new plan of action will focus on more measurable themes, including conflict prevention, community engagement, and also women and youth empowerment. It will be aligned with seven key priority areas in the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, namely:

- 1) Dialogue and conflict prevention;
- 2) Strengthening good governance, human rights, and the rule of law;
- 3) Engaging communities;
- 4) Empowering youth;
- 5) Gender equality and empowering women;
- 7) Education, skills development, and employment facilitation; and
- 8) Strategic communications, the internet, and social media.

A.1. Measures against Terrorist Financing

Indonesia remains committed to continually strengthening its Anti Money Laundering (AML) and Counter-Terrorism financing (CTF)

regime. This commitment is underscored by Indonesia's recent achievement of becoming a full member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing in 2023. As a full member, Indonesia's status is elevated to be on par with other G20 member countries, reinforcing its position within the global financial system.

From a law enforcement perspective, Indonesia's FATF membership enhances international cooperation by leveraging the strong support of the FATF member network to combat cross-border money laundering and terrorism financing effectively. Consequently, the Indonesian National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT) remains deeply committed to synergising efforts to prevent and eradicate money laundering, terrorism financing, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in Indonesia.

In the second quarter of 2025, Indonesia's Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center (PPATK) organised a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to develop the methodology for the 2025 National Risk Assessment (NRA), aligning with the latest FATF's international standards. This effort is in line with the goal to strengthen early detection and prevention strategies for money laundering and terrorist financing. Indonesia continues to enhance its AML/CTF measures, including improved risk-based supervision and asset recovery mechanisms.

B. Non-proliferation and Disarmament

While pursuing implementation at the national level, Indonesia consistently promotes international cooperation, be it by establishing agreements with various countries, a regional cooperative framework, or participating actively in multilateral forums.

Indonesia's diplomacy is directed towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons by supporting the international community in non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament efforts. Indonesia emphasises the importance of multilateralism as the "core principle" of non-proliferation and disarmament negotiations and asserts that achieving these goals must be pursued through "lawful" means based on prevailing international law and under the UN framework.

Indonesia has never wavered in its support for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Indonesia believes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against the use or threat of use as well as the catastrophic risks of nuclear weapons.

Indonesia's commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is reflected, among others, by its ratification of the key international treaties, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), and the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty, IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Its Additional Protocol, etc.

Indonesia also plays an active role in various relevant multilateral efforts, including as the long-standing Coordinator of the Non-Aligned Movement Working Group on Disarmament since 1994, one of the Vice Presidents in the negotiation conference of the TPNW, and a member of the IAEA Board of Governors (2023-2025). Over the years, Indonesia has coordinated the joint positions of NAM countries in various UN disarmament mechanisms, not only on nuclear issues but also in forums like the First Committee, the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and other multilateral forums.

Within ASEAN, Indonesia actively participates in ASEANTOM, which is focused on implementing action plans across its technical working groups, including those on Radiological and Nuclear Security. Indonesia has also initiated the draft for a Model Legislation for Nuclear Security and Safeguards within ASEANTOM to assist ASEAN member states in developing their legislative frameworks for nuclear security and safeguards.

Indonesia was also pleased to co-host the UNSCR 1540 National Awareness Raising Workshop with the UN Office on Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) in Bali in July 2024. The Workshop successfully raised awareness among national stakeholders on the 1540 UNSCR.

B.1. Non-proliferation/NPT Regime

The NPT's three pillars – disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful use of nuclear energy – form an inseparable bargain. The realisation of the objectives of the Treaty and its relevance and credibility depend on full, non-discriminatory, balanced and effective implementation of all the obligations across its three pillars.

Indonesia reaffirms its commitment to the non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons in all its aspects. The country believes that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing and essential for strengthening international peace and security. Non-proliferation derives its legitimacy from the broader goal

of nuclear disarmament. Pursuing non-proliferation while neglecting nuclear disarmament obligations is both counterproductive and unsustainable.

Indonesia believes that the three pillars of the NPT must be implemented in a balanced, transparent, and comprehensive manner. Indonesia considers that the NPT has successfully prevented the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons but has not fully succeeded in preventing vertical proliferation. Therefore, Indonesia calls for all NPT parties, including the NWS, to commit to not developing nuclear weapons, both vertically and horizontally (non-proliferation in all its aspects).

Regarding disarmament, Indonesia continues to emphasise that all States Parties, especially the NWS, must fulfil commitments to disarm their nuclear weapons within a clear timeframe. Indonesia calls on all States Parties to uphold Article VI and implement the commitments made under the 1995 Decision and 2010 Action Plan. Indonesia believes that the nuclear disarmament process must be verifiable, irreversible, and transparent.

Indonesia reiterates the inalienable right of states to pursue nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination as specified in the NPT, in conformity with Articles I and II of the Treaty. In this regard, Indonesia has demonstrated its commitment, including through the implementation of a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) with the IAEA and the attainment of a broader conclusion under the Additional Protocol (AP).

Indonesia continues to advocate for the universality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and urges states that are not yet parties to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear states.

Consistent with the ASEAN Political-Security Blueprint 2025, Indonesia envisions Southeast Asia not only as a nuclear weapons-free zone but also as a region free from all other weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, Indonesia is committed to intensifying efforts with ASEAN and nuclear-weapon states (NWS) to address all outstanding issues concerning the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty, with the aim of achieving the signing and ratification of the SEANWFZ Protocol by the NWSs as soon as possible.

B.2. Disarmament

Indonesia is gravely concerned about the continued modernisation of nuclear arsenals, increased reliance on deterrence, and normalised nuclear threats. We are also concerned about the new and unpredictable risks posed by the use of emerging technologies in weapons of mass destruction systems.

Indonesia reaffirms its commitment to nuclear disarmament through its ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) last year. Indonesia also sees the TPNW as a breakthrough for nuclear disarmament. Indonesia views the vital importance of the TPNW as it fills the existing legal gap, among others, in:

- Reaching a broader scope and regulating various aspects related to nuclear weapons that were previously unregulated.
- Implementing Article VI of the NPT related to negotiations on the cessation of the nuclear arms race.
- Incorporating principles of law and International Humanitarian Law into the TPNW.
- Recognising the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons that go beyond national borders: on humans, the environment, socio-economic development, the global economy, food security, and the health of current and future generations.

Indonesia has consistently contributed to the TPNW process. We served as one of the Vice Presidents for the Asia-Pacific regions in the TPNW negotiation Conference, signed the Treaty on 20 September 2017, ratified it in 2023 through Law No. 22 of 2023, and deposited our instrument of ratification with the UN Secretariat in September 2024. Indonesia has also continued to actively contribute to its implementation and advocacy in various multilateral forums.

Indonesia was among the first countries to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) on September 24, 1996, the day it was opened for signature. The CTBT is viewed as a key element in the international regime for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. As an Annex II country, Indonesia ratified the CTBT through Law No. 1 of 2012, a timely action following ASEAN Member States' negotiations with NWSs on their accession to the SEANWFZ Protocol at the 19th ASEAN Summit in Bali in November 2011.

To support the implementation of the CTBT, Indonesia's Nuclear Energy Regulatory Agency, in cooperation with the Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysical Agency, has installed radiological monitoring stations

at several locations including West Java, Papua, Sumatera, South Sulawesi, and East Nusa Tenggara.

These radiological monitoring stations provide radiological data to complement the seismic data from CTBT stations in the aforementioned areas, enhancing monitoring capabilities for nuclear weapon testing.

B.3. Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy – Civil Nuclear Safety and Security and Regional Partnership

Indonesia believes that the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article IV of the NPT has a vital role in achieving the objectives of the Treaty.

With due regard to all activities designed to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, Indonesia is of the view that, as a fundamental principle, preferential treatment shall be given to the non-nuclear-weapons States Parties to the Treaty. Such preferential treatment should also take into account the particular needs of developing countries.

Indonesia acknowledges the IAEA's central role in the implementation of Article IV of the NPT, particularly through the Technical Cooperation Programme based on national priorities. Indonesia commends the Agency's role in supporting Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, Indonesia will continue to work closely with the IAEA towards the fulfilment of SDGs, including through the Technical Cooperation Programme. Indonesia has been working closely with the Agency, both as a beneficiary of its programmes and as a provider of technical cooperation, supporting fellow Member States in strengthening their nuclear capacities.

Indonesia calls for the strengthening of the Agency's activities to properly respond to the needs of member states. The inalienable right of NPT States Parties to the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology and their access to IAEA assistance should be guaranteed and not be subjected to any conditionality.

Indonesia also calls upon States to ensure that measures to strengthen nuclear security do not hamper international cooperation in the field of peaceful nuclear activities, nor undermine the established priorities of the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programmes.

C. Transnational Crime

In terms of trafficking in persons (TIP), Indonesia remains committed to the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP). Nationally, Indonesia established a joint Task Force to combat TIP and introduced measures for victim protection, prosecution, and repatriation. Indonesia co-chairs the Bali Process, which includes over 45 countries and organisations, aiming to combat human smuggling and improve migration governance. Bilateral efforts have also intensified. In May 2025, Indonesia and Cambodia reaffirmed their commitment to combat transnational crime through joint operations and information sharing.

Indonesia also supports the ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Work Plan Against TIP (2023–2028), emphasising coordination among law enforcement, immigration, and social services. Recent breakthroughs in dismantling transnational syndicates linked to fraudulent job offers and forced labour in the fisheries sector demonstrate Indonesia's vigilance.

Furthermore, Indonesia advocates for stronger judicial cooperation across ASEAN. The implementation of Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) and extradition treaties is crucial to ensuring prosecution across jurisdictions. Indonesia has initiated multiple high-level dialogues and operational workshops to harmonise legal standards and enhance cross-border law enforcement.

C.1. Illicit Drug Trafficking

Indonesia actively participates in international and regional efforts to combat drug trafficking. This includes involvement in the 66th Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna (March 13-17, 2023), 67th Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna (March 14-22, 2024), 68th Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna (March 10-14, 2025), and hosting the Extraordinary Session of the Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA) Asia and the Pacific in Bali, October 2023. In 2025, Indonesia continues to strengthen international cooperation through joint operations with agencies like the Interpol, and regional partners, targeting transnational drug networks.

In the fight against drugs, BNN employs a multifaceted approach:

1. Soft Power: Prevention, community empowerment, and rehabilitation.
2. Hard Power: Eradication efforts.
3. Smart Power: Development and analysis through information technology.

4. Cooperation: National, regional, and bilateral collaborations.

These approaches are integrated into the national action plan for the Prevention and Eradication of the Abuse and Illicit Trafficking of Narcotics and Their Precursors (P4GN), aiming for a drug-free Indonesia (BERSINAR).

In terms of rehabilitation, BNN focuses on improving accessibility and capabilities of rehabilitation institutions, enhancing the capacity of the rehabilitation workforce, and elevating the quality of services. These strategies aim to improve the quality of life for individuals with substance use disorders, thereby fostering their productivity and economic growth.

BNN employs the Community-Based Intervention (CBI) method, providing accessible rehabilitation services within communities. The CBI approach addresses the treatment gap in areas lacking formal rehabilitation facilities. In 2022, BNN recorded 9,783 outpatients, 1,570 inpatients, and a total of 2,357 patients treated using the CBI method.

To address drug trafficking, Indonesia has established a national interdiction task force comprising relevant national agencies. Regionally, Indonesia initiated the ASEAN Seaport Interdiction Task Force in 2016 to combat transnational drug trafficking via sea routes and prevent drug syndicates from utilising ASEAN seaports.

Indonesia believes that addressing the global drug problem requires a zero-tolerance stance, a comprehensive and balanced approach, and respect for each country's sovereign rights. In this regard, Indonesia adopted the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016–2025 to guide efforts in combating drug activities and mitigating their societal impact. The country completed the Mid-term Review of this Work Plan in 2021 to assess and analyse the implementation of strategies from 2016 to 2020.

International cooperation remains crucial in deterring criminal syndicates and drug traffickers. With a spirit of shared responsibility, Indonesia has established agreements and collaborations with other countries, including judicial cooperation for arresting perpetrators of organised narcotics crime through extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA).

C.2. Trafficking in Persons and People Smuggling

Regionally, Indonesia, in collaboration with Australia, has established and co-chaired the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons, and Related Transnational Crime. This initiative strengthens cooperation in preventing and combating smuggling and trafficking in the region. The Bali Process, attended by 49 participants including 43 countries, 2 jurisdictions, and 4 international organisations, is the only Regional Consultative Process (RCP) involving countries of origin, transit, and destination. It provides a platform for dialogue and information-sharing on irregular migration issues.

Along with other ASEAN countries, Indonesia has also ratified the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which entered into force on March 8, 2017.

Indonesia believes that effectively combating trafficking in persons requires a global and collective response, coupled with a deeper understanding of its root causes. The country remains committed to collaborating with other nations within the ARF framework and beyond to address this pressing issue.

D. Information Communication Technology Security

The ongoing development of cyberspace presents both opportunities and challenges for Indonesia, the Asia-Pacific region, and the global community. This dynamic environment introduces significant challenges, including serious cyber threats and attacks that can undermine regional security.

Indonesia acknowledges the necessity of enforcing international law in cyberspace and advocates for international cooperation to address the multifaceted challenges and threats in this domain. This cooperation involves dialogue, capacity building, and confidence-building measures (CBMs). Efforts such as sharing information and best practices through webinars, seminars, and workshops are essential steps toward fostering a safe, peaceful, and open cyberspace for all stakeholders.

The National Cyber and Crypto Agency (BSSN) has been proactively involved in ASEAN forums on cybersecurity, underscoring its commitment to regional and international cooperation. These forums and activities include:

ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

- a) 14th ARF Open Ended Study Group (OESG) on ICTs Security, 12 February 2025, via video conference.

- b) 15th ARF OESG on ICTs Security, 25 March 2025, via video conference.
- c) 7th ARF ISM on ICTs, 26 March 2025, via video conference.

ASEAN-US Cyber Policy Dialogue

5th ASEAN-US Cyber Policy Dialogue, 17 October 2024 in Singapore.

ASEAN-India Cyber Policy Dialogue

1st ASEAN-India Cyber Policy Dialogue, 16 October 2024 in Singapore.

ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Working Group

- a) 1st ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Working Group Meeting, 6 – 7 February 2024 in Bangkok, Thailand.
- b) 2nd ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Working Group Meeting, 21 – 22 May 2024 in Siem Reap, Cambodia.
- c) Critical Infrastructure Information Protection Workshop, 29 July 2024, in Osaka, Japan.
- d) 3rd ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Working Group Meeting, 30 July – 1 August 2024, in Osaka, Japan.
- e) 17th ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Policy Meeting, 18 October 2024, in Singapore.

ASEAN-Russia Dialogue on ICT Security Related Issues

4th ASEAN-Russia Dialogue on ICT Security Related Issues, 25 October 2024, via video conference.

ASEAN Network Security Action Council

15th ASEAN Network Security Action Council, 24 June 2024, in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee

5th ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee, 26 November 2024, via video conference.

ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity

9th ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity, 16 October 2024, in Singapore.

ASEAN Regional Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT)

The 1st ASEAN Regional Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) Task Force Meeting was held on 16 August 2024 in Singapore.

Representatives from BSSN (National Cyber and Crypto Agency of Indonesia) attended virtually. The meeting discussed the structure, roles, and responsibilities of the ASEAN Regional CERT, with a focus on three

main entities: the Overall Coordinator, the Task Force, and the Commission.

Other than that, Indonesia has been actively involved in discussions on cybersecurity and cybercrime issues in multilateral forums such as the Open-Ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (OEWG on ICT Security) and the Ad-Hoc Committee on Countering the Use of Information and Communication Technologies for Criminal Purposes (AHC), as well as the BRICS Working Group on Security in The Use of Information and Communications Technologies.

E. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

As a disaster-prone country, Indonesia remains steadfast in its commitment to disaster risk reduction (DRR), by active participation in the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), particularly through the development of ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency (AADMER) Work Programme 2026 – 2030. Moreover, Indonesia under the ASEAN mechanism has established the Joint Statement of ASEAN for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) 2025.

In 2024, Indonesia conducted the 20th Anniversary of Indian Ocean Tsunami (IOT) in Jakarta, on 11-14 September 2024 which was held back-to-back with Asia Disaster Management and Civil Protection Expo and Conference (ADEXCO) and Global Forum on Sustainable Resilience (GFSR). Indonesia supported the development of the ASEAN Ministerial Statement on the Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Indian Ocean Tsunami.

Furthermore, Indonesia supported emergency response and mobilisation of humanitarian assistance after the occurrence of Earthquake 7.7 magnitude in Myanmar and Thailand on 28 March 2025 by deployment of the Indonesia Urban Search and Rescue (INASAR) team, Emergency Medical Team (EMT) and mobilisation of logistical equipment worth USD 1.2 million.

Indonesia was also co-chair for the 9th Meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management Working Group on Global Leadership (9th ACDM WG GL) on 13 March 2025, Bali Indonesia. During the meeting, Indonesia briefed the meeting on the plan to initiate the formulation of the ASEAN Sustainable Resilience Framework as a follow up of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Sustainable Resilience in 2023 and the framework will closely align with the upcoming AADMER Work Programme.

F. Maritime Security

Indonesia promotes maritime governance based on national and international laws, including through ASEAN mechanisms such as the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security and the ASEAN Coast Guard Forum.

In the Southeast Asian region, the ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum have been playing a key role in addressing maritime issues through the three pillars of ASEAN—Political-Security, Economic, and Socio-Cultural. The strengthening and regularisation of the AMF and EAMF have been realised in 2023 to intensify dialogue and cooperation on maritime issues pertinent to the three Community pillars. Indonesia has actively participated in AMF and EAMF too.

Indonesia also champions the ASEAN Maritime Outlook (AMO), launched during its 2023 Chairmanship, which provides strategic guidance across ASEAN's political-security, economic, and socio-cultural pillars. AMO is expected to make a meaningful contribution to efforts to build a secure, stable and prosperous ASEAN Community, as well as further strengthen ASEAN's relations with external partners.

Indonesia actively combats illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing through the ASEAN Seaport Interdiction Task Force and ongoing cooperation with Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs). According to national reports, IUU fishing causes losses exceeding USD 4 billion annually. Indonesia has adopted satellite-based monitoring, port inspections, and international cooperation to address this. Furthermore, Indonesia's participation in the Blue Justice Initiative underscores its commitment to combating transnational organised crime in the fishing industry, promoting sustainable and lawful maritime practices.

Indonesia's commitment is further demonstrated through participation in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), collaboration with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Global Maritime Crime Programme) to strengthen coordination and capacity in combating maritime crime, and support for International Maritime Organisation (IMO) security protocols. Indonesia is also developing a Security Policy Paper on port and terrorism threats for integration into the Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS).

Indonesia has significantly expanded its bilateral maritime cooperation with several ARF Participants between 2024 and 2025 to enhance maritime security and regional stability. In August 2024, Indonesia and

Australia signed a Defence Cooperation Agreement, facilitating joint maritime patrols, humanitarian operations, and peacekeeping efforts, thereby strengthening interoperability between their armed forces. In January 2025, Indonesia and India renewed their maritime security agreement, focusing on joint patrols and capacity building to address shared concerns in the Indo-Pacific region. Additionally, Indonesia and the Philippines have intensified their joint maritime patrols in the Sulawesi Sea and Mindanao waters since July 2024, targeting piracy and terrorism threats in these regions. These collaborations underscore Indonesia's commitment in safeguarding maritime domains.

The security of submarine cable infrastructure has also emerged as a critical concern for Indonesia, given its reliance on these cables for internet connectivity and economic activities. There is an increase in frequency of submarine cable disruptions globally, which are often attributed to accidental damage or potential sabotage. This has raised alarms about the vulnerability of these infrastructures. Indonesia highlights the importance of a streamlined procedure in addressing potential issues that may affect submarine cable infrastructures that are critical for communication. Indonesia is thus prioritising the development of robust policies and international cooperation frameworks to enhance the resilience and security of its submarine cable networks.

Other key regional activities, which Indonesia are engaged in, include the Maritime Law Enforcement Dialogues (MLED) that promote experience-sharing and cooperation among Southeast Asian countries. MLED has been conducted 15 times, with the most recent hosted by Malaysia in October 2024. Indonesia also participates in the Contact Group on Maritime Crime in the Sulu and Celebes Seas to foster a shared understanding and joint response to maritime threats in those waters. There have been 11 contact group meetings to date. In 2025, Indonesia will co-chair the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security alongside India and the United States.

4. THE ROLE OF INDONESIA IN ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM (ARF)

a. National contributions to enhancing the ARF and regional security

Following up with the adoption of the ARF Statement on the Treatment of Children Recruited by or Associated with Terrorist Groups, Indonesia is of the view that more work needs to be done to advocate efforts to end violence against children. A balanced approach between public security and the rights of children is supposed to be taken into consideration.

In this context, Indonesia has further initiated ECOSOC resolution on the “Treatment of Children Associated with Terrorist Groups, Including Children Who are Recruited and Exploited by Those Groups”, which was adopted by consensus in the 33rd CCPCJ Meeting that took place in Vienna, 17 May 2024. The resolution was adopted, with 36 countries cosponsoring it, including Australia, the United States, Brazil, Dominica, the Philippines, Italy, Japan, Canada, Morocco, and 27 countries that are part of the European Union.

The adoption of this ECOSOC resolution reflects the Indonesian Government's strong commitment to addressing the situation of children associated with terrorist groups. This approach acknowledges Indonesia's achievements, best practices, and strengths at both national and regional levels, recognising that, regardless of their involvement, these children are primarily victims who require understanding and support.

In regards to the revitalisation of the ARF, Indonesia continues to advocate revitalisation process that enhances the effectiveness and relevance of the ARF with the current global geostrategic and geopolitical dynamic as outlined in the ARF Statement on the Commemoration of 30 Years of the ARF, which was initiated by Indonesia during its 2023 Chairmanship.

b. Future of ARF

It is imperative for the ARF to be able to effectively respond to the evolving nature of global geopolitical and geostrategic dynamics, as well as the emerging challenges that follow. ARF must fully leverage its attributes to add value to existing regional mechanisms. One of the ARF's strengths is its establishment of a foundation for political and security dialogues that integrate both civil and military elements.

It is important to recognise that the ARF is an institution with a dynamic process through which countries in the Asia-Pacific region engage in dialogue and undertake activities to promote confidence-building measures (CBMs). As the ARF plans to move into the stages of preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution, the ARF must advance this goal by continuously improving its mechanisms to be more robust, substantive, proactive, and action-oriented.

Revitalisation of the ARF must be pursued with the common interest to move the ARF forward as a key platform for dialogue and consultation on regional political and security issues that could

meaningfully contribute to regional and global peace, stability and security in the face of increasing external challenges. Part of its revitalisation effort can be to optimise the utilisation of the ARF Annual Security Outlook (ASO) as a primary reference for dialogue and activities conducted under the ARF framework and streamlining its significant thematic contributions to avoid redundancy with existing regional initiatives.

JAPAN

1) JAPAN'S OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Japan consistently supports ASEAN centrality and unity for peace and prosperity in the region, and thus attaches high importance to ASEAN-led frameworks such as East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Particularly on the ARF, Japan recognizes its unique role in improving the regional security environment by promoting mutual confidence building through dialogue and practical cooperation. As the trusted partner of ASEAN, Japan will proactively engage in the discussions and activities in the forum to maintain peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

The world is now at a turning point in history, and the security environment we all face is most severe and complex since the end of WWII. In Europe, Russia's aggression against Ukraine continues, and that has been eroding the foundation of the international order that the international community has nurtured. We cannot deny the possibility that a similar situation may arise in the future in the Indo-Pacific region. In this region, power balances have been changing obviously. Turning the eyes to the vicinity of Japan, military build-ups, including those of nuclear weapons and missiles, are rapidly advancing. Moreover, grey zone situations over territories, cross-border cyberattacks on critical civilian infrastructures, and information warfare through spread of disinformation, are constantly taking place, thereby further blurring the boundary between contingency and peacetime. The scope of national security has expanded to include the fields previously considered non-military such as economic, technological and others, and thus the boundary between military and non-military fields is no longer clear-cut either.

We all benefit from the oceans and seas that connect the world, and therefore, thorough respect for the rule of law at sea is a common interest of the international community. Japan has been continuously promoting a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), striving to make the Indo-Pacific region one that respects freedom and the rule of law, free from coercion and force. However, unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the maritime and air domain including in the East China Sea and the South China Sea have been intensified such as intrusions into the territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands. Japan reiterates its strong opposition against such attempts and express its unchanged position to respond to them calmly and resolutely while enhancing coordination with the relevant countries, along with strengthening communication in order to make the East China Sea a "Sea of Peace, Cooperation and Friendship."

In the South China Sea, dangerous and coercive activities against coastal states have been rampant, including the further militarization of the disputed features

and the use of military, coast guard, and maritime militia forces, based on claims of expansive maritime rights with no legal basis. Japan is seriously concerned about the repeated actions that heighten regional tensions.

Japan strongly opposes any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the South China Sea, including the obstruction of freedom of navigation and overflight, and any actions that increase tensions. In particular, there have been frequent incidents of collisions since 2023 between Chinese vessels and Filipino and Vietnamese vessels, and dangerous and unprofessional flights against aircrafts of dialogue partners. Japan has repeatedly and strongly opposed these actions that increase regional tensions.

The issue concerning the South China Sea is a legitimate concern of the international community, directly related to the peace and stability of the region, and the issue is of vital importance to Japan, whose economy heavily depends on maritime trade. Therefore, Japan has consistently upheld the rule of law at sea and emphasized the importance of freedom of navigation and overflight, as well as the security of sea lanes.

Based on this fundamental position, Japan's Prime Minister ISHIBA Shigeru stressed at the Japan-ASEAN Summit and the East Asia Summit (EAS) last October that unlawful maritime claims and activities not based on the relevant provisions of UNCLOS are not acceptable, touching upon the continuing and escalating militarization and coercive activities there, and that all parties should pursue for the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with the principles of international law, in particular UNCLOS.

In the context of the peaceful resolution of disputes based on international law, Japan maintains its position that the award rendered by the Arbitral Tribunal in 2016 is final and legally binding on the parties to the dispute, and reiterates our strong expectation that this award serves as a useful basis for a peaceful resolution of disputes in the South China Sea, as was expressed in the Foreign Minister's statement last July.

Furthermore, regarding the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC), Japan has expressed its position that it should be effective and substantive, consistent with international law in particular UNCLOS, and respect the legitimate rights and interests of all stakeholders utilizing the South China Sea. Japan will continue to cooperate with the international community including ASEAN Member States, the United States and other like-minded countries, and the broader international community to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

Japan also reiterates the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and encourage the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues.

On the situation in Myanmar, Japan expresses serious concern over the situation and deplores that there are still no signs of improvement on the ground and many innocent civilians are killed and wounded daily by air strikes and other acts of violence. Japan has consistently urged the Myanmar military to take concrete actions to immediately stop the violence, release those who are arbitrary detained, and swiftly restore Myanmar's democratic political system. To improve this, Japan calls upon the Myanmar military to resolve the crisis through constructive dialogue among all stakeholders. Japan calls for the continuation and full implementation of the ceasefire by all parties involved, especially the Myanmar military. Japan will continue to work closely with the international community and support ASEAN's efforts to the maximum extent, so as to ensure the steady implementation of ASEAN's "Five-Point Consensus".

Amid the ongoing difficult situation, humanitarian assistance for the people of Myanmar is an urgent challenge. Since the coup, the Government of Japan has provided approximately 190 million US dollars in humanitarian assistance through international organizations, NGOs and other partners. Japan will continue to actively provide humanitarian assistance and pay close attention to the needs of the people of Myanmar, who are facing difficult circumstances, while urging the Myanmar military to allow safe and unhindered humanitarian access.

On North Korea, it has been advancing its nuclear and missile development, including the launches of the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)-class ballistic missiles, and it is totally unacceptable. Furthermore, the development of the Russia-North Korea military cooperation has been revealed, including the engagement of North Korean troops in combat against Ukraine, as well as Russia's procurement and use of North Korean weapons and munitions, including ballistic missiles. Japan is seriously concerned about this as it not only leads to further deterioration of the situation in Ukraine, but also affects the security environment surrounding Japan and Southeast Asia.

In view of the above, it is imperative for each country to fully implement the relevant UN Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs) and Japan will work closely with the international community toward the full implementation of the relevant UNSCRs. Japan stresses the need to counter North Korea's illicit activities, including malicious cyber activities such as cryptocurrency thefts, which fund its nuclear and ballistic missile development, and to strengthen measures against such activities including in Southeast Asia.

In this regard, the participating states of the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team (MSMT) including Japan, released its first report on 29 May on the theme of "Unlawful Military Cooperation including Arms Transfers between North Korea and Russia". The MSMT was established in October 2024 to address the monitoring gap arising from the disbandment of the Panel of Experts for the UNSC 1718 Sanctions

Committee in April 2024 which was caused by Russia's veto in March 2024. The report will assist with the full implementation of UN sanctions by the international community.

With regard to Japan-North Korea relations, Japan's basic policy remains unchanged. Japan will achieve the normalization of relations with North Korea, in accordance with the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration, by comprehensively resolving outstanding issues of concern, such as the abductions, nuclear and missile issues, as well as settlement of the unfortunate past. In particular, with the aging of the abductees and their families, the abductions issue is a time sensitive, humanitarian issue with no time to spare, as well as a matter of infringement of the sovereignty of Japan in nature. In order to realize the return of all abductees at the earliest possible date and resolve the outstanding issues of concern between Japan and North Korea, Japan will spare no effort in taking the most effective measures toward that goal.

On the situation in Gaza, it has worsened since the terrorist attacks by Hamas and other terrorist groups against Israel in October 2023, and the conflict structure in the international community has become more complex. Furthermore, the use of the Internet and social networking services to spread extremist ideology and recruit, and the use of cryptographic assets to acquire funds for terrorist activities have become prominent trends.

2) NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY

a. Japan's Security Policy

Amid the deepening divisions and confrontations in the world, there is a mountain of issues to be addressed that transcend national borders and values, and the international cooperation has become more important than ever. In response to this situation where it is in the most severe and complex security environment in the post-WWII era, Japan will steadily implement the National Security Strategy and other documents formulated in December 2022.

The following five points describe the fundamental principles of Japan's national security, and are prerequisites for the execution of the associated policies that strive to protect of our national interests.

- Japan will maintain the policy of "Proactive Contribution to Peace" based on international cooperation. In order to further embody this principle in the international community and to protect our own national interests in the time ahead, and based on the recognition that the primary responsibility for defending Japan lies with itself, Japan will squarely face the ever-changing security environment by decisively taking on necessary reforms and reinforcing our national security capabilities and roles.

- Japan will execute its security policy in a manner that maintains and upholds universal values such as freedom, democracy, respect for fundamental human rights, and the rule of law. As one of the most mature and stable advanced democratic countries in the world, even amidst a complex and severe security environment, Japan will strive to maintain and uphold universal values and principles in cooperation with other countries, and lead the international community by example.
- As a peace-loving nation, Japan will adhere to the basic policy of maintaining an exclusively national defense-oriented policy, not becoming a military power that poses a threat to other countries, and observing the Three Non-Nuclear Principles. The Japan-U.S. Alliance, including the provision of extended deterrence, will remain the cornerstone of Japan's national security policy.
- Japan will attach importance to coexistence and coprosperity alongside other countries, cooperation with like-minded countries, and multilateral cooperation.

The National Security Strategy first identifies diplomatic power as an element of Japan's overall national strength for security. While linking diplomacy and defense, Japan will organically and effectively link its various soft powers, such as its strong economy, advanced technological capabilities, and rich culture, to pursue a comprehensive foreign and security policy. In addition, Japan will steadily implement the newly established Official Security Assistance (OSA) and actively work on the promotion of cyber security and economic security.

Against international information warfare in the cognitive domain through manipulation of information including proliferation of disinformation, etc., we will collect and analyse information from various angles and strategically disseminate it, as well as build and strengthen information security infrastructures.

b. Japan's Defense Policy

(1) The National Defense Strategy

On December 16, 2022, Japan issued the National Defense Strategy and the Defense Buildup Program as replacements to the National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG), and the Medium Term Defense Program (MTDP).

The Strategy states Japan's three defense objectives and three approaches to achieve those objectives. Japan's defense objectives are as follows:

- Shape a security environment that does not tolerate unilateral changes to the status quo by force.

- Deter through cooperation with our ally, like-minded countries and others, unilateral changes to the status quo by force and such attempts that concern Japan's peace and security. Should such an eventuality occur, our objective is to swiftly respond in whatever ways and bring the situation under control at an early stage so that the situation would not lead to invasion of Japan.
- Should deterrence fail and invasion of Japan occur, to rapidly respond to the invasion in a tailored and seamless manner; to take primary responsibility to deal with the aggression; and, while receiving support from the ally and others, to disrupt and defeat the invasion.

The three approaches to realize Japan's defense objectives are stated as follows:

- In an effort of strengthening of Japan's own architecture for national defense, to fundamentally reinforce Japan's defense capabilities, which constitute the core of national defense, and to reinforce the defense architecture of the whole country.
- Further reinforce joint deterrence and response capability of the Japan-U.S. Alliance by further strengthening cooperation with the United States, our ally.
- Reinforce collaboration with like-minded countries and others with whom Japan cooperate to uphold and reinforce a free and open international order.

Amid the most severe and complex security environment since the end of WWII, Japan needs to squarely face the grim reality and fundamentally reinforce Japan's defense capabilities, with a focus on opponent capabilities and new ways of warfare, to protect the lives and peaceful livelihood of Japanese nationals. Japan also needs to strengthen Japan's architecture for national defense that integrates various elements of national power. Thinking strategically, Japan should promote these two lines of effort as a coherent whole. It is this undertaking that provides the way forward to bolster Japan's deterrence capabilities and further strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance, and which forms the foundation of security cooperation with like-minded countries and others.

(2) The Defense Buildup Program and Defense-Related Expenditures

The Defense Buildup Program is the first five-year defense build-up plan developed to achieve the targeted levels of defense capabilities as set forth in the National Defense Strategy. The expenditure earmarked from FY2023 to FY2027 amounts to approximately ¥43 trillion. In addition to the cost of maintaining and operating the JSDF, defense-related expenditures in Japan also include the cost of improving the living environment in the vicinity of defense facilities and support

for US forces stationed in Japan. As the FY2025 defense-related expenditures budget is based on the National Defense Strategy and the Defense Buildup Program, it includes an array of projects aimed at the establishment of a Multi-Domain Defense Force. The expenditure budget for FY2025 has been increased by 749.8 billion yen (or 9.7 % growth) from the previous fiscal year to 8,474.8 billion yen, marking the thirteenth consecutive year of growth, and is 1.35% of gross domestic product. It includes expenditure which will be transferred from Digital Agency (31.4billion yen)

In addition to the expenditure budget based on the Defense Buildup Program, including 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), and the US forces realignment-related expenses (the portion allocated for mitigating the impact on local communities), the total expenditure budget for FY2025 amounts to 8,700.5 billion yen, an increase of 750.8billion yen, or growth rate of 9.4% from the preceding fiscal year, and is 1.38% of gross domestic product.

c. Japan-US Security Arrangements

Given an increasingly severe security environment in the Indo-Pacific region, securing the forward deployment of U.S. forces based on the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty and strengthening Alliance deterrence and response capabilities are essential not only for the security of Japan, but also for peace and stability in the region. Japan's decision to fundamentally reinforce its defense capabilities under the strategic documents formulated in December 2022 will lead to more effective employment of U.S. capabilities and will further strengthen Alliance deterrence and response capabilities. In concrete manner, the two countries will expand and strengthen cooperation in a wide range of areas, such as ballistic missile defense, cyberspace, outer space, and information security.

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

3) JAPAN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL SECURITY

a. Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime

On terrorism, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Qaida and their affiliates remain a threat to international peace and security, and Japan continues to make efforts against international terrorism and violent extremism in cooperation with the countries and the regional and international organizations concerned.

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. In 2024, Japan held the bilateral consultations with India, also hosted the dialogue between Australia-Japan-US, as well as the dialogue between Australia-India-Japan-US in Tokyo. To help build counter-terrorism capacity, Japan supports projects in the field of border control, aviation security, maritime security, and law enforcement under the cooperation with relevant international organizations or partner countries, and holds dialogs including in the frameworks such as, the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime plus Japan (AMMTC+Japan), and the Senior Official Meeting on Transnational Crime plus Japan (SOMTC+Japan).

In the Indo-Pacific region, Japan has also been stepping up its efforts to support for capacity building to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism, as well as to combat transnational crimes such as illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in persons and cybercrime including online scams, through financial contributions to the projects of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL). The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has conducted a “Project for Strengthening Regional Network for Combating Trafficking in Persons (TIP) in Mekong Region” including support for the Mekong Region Workshop, since January 2022. Japan has also actively participated in multilateral dialogues at the frameworks such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), and the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), etc. In addition, Japan organized the South and Southeast Asian workshop on February 2024 in Tokyo, with collaboration with the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offender (UNAFEI) and the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ) to ensure due process of law throughout investigation, prosecution, and treatment of offenders, as well as to promote the rule of law for effective counter-terrorism measures.

Many countries are suffering enormous economic and human damage due to international organized crime in Southeast Asia, including online fraud. In addition, organized crime groups are closely related to crimes such as money laundering and illegal drug issues. Due to their regional expansion, it is impossible for a single country to respond, making cooperation between countries in the region important. In this regard, Japan intends to continue providing support for building law enforcement capabilities against international organized crime, including online fraud, through international organizations such as UNODC and INTERPOL. In light of the growing problem of criminal organizations recruiting young people online and forcing them to participate in online fraud and other crimes in the East

and Southeast Asian regions, Japan, in collaboration with UNODC and INTERPOL, held a regional working-level meeting to facilitate information sharing regarding the activities of online scam centers, particularly in Myanmar near its border with Thailand, with participation of Thai authorities and relevant countries' embassies in Bangkok in May 2025. Japan will continue to work closely with regional partners and international organizations.

b. Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during war, Japan has the responsibility to lead international efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. Japan will continue to advance realistic and practical efforts toward a world without nuclear weapons, maintaining and strengthening the regime centered on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the only universal framework in which both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States widely participate.

The global security environment has become even more 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 efforts with the involvement of nuclear-weapon States in order to promote nuclear disarmament.

It has become increasingly important under the current severe security environment that the international community maintains and strengthens the NPT. Japan has made a series of efforts to this end, such as the submission of the United Nations General Assembly resolutions on the elimination of nuclear weapons, as well as close cooperation through the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) and the Stockholm Initiative for nuclear disarmament and the NPT.

Moreover, Japan will continue to work on promoting effective nuclear disarmament measures such as the universalization and early entry into force of the CTBT, the immediate commencement of negotiations on an FMCT, and building a reliable international verification mechanism. For this purpose, in March 2024 Japan announced the establishment of the "FMCT Friends," a cross-regional group with the participation of both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States which aims to maintain and enhance political attention on an FMCT and to contribute to expand the support for the negotiation of an FMCT, and in September 2024 hosted the High-Level Launch Meeting of the "FMCT Friends."

Furthermore, the emergence of new technologies has heightened the risk of the diversion of private sector technologies to military uses. Under these circumstances, Japan has been implementing its non-proliferation policies through international non-proliferation regimes and rules, taking non-proliferation measures domestically, and promoting close coordination with and capacity building support for other nations.

To this end, Japan supported regional workshops for the implementation of UNSCR 1540, by contributing 1,000,000 USD in 2017 and additional 720,000 USD in 2025 to UNODA. Japan has also been hosting a range of meetings each year, including the Asia Senior-Level Talks on Non-Proliferation (ASTOP) and the Asian Export Control Seminar in order to promote a better understanding of the non-proliferation regimes and strengthen regional efforts, mainly in Asian countries. Japan has also actively participated in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) exercises and related conferences including PSI rotation exercise in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, Japan has actively contributed to the enhancement of the understanding on safeguards system, such as the universalization of the Additional Protocol (AP), and the capacity building in safeguards implementation to share its experience and knowledge, including through the Asia-Pacific Safeguards Network (APSN).

c. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Japan has provided active support in response to large-scale natural disasters in the Indo-Pacific region. In 2022, Japan provided emergency relief goods in five cases to assist affected people. In addition, for the volcanic eruption and tsunami disaster in Tonga, Japan dispatched the Self-Defense Force Units as Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Team for transporting relief goods and providing desalinated drinking water. In 2023, Japan provided emergency relief goods in one case, and for the oil spill disaster off the Coast of Mindoro Island, Philippines, Japan dispatched JDR Expert Team for providing advisory on oil removal and control. In 2024, Japan provided emergency relief goods in six cases notably to Mongolia and Viet Nam, which were affected by the dzud and Typhoon Yagi. In April 2025, Japan dispatched a Self-Defense Force Unit as JDR Team to Myanmar in order to transport medical goods, which were necessary for the JDR Medical Team dispatched in response to the earthquake that occurred in March. 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 three types of assistance through the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre). The first type of assistance concerns the 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. Under the DELSA, the AHA Centre also has enhanced the supply chain management for emergency response of ASEAN through innovation, utilization of technology and capacity development. The second 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 Third type of Japan's assistance through the AHA Centre concerns a human resources development project (ACE Program) in DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction). This project involves training programs for officials at the DRR organization in ASEAN Member States.

d. Maritime Security

Japan is a maritime nation that has achieved economic growth through maritime trade and development of marine resources and has pursued a “Free and Open Ocean”. For Japan, maritime rights and interests, which are the basis for economic survival, including the freedom of navigation and overflight, and use 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, a “Free and Open Ocean,” which is 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 a “Free and Open Ocean,” 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 participating countries with the opportunity to discuss maritime cooperation and maritime issues in the region, which realized the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), a Track 1.5 forum. At the 12th EAMF, which was chaired by Lao People's Democratic Republic in November 2024, Japan introduced its activities to realize a rules-based maritime order and emphasized the importance of the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law, in particular UNCLOS.

In addition, Japan took the initiative in establishing the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP). Since its inception, Japan has been actively contributing to the implementation of the ReCAAP by sending Executive Director until March 2022 and Assistant Director to the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) and supporting ReCAAP ISC's efforts in the area of information sharing and capacity building through making financial contributions among others. For instance, at the seventh Capacity Building Executive Program (CBEP), held on October 2024 at

Tokyo, Japan Coast Guard explained its efforts to combat piracy and armed robbery against ships and shared its experience of cooperation with Asian littoral states.

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 served 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 2018-2020. 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).

e. Cyberspace

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 of these issues in a number of areas.

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 crises through capacity-building trust and assistance while building confidence among nations. In this regard, Japan has held the "ASEAN-Japan Cyber Security Policy Meeting" every year since 2007 to strengthen international cooperation and efforts between Japan and ASEAN countries in the

field of cyber security. In the last Policy Meeting, ASEAN member states and Japan exchanged views regarding the cybersecurity policies of each country over the past year and also confirmed the status of collaborative activities such as information sharing of the good practice of critical information infrastructure protection, the topic of joint awareness raising, capacity building, joint government-industry-academia partnership and cyber exercises. Furthermore, they discussed how the collaborative activities should be for the future.

In addition to these efforts, Japan has continued to provide capacity building support mainly to ASEAN countries. For example, since 2017, Japan has established the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC) and conducted cybersecurity exercises, among other initiatives. As of May 2025, Japan has conducted capacity building programs on cybersecurity for more than 2,700 trainees from ASEAN countries. Additionally, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the Industrial Cyber Security Center of Excellence (ICSCoE) under the Information-Technology Promotion Agency, Japan (IPA), in collaboration with the government of the United States and the European Commission, are co-hosting the JP-US-EU Industrial Control Systems Cybersecurity Week for the Indo-Pacific Region. In order to respond to the increasing cyber threats through by multilateral capacity building efforts, Japan has contributed to the World Bank's Cybersecurity Multi-Donor Trust Fund. Japan will continue to promote human resource development and other relevant efforts. Based on the experience Japan has cultivated to date through support for ASEAN member states and interstate relations with the region, Japan will enhance support in area other than ASEAN, with a focus on the Indo-Pacific region according to the “Basic Policy on Cybersecurity Capacity Building Support for Developing Countries”.

f. Peacekeeping Operation

UN Peacekeeping Operations are facing various challenges, including geopolitical conflicts, new technological threats, and gaps between expectations and capabilities. From the perspectives of safety and efficiency, strengthening the capabilities of Peacekeepers is an important issue. For this reason, Japan has been taking a lead in promoting the UN Triangular Partnership Program (TPP) since 2014. To date, Japan has contributed a total of approximately US\$100 million and provided training to approximately 16,000 personnel, striving to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Peacekeeping operations and enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers. Considering that 30% of personnel engaged in Peacekeeping activities are dispatched from Asian region, Japan has implemented a total of seven training sessions targeting Asian and neighbouring countries since 2018 till the end of 2024, having trained 127 engineering personnel from 14 countries.

In this regard, the 8th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Peacekeeping Experts' Meeting was held in June 2024, co-hosted by Indonesia and Japan. The participants exchanged views on partnerships for training and capacity building to advance the performance of Peacekeeping activities and enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers. Japan will continue to promote initiatives to capacity-building, drawing on the experience gained through its support for ASEAN countries and its bilateral relations with the region.

g. Defence Cooperation

The ADMM-Plus 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. Japan is taking part in each ADMM-Plus EWG to further enhance regional security cooperation by actively exchanging views with other countries and making proposals as follows;

- In the first cycle, from 2011 to 2013, Japan acted as a Co-Chair of the EWG on Military Medicine with Singapore, and conducted field training exercises on HA/DR and military medicine in Brunei in June 2013.
- In the second cycle, from 2014 to 2017, Japan, together with Lao PDR, co-chaired the EWG on HA/DR. During this period, Japan concentrated its efforts on formulating 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 assumed with Vietnam the role of Co-Chair of the EWG on PKO, and successfully convened the first EWG meeting under the new cycle in April 2021 by taking up Women, Peace and Security (WPS) as the main discussion topic. This led to the establishment of the WPS Platform under the fourth cycle of the EWG on PKO, and since then, the Co-Chairs convened WPS seminars by inviting eminent experts from the

UN. In September 2023, the Competency Evaluation Program for Prospective UN Peacekeepers (CEPPP) was held in Vietnam under EWG on PKO. The program consisted of classroom lectures and scenario-based exercise to validate coordination procedures such as how UN Military Observers should coordinate with engineers and medical personnel. Throughout the cycle, Co-Chairs contributed to enhancing partnerships as well as the knowledge and skills participants require to undertake UN PKO mission tasks, including WPS.

- In the fifth cycle, from 2024 to 2027, Japan is co-chairing EWG on Maritime Security with the Philippines. Co-chairs have convened the EWG meeting twice: in November 2024 in the Philippines and in March 2025 in Japan. Through a series of meetings, participants raised awareness on the climate change and marine environmental protection, as well as Women, Peace and Security. Japan will work towards maintaining maritime order governed by the rule of law, not force or coercion through practical cooperation.
- The ADMM-Plus is a vital framework that provides 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.

4) ROLE OF THE ARF

a. National contributions to enhancing the ARF and regional security

Considering the regional security environment, the role of the ARF in promoting dialogue and cooperation among a wide range of actors and fostering confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the region is more important than ever. Japan has actively contributed, including serving as co-chair in all Inter-Sessional Meetings (ISM) on maritime security, non-proliferation and disarmament, counter-terrorism and transnational crime, disaster relief, and cybersecurity.

In addition, Japan engages not only in intergovernmental consultations but also in track 1.5 frameworks such as the Asia-Pacific Roundtable to promote the understanding of Japan's security policies among various countries and to work towards confidence building in the region.

b. Future of the ARF

On the ways forward of the ARF, as the Hanoi Plan of Action II (2021-2025) approaches its expiration and momentum for a new action plan builds, it is crucial to set strategic yet achievable goals for the next plan. Japan will constructively

contribute to the formulation of the new plan that is conducive to the enhanced ARF.

MALAYSIA

1) OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The Asia-Pacific region continues to face an increasingly complex and multifaceted security environment characterized by evolving traditional and non-traditional security challenges. Although Malaysia is not currently beset by military threats or conflicts, the nation faces the need to manage the growing nexus and fluidity of traditional and non-traditional security threats. This requires comprehensive national security responses, enhanced inter-agency coordination at both national and regional levels, and strengthened multilateral cooperation frameworks.

Traditional Security Challenges

Geopolitical tensions and strategic competition among major powers continue to affect regional stability, requiring careful diplomatic navigation and sustained dialogue mechanisms. Meanwhile, territorial and maritime disputes in various regional domains necessitate multilateral dialogue, adherence to international law and peaceful resolution through established diplomatic channels. In addition, military modernization programs across the region require enhanced transparency measures, confidence-building initiatives and coordinated approaches to maintain regional stability.

Non-Traditional Security Threats

On transnational crime networks, sophisticated drug trafficking networks involving methamphetamine production and distribution pose significant threats to national security, with Malaysia serving as both transit and destination point, while cross-border human trafficking operations exploit regional connectivity, requiring enhanced cooperation through ASEAN mechanisms. Financial crimes including money laundering and cyberfraud operations undermine financial security and state authority, alongside increasingly sophisticated organized crime syndicates utilizing advanced technology and digital platforms.

On terrorism and violent extremism, persistent challenges from domestic radical extremist groups require continuous vigilance and adaptive counter-terrorism strategies, while cross-border terrorist networks necessitate enhanced intelligence sharing and coordinated response mechanisms. Ideological threats involving radicalization and violent extremism require comprehensive prevention and deradicalization programs, alongside the growing challenge of cyber-enabled terrorism where digital platforms are being exploited for terrorist recruitment and operations.

Cyberattacks targeting national critical information infrastructure pose significant national security risks, while sophisticated cyber threats from state and non-state

actors require enhanced defensive capabilities. Malaysia has put in place a comprehensive cybersecurity frameworks, regulatory measures and public-private partnerships to counter data breaches and ransomware threats. Transnational cybercriminal organizations targeting Malaysia's digital infrastructure and citizens present ongoing challenges, alongside emerging threats posed by artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and other emerging technologies.

Climate change impacts and environmental degradation pose emerging national security challenges that require integration into comprehensive security planning, while increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters require enhanced preparedness and response capabilities, alongside addressing water, food, and energy security challenges affecting national stability.

Public health emergencies and pandemic threats require coordinated national security responses and crisis management capabilities, while biosecurity threats necessitate enhanced detection and response mechanisms, alongside addressing critical supply chain vulnerabilities.

All these regional security challenges are inherently interconnected and require comprehensive, coordinated national responses. Malaysia's approach emphasizes the critical importance of the ASEAN-centered regional security architecture, including the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), and other multilateral frameworks in fostering dialogue, building confidence, and promoting cooperative security solutions that support national and regional security objectives.

2) NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Overview of National Security and Defence Policy

Malaysia's national security approach is guided by the National Security Policy (NSP) 2017 and 2021-2025, which serves as the overarching policy framework for comprehensive national security. The NSP aims to maintain, safeguard, and defend National Core Values through coordinated whole-of-government approaches and integrated security strategies.

i. Core National Security Principles

- (a) **Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity:** maintaining Malaysia's sovereignty and territorial integrity against all forms of threats, both traditional and non-traditional, while safeguarding national borders and maritime boundaries through enhanced security capabilities.
- (b) **Multi-Dimensional Security:** addressing both traditional and non-traditional security challenges through integrated, comprehensive

approaches and coordinating security responses across multiple domains: land, sea, air, space and cyberspace.

- (c) Preventive Security: emphasizing prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery mechanisms through proactive threat assessment and early warning systems, while building resilient national security infrastructure.
- (d) Regional Cooperation: maintaining active participation in regional and international security cooperation frameworks, strengthening bilateral and multilateral security partnerships, and contributing to global security initiatives and peacekeeping efforts.

ii. National Security Approach

- (a) Comprehensive Security Framework: adoption of whole-of-government approaches to address diverse security challenges through integration of various security agencies and departments under coordinated frameworks, including implementation of the National Security Council Act 2016 for enhanced coordination. Malaysia emphasizes economic resilience to address demographic transition challenges through sustainable development policies and economic diversification strategies.
- (b) Integrated Response Mechanisms: coordination among various agencies and departments for effective security management through establishment of specialized committees and crisis management teams, while enhancing inter-agency information sharing and intelligence coordination. Enhanced border security measures with significant resource allocation for regional border areas, complemented by integrated security-development approaches.
- (c) Strategic Planning: long-term security planning aligned with national development objectives through regular threat assessments and security environment analyses, implementing adaptive policy frameworks responsive to evolving challenges. Strengthening legal frameworks to address emerging security threats including espionage and foreign interference through comprehensive national security legislation.
- (d) Institutional Strengthening: continuous capacity building and training programs for security personnel, modernization of security infrastructure and capabilities and development of specialized counter-terrorism and cybersecurity units.

3) NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL SECURITY

Counter-terrorism

Malaysia continues to contribute significantly to regional security through a comprehensive, people-centric approach to counter-terrorism. The launch of the Malaysia Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (MyPCVE) initiative on 30 September 2024 marked a key milestone in national efforts to prevent radicalisation, counter extremist narratives, and foster community and youth engagement. This initiative is supported by programmes such as the LEARN Project, which enhances local resilience and awareness.

Malaysia actively engages in intelligence sharing and operational coordination through various regional and international platforms, including the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism Information Centre (ACTIC), CT Trilateral, INDOMALPHI INTELEX, Counter-Terrorism Working Group (CTWG), Counter-Terrorism Legal Framework (CTLF), and INTERPOL. To further bolster border management and prevent cross-border threats, Malaysia established the Malaysia Border Control and Protection Agency (AKPS) in January 2025. AKPS currently covers 22 major entry points and is expected to achieve full nationwide coverage by September 2025. The agency collaborates closely with domestic enforcement bodies and leverages both national and international databases to enhance border screening and threat interdiction.

Malaysia also continues to strengthen bilateral counter-terrorism cooperation, such as through the UK–Malaysia Border Security Exchange, which facilitates knowledge sharing on risk assessment and border enforcement strategies. In combating terrorist financing, Malaysia enforces the Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act (AMLATFPUAA), works closely with Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM), and regularly engages with non-profit organisations (NPOs) to ensure funds are not misused for terrorist purposes. These efforts are consistent with the ARF principles on counter-terrorism and contribute to broader regional security objectives.

Promoting a People-Centred Approach to Counter-Terrorism

The Department of National Unity and National Integration (JPNIN), under the Ministry of National Unity, Malaysia, has launched comprehensive initiatives supporting ASEAN's strategic commitment to counter-terrorism and violent extremism. These efforts are people-centred, aligning with the ARF principles of preventive diplomacy, inclusive engagement, and community-based resilience. JPNIN prioritizes community-led counter-terrorism strategies, activating grassroots mechanisms, civic education, and interfaith dialogue to address extremism's root causes and strengthen social cohesion.

One of the key mechanisms is the mobilisation of the *Rukun Tetangga* (KRT) communities. With over 8,000 KRT units nationwide, KRTs serve as grassroots structures that foster harmony and act as early warning systems for potential social conflict. These community groups actively involved in building inter-ethnic and interfaith trust, thereby preventing isolation and marginalisation that may lead to radicalisation. Through social activities such as communal feasts, traditional games, mutual assistance campaigns (*gotong-royong*), voluntary neighbourhood patrols and inclusive community dialogues, KRT units create environments that facilitate cross-identity interaction and reduce the risk of extremist influence.

To further build community resilience, JPNIN, through the National Institute for Integration Research and Training (IKLIN), has collaborated with the Special Branch of the Royal Malaysia Police to conduct targeted training programmes. One such initiative, the Progressive RT Issue Detection Course, equips KRT leaders, members of the Voluntary Patrol Scheme and community mediators with the skills to identify early indicators of radicalisation and deliver effective counter-narratives. This approach ensures communities are the proactive first line of defence against violent extremism.

In education, JPNIN has institutionalised civic and patriotic education through the establishment of *Kelab Rukun Negara* (KRK) in primary and secondary schools. These clubs provide value-based learning that fosters a sense of national belonging, mutual respect and resistance to extremist ideologies. At the tertiary level, the Rukun Negara Secretariat (SRN) in universities serves as a platform to instil civic values and promote early prevention of radical thought.

A notable initiative under JPNIN is the *Jejak Harmoni* (Harmony Trail) programme, which promotes interfaith and intercultural understanding through experiential learning. This programme allows participants from diverse backgrounds to visit religious sites, cultural institutions and historical landmarks that embody Malaysia's heritage and diversity. It aims to increase public awareness of the customs, values, and religious practices of other communities, thereby breaking down stereotypes and fostering empathy.

JPNIN also implements the National Unity and Security Townhall series which functions as a platform for direct engagement between the government and citizens. These interactive townhall sessions enable dialogue on key issues related to community safety and national unity. Unlike traditional forums, these sessions allow community leaders, civil society representatives, youth, public servants and enforcement agencies to share field experiences, raise concerns and propose actionable solutions.

Promotion of Inter-Civilisation Dialogue

Beyond security measures, JPNIN also plays an instrumental role in facilitating interfaith and intercultural dialogue, recognising that peaceful coexistence is fundamental to national and regional stability.

One of the cornerstone initiatives is the celebration of World Interfaith Harmony Week, observed annually in the second week of February, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/65/5. This global event is adapted locally to encourage mutual understanding, respect and constructive dialogue among Malaysia's religious communities.

Another significant platform is the Dialog Harmoni (Harmony Dialogue) programme, which offers a safe and inclusive space for open conversations on social, religious and cultural issues. This initiative promotes empathy and bridges misunderstandings among diverse communities by highlighting shared universal values such as compassion, respect and social responsibility.

In response to the growing influence of digital media, JPNIN also launched the *Bicara Harmoni* podcast, a digital audio platform that facilitates inclusive and accessible discussions on national unity and social harmony. Designed particularly for younger audiences, the podcast provides an informal yet informative channel for addressing issues related to interethnic relations, religious diversity and civic values.

The initiatives implemented by JPNIN represent a holistic, non-military and community-rooted approach to preventing violent extremism and enhancing national resilience. These efforts significantly reduce distrust between different ethnic and religious communities, strengthen social resilience against radical ideologies and promote inclusive counter-narratives that reject hatred and discrimination. At the same time, these programmes reinforce an inclusive and balanced national identity based on shared values and mutual respect.

This approach is fully aligned with the spirit and objectives of the ARF, particularly its emphasis on early prevention and whole-of-society participation. By integrating education, community engagement, interfaith dialogue and digital outreach, Malaysia continues to champion a comprehensive model of social harmony and security that can serve as a regional and global reference.

Measures Against Terrorist Financing

As the competent authority, the Central Bank of Malaysia or *Bank Negara Malaysia* (BNM), administers the Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act 2001 (AMLA 2001). This includes BNM's role as the country's financial intelligence unit (FIU) and the anti-money

laundering, countering financing of terrorism and countering proliferation financing (AML/CFT/CPF) regulatory and supervisory authority for reporting institutions¹. BNM collaborates with various stakeholders to ensure a holistic and robust AML/CFT/CPF framework is in place and aligned with international standards and best practices.

Malaysia implements its national AML/CFT/CPF strategy through the National Coordination Committee to Combat Money Laundering (NCC), a national inter-agency platform responsible for coordinating, implementing and monitoring Malaysia's AML/CFT/CPF initiatives, particularly based on key ML/TF/PF risks identified under the national and thematic risk assessments. In 2024, Malaysia endorsed and implemented the new NCC Roadmap 2024- 2026, which sets out action plans and clear milestones for prioritisation and effective monitoring of AML/CFT/CPF efforts.

Key initiatives undertaken to reinforce the national AML/ CFT/CPF framework and safeguard the integrity of the financial system include:

- (a) Malaysia completed the latest National Risk Assessment 2023 and 5 thematic risk assessments such as Proliferation Financing Risk Assessment 2024, Non-Profit Organisation Risk Assessment 2024, Legal Persons Risk Assessment 2024, Legal Arrangement Risk Assessment 2024, and Virtual Asset Risk Assessment 2024, which collectively provide a holistic understanding of Malaysia's ML/TF/PF risk landscape. These risk assessments have further deepened Malaysia's understanding of risks within our landscape, as well as cross-border.
- (b) BNM continues to collaborate closely with Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) and financial institutions by sharing relevant information on ML/TF/PF via Malaysia's public- private partnership (PPP), known as MyFINet or Malaysia Financial Intelligence Network. The PPP enables sharing of tactical intelligence on TF cases, issues and trends between LEAs and private sectors.
- (c) The annual International Conference on Financial Crime and Terrorism Financing (IFCTF) 2024, organised jointly with the Asian Institute of Chartered Bankers (AICB) and Compliance Officers' Networking Group (CONG), which had provided insights into the latest AML/CFT/CPF trends, as well as the national, thematic and institutional risk assessments. Sessions catering especially to TF risks was also held with leading global experts sharing their thoughts.

¹ Reporting institutions are defined in the First Schedule of AMLA 2001. It includes financial institutions, non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs), and designated non-financial businesses and professions (DNFBPs)

- (d) Hosting of the AML/CFT/CPF Supervisory College for the banking sector, attended by regional authorities like the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, Otorita Jasa Keuangan Indonesia, and the Monetary Authority of Singapore. The event strengthened cross-jurisdictional cooperation to protect financial system integrity and combat global financial crimes, and covered amongst others, a deeper understanding of TF and typologies.
- (e) Amendment to the AMLA to clarify and enhance investigation and prosecution procedures, and the supervision and regulation of reporting institutions. These amendments address recommendations from the NCC's gap analysis and issues highlighted in Malaysia's 2015 Mutual Evaluation report, as well as align with the latest Financial Action Task Force (FATF) standards and methodologies updated between 2020 and 2024. The amendments also clarify specific powers of the competent authority, regulatory, and supervisory authorities in ensuring compliance with Targeted Financial Sanctions – Terrorism Financing (TFS-TF) obligations under the AMLA.
- (f) Conducting risk-based oversight of over 20,000 reporting institutions using various supervisory tools, including supervisory technology (SupTech). BNM focused their onsite supervisory reviews on DNFBPs in higher-risk sectors, resulting in 181 on-site supervisory engagements conducted in 2024. Further, the Data and Compliance Report 2024, i.e. BNM's off-site assessment, was expanded to cover 12,000 reporting institutions.

Sharing of Financial Intelligence

There has been a notable improvement in detection mechanism by reporting institutions reflected by an increasing trend in submission of STRs. To further assist the reporting institutions, Malaysia's FIU has also published a Suspicious Transaction Reporting Handbook to provide practical guidance to RIs to submit quality STRs.

Upon analysing the STRs submitted, Malaysia's FIU shared financial intelligence with domestic LEAs and more than 30 foreign FIUs in 2024 supporting cross-border financial investigations, whereby approximately 16% of the disclosures are pertaining to national security which covers terrorism/TF and PF. These efforts supported monitoring and investigation of cases related to national security.

Global and Regional Collaboration

Malaysia also continues to uphold regional cooperation to fight against ML/TF/PF through participation in the regional and global platforms, as well as bilateral engagements with our counterparts.

Notably, BNM remains an active participant and contributor to discussions and projects in regional and global platforms/forums such as the FATF, Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), Egmont Group of FIUs, and Financial Intelligence Consultative Group (FICG).

Malaysia has been fully onboarded as a member of FICG's Information Sharing Platform (ISP) and utilises the ISP for exchanging intelligence and financial information related to financial crimes and sanctions with other member countries. Additionally, BNM and APG co-hosted the 25th Typologies Workshop in 2024, focusing on abuse of legal persons and cyber-enabled fraud.

With respect to Malaysia's collaboration with ASEAN on ML/TF/PF matters, Malaysia is also involved in the ASEAN Senior Officers Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC), a platform for regional collaboration in combating cross-border criminal activities. In addition, within the SOMTC, Malaysia contributes as a Voluntary Lead Shepherd for ML, Sea Piracy and People Smuggling priority areas.

BNM has also established multiple Memorandum of Understandings with a majority of ASEAN members on the sharing of financial intelligence related to money laundering, related predicate offences and financing of terrorism.

Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

Malaysia maintains a principled and consistent position in support of the general and complete disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, with nuclear disarmament as the highest priority. The meaningful progress in disarmament can only be achieved through a multilateral, rules-based process grounded in international law. The continued existence and modernisation of nuclear weapons not only heighten international tensions but increase the risk of proliferation, including to non-State actors.

Disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy must be advanced in a balanced and comprehensive manner, in accordance with the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). To this end, transparency and confidence-building – through adherence to full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards – remain essential in harnessing the benefits of peaceful nuclear technology.

At the recently concluded 2025 Third NPT PrepCom (28 April–10 May 2025), Malaysia reiterated its deep concern over the lack of substantive progress in fulfilling the disarmament obligations under Article VI of the NPT. Malaysia supported proposals for strengthening the review process, including a structured and inclusive dialogue on national reporting by NWS, and reaffirmed its position that doctrines such as nuclear sharing and extended deterrence are incompatible with the Treaty's spirit. Malaysia also expressed grave concern over the DPRK's

continued missile activities and underscored the importance of full compliance with all relevant UNSC resolutions.

Malaysia reaffirmed that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) complements and reinforces the NPT, particularly its disarmament pillar. As an early signatory and consistent supporter of the TPNW, Malaysia continues to advocate for its universalisation and implementation. Malaysia also engaged in TPNW intersessional discussions on verification (Article 4), co-chairing informal consultations with the Philippines, in preparation for the First TPNW Review Conference in November 2026.

In fulfilling the obligations stipulated under 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.

The Strategic Trade Act Review 2025 (STAR 2025), launched in 2023, is a comprehensive review of STA 2010, aimed at strengthening enforcement, streamlining regulatory processes, and aligning Malaysia's export control framework with international best practices. Once implemented, the initiative will benefit both industry and regulators by facilitating legitimate trade, enhancing compliance, and reinforcing Malaysia's position as a trusted and responsible global trade partner.

The Malaysia Strategic Trade Control Community (MYSTCC) is an initiative established by the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI) to serve as a platform for industry players, researchers, and organisations involved in strategic items, offering advisory support on strategic trade management. Spearheaded by leading companies with strong Internal Compliance Programs (ICP), this public-private collaboration brings together experts to exchange views and advance best practices in the implementation of STA 2010, as well as providing valuable input to the Government to strengthen compliance with the Act.

Malaysia remains supportive of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and has played a constructive role during the negotiations leading up to the conclusion of the Treaty. Malaysia believes that ATT will strengthen the existing national policies on conventional weapons, while at the same time recognising the legitimate right of States to use arms judiciously for security, self-defence, research and trade.

Malaysia continues to fully adhere to its obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The Ministry of Defence serves as the Lead Agency for the implementation of the Convention in Malaysia, with the Science and Technology Research Institute for Defence (STRIDE) acting as its technical agency. Malaysia

recognises the importance of 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 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention of Malaysia (NACWC), officially established in September 2006 as part of the implementation of the 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 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.

In the regional context, Malaysia continues to advocate for the early signing and ratification of the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) by the NWS. Malaysia underlines its importance as a disarmament and non-proliferation instrument in the ASEAN region. Malaysia remains committed to engaging all NWS, including those with reservations, and will intensify efforts from all parties to resolve outstanding issues in accordance with the SEANWFZ Treaty's objectives and principles.

Moving forward, Malaysia will keep working closely with ASEAN Member States to strengthen regional contributions to global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Malaysia reaffirms its support for the SEANWFZ Treaty's integrity and objectives, and encourages continued engagement with NWS towards the signing and ratification of its Protocol, with the understanding that their reservations do not go against the purpose and objectives of the Treaty.

Supporting National Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540

Atomic Energy Licensing Act 1984, passed on 1 February 1984, is an Act to provide for regulation and control of atomic energy, for the establishment of standards on liability for nuclear damage and for matters connected therewith or related thereto. Department of Atomic Energy Malaysia (Atom Malaysia) acts as an

enforcement body for Act 304 includes regulations and other subsidiary legislation made under this Act.

Atom Malaysia, is in the midst to enact an Atomic Energy Bill, by amending existing Act 304 to strengthen the legal and regulatory provision of safety, security and supervise the usage of atomic energy implicitly and comprehensively, in line with the dynamic changes of internationally accepted and recognized practices.

The enactment of this Bill will ensure adequate protection to workers, the public, and the environment from the harmful effects of ionizing radiation, emphasizing controls on nuclear security and safeguarding nuclear material and related technologies, demonstrate the Government's commitment and transparency in ensuring implementation of relevant international obligations within the country. The Bill is currently in the review of the Attorney General's Department.

Export Control

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, technologies and related material, and other activities that will or may facilitate the design, development and production of WMDs and their delivery systems.

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, while ensuring its compliance with the relevant UNSCR without discouraging trade activities. The STA (Amendment) 2017 came into force on 8 September 2017.

Under STA 2010 and its Amendment, a Strategic Controller in The Strategic Trade Secretariat is appointed to serve as the focal point for the administration of STA 2010. Apart from the Controller, relevant agencies are appointed as an "appropriate authority", inter alia the Malaysia Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), Department of Atomic Energy (Atom Malaysia), and Pharmaceutical Services Division, Ministry of Health, who are responsible to issue permits for specific activities mandated by STA 2010.

Non-Proliferation

Malaysia recognizes the role of the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Malaysia holds the view that nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear

technology must be addressed comprehensively in all their aspects in a balanced manner, in line with the three pillars of the NPT. Malaysia is Party to a number of international treaties on disarmament and non-proliferation of WMDs, including the:

- (a) 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 on 15 July 1964.
- (b) Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (1968 NPT) on 1 July 1968 and ratified on 5 March 1970.
- (c) 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.
- (d) Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof (1971 Seabed Treaty) on 20 May 1970 and ratified on 21 June 1972.
- (e) 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.
- (f) Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident on 1 September 1987.
- (g) Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency on 1 September 1987.
- (h) Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) on 15 December 1995 and ratified on 11 October 1996.
- (i) Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (1998 CTBT) on 23 July 1998 and ratified on 17 January 2008.
- (j) Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (2017 RCA) on 19 June 2017.

Malaysia is committed to realizing the long-overdue goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Malaysia reaffirms the centrality of the IAEA in this regard, and recognises the Agency's invaluable contribution in establishing and promulgating effective safeguards and verification mechanisms for peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Under the Safeguards Agreement, Malaysia has accepted IAEA Safeguards Inspectors for the annual Physical Inventory Verification (PIV). Atom Malaysia, as a State Regulatory Authority, is responsible for national safeguards implementation and maintaining the State System of Accounting for and Control (SSAC) by ensuring the correctness and completeness of the declared nuclear materials.

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)

Malaysia ratified the TPNW in 2020, becoming the 46th State Party. As a State Party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) starting on 30 September 2020, ratifying the TPNW is Malaysia's tangible effort to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament on the international stage. The entry into force of the TPNW complements international law regarding nuclear disarmament, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Malaysia hopes that ratifying the TPNW will change the nuclear disarmament discourse from one dominated by nuclear weapons and nuclear-armed States to one more democratic, equitable, and where all States have an equal voice. Malaysia strongly reaffirms the paramount importance of the Treaty as the disarmament and non-proliferation instrument in the ASEAN region. Malaysia believes that the TPNW strengthens the global norms against nuclear weapons, and more importantly, for a safer and secure world.

Transnational Crime

Malaysia remains deeply committed to combatting transnational crime through enhanced regional and international cooperation. In 2025, Malaysia signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) on Cooperation in Preventing and Combating Transnational Crime with Singapore, China, and the United States of America, marking a significant step forward in strengthening cross-border law enforcement collaboration. The MOU with Singapore, signed on 14 November 2024, reinforces joint action against drug trafficking, cybercrime, and terrorism, while establishing a formal working committee for continuous policy coordination.

During the state visit of President Xi Jinping to Malaysia in April 2025, both countries formalised an MOU to enhance cooperation on combating organised crime, with particular focus on human trafficking and financial crimes. In addition, cooperation with the United States was reaffirmed during the 6th Malaysia-U.S. Senior Officials' Dialogue, covering areas such as trafficking in persons, cyber-enabled crime, and coordinated capacity building.

Regional collaboration to prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals into illicit drug production remains a key priority for Malaysia. Through active engagement in both bilateral and multilateral frameworks, Malaysia continues to strengthen information sharing, enforcement strategies, and border security in cooperation with ARF Participating Countries. Leveraging joint operations, intelligence exchanges, and capacity-building initiatives, Malaysia remains firmly committed to enhancing precursor control. At the same time, the country actively advocates for greater public-private partnerships and the use of advanced detection technologies to combat illicit drug manufacturing more effectively.

These efforts are supported by the operationalisation of AKPS, which plays a critical role in detecting, disrupting, and interdicting cross-border criminal activities. Through these strengthened frameworks, Malaysia continues to align its national strategies with ARF's vision of a safer, rules-based regional environment.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

The Southeast Asia region continues to experience a significant rise in disaster occurrences, driven by rapid urban development, population growth, and the escalating impacts of climate change. These factors have intensified the frequency and severity of natural hazards such as floods, typhoons, droughts, and landslides—placing immense pressure on national and regional capacities for disaster preparedness and response.

In response, ASEAN has made notable strides in disaster management and risk reduction, particularly following the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004. In 2005, ASEAN Member States adopted the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), which serves as the region's legally binding framework for disaster cooperation, defining the roles and responsibilities of Member States in managing and responding to disasters collectively.

This commitment was further strengthened in 2015 with the endorsement of the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management, which charts a strategic path toward a disaster-resilient region. The following year, ASEAN adopted the Declaration on “One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region”, affirming a unified approach to disaster response that emphasizes speed, scale, and solidarity.

To sustain this momentum, ASEAN developed three successive AADMER Work Programmes—for 2010–2015, 2016–2020, and the current 2021–2025 Work Programme. The ongoing programme builds upon the foundations laid by its predecessors and remains anchored in AADMER's vision of “a region of disaster-resilient nations, mutually assisting and complementing one another, sharing a common bond in minimizing adverse effects of disasters in pursuit of safer communities and sustainable development.”

Looking ahead, the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) is in the process of developing the AADMER Work Programme 2026–2030, which will guide regional disaster cooperation into the next phase. These Work Programmes have galvanized ASEAN into concrete and coordinated action, achieved through close collaboration with National Disaster Management Organisations (NDMOs), relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies and mechanisms, ASEAN Centres, and external partners—moving the region closer to a safer and more resilient ASEAN Community.

Given the increasingly complex and evolving risk landscape, anticipatory action has become a critical element in risk management. Reflecting this shift, the ASEAN Framework on Anticipatory Action in Disaster Management represents a proactive approach to reduce disaster impacts—by acting ahead of crises rather than merely responding after they occur. This forward-looking approach is in line with the principles of *One ASEAN, One Response*, particularly in ensuring speed, scale, and solidarity in disaster management.

Since the ratification of AADMER, Malaysia has remained an active and committed partner in advancing the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management and the One ASEAN, One Response declaration. Malaysia also continues to support the operational engine of AADMER – the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) – as a central hub for disaster monitoring, preparedness, response, and capacity building in the region.

Some actions and measures taken by Malaysia at the national and regional level in fulfilment of its regional commitments are:

- National Level

In Malaysia, the management of disasters is now guided by the National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA) Directive No. 1 – Policy and Mechanism on National Disaster Management. This Directive replaces the former National Security Council Directive No. 20 and sets forth a comprehensive, integrated emergency management system that reflects the current policy changes, as well as patterns and complexities of disaster occurrences at present. NADMA Directive No. 1 details out the responsibilities and coordination mechanisms among various agencies through the Disaster Management Committees at Federal, State, and District levels, depending on the severity and complexity of a disaster occurrence.

Malaysia has also launched the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2030 (National DRR Policy 2030), which serves as a strategic and cross-sectoral framework to guide disaster risk reduction efforts across all levels. This policy aims to institutionalise risk-informed development planning, improve governance, and enhance resilience nationwide. The development of the National DRR Policy 2030 aligns Malaysia's national effort with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the AADMER, Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the Paris Agreement.

In addition, The Federal Disaster Management Committee endorsed the 8 Strategic Steps to further improve disaster management and risk reduction at all levels, emphasizing anticipatory and risk-based approaches, budget allocation for DRR, and capacity development for information systems and early warning.

Furthermore, Malaysia's commitment to climate resilience and DRR is also reflected in the 12th Malaysia Plan (2021-2025). Building upon initiatives from the previous Malaysia Plans, the 12th Malaysia Plan emphasizes:

- (a) Climate-resilient infrastructure and development planning;
- (b) Evident-based and risk-informed actions;
- (c) Integrated climate adaptation and DRR approaches;
- (d) Strengthened early warning systems; and
- (e) Enhanced disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

Notable anticipatory action efforts include the National Flood Forecasting and Warning Programme (PRAB) for 41 major river basins in Malaysia. Through the flood prediction model, early warning is able to be issued as early as 48 hours ahead of potential floods. NADMA has partnered with major Malaysian telecommunication providers to disseminate SMS alerts to at-risk communities.

As part of the Government's effort to recognise and formalise the expertise of qualified officers as Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), disaster management has been identified by the Honourable Prime Minister of Malaysia as one of seven new priority areas under the SME development initiative. Selected officers will be nominated to attend disaster management-related courses at reputable institutions worldwide to strengthen national capacity and preparedness.

Aside from this, the Government also proactively encourage the participation of communities in disaster prone areas. The Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) is designed to encourage participation from the community including vulnerable groups to identify, analyse, treat, monitor, and evaluate potential risks within their locality, thereby empowering them into implementation of solutions that they themselves develop.

NADMA has also established the National Risk Register (NRR) aimed to support decision making process and allocation of resources for disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. The NRR will ultimately promote a culture of safety and strengthening disaster resilience.

- Bilateral and Regional Level

Malaysia's Special Malaysia Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team (SMART) stands ready to be deployed for international HADR Missions. Formed on 1 August 1995, the team consists of members from the Malaysian Armed Forces, Royal Malaysia Police and the Fire and Rescue Department who are recruited via a rigorous selection process. Being an elite search and rescue team, SMART has enhanced the image of Malaysia through its various deployments abroad to assist in major disasters. SMART has gained the INSARAG External Classification (IEC) in 2016,

being only the second team to be accredited under the Heavy Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) category in ASEAN.

For regional preparedness, Malaysia is home to the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) as well as the ASEAN Disaster Emergency Logistics System (DELSA). Following a number of natural disaster occurrences in Southeast Asia, the World Food Programme (WFP) was looking into strengthening its facility by establishing the UNHRD in this region. During the Indian Ocean Tsunami in December 2004, the humanitarian community utilized Subang Airbase in Malaysia as a temporary logistics hub, further highlighting the need for a regional logistics facility.

On 25 February 2010, the Government of Malaysia and the WFP signed a Basic Agreement to host the UNHRD in Subang Airbase. The Government of Malaysia has committed to financially support the UNHRD network with \$1 million USD per annum starting from the year 2010. The Government also committed to provide a total of at least 12,000 sq metres of total surface area for the premises which include a covered storage, space of a minimum 5,000 sq metres and another 500 sq metres for office and training facilities based in Subang Airbase. The construction of the warehouse with the cost of RM17 million was also borne by the Government. While regionally focused, the UNHRD facility in Malaysia has a global scope and augments the international humanitarian community's ability to respond to emergencies worldwide more quickly and effectively.

At the ARF level, Malaysia co-organized together with China the ASEAN Regional Forum Disaster Relief Exercise (ARF DiREx) in 2015, which is a biennial event to test civil-military effectiveness and efficiency in its response to large-scale disasters. It also allows testing of existing mechanisms in ASEAN and identifies issues related to civil-military coordination in the delivery of humanitarian aid at the strategic and operational level through Tabletop Exercises (TTX), and tactical level through Field Training Exercises (FTX).

The ARF DiREx 2015 was participated by more than 25 ARF Member States in addition to international humanitarian organizations such as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (ICRC) as well as representatives from the NGO sector.

Aside from its commitments at the regional level, Malaysia also actively engages in bilateral cooperation through the establishment of MoUs with neighbouring countries in disaster management and emergency response, particularly those that share land borders with Malaysia. Among the activities conducted are cross-border training exercises, exchange of information, and capacity building.

Moving forward, Malaysia will continue to commit to collaborate with ASEAN Member States towards the implementation of the AADMER Work Programme in order to strengthen disaster management and emergency response, enhance resilience and mitigate the impacts of disasters in the region. This includes ongoing efforts in the implementation of the Work Programme whilst exploring opportunities for further cooperation and innovation in disaster management and risk reduction.

Maritime Security

Malaysia is geographically located at one of the most strategic and very important international shipping routes, namely the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea. The country's maritime boundaries encompass a significant portion of the sea, making it a crucial player in regional and global maritime affairs. Hence maritime security in Malaysia is a crucial aspect of the country's overall security framework due to its extensive coastline and strategic location.

Malaysia is deeply committed to working closely with neighbouring nations and participating in international discussions to improve maritime security in the region. At its core, Malaysia is deeply committed to making its seas safer, not just for itself but also for all maritime communities from various nations in the region and the world. This is mainly achieved through active participation and international forums and also undertaking numerous unilateral, bilateral and multilateral operations in exercising effective enforcement and maritime presence within and beyond the Malaysian Maritime Zone (MMZ).

In adherence to the ARF Statement on Cooperation Against Piracy and Other Threats to Maritime Security, Malaysia, through the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN), has undertaken a multifaceted approach to combat maritime threats effectively. In principle, Malaysia recognises the importance of regional and international cooperation in ensuring maritime security and upholding the principles of international law, particularly within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). In alignment with its commitment to combating piracy and other maritime threats, Malaysia has undertaken and will continue to implement various measures and actions in collaboration with regional and international partners.

Malaysia has bolstered its maritime security infrastructure by enhancing surveillance capabilities, investing in advanced technology and conducting regular patrols in its territorial waters and MMZ. Malaysia has intensified joint operations between the Malaysian Armed Forces and other maritime enforcement agencies to ensure a coordinated and seamless response to maritime threats.

Malaysia also seeks to intensify its commitment to regional and global efforts against piracy and other maritime security threats within the region. Malaysia has

enhanced maritime patrolling within the important Sea Line of Communication (SLOC) through bilateral and multilateral initiatives such as the Malacca Straits Patrol (MSP) and the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangements (TCA).

Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand have been working closely since 2004 under a cooperative arrangement named Malacca Straits Patrol (MSP). The MSP aims to ensure the security of maritime areas along the Straits of Malacca, one of the most important and busiest maritime routes in the world. With this arrangement in place, the security and safety of the maritime areas concerned are secured. This is another testament to Malaysia's commitment and determination in safeguarding international security and trade interests.

The Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA) between Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines is a collaborative effort signed in 2016 aimed at enhancing maritime security and addressing transnational crimes, particularly in the maritime areas bordering these countries. The TCA primarily focuses on the Sulu and Celebes Seas region, which has been known for piracy, armed robbery against ships, maritime terrorism, and other illicit activities.

The TCA provides a framework for regular dialogue, cooperation, and coordination among the participating countries to address common maritime security concerns as well as promote regional stability and safety.

Participating countries share maritime information and intelligence to improve situational awareness and facilitate more effective responses to security incidents. This includes sharing data on vessel movements, suspicious activities, and exchange intelligence on criminal networks operating in the region. The TCA involves sea and air coordinated patrols conducted by naval and coast guard vessels from Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. These joint patrols aim to enhance surveillance, deterrence, and response capabilities against security threats in the designated maritime areas.

A MoU between Malaysia dan Republic of Indonesia signed in 2012 in Respect of the Common Treatment of Fisherman by Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies of Malaysia dan Republic of Indonesia (MoU Common Guidelines). The objective of the MoU Common Guidelines is to establish guidance for agreed activities in dealing with fisheries issues between Indonesia and Malaysia with particular emphasis on ensuring the wellbeing of fishermen from both countries.

In line with the MoU Common Guidelines, Indonesia and Malaysia, inter alia, have agreed that upon encroachment cases by fishermen in unresolved maritime boundary area, the authorities of the two countries would inspect and request the fishermen to leave the area, except for those using illegal fishing gears such as explosives. Indonesia and Malaysia have established the Review Meeting on the Implementation of the MoU Common Guidelines (Review Meeting) to monitor,

evaluate and review the implementation of the MoU Common Guidelines. The Review Meeting is to ensure that the MoU Common Guidelines is honoured and respected by all maritime law enforcement agencies of Malaysia and Indonesia. To date, Malaysia and Indonesia and the Philippines had convened 10 series of Review Meetings.

Malaysia and Indonesia have signed numerous bilateral agreements covering a wide range of areas, including trade and investment, defence and security, education, tourism, and agriculture. These agreements provide frameworks for cooperation and establish guidelines for collaboration in specific sectors. Both countries engage in security and defence cooperation to address common challenges such as terrorism, piracy, and transnational crime.

Guidelines for such cooperation include joint patrols, intelligence sharing, and joint exercises aimed at enhancing maritime security and combating cross-border threats. Guidelines for resolving disputes or managing disagreements between Malaysia and Indonesia may include diplomatic channels, bilateral consultations, and adherence to international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Hence bilateral meeting between Malaysia and Republic of Indonesia have been held annually to view, report and share finding between two countries to ensure fishermen of both countries are treated as stipulated in the common guidelines.

Malaysia values dialogues with countries that share its common interest in promoting maritime stability and security. Bilateral platforms that serve as channels of communication at various tracks of diplomacy have been established between Malaysia and other countries. The objective is to promote cooperation in maritime-related matters that are crucial in maintaining maritime safety and security. The mechanisms are designed to align with Malaysia's neutrality and impartiality on regional issues to ensure that Malaysia is not embroiled in major power rivalry.

Malaysia upholds ASEAN Centrality as the foundation and mainstay in regional issues and maritime dialogues. Malaysia participates in relevant ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ASEAN Maritime Forum, the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum, the East Asia Summit, the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security. Malaysia's participation in these mechanisms not only enables Malaysia to voice its perspectives, but also allows Malaysia to understand the concerns of other nations. This is vital in building confidence and strengthening collective efforts in maintaining regional and international maritime security.

4) ROLE OF THE ARF

The ARF continues to serve as a cornerstone of the regional security architecture. It offers a unique and inclusive platform for open dialogue and consultations, trust-

building, and cooperation among its 27 participating countries. As Malaysia assumes the Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2025 and prepares to commemorate the 32nd ARF Ministerial Meeting, the nation remains confident in the ARF's ongoing relevance in navigating an increasingly complex and dynamic geopolitical landscape.

Since its establishment in 1994, the ARF has fostered meaningful engagement on political and security issues, notably through Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) and Preventive Diplomacy (PD). These efforts have laid crucial groundwork for mutual understanding, transparency, and regional stability. However, the evolving nature of regional and global threats, including great power competition, maritime disputes, cyber vulnerabilities, climate change, and public health emergencies, demands a more agile and forward-looking response.

Looking ahead, Malaysia strongly advocates for a new, future-proof Plan of Action to succeed the ARF Ha Noi Plan of Action, which concludes in 2025. This updated blueprint must be guided by a thorough assessment of the current and anticipated security environment, taking into account the diverse security needs of member states while upholding the principles of ASEAN Centrality and unity.

Malaysia also recognises the critical role of non-state actors in complementing state-led initiatives. Engaging civil society, academia, and the private sector can enrich ARF discussions with fresh perspectives, technical expertise, and innovative policy ideas. Inclusivity and multi-stakeholder collaboration will enhance the legitimacy and sustainability of the ARF's initiatives.

Furthermore, it is crucial to deepen synergies between the ARF and other ASEAN-led mechanisms. Greater policy coherence and coordination across these platforms will enable more comprehensive and effective responses to cross-cutting security challenges.

Malaysia remains committed to ensuring that the ARF remains adaptive, responsive, and fit-for-purpose. The Forum must not only acknowledge its past achievements but also boldly shape its future. With continued dialogue, sustained engagement, and innovative thinking, the ARF can continue to be a leading platform for dialogue and security cooperation across the wider Asia-Pacific. In essence, Malaysia views the ARF as an indispensable and enduring forum that must evolve to maintain its effectiveness. Through proactive diplomacy, enhanced collaboration, and inclusive policymaking, the ARF can further solidify regional peace and security, fostering a resilient and rules-based international order.

MYANMAR

1) OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The Asia-Pacific region, housing over half of the world's population, holds strategic significance globally. It serves as a hub for international trade and boasts a large populace, influencing various sectors, notably security. Additionally, it's witnessing a surge in global interest and trends. Challenges to stability and security on a global scale significantly impact the Asia-Pacific's economic and security domains. Amidst such circumstances, ASEAN member nations, situated in this region, assume a pivotal role in ensuring stability and security.

ASEAN is a geographically important region as it connects the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. Nowadays, some countries perceive ASEAN as a crucial part of the Indo-Pacific region and are endeavouring to gain influence by the region. Hence, some countries have been persuading ASEAN countries in various means, focusing on their own interests and goals. As a consequence, it is likely to occur deviations from original ASEAN's goals and stance. Particularly, the formation of blocs in the Indo-Pacific brings different responses and disagreements among ASEAN members. Similarly, some external countries could initiate issues that can deviate from ASEAN consensus, provisions and or lead to disunity among member countries.

In the ASEAN region, efforts must be made to rid the dominance of some powerful countries and gradually to eliminate one-sided influence which may impact on the regional stability and peace. When the regional countries expand their relations with these powerful countries, it's crucial to remain unbounded and not to impinge on the amity of the ASEAN community. Similarly, when the unilateral activities of some powerful countries in the region might affect the safety and interests of the region, all ASEAN countries need to oppose unanimously. By doing so, the impacts on ASEAN centrality and ASEAN's decision could be mitigated, but the essence of the ASEAN's own stance would be highlighted.

When the ASEAN community faces unforeseen conflicts in the region, it is necessarily important to prioritize peaceful solutions over military ones. We must prioritize diplomatic solutions to address the disputes in the South China Sea and conflicts between neighbouring countries. Moreover, it is imperative to adopt an ASEAN-centered approach as the foremost strategy in managing regional tensions. In other words, all ASEAN countries must focus on preventing the occurrence of wars and conflicts in the region, which cause serious damage to the socio-economic development of the people. Only then the people of the ASEAN region will be able to fully enjoy amity, prosperity, and cultural exchange between countries. Therefore, any crisis or conflict that may arise in the ASEAN community must be resolved peacefully through amity.

The superpowers later sought to gain political and military influence by intensifying competition over economic projects in the Indo-Pacific region. It is essential to be aware of the potential for influencing in the region and intervention in the internal affairs of regional countries, under the pretext of human rights, democracy, and humanitarianism.

In addition, maritime operations are conducted in the region for the reason of becoming a free and open Indo-Pacific region. The ASEAN region has become a major hub for competition of power, which could have a significant impact on the unity and security of ASEAN countries. ASEAN member states should consider prioritizing on security, stability and interests of the ASEAN region in accord with ASEAN CHARTER, ASEAN VISION, CONSENSUS at a time of increasing competition from external powers in the ASEAN region. Interference of external powers can only be avoided, especially if there is a united stance on security in the ASEAN region.

There is a gradual increase in arms race in the East Asian region, particularly evident in the arms race, installation, and deployment of the state-of-the-art weapon systems. Similarly, within the ASEAN region, the procurement of modern weapons systems and technologies for national security and sovereignty is steadily rising, contributing to the overall increase in arms races in the region. Additionally, some countries in the region are prioritizing military means through cooperation with powerful countries. Consequently, countries focusing on weapon installation and military build-up must consider the potential consequences of military solutions.

As an ASEAN community, it is necessary for all ASEAN countries to make concerted efforts to reduce the influence of some powerful countries in the region as much as possible, prioritize peaceful solutions to any conflicts that may arise, maintain focus on ASEAN-centered decisions and agreements, and monitor and address the rise of regional arms races. Only then the ASEAN will be able to preserve and protect the prosperity, unity, and development of the people in the region. Myanmar will also make all efforts to strengthen the ASEAN community and enhance the safety and socio-economic of the people in the ASEAN Community.

2) NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE 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 the State Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (2008) has clearly promulgated that:

- (a) The Union of Myanmar shall not commence aggression against any nation.

- (b) 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 Defense Policies to safeguard the national interests of the Union as well as the citizens:

- (a) 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.
- (b) To formulate the National Defence with the People's War Strategy centered at Tatmadaw as pillar depending on the synergy of the entire people.
- (c) 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.
- (d) To employ a defense system that has oriented towards friendly relations with other nations in accord with the five principles of peaceful co-existence.
- (e) Not to permit forming military alliance with other nations and the deployment of any foreign troops in the territory of the Union.
- (f) To cooperate with international community in non-traditional security issues and anti-terrorist affairs and to render assistance when calamities occur in the Union.

Defense Budget (Military Expenditure)

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar allocated Defence Budget about MMK 6327.5 billion for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

3) NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL SECURITY

For the security of the region in multiple aspects, Myanmar is actively participating and contributing her efforts to the inter-regional organizations and institutions. Myanmar became a member of ASEAN in 1997 and in the same year it also joined the Bay of Bengal Initiative of Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation – BIMSTEC. In 2014, Myanmar successfully served its chairmanship of the ASEAN for the first time since her membership. As a member of the ASEAN, Myanmar has been participating the dialogues and workshops organized by the ASEAN Regional

Forum – ARF since the establishment of the institution in 1994 which hosts the countries inside and outside of the region.

Myanmar perceived that any act of terror is still remaining a big challenge for the security in the region especially within the ASEAN. Myanmar had decisively opposed the terrorist groups designated by some of ASEAN countries and will be continue to oppose. For anti-terrorism measure, Myanmar was a member of the team of formulating the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism-ACCT and also a signatory nation of the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Among Like-Minded ASEAN member countries. Myanmar co-chaired the ADMM Plus Expert Working Groups (EWGs) with Russia on Counter Terrorism for 2020-2023 period. Myanmar is very concerned about the potentiality of making the sovereign land of a country as a safe haven of any terrorist group, and always cooperating with the like-minded countries to make sure that no terrorist group can station in the region.

For eradication of narcotic drug production and trafficking, Myanmar has been attending the annual Meetings of ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matter – ASOD even before the member of the ASEAN as an observer, and has been implementing its resolutions after becoming a member of the regional organization. For narcotic drugs control, Myanmar signed a MOU with China, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia in 1993, and MOU for Centre of Information Sharing in Asia-Pacific with ASEAN member states and the Republic of Korea in 2014. Myanmar is closely cooperating with countries within the Greater Mekong Sub Region as well as with ASEAN member states in striving to combat narcotic drugs.

Additionally, there are joint endeavours with Yangon based US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) Thailand, and with National Narcotics Control Commission (NNCC) of China and we have set up Border Liaison Offices (BLOs) along Myanmar-China, Laos and Thailand borders. These serve as main centers for exchanging information relevant to combat narcotic drugs. Myanmar has also signed Bilateral Agreements with India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Russia, Lao PDR, China, and Thailand and with United States of America to jointly combat narcotic drugs. To enforce the anti-narcotic measure of the country, the Department of Narcotic Drugs Elimination was transformed into Myanmar Police Force Narcotic Drug Suppression Division in 2013.

With regard to regional cooperation, Myanmar Air Force and Thai Air Force held 2nd MAF-RTAF Air Command Center and Section Operation Center (ACC/SOC) Operational Meeting on 16 to 20 September 2024 at Yangon. Besides, Myanmar hosted 18th ASEAN Navy Chiefs Meeting (18th ANCM) on 9 to 12 October 2024, at Naypyidaw.

Regarding non-proliferation of nuclear weapon, Myanmar has signed the additional protocol of the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty –

SEANWFZ, and actively following the Action Plan to strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty on the SEANWFZ (2018-2022).

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. 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 ARF

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) plays a vital role in promoting stability and security in the region by providing an important forum to discuss current security issues and ways of cooperation. To address regional security challenges, ASEAN member states should continue to emphasize joint actions towards a more secure and stable region.

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. 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 change 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 COVID-19 Coronavirus.

The ASEAN Regional Forum with three-stage process of security cooperation, namely, confidence-building measures, preventive diplomacy, and conflict resolution was established for the purpose of consultation between countries. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) faces a dynamic set of challenges and prospects as it navigates the evolving geopolitical landscape of the Asia-Pacific region. The ARF

has traditionally focused on confidence building and conflict resolution, but to remain relevant, it must expand its scope to tackle contemporary security concerns effectively.

Looking ahead, the ARF has significant prospects for fostering regional stability and security. By promoting a three-stage process of security cooperation, the forum can develop a more predictable and constructive pattern of relationships within the Asia-Pacific region. Additionally, the ARF's unique position, with its broad membership encompassing major powers, provides a platform for dialogue and consultation that can help mitigate tensions and build trust among nations.

NEW ZEALAND

1) OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The Indo-Pacific region is central to New Zealand's security and economic well-being. The region faces a number of serious challenges. New Zealand meaningfully engages in the regional security architecture on the key strategic and security issues facing the region, and supports regional economic integration and resilience.

New Zealand values our **participation in ASEAN-led architecture**, including the East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) and ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus). These channels provide us with the means to coordinate our efforts with ASEAN and regional actors so that together, we may work collectively to secure a more stable, prosperous and resilient Indo-Pacific region. ASEAN centrality is a core tenet of New Zealand's approach to the Indo-Pacific region, in line with New Zealand's overarching objective of regional peace, prosperity and stability. Effective regional architecture plays an important role in shoring up such centrality.

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.

When it comes to new and emerging security threats, close regional cooperation is increasingly important as the nature of threats continues to evolve. New Zealand is working to ensure that our country and our region are equipped to deal with the emerging risks such as those posed by the increased use of technology, security impacts of climate change and actors seeking to challenge the existing regional and international rules and norms.

We must continue to **use the ARF for dialogue and cooperation** to build confidence and capacity, to manage differences, and to ensure there are no misunderstandings that might lead to conflict.

A key security issue occupying the ARF membership is the illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by its neighbour, an ARF member, Russia. The invasion continues to have serious implications for global peace, security and economic stability, including in our Indo-Pacific region. This has been highlighted by Russia's recent public confirmation that DPRK troops have been fighting Armed Forces of Ukraine troops in the Kursk region of Russia, in clear contravention of multiple UN Security Council resolutions. We call on President Putin's regime to act in a

manner consistent with all its international obligations and responsibilities and end this war immediately. New Zealand will continue to stand with Ukraine, and work to uphold the rules-based international system that is critical to ongoing peace and security in our region.

New Zealand remains deeply concerned by the situation in Gaza. The 7 October attacks were abhorrent, and we have condemned them unequivocally. But Israel's actions, including a return to major military action alongside the two-month blockade of humanitarian assistance, have also been unacceptable. We continue to call for an immediate ceasefire, the flow of humanitarian aid into and throughout Gaza, and all parties to abide by their obligations under international law. New Zealand will also continue to advocate for the parties to urgently work towards a two-state solution, where Israelis and Palestinians can live side-by-side in peace, security, and dignity.

Similarly, New Zealand strongly condemns the military coup in Myanmar. We continue to call for the immediate cessation of violence and a return to civilian rule. New Zealand supports ASEAN's efforts to fully implement the Five-Point Consensus.

We remain seriously concerned about developments in the South China Sea. We have consistently called on all claimant states to cease actions that escalate tensions and to settle disputes peacefully and in accordance with international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the constitution for the oceans. Prosperity and stability in the Indo-Pacific region 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 UNCLOS.

New Zealand has a strong interest in peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. We are concerned by increased tensions and encourage the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues, without the threat or use of force or coercion.

The volatility of the Korean Peninsula remains one of the greatest long-term threats to regional security. We are concerned at the intensity of DPRK's ballistic missile tests, in contravention of multiple UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions and are deeply troubled by reports that the DPRK may be preparing for a further nuclear test. It is critical that there is a strong, unified international response condemning the DPRK's actions if it conducts a nuclear test. New Zealand continues to engage actively in 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 UNSC Resolutions.

New Zealand remains committed to the work of the ARF in building cybersecurity resilience in and against the spread of misinformation and disinformation, and prioritising functional cooperation and preventive diplomacy in areas of counter-terrorism and trans-national crime, non-proliferation and disarmament, maritime security, and disaster relief. We are concerned at the increased attempts to disrupt and destabilise the international rules-based order through the spread of mis- and disinformation.

New Zealand is strongly committed to **an open, rules-based trading system** 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 also aims to strengthen the broader regional trade architecture to ensure it is resilient to future shocks. For New Zealand, APEC continues to be the premier regional body for pursuing trade and economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region.

The ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) entered into force in 2010. It is an important mechanism for New Zealand to deepen economic ties and grow two-way trade with ASEAN. AANZFTA was upgraded on 21 April 2025 to modernise the agreement, address barriers faced by exporters and support the flow of essential goods in times of crisis.

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), signed by the ten ASEAN members plus Australia, China, Japan, Korea and New Zealand, covering 30% of global GDP, is the biggest trade agreement in the world by geographical coverage. RCEP entered into force in January 2022 and the rules and norms set by RCEP make trade simpler to navigate and provide greater confidence to businesses.

The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which entered into force in December 2018 is made up of 12 economies including four from ASEAN (Singapore, Malaysia, Viet Nam, and Brunei). The CPTPP makes up 13 percent of world GDP and is the destination for almost 30 percent of New Zealand's goods exports. Indonesia requested accession to CPTPP in 2024 and the Philippines has indicated it will table its request around mid-2025. CPTPP Ministers agreed to work towards a CPTPP-ASEAN dialogue in 2025. In addition to regional agreements, New Zealand has other bilateral FTAs or Closer Economic Partnerships with many other ARF members, including China, the Republic of Korea, Australia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong and Chinese Taipei.

In addition to the traditional security threats, the impacts of climate change on human security, on secure supply chains, on access and servicing of critical infrastructure cannot be underestimated. Climate change is one of the greatest

threats to the livelihoods, security, and well-being of peoples in the Indo-Pacific. The ARF membership has a role to play in considering climate change issues in the Confidence-Building Measures and Preventative Diplomacy work plan of the ARF.

2) NEW ZEALAND'S 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. While geographically isolated, New Zealand is impacted both by intensifying geostrategic competition and by transnational threats such as climate change, terrorism, arms proliferation, organised crime, and cyber-attacks. The New Zealand Government is working to maintain a secure and resilient New Zealand that is protected as a free, open, and democratic society for future generations. 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, multilateral avenues, regional partnerships, and support for regional architecture and institutions. We see ASEAN-centred regional security architecture as having an increasingly important role in bringing countries together and providing a forum for discussions. These forums fulfil an important role promoting understanding, embedding 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. Efforts to achieve this include:

- Significantly increasing New Zealand's focus on and resources applied to Southeast Asia, South Asia (in particular India), and North Asia;
- Applying renewed attentiveness to traditional and like-minded partners;
- Sustaining our deeper and comprehensive focus on the Pacific, working closely with Pacific leaders, Australia, and other partners;
- Targeted multilateral engagement on global or transboundary issues;
- Supporting new mini-lateral groupings; and
- Supporting Pacific and Indo-Pacific regional security architecture such as the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), 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's defence policy settings conclude that the two principal challenges to New Zealand's security interests are strategic competition and the impacts of climate change. In response, the Defence Policy and Strategy Statement emphasises a more deliberate, proactive and strategy-led approach with three objectives: promoting and protecting New Zealand's defence interests in the region, particularly in the Pacific; contributing globally to collective security efforts

that protect New Zealand's interests and values, particularly in the Indo-Pacific; and responding to events in New Zealand, the region, and globally where required. These objectives are underpinned by a strategy with three mutually reinforcing themes: understand, partner, and act.

3) NEW ZEALAND'S CONTRIBUTION TO REGIONAL SECURITY

NZ is as an active contributor to regional security across a broad range of areas including: Counter Terrorism, TNOC, Disarmament, Humanitarian and Disaster Relief, Maritime Security, and Cyber, as well as support for the Pacific and the Pacific Island Forum.

New Zealand remains firmly committed to **countering and preventing terrorism and violent extremism in all forms, and to combatting transnational organised crime**. Under the New Zealand Transnational Organised Crime Strategy 2020-2025, New Zealand aims to unify its efforts through a system-wide governance model to prevent, detect, and dismantle TNOC threats. A strong focus of the Strategy is partnerships and New Zealand engages to prevent, detect, and respond to these threats. New Zealand works at the multilateral, regional, sub-regional and bilateral levels, with a particular focus on the Indo-Pacific region.

To support the achievement of New Zealand's global security priorities, including assisting with capacity building in neighbouring states, New Zealand has a dedicated security fund, called the Combined Security and Disarmament Fund. This helps New Zealand complete 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 (FTFs). Ongoing collective effort is required to prevent FTFs from relocating to other conflict zones, and to effectively manage their return home through targeted rehabilitation and reintegration support.

In line with our commitment to reduce the risk of Southeast Asia being a target or source of terrorism we continue to strengthen efforts to support partners to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks. This includes activities to counter the root causes of violent extremism by building resilient communities, and invigorating mechanisms that promote coordination of counterterrorism policy both 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 ARF.

Capacity building in Southeast Asia is a significant focus of New Zealand's global counterterrorism engagement. We have long-standing relationships with institutions in the region such as the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation and the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (Malaysia). New Zealand also contributes Defence personnel to the Counter Terrorism Information Facility located in Singapore.

Courses scheduled for delivery by New Zealand Police and Customs continue to be delivered, largely via in-person training, including:

- Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) through Community Engagement Course – delivered in person in May 2025 with a focus on cooperation between Counter Terrorism (CT) units and Police, and Government / Non-Government Organisation (NGO) stakeholders to develop a multi-agency approach to CVE. New Zealand Police (NZ Police) provided two trainers to support the development and delivery of training content through the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC).
- International Cybercrime Investigations Workshop (ICIW) – jointly delivered by the New Zealand Police, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) at JCLEC. ICIW seeks to address knowledge and skills gaps in Cyber and Technology Enabled Crime (TEC) Investigations, with a focus on three thematic areas – cybercrime, child exploitation / online engagement and digital forensics.
- Victoria University of Wellington STIK (Indonesian National Police Higher Education) Masters Course – a collaborative initiative between Victoria University of Wellington and NZ Police, held annually with Indonesia National Police (INP) to build collaborative educational relationships. The most recent course took place in December 2024 with INP students travelling to New Zealand to attend.
- Transnational Organised Crime (TNOC) International Cooperation Course – delivered in May 2025 at JCLEC by the New Zealand Police, the New Zealand Customs Service and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). The course aims to facilitate regional and strategic cooperation across ASEAN in combating TNOC, with 24 participants attending this course from a range of ASEAN Countries.
- Ad hoc in-regions contributions - Additionally, the New Zealand Police Senior Liaison Officer (SLO) based in Bangkok, the two New Zealand Police Liaison Officers (PLOs) based in Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur, and the four Irregular Migration Liaison Officers (IMLOs) based in the Southeast Asia region have continued to participate in localised training and presentations, maintain and strengthen partnerships, and facilitate cooperation on criminal matters.

New Zealand remains concerned about **irregular migration** and its regional impact. As part of our contribution to managing security and humanitarian

challenges posed by irregular migration, New Zealand is an active member of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (the Bali Process). This includes our work alongside Viet Nam in co-chairing the Working Group on Disruption of Criminal Networks Involved in People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons. The working group facilitates collaboration on concrete, action-oriented activities for enhancing law enforcement and border security coordination. In addition, New Zealand provides support for regional capacity building, including targeted capacity building assistance to ASEAN members on people smuggling, and transnational organised crime.

An important tool in combatting **transnational organised criminal** and terrorist groups, is the targeting of their financial systems and processes. In this regard, New Zealand works closely with the Asia-Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering to support the coordination of technical assistance and training in the Pacific. Since 2017, New Zealand has funded APG's "Pacific Cell" to improve implementation of Anti-Money Laundering/Countering Financing of Terrorism ('AML/CFT') standards across 12 Pacific jurisdictions and Timor-Leste.

Additionally, New Zealand has funded and organised a number of regional capacity building workshops for ASEAN countries on key related 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 participates in multilateral initiatives which engage on counter-terrorism projects in the region. These include the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), through which we are pleased to continue our support on CVE initiatives in the Philippines.

In addition to our work in Southeast Asia, New Zealand also works with **Pacific Island Forum member countries** to strengthen the region's capacity to respond to a range of shared security challenges. New Zealand is a Pacific country, and as such, has a strong commitment to our region's security as set out in the Biketawa and Boe Declarations and more recently through the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. As a region, we strive to work together to preserve our security and our sovereignty. The Boe Declaration on Regional Security affirms an expanded concept of security encompassing traditional and non-traditional challenges encountered by the region, with climate change recognised as the preeminent security threat to the region. Other priorities include human security, environmental security, transnational crime, and cyber security.

New Zealand strongly supports the implementation of the Boe Declaration, and channels this through 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 regional discussions and consensus building on disaster response, Transnational Organised Crime and climate security.

New Zealand supports Pacific regional organisations such as the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police Secretariat, Oceania Customs Organisation and the Pacific Immigration Development Community and contributes to their consideration of, and responses to, regional security issues. New Zealand also provides technical assistance, capacity building, and mentoring for law enforcement and border agencies in the region.

In 2023, Pacific Island Forum Leaders adopted the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent implementation plan. The plan includes over 100 specific high-level actions designed to help Forum Members and Forum Dialogue Partners deliver against the region's aspirations, priorities, and values for the next 30 years. This is a critical document for any partner undertaking, or considering, cooperation with Pacific countries.

One growing challenge the region faces is the unprecedented use of social media by **terrorist groups**. This has forced states to adapt, with many now adopting sophisticated counter-messaging protocols and systems to enable them to convey another view to that of would-be terrorists. Tragically, social media was used to amplify terrorism as part of the 15 March 2019 terrorist attack in Christchurch. New Zealand responded, with France, by developing 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. On 1 July 2024, the Christchurch Call Foundation was formally launched. This non-governmental organisation coordinates the Christchurch Call's work to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online.

Another area of international and regional security in which New Zealand engages actively is **disarmament and arms control**. The New Zealand Disarmament and Arms Control Strategy 2024-2026 identifies our priority objectives in this area, the context in which we are pursuing them, and the means through which we aim to achieve them. The three broad priorities outlined in the Strategy are (1) promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation; (2) defending international humanitarian law and promoting the protection of civilians, and (3) helping to shape norms and rules on outer space and autonomous weapon systems respectively.

New Zealand strongly supports the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). New Zealand's position stems from concern about the humanitarian effects of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, and our support for international humanitarian law. Until 2023, New Zealand was 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 has a strong legacy of supporting unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance, risk education and victim assistance in Southeast Asia. New Zealand currently provides support to the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre, and funds mine action work in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar.

New Zealand is a strong supporter of the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation** Treaty (NPT) and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). New Zealand ratified the TPNW in 2018 and continues to encourage non-signatory states to sign the Treaty, and signatories to ratify it. Currently New Zealand co-chairs the TPNW's work on universalisation. New Zealand has also continued to actively promote nuclear disarmament more generally, including through our membership of the New Agenda Coalition and our work in the NPT context to improve transparency and reporting under the review cycle's disarmament review pillar.

New Zealand is a strong proponent of nuclear weapon-free zones because of their helpful role in reinforcing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation commitments. New Zealand is party to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone (Treaty of Rarotonga) and we have 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. We have welcomed ratification of the CTBT by Annex 1 and 2 states in the region and encourage ARF participants to ratify this important treaty.

New Zealand is a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which provides the global focal point for nuclear cooperation and safeguards. In the period 2020 to 2022, we served as a member of the IAEA Board of Governors, the Agency's primary policymaking organisation. New Zealand is in full compliance with its safeguard obligations and routinely urges all states to sign Additional Protocol agreements with the IAEA. We support international projects involving the peaceful use of nuclear energy, including through the IAEA's Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology for Asia and the Pacific.

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. Additionally, we make annual voluntary contributions to the IAEA's Nuclear Security Fund.

New Zealand is a party to the **Chemical Weapons Convention** and the Biological Weapons Convention. We have provided financial assistance to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to support the Organisation's work in Syria. We routinely speak out strongly against the use of chemical weapons, including by Russia in Ukraine, and in Sudan. In March 2024 we sponsored a capacity-building workshop for Pacific Island countries, focused on implementing legislation for the Chemical Weapons Convention, and in 2024 participated in Biological Weapons Convention universalisation and implementation workshops in Southeast Asia and in the Pacific.

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 chaired the Missile Technology Control Regime 2019-2020.

New Zealand is an active participant in and contributor to the Proliferation Security Initiative. Our involvement, which has included our membership of the Operational Experts Group and participation in both 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. As part of the PSI Asia-Pacific exercise rotation, New Zealand hosted a PSI table-top exercise in Wellington in 2015 and we are currently scheduled to host an exercise in 2026. 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. We have been engaged in a breadth of initiatives that support universalisation and greater implementation, of the Treaty, including recently as Chair of the Treaty's Voluntary Trust Fund which has as its core objective the assistance of State Parties 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 looks forward to continuing to work closely with its ARF partners on universalisation and implementation of the ATT.

New Zealand's work on **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief** also contributes to regional security. The Indo-Pacific region continues to be afflicted by disasters that underline the need to continue deepening practical and effective cooperation in relation to disaster reduction, readiness, 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 has also provided targeted humanitarian assistance for disasters in the Southeast Asia region. Since 2024, we have supported humanitarian responses in Myanmar, Viet Nam, and the Philippines.

New Zealand is continuing to play its part in deepening regional capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters. We do this drawing on lessons learned from New Zealand's experience with the Christchurch earthquakes (2011) and Cyclone Gabrielle in early 2023. 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. We are pleased to be working with Singapore in co-chairing the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on HADR for the 2024-2027 cycle.

New Zealand has been a solid proponent of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance in disaster management (AHA Centre) since its inception in 2011, and has trained ASEAN officials in disaster response leadership and contributed technical expertise to the Centre. We currently support strengthening the AHA Centre's professional development programmes to reduce the impact of disasters through design and implementation of e-learning solutions and establishment of a training network.

Maritime Security, including the preservation of secure and sustainable oceans, is fundamental to New Zealand's security. Accordingly, New Zealand released a refreshed Maritime Security Strategy in 2024, building on the 2019 version and

reflecting the importance of maritime security as one of the 12 core issues in our National Security Strategy. The Maritime Security Strategy focuses on protecting New Zealand's maritime border, marine resources and regional maritime security interests, recognising the cultural and environmental significance of the oceans for New Zealand.

New Zealand is not alone in facing these complex challenges and we value our maritime cooperation with ARF partners. For New Zealand's part, we 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. In particular, we have been active sharing our experience 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 4th ARF Workshop on Enhancing Regional Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation, and co-hosted the 4th ARF Workshop on Implementing UNCLOS and other International Instruments to address Emerging Maritime Issues alongside Viet Nam, Australia and the EU in November 2022. New Zealand continues its active involvement in the ADMM-Plus Experts Working Group on Maritime Security and the ARF Maritime Security workstream.

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 Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of ICTS in April 2024, and the associated Study Group on Confidence-Building Measures, and we look forward to further cooperation in this area. We welcome constructive proposals made in this work stream, including Malaysia and Australia's ongoing work to maintain a point of contact directory, and the recent Singapore-EU initiative to hold a workshop on the Protection of ICT-Enabled Critical Infrastructure.

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, and support the ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence.

4) 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 and part of our broader relationship with ASEAN and its Member States. The ARF contributes to building an environment of dialogue and cooperation on a wide range of regional security issues. It 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 large number and sheer diversity of practical ARF projects under implementation during the current intersessional year reflects the ARF's value in helping Members 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 the 2023-2024 ARF intersessional year, New Zealand co-chaired the Intersessional Group Meeting on Confidence Building Measures and Preventative Diplomacy (ISG on CBMs and PD) and the Defence Officials' Dialogue alongside Lao PDR. In the 2025-2026 ARF intersessional year, New Zealand will co-chair these two meetings again alongside the Philippines. New Zealand is also co-chairing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament workstream with the Philippines and Australia. We value these opportunities to contribute to dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest, and to contribute to efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific region.

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 on issues that straddle multiple fora would help to achieve streamlining of efforts and eliminate unnecessary duplication of activities. Such issues include disaster relief/management, cyber security and maritime security. 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 strategic issues and risks.

Future of the 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. It has the potential to do more.

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.

New Zealand remains committed to the principles of peace and security underpinning the ARF. We encourage dialogue and capacity building among members to achieve our collective aims in strengthening regional security. At a time of heightened geopolitical tensions, our ability to come together, engage in dialogue and share experiences to resolve tensions is more important than ever.

PAKISTAN

1) OVERVIEW OF REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The global order is undergoing profound change. Shifts in security dynamics, climate change, terrorism, xenophobia and Islamophobia continue to pose serious threats. The rise of disruptive technologies, cybercrime, organized transnational crime and large-scale displacement - often driven by conflict and natural disasters, further complicates the security environment.

Pakistan remains firm in its belief that enduring peace, security, and prosperity depend on a rules-based international system, rooted in the UN Charter. Respect for sovereignty and peaceful coexistence, especially among neighbours, must remain guiding principles. However, strategic stability is increasingly under strain, particularly in South Asia. Unresolved disputes and competition for regional and global influence threaten long-term stability. Pakistan calls for renewed global commitment to dialogue, diplomacy, and cooperative security efforts to ensure a safer, more just world for all.

Situation in South Asia

India-Pakistan Stand-Off Post Pahalgam Attack

India blamed Pakistan for the Pahalgam Attack, without any verifiable evidence or credible investigations. On 26 April 2025, the Prime Minister of Pakistan proposed a transparent and independent probe into this tragic incident through neutral investigators. However, India chose the path of belligerence and aggression. A number of countries called for exercise of restraint. The international organization like United Nations and Organization of Islamic Cooperation also counseled the same but India did not pay heed to these calls.

India attacked Pakistan, without any verifiable evidence or a credible investigation into the Pahalgam Attack. Jeopardizing regional peace, it set a dangerous precedent for arbitrary aggression. In view of India's unabated aggression starting on 7 May 2025, Pakistan was constrained to respond in line with Article 51 of the UN Charter to defend Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Pakistan's response was mature, calibrated, restrained, and targeted only military installations. Pakistan's successful counterstrikes helped reinforce the credibility of its deterrence, and challenged the perception of India's conventional superiority.

India is engaged in propaganda of establishing a "new normal" in bilateral relations, under the pretext of aggression. Pakistan has shown through a measured response that the only "new normal" is respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Indian decision to hold the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in abeyance is a unilateral and illegal action. There are no such provisions in the treaty. The Indian move is tantamount to weaponization of water and shows India's blatant disregard for the sanctity of international treaties. Pakistan is an agrarian economy. Millions of people are dependent on the waters being regulated by the IWT. The Indian move has the potential to create serious challenges to the Pakistan's economy, food security and agriculture. India must immediately resume the normal functioning of the IWT.

The announcement of Pakistan-India ceasefire is a positive development and Pakistan remains firmly committed to upholding the ceasefire and promoting an environment of regional stability. It is also hoped that India remains faithful to its continued implementation. The Indian side's portrayal of Pakistan as seeking a ceasefire in "despair and frustration" is absolutely incorrect. Pakistan not only appreciates the constructive role played by the friendly countries in realizing the ceasefire but also reiterates its support for President Trump's announcement on working with Pakistan and India for a settlement of the Jammu & Kashmir dispute. In view of India's belligerent posture, the international community should ensure that India honours its commitments and does not resume its aggressive actions. In that case, Pakistan would be obliged to respond.

At a time when international efforts are being made for regional peace and stability, the statements emerging from India reflect a propensity to fabricate misleading narratives to justify aggression. To the contrary, as a responsible country, Pakistan continues to reaffirm commitment to ceasefire, and taking necessary steps towards de-escalation and regional stability. South Asia is home to over one-fifth of the world population and it could ill-afford the irresponsible Indian actions. Pakistan believes in peaceful co-existence and it prefers dialogue and diplomacy over conflict and confrontation. Pakistan has always advocated meaningful engagement and result-oriented dialogue to resolve all outstanding issues between Pakistan and India, including the core Jammu and Kashmir dispute. The international community should pay its role in peaceful settlement of these disputes, in the interest of a lasting peace in South Asia.

Afghanistan

Peace and stability in Afghanistan is vital for the region. It is essential for advancing economic growth, robust connectivity and shared prosperity. Pakistan is fully committed towards translating this vision into reality. Following decades of conflict, an improved security situation in Afghanistan provides new opportunities to promote regional connectivity and sustainable development in the country. It is especially important to secure livelihoods of the Afghan people who play an indispensable role in driving the country's long-term recovery and economic development. At present, Afghanistan is facing a worsening humanitarian crisis.

Around 22.9 million people, almost half of the population, are in need of critical humanitarian assistance.

To address these challenges, the international community should engage in constructive dialogue, continue humanitarian and development assistance, and support the long-term economic stabilization of Afghanistan. Pakistan has extended substantial development and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. This assistance spans the sectors of healthcare, education, infrastructure, agriculture and human resource development. Pakistan has supplied wheat, medicines and emergency relief items to the Afghan people and constructed healthcare facilities in Kabul, Jalalabad, and Logar. It has also provided 4,500 higher-education scholarships for Afghan students, with one-third reserved for female students, imparted training to Afghan doctors and medical practitioners, and supported capacity-building of Afghan professionals in various sectors.

Pakistan has consistently endeavoured to build convergences and pursue the path of a sustained engagement with Afghanistan. It is keen to develop close, cooperative relations with Afghanistan, covering all aspects of bilateral importance, particularly trade, transit, and connectivity. Besides bilateral cooperation, Pakistan has remained actively engaged in all consequential regional and multilateral mechanisms on Afghanistan, which seek to address the country's multifaceted challenges. It will continue to work with the international community and regional partners to promote a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

Terrorist threats emanating from Afghan soil in the form of Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) / Fitna al-Khawarij (FAK) and Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) remain a major concern for Pakistan. The country is urging Interim Afghan Authorities to continue countering these terrorist organizations.

Russia-Ukraine Conflict

Pakistan stands for the universal and consistent application of fundamental principles of the UN Charter: self-determination of peoples, non-use or threat of use of force, sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. Pakistan is neither a cheerleader nor an enabler of this conflict; rather it is an indirect victim of it; in terms of the effect of the conflict on energy and food security. Pakistan is a staunch advocate of dialogue, use of peaceful means and exercise of diplomacy for resolving disputes. In this spirit, on Ukraine conflict, Pakistan has been consistent in its calls for restraint, respect for UN charter and principles and adoption of path that leads to a negotiated settlement of this issue. Developments in Europe are also important for Pakistan as Europe is one of our biggest trading, economic, diplomatic partner. Hence, the issues of war and peace in Europe also impact us deeply.

Combating International Terrorism

Pakistan has remained at the forefront of global counterterrorism efforts and been a principle target of terrorist attacks, financed by our adversaries in the region and the country has paid a heavy price in innocent human life; 80,000 casualties and enormous damage to our economy.

Pakistan has taken several steps to combat terrorism and violent extremism, employing a whole-of-society approach. The non-kinetic steps include focus on review of education curriculums, propagating counter narratives to extremist ideology, socio-economic development, skills development for youth, efforts for de-radicalization, revitalization of the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), launch of a reinvigorated national campaign (Azm-e-Istehkam) integrating military, law enforcement, socioeconomic lines of effort, and creation of new National and Provincial Intelligence Fusion and Threat Assessment Centres (NIFTAC and PIFTACs) for real-time intelligence-sharing. Other measures included surveillance and monitoring of social media and cyberspace by the specialized government bodies i.e. Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for contentious material, and tightening border security to prevent militant infiltration.

Over the past year, Pakistan's counterterrorism campaign has combined internal operations with institutional reforms and international diplomacy for a holistic response to a complex phenomenon. Pakistan's resolve to pursue a sustained drive aimed at eliminating militant threats and securing national development projects is unwavering.

At the same time, global terrorism landscape has evolved significantly and continues to evolve in the wake of rapid technological and geopolitical changes. Terrorist attacks have increased globally, especially across the Middle East, Africa and in and from Afghanistan. While Al-Qaida "Core" was decimated in Afghanistan, largely due to Pakistan's efforts, several of Al-Qaeda's subsidiaries have emerged elsewhere. The Islamic State (IS) was suppressed in Syria and Iraq, but the franchises have also emerged in Afghanistan and in the Sahel. Moreover, the terrorists are increasingly adopting new and emerging technologies, including: Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to organize online and collaborate with transnational criminal networks to recruit and finance their activities, cyber tools of terrorism, including the dark web and crypto currencies which are being utilized for radicalization campaigns, incitement to violence, terror financing, propaganda and disinformation through the social media and gaming platforms for communication.

Along with the use of new technologies, the terrorist groups are in possession of billions worth of illicit arms abandoned in Afghanistan, which are being used

against civilians and armed forces of Pakistan. They have acquired modern and sophisticated weaponry including thermal imaging devices, Night Vision Devices (NVDs), sniper guns, and drones. This has provided them with 24/7 operational capability.

While countering the terrorists, it is imperative that the root causes of terrorism that include poverty, injustice and prolonged and long-festered unresolved conflicts, foreign occupation and denial of the right to self-determination to peoples under colonial and foreign domination and alien rule, such as in the occupied territories of Palestine and Jammu and Kashmir are addressed. Without addressing the root causes, there is no hope for success as the focus remains restricted to the consequences of such policies and not the underlying causes.

It is also imperative for international community to address state terrorism including the use of state power to suppress legitimate struggles for self-determination or to continue foreign occupation, which is amongst its worst manifestations, and the state sponsorship of terrorism in other countries. It is unfortunate that the counter terrorism policies have so far singled out only one religion – Islam – for affiliation with terrorism and extremism. Such concepts that stigmatize Muslims have fanned the flames of Islamophobia and fuelled further radicalization.

It is vital to understand that terrorism continues to mutate into various new forms that are not being effectively addressed. To comprehensively defeat terrorism, the new and emerging forms of terrorism including violent acts by white supremacists, far right extremists, violent ultra-nationalist, fascist, xenophobic, Islamophobic and anti-Muslim groups, and similar ideologies in various parts of the world must be challenged.

While countering terrorism, it is equally necessary to ensure that these efforts around the world are not misused to violate human rights and international humanitarian law. There must be accountability for the violation of fundamental human rights especially the right to self-determination and in situations of foreign occupation.

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

As a responsible nuclear state, Pakistan subscribes to the mutually reinforcing objectives of ensuring equal and undiminished security for all and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Pakistan has put into place robust legislative, regulatory administrative and enforcement mechanisms to regulate the transfer of sensitive goods and technologies.

The following measures have been undertaken by Pakistan in this context:

- In pursuance of its commitment to non-proliferation and to regulate the

export of sensitive and dual-use goods, items, and technologies, Pakistan enacted the Export Control Act on Goods, Technologies, Materials, and Equipment related to Nuclear and Biological Weapons and their Delivery Systems, also known as the Strategic Export Control Act (SECA), in September 2004. This legislation underscores Pakistan's dedication to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ensuring stringent controls over the export of critical materials and technologies.

- Pursuant to SECA-2004, Strategic Export Control Division (SECDIV) was set up in 2007 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. SECDIV is responsible to regulate and administer the exports of strategic goods and technologies. SECDIV also leads inter-agency consultation to take immediate effect to the decisions taken by the UN Security Council (UNSC), and the rules under the Export Control (Licensing and Enforcement) notified in 2009. These rules set out complete procedures for licensing, enforcement, investigation, prosecution and implementation of the Act. In August 2018, Pakistan established Inter-Agency Committee for Coordination, Review and Monitoring Committee (CRM Committee) to effectively implement, supervise and monitor the enforcement of UNSC resolutions/decisions on countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
- Pakistan has also declared adherence to the National Security Group (NSG) Guidelines and shown keen interest in joining the four export control regimes i.e., NSG, Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), AG and Wassenaar Arrangement.
- Pakistan has joined Nuclear Security Contact Group (NSCG) to contribute to advancing implementation of nuclear security commitments and building a more strengthened, sustainable and comprehensive global nuclear security architecture.
- As participant of Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) since 2007, Pakistan has been proactively participating in its various activities.
- Nuclear security regime of Pakistan includes not only technological systems, but the human resources needed to manage, operate, administer and maintain equipment.
- Pakistan Centre of Excellence for Nuclear Security (PCENS) and National Institute of Safety and Security (NISAS) have been established for human resource development and technical support for effective in the area of nuclear safety and security. These institutions collaborate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to impart trainings at the regional and global levels.

- Pakistan is also party to the international conventions and treaties on nuclear safety and security such as Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS), Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and its Amendment and IAEA code of conduct on the safety and security of radioactive sources.
- Pakistan has been submitting its reports on the implementation of the UNSC 1540 Resolution to the 1540 Committee. So far, Pakistan has submitted 6 reports to the Committee. In-line with the provisions of UNSCRs 1540 (2004), 1810 (2008), and 2325 (2016), Pakistan also offers technical assistance to several countries to help them in implementing the provisions of the UNSCR 1540 (2004).
- Pakistan is committed to its obligation under UNSCR 1540 (2004), with a view to strengthening the global framework to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, biological and radiological material to the non-state actors.

i. New and Emerging Technologies

- Pakistan recognizes the indispensable importance of new and emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Cyber for socio-economic progress of states and calls for fair, equitable and non-discriminatory access to new and emerging technologies for the developing countries.
- However, being fully aware of the risks associated with the unregulated military applications of new and emerging technologies, and their impact on global peace and security, Pakistan calls for a legally-binding instrument to ensure the responsible uses of new and emerging technologies in military domain.
- Pakistan has been playing an active role in the multilateral discourse on Military Applications of AI and Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). Pakistan believes that AI enabled military capabilities, in the absence of human control, increase the likelihood of miscalculations, accidents and evoke asymmetric responses, and can heighten nuclear risks, thereby lowering the threshold for use of force and armed conflict.
- In this regard, Pakistan has submitted a concrete proposal in Group on Governmental Experts (GGE) established under Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) on a legally binding instrument or a new Protocol under the CCW proposing prohibitions and regulations relating to LAWS. Similarly, in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), Pakistan

submitted a working paper in July 2023 proposing the CD to examine and address the security and stability impacts of military uses of AI.

ii. Artificial Intelligence in Military Domain

Pakistan is actively participating in REAIM (Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain). Pakistan cosponsored United Nations General Assembly's resolution 79/239 titled, "Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain and its Implications for International Peace and Security". Pakistan is also hosting the regional consultation on REAIM in Islamabad in 2025, to steer discussions in South Asia, West Asia and Middle East.

iii. Outer Space

- Being concerned about the risks to safety and sustainability of Outer Space for the peaceful uses and the growing nature and extent of threats owing to the employment of space based objects and resources for military purposes, such as the development and deployment of Anti-Ballistic Missile systems and their integration into space assets as well as the testing of Anti-Satellite weapons, Pakistan calls for the formulation of a comprehensive treaty on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS).
- Pakistan regularly co-sponsors the resolution on PAROS under UN General Assembly each year, calling on the CD to establish a working group on PAROS as early as possible. Pakistan has also been co-sponsoring every year since 2013 the resolution titled "No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space".

iv. Chemical Weapon Convention

- Pakistan established the National Authority on Chemical Weapons Convention (NA CWC), under CWC Implementation Ordinance-2000. It oversees implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention ensures chemical safety and security and conducts regular national and international trainings and awareness/outreach programmes. It also coordinates the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) inspections in Pakistan. Till the date, OPCW has conducted 25 inspections in Pakistan.
- Pakistan continuously updates its regulatory framework and is currently in the process of updating CWC Implementation Rules (2010) to further broaden the scope of safety and security procedures and guidelines in procurement, production, storage, transfer, usage, import and export of scheduled chemicals.

v. Biological Weapon Convention

- Since ratification of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) in 1974, Pakistan has instituted a comprehensive legislative, regulatory and administrative framework to regulate life sciences in Pakistan and to strengthen export control systems on biological agents and toxins. The scope of the controls is consistent with those followed by the Australian Group.
- Pakistan has been submitting Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) under the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) as a useful tool for increasing transparency and building trust among State Parties in implementation of the convention.
- National legislation on Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (Implementation) Bill, 2025 has been approved by the Parliament and Senate. The bill will come into the effect upon signature of honorable President of Pakistan. Pakistan is one of first countries in the region to have standalone national legislations to give effect to provisions of Biological Weapons Convention.

Transnational Organized Crime

Narcotics Smuggling

Pakistan has remained at the forefront of global policy formulation and norms setting on drug-related issues. Pakistan, like many fellow countries, has been affected by the drug problem. It has long been exposed to the negative and wide-ranging consequences of illicit poppy cultivation, production, manufacturing, trafficking, and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in one of our neighbouring countries. Pakistan has enjoyed a Poppy-Free Status since 2001. However, Pakistan continues to grapple with transnational drug trafficking.

Pakistan is signatory to all three international drug control conventions, which constitute the cornerstone of the international drug control approach. It has been a leader in global counter-narcotics efforts and is playing a prominent role against the illegal trafficking, production, and use of drugs.

At multilateral fora, including the UN, Pakistan continues to advocate for a holistic and balanced approach in addressing the World Drug problem including addressing new and emerging challenges. Pakistan has also been elected as a member of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) for the term 2026-29 and is committed to working with other members of the Economic and Social Council and the wider United Nations membership to further strengthen the role of the CND as the primary global policy-making body, ensuring that

international drug control regime remains comprehensive, effective and consistent with the requirements of the three United Nations Conventions on Drugs.

At the domestic level, Pakistan has devised a comprehensive national legal framework to combat drug trafficking, which includes the Anti-Narcotics Policy 2019, and have taken additional measures like creation of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Counter-Narcotics, revision of the Precursors Control Regime, and the launch of 'Project Amaan,' and devising an AI-driven database of criminals related to narcotics and money laundering. As a longstanding partner in international drug control efforts, Pakistan remains committed to further strengthening multilateral cooperation on the subject.

Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons

Being a country of origin, transit and destination for smuggled migrants and trafficked persons, migration and Trafficking in Persons (TIP) related issues hold special importance for Pakistan. Pakistan is actively working on the international and domestic level to make migration orderly and safe to deny any space to Traffickers and Smugglers to operate. Pakistan is a party to United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and acceded to the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) protocol in 2022.

Pakistan's National Action Plan 2021-2025 on Combating Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling focuses on, i) Legislative/Policy formulation; ii) Capacity Building; iii) Public awareness; and, iv) Regional and International cooperation. Pakistan has enacted two Legislative Instruments namely Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2018 and Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act 2018 which are in line with International Protocols under United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC). Under these laws, rules have been approved by the cabinet for their effective implementation.

To complement our efforts for curbing this challenge, we continue to call on the international community to focus on addressing the root causes of irregular migration, particularly by bridging economic disparities among developing and developed countries and by enhancing legal pathways of migration. While States retain the sovereign right to strengthen their border security, this right should be consistent with international law and human rights of migrants, irrespective of their status. Restrictive visa and border control regimes would further aggravate the problem and force people to avail services of human smugglers.

The international community needs to take notice of the root causes of illegal migration, including bridging economic disparities among developing and developed countries and the addressing the absence of safe, affordable and legal pathways for migration.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

In the field of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, below are Pakistan's major recent contributions:

Flood Relief Goods for Malaysia

Severe floods across six Malaysian states in December 2024 affected thousands of residents, displacing over 150,000 people and resulting in six fatalities. Pakistan sent two chartered planes, each carrying 40 tons of relief goods for the flood affected people in Malaysia on 07 December, 2024 and 11 December, 2024, respectively. The consignment comprised of relief goods including tents, blankets, life-saving jackets, quilts, sleeping bags and sleeping mats.

Relief Activities in the Wake of Earthquake in Myanmar

In response to the devastating 7.7-magnitude earthquake that struck Myanmar in March 2025, Pakistan extended significant humanitarian assistance. Through the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Pakistan dispatched a total of 70 tons of relief supplies in two separate consignments via chartered flights. The aid included over 500 tents, 210 tarpaulins, 2,000 blankets, ready-to-eat meals, medicines, and water purification modules, which were handed over to Myanmar authorities, including the Chief Minister of Yangon Region. This support was part of a broader international relief effort following the earthquake, which claimed over 3,450 lives and left thousands injured. Pakistan's prompt response reflects its commitment to regional solidarity and humanitarian assistance in times of crisis.

Humanitarian/Medical Assistance for People of Palestine

Pakistan significantly ramped up its humanitarian assistance to Palestine in response to the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Pakistan dispatched over 1,600 tons of aid, including food supplies such as canned goods, rice, and powdered milk. The relief shipments, sent via air to Jordan for onward delivery to Gaza, were part of a sustained effort, with the 15th consignment dispatched in May 2025. In parallel with material support, Pakistan also voiced strong diplomatic backing for Palestine, condemning obstructions to humanitarian aid and advocating for unimpeded relief access to the affected population.

Relief Operations for Lebanon and Syria

Pakistan dispatched relief assistance to Lebanon and Syria in response to the ongoing humanitarian crisis fuelled by conflicts and violence in the region. This initiative was part of Pakistan's broader diplomatic efforts to demonstrate solidarity with Lebanon and Syria. As a longstanding advocate for human rights on

international platforms, Pakistan underscored its commitment to humanitarian support through significant relief missions.

2) ROLE OF ARF

Since joining the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 2004 and signing the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, Pakistan has actively supported regional peace and security through multilateral engagement. Its approach aligns closely with ARF's objectives of promoting dialogue, peaceful dispute resolution, and adherence to international law.

Future Challenges of ARF and Pakistan's Contributions:

Pakistan consistently reaffirms its commitment to international law and UN principles. Pakistan regularly participates in ARF ministerial and inter-sessional meetings, including on maritime security, disaster relief, non-proliferation, and preventive diplomacy, thereby reinforcing its multilateral commitments.

Pakistan has engaged in ARF's efforts to combat terrorism, violent extremism, and transnational crime. It supports regional work plans and has signed declarations on counterterrorism with ASEAN. Pakistan has been sharing and will continue to share its expertise in tackling extremist violence, contributing to ARF's preventive diplomacy goals. Pakistan's National Action Plan (NAP) & the National Counter Terrorism Authority's (NACTA) up-gradation with National Intelligence Fusion and Threat Assessment Centre (NIFTAC)-2025 enhances inter-agency cooperation and intelligence fusion to combat terrorism in line with ARF framework. Similarly, Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act 2023 strengthens legal provisions to prosecute terrorism financing and cross-border militancy which provides yet another area of cooperation between Pakistan and ARF member states.

Recognizing the strategic importance of cyber cooperation, Pakistan has prioritized cyber security in its engagements with ASEAN and the ARF. Recently held ASEAN-Pakistan Technology Expo in Islamabad in April 2025, in which 18 delegates from ASEAN countries participated provided a platform to explore opportunities for collaboration in Artificial Intelligence, Robotic and Cyber regime. Pakistan has developed national cyber security frameworks and collaborates on capacity-building and digital governance addressing one of ARF's most urgent emerging challenges. Pakistan's Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), 2016 governs cybercrime, data protection, and online safety. Pakistan also actively contributes to ARF inter-sessional meetings on ICT security and supports regional norms on responsible state behaviour in cyberspace. Moreover, Pakistan's national cyber security Policy 2021 aims to establish a secure and resilient digital ecosystem by safeguarding critical information infrastructure and promoting public-private partnerships. This approach aligns with the ARF's objectives of enhancing regional cyber security cooperation and capacity-building among member states.

Therefore, these initiatives provide opportunities for collaboration between Pakistan and ARF member states.

Pakistan's provision of educational scholarships, humanitarian assistance, and people-to-people exchange programs with ASEAN countries enhances mutual trust through its Technical Assistance Programme and Scholarships offered in the field of Medical, Engineering and Pharmaceuticals.

Pakistan values the idea of an inclusive regional security structure where all states, regardless of size or power, have a voice. It promotes sovereignty, non-interference, and mutual respect principles central to the ARF. Pakistan's statements at ARF meetings emphasize equal security for small and large states and oppose bloc-based politics in the Asia-Pacific.

Recognizing that environmental degradation and climate change are non-traditional security threats, Pakistan is aligning its national goals with ARF's focus on environmental cooperation and resilience-building. Being one of the most vulnerable countries to Climate Change, Pakistan can contribute to ARF's frameworks related to Climate Change and Environmental Security. Pakistan's Climate Change Act 2017 establishes the framework for meeting international obligations and addressing climate change impacts. This Act, along with the National Climate Change Policy, provides a comprehensive approach to adaptation, mitigation, and capacity building. These legislations and initiatives can significantly contribute towards enhancing ARF capacity in dealing with the Climate Change. Pakistan also participates in ARF's Environment and Disaster Relief meetings and promotes joint strategies for regional adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

THE PHILIPPINES

1) OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

A region that accounts for 62 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP), 46 percent of international trade, and half of global maritime transport (*US Indo-Pacific Strategy, 2022*) the strategic significance of the Indo-Pacific region cannot be denied. It is also currently the epicenter of regional economic and security architectures that are poised for major geopolitical and geo-economics shifts. But apart from its sheer size, it is a region rife with current and emerging issues and challenges that test the deftness and statecraft of its leaders in contending with numerous and overlapping political, economic, and security concerns that impact the region's peace and stability.

Notable observations in the region include the acceleration of the arms race, with many Indo-Pacific countries increasing their military budgets and pouring resources in the development of their defense capabilities; the return of alliance-building and defense partnerships, as shown by the formation of multilateral groupings such as the QUAD, AUKUS, and most recently the Squad which includes the Philippines alongside the US, Japan, and Australia; and a noticeable increase in hostilities and coercive tactics, particularly in the maritime sphere, that have intensified tensions in the region (Tiberghien, 2024).

Another critical issue in the Indo-Pacific is the advent of technological innovations, including Emerging and Disruptive Technologies (EDTs) for both civil and military purposes. The continuous development of civil use robots, 5G, space, and quantum computing will create increased opportunities for investment but can also be possible fields for fierce competition (*NATO, 2023*). Other emerging concerns in the region include challenges facing undersea cables—critical infrastructure for global communications and economic security, which, apart from its vulnerability to natural disasters, is also subject to sabotage, such as the cutting of cables allegedly undertaken by China and Russia to disrupt communication and probe defenses of other states (Tan, 2024).

More recently, the changes in leadership across key Indo-Pacific countries such as the re-election of Donald Trump in the US, the resignation of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and the recent impeachment of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol indicate the fragility of governance, which can have significant implications not only for domestic foreign policy direction but also for existing Indo-Pacific strategies and visions in the region.

These developments paint a grim picture of a region enmeshed in a polycrisis that contributes to the intricacy and ambiguity of its future. The geopolitical changes that occur at a heightened speed and frequency add to the difficulty of formulating a cohesive and unified response to maintain peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

It is crucial now more than ever to uphold ASEAN's shared values and norms. Upholding international law, mutual trust and confidence, inclusive dialogue, and cooperation among stakeholders are necessary to address these concerns. Member states and external partners in the region must maintain the culture of dialogue and cooperation to address both traditional and non-traditional security issues effectively. Maintaining principles for friendly and mutually beneficial relations, as enshrined in various ASEAN documents, and maintaining a peaceful environment conducive to cooperation and friendship must be consistent with engagements and operations on the ground. Indeed, ASEAN is faced with an inevitable need to come up with new forms of confidence-building mechanisms; however, it must aim to supplement and enhance already existing ones in tackling pressing issues of the world today.

Regional Power Dynamics

In recent years, pervasive trends have been noted that have defined the geopolitical and security landscape of the Indo-Pacific region. Foremost among these is the great power competition between the US and China. Professor Graham Allison of Harvard Kennedy School alluded to this rivalry as the Thucydides' Trap, in which if a rising power threatens to displace a ruling one, the most likely outcome is war. The fierce competition between the US and China spans across many facets—military, trade, technology, etc., and is unlikely to dampen anytime soon. Their divergent views on a rules-based international order and escalation of tensions could have far-reaching consequences for the region and beyond.

Against this backdrop, upholding ASEAN Centrality is essential in managing engagements with major powers and accommodating their initiatives in the region. Should major powers desire to play a more active role in shaping the regional dynamics, they must adhere to ASEAN's common vision of a rules-based, cohesive, and stable region in an increasingly integrated and interdependent world. The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) is a testament to ASEAN's commitment to cooperation and ensuring the resilience and effectiveness of ASEAN-led mechanisms while accommodating innovation amid geostrategic shifts. It is a guide for external partners as they work with ASEAN to undertake practical cooperation in four priority areas, namely: maritime cooperation, connectivity, Sustainable Development Goals, and economic cooperation, as well as other possible areas of cooperation.

Situation in the Korean Peninsula

Significant foreign policy shifts occurred under the Republic of Korea's (ROK) previous administration. In 2023, ROK successfully deepened its military and economic cooperation with Japan and the United States (US), strengthening the trilateral alliance (Akiyama, 2023). A notable demonstration of this partnership was

the joint aerial exercise conducted on 3 November 2024, involving fighter aircraft from all three nations—an explicit signal of their unified commitment to regional deterrence (US, Japan, Republic of Korea conduct trilateral aerial exercise, 2024). This cooperation continued with a follow-up trilateral coordinating secretariat meeting on 19 May 2025, convened to review ongoing initiatives and reaffirm strategic alignment (Japan-U.S.-ROK Trilateral Coordinating Secretariat Meeting, 2025).

In contrast, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has escalated its military posture. It conducted tests of solid-fuel intermediate-range ballistic missiles in January (likely the Hwasong-16A) and April 2024, signaling advancements in its missile capabilities (Kim, 2024). Aside from this, one of the most consequential shifts in the regional balance occurred on 19 June 2024 when the DPRK and Russia signed a mutual defense treaty. The agreement commits both nations to provide immediate military assistance in the event of aggression against either party (Davenport, 2024).

Further heightening regional concerns, the official newspaper of the DPRK's Workers' Party, *Rodong Sinmun*, reported on 13 September 2024 that Kim Jong-un inspected a nuclear production facility (Kim and Kim, 2024). This facility, which includes a uranium-enrichment plant, was revealed to the public for the first time with accompanying photographs (Kobayashi, 2024). Experts highlight that uranium enrichment is essential for producing highly enriched uranium, a core component in nuclear weapons. Alongside an existing plutonium-producing site in Yongbyon, these facilities significantly enhance the DPRK's nuclear weapons capability. Moreover, DPRK claimed to have tested a cruise missile system on 25 January 2025 (Yim, 2024). All these developments raise serious doubts about the feasibility of achieving complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization (CVID) in the Indo-Pacific.

Meanwhile, the ROK has been grappling with domestic political turmoil that threatens to reverse recent reunification efforts, notably the 15 August Unification Doctrine championed by the now-impeached President Yoon Suk-yeol. To backtrack a little, in December 2024, Yoon declared martial law amid mass protests, citing national security threats. This decision was met with widespread public backlash and was later declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court on 4 April 2025, ultimately leading to his impeachment (Lee and Park, 2025). A snap presidential election has since been scheduled for 3 June 2025. Political discourse among leading candidates has increasingly focused on the future of ROK's defense policy and regional diplomatic posture in light of escalating tensions.

As of early 2025, the Korean Peninsula has been witnessing heightened instability and intensified geopolitical friction. Military alliances are becoming more clearly defined, DPRK's militarization continues unchecked, and ROK's internal political

shifts introduce new uncertainties. These developments may have broader implications for regional cooperation on economic security, supply chain resilience, and cybersecurity—areas that countries like the Philippines are increasingly dependent on.

Given these dynamics, there is a pressing need for regional and global stakeholders to engage in proactive diplomacy, reinforce deterrence frameworks, and reevaluate strategies for sustainable peace and non-proliferation. The international community must renew its commitment to long-term stability by consistently enforcing sanctions and exploring innovative mechanisms to halt nuclear testing and proliferation by the DPRK.

Maritime Security Challenges

The Philippines, as a maritime and archipelagic country, emphasizes the importance of sustainably exploiting marine resources to meet the needs of the current generation, without compromising the future of the next generations, as the seas and oceans are the shared heritage of humankind. Disputes concerning maritime rights and entitlements, including overlapping maritime claims, threaten maritime security. The unilateral interpretation of international law frameworks, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and the deliberate use of illegal, coercive, aggressive, and deceptive (ICAD) tactics increase tensions, undercut prospects for effective cooperation, further mistrust between states, and subvert regional stability.

Given the interconnectedness of the oceans and seas, addressing maritime security threats entails meaningful cooperation among states; this includes strengthening maritime law enforcement capabilities and capacities, and sustaining regional dialogues anchored in international law, particularly the 1982 UNCLOS. In the context of the South China Sea disputes, the Philippines calls for maintaining proactive engagements and open channels for dialogue and communication to facilitate robust partnerships geared towards transforming the South China Sea into a sea of peace, stability, and prosperity.

Violent Extremism and Terrorism

The threat of terrorism significantly declined as an offshoot of the Government's effective whole-of-nation counter-terrorism campaign that places emphasis on prevention and addressing the root causes, especially socio-economic drivers behind violent extremism. Improvement can be seen in the Philippines' steady downward Global Terrorism Index trajectory from 2021 to 2024.

On Local Terrorist Groups (LTGs) composed of the four Daesh-linked Dawlah Islamiyah groups and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), their combined strength as of yearend of 2024 is at 135 fighters and 181 firearms,

representing a marked decrease of over 80 percent against their 1,074 manpower and 999 firearms during the height of the 2017 Marawi siege.

LTG-initiated violent incidents declined to 14 in 2024 from 192 in 2017. DI-Abu Sayyaf Group-attributed seaborne kidnap-for-ransom operations are at zero from 2021 to 2024 from 16 incidents in 2016. The decline can be attributed to strengthened intelligence gathering, target hardening, focused military operation, crisis management, legal offensive, and comprehensive prevention/countering violent extremism (P/CVE) programs.

On the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF), the armed guerilla fronts have been reduced to one remaining heavily weakened front from a high of 89 active guerilla fronts in 2018. From 2010-2019, a total of 4,487 NPA-initiated violent incidents killed and injured people, destroyed critical infrastructure, and harassed civilians and public officials. While the CPP-NPA-NDF threat is diminished, the group remains persistent. Currently, CPP-NPA manpower is at 1,050 and firepower at 905 with 31 NPA-initiated violent incidents. Despite the critical losses, the group continues to persist and carry out grooming activities targeting children, youth and vulnerable sectors for their underground and armed movement.

2) NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY

a. Overview of National Security and Defense Policy

The National Security Policy (NSP) 2023-2028, adopted on 10 August 2023, contains the guiding principles and defines the strategic direction of the Marcos, Jr. administration. The NSP complements the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028, as well as contributes to the realization of the long-term national dream of a "*Matatag, Maginhawa at Panatag na Buhay*" by 2040.

The National Security Strategy (NSS) 2024, adopted on 20 December 2024, provides the roadmap for the implementation of the NSP. The NSS defines the strategic directions and lines of action towards achieving the country's national security vision. It serves as the overall anchor for all security-related plans and programs of the Philippines to be implemented at all levels of the government and society.

Responding to the realities of the complex and evolving security environment, Defense Secretary Gilberto C. Teodoro, Jr. announced the Comprehensive Archipelagic Defense Concept (CADC), to be implemented by the Department of National Defense (DND) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). With the newly adopted National Defense Strategy (NDS), the CADC is aimed at protecting and securing the Philippines' entire territory and exclusive economic zone (EEZ) against current and future threats.

Moreover, the 2024 National Defense Strategy (NDS) identifies the promotion of regional stability as an Archipelagic Defense Objective. In line with this, the Department of National Defense (DND) seeks to build interoperability and intensify practical cooperation with foreign partners to develop individual, joint, and collective defense capabilities to address shared security challenges, play a meaningful role in upholding a rules-based international order, and promote solidarity in Southeast Asia to manage geopolitical dynamics that impact Philippine and regional defense interests.

b. Data Contribution to the ARF Arms Register

Total defense expenditure on an annual basis

For fiscal year 2025, the total new appropriations available for the DND amount to PhP 271.92 billion. More than one-half (60.15 percent) or PhP 163.55 billion is allocated for personnel services; about PhP 79.39 billion will go to maintenance and other operating expenses; while PhP 28.98 billion will be used for capital outlay. (GAA, 2025)

The approved defense budget is a 14.02 percent increase from the PhP 238.36 billion in the previous year (GAA, 2024). The defense budget also makes up for 4.3 percent of the total government budget of PhP 6.326 trillion for 2025 (RA No.12116, 2025).

Total number of personnel in the national armed forces and its percentage in population

Active military personnel²

Philippine Army	103,200 (0.095%)
Philippine Navy	25,450 (0.02%)
Philippine Air Force	17,600 (0.016%)

3) NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL SECURITY

i. Counter-Terrorism

Promoting a People-Centred Approach to Counter-Terrorism

The Philippines' National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (NCTS) was approved and adopted by the Anti-Terrorism Council in 2021. The NCTS conforms to the Anti-

² According to the Philippines Statistics Authority, the total population of the Philippines as of May 2020 is 109,035,343. For the breakdown of the number of active military personnel, see International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). (2025). *The Military Balance 2025: The Annual Assessment of Global Military Capabilities and Defense Economics*. (London), pp. 291-292.

Terrorism Act of 2020, the Terrorism Financing Prevention and Suppression Act of 2012, the Strategic Trade Management Act of 2015. It is aligned with the: 1) Philippine Development Plan; 2) National Defense Plan; 3) National Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing; 4) Executive Order No. 70; and 5) United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Pillar 1 or the Prevent Workstream of the NCTS, aims to thwart and counter the spread of violent extremist ideology by focusing on the root causes of societal conflicts. Among the key programs include: 1) the provision of basic services in conflict-prone/affected areas through the PAMANA Program, Normalization Program with Php 3.6 billion in socio-economic and infrastructure projects resulting in the decommissioning of 65% of MILF combatants. As of November 2024, around 400 former MILF and MNLF members were successfully integrated into the police force; the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) extended complete package of assistance to former rebels, former violent extremists, their families and communities; the Barangay Development Program with has supported over 4,000 barangays with over 6,000 projects such as farm-to-market roads, health and education facility, etc., and 2) Implementation of the National Action Plan on Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism.

Pillar 2 or the Protect Workstream under the NCTS aims to ensure the safety and security of individuals, communities, institutions, critical infrastructure, and key assets. Among the progress include the passage of the: 1) National Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing Strategy (2023-2027); 2) the National Cybersecurity Plan 2023-2028; and the 3) updates in 2024 of the National Action Plan on Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Risk Mitigation.

Pillar 3 or the Prepare Workstream encompasses promoting operational readiness to facilitate appropriate responses. Among the accomplishments are: 1) the updating in 2024 of the National Disaster Response Plan that includes consequence management for terrorism-related incidents; 2) the advocacy for the passage of the Draft Chemical Weapons Protection Act in the Senate; 3) the Counter-Terrorism Tabletop Simulation and Field Exercises such as through the PH-US Tempest Wind 2023-2024 conducted in Manila and three other sites in the country; and 4) CBRN Risk Mitigation Information Awareness with the private sector.

On Pillar 4 or the Respond Workstream, the core concerns are pre-empting the threat, managing and mitigating the impact, and restoring normalcy in the post-crisis setting. Some notable progress include: 1) strengthened collaboration efforts of law enforcement agencies where investigation and prosecution led to the conviction of terrorist personalities, freezing of assets and filing of terrorism financing cases; 2) Amnesty Program with the processing of 985 amnesty application from CPP-NPA-NDF members, MILF, and MNLF; 3) Creation of the Marawi Compensation Board through Republic Act no. 11696 of 2022 and creation

of the Office of Presidential Adviser on Marawi Rehabilitation and Development in November 2024; and 4) Efforts related to advancing the rights of Victims of Terrorism.

National Action Plan on Preventing/ Countering Violent Extremism (NAP-P/CVE)

The NAP P/CVE, adopted in 2019, was born from hard lessons particularly the Marawi Siege of 2017 which underscored the urgent need for a multi-dimensional approach to violent extremism. NAP P/CVE is the government's response which places equal emphasis on prevention, education, community empowerment and inclusive governance. It focuses on tackling the conditions conducive to extremism, such as poverty, inequality, and lack of access to education. It integrates peacebuilding and development initiatives, ensuring that security efforts are paired with social interventions. The NAP P/CVE is closely aligned with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, particularly Pillar I (Addressing Conditions Conducive to the Spread of Terrorism) and Pillar IV (Ensuring Human Rights and Rule of Law in Counter-Terrorism Efforts).

The three major outcomes of the NAP-P/CVE for 2023-2028 are the: 1) effective localization; 2) broadened stakeholder engagement; and 3) strengthened social protection and community development programs; and 4) enhanced and harmonized rehabilitation, reintegration, and aftercare programs. Among the implementation progress includes: the development of an Orientation Module on Early Warning Prevention and Response (EWPR) which was already rolled out by 15 DILG Regional Offices for integration into monitoring and reporting mechanisms of local government units; the Nationwide Rollout of Social Work Case Management for Former Rebels and/or Former Violent Extremists, facilitating the implementation of the Community-Based Rehabilitation and Reintegration programs; and the Mainstreaming of Community-Based Rehabilitation and Reintegration through Local Government Operations Officers (LGOOs) and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers (MSWDOs) who are considered as frontliners in handling and managing cases of former rebels and former violent extremists, including child victims, providing retooling for service providers for psychosocial trauma and healing process.

National Action Plan for Unity, Peace, and Development (NAP-UPD)- 2025-2028

The NAP-UPD, represents the roadmap for 2025-2028, highlighting strengthened focus on a more civilian and good governance-based approach as the country ushers into a post-conflict scenario with respect to CPP-NPA-NDF. The NAP emphasizes: unity, healing, reconciliation and social transformation; sustaining peace and development efforts towards community resilience; and advancing the rights of victims of terrorism/violent extremism. Among the key accomplishments include: the investment of P34.8 billion under the Barangay Development Program benefiting 4,050 barangays in 2021-2024.

The resilience of the CPP-NPA-NDF compels the Philippines to remain vigilant. With its persistent terror grooming targeting children, youth, and vulnerable sectors such as indigenous peoples, international networking, and resource or fund generation schemes, the prospect of the group regaining ground is not remote, hence it remains a threat to national security. Among the priorities under NAP-UPD are: For Peace and Security, sustaining efforts in 9,272 former conflict-affected barangays and the achievement of Stable Internal Peace and Security (SIPS) status in all provinces; accountability efforts for crimes committed by the CPP-NPA-NDF organizations and personalities; For Socio-Economic Development, sustained socio-economic development projects for priority barangays; establishment of a results-based monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) system; expanded civil society-led third party monitoring and feedback mechanism for all programs under the NAP-UPD, including the Barangay Development Program.

Among the key developments include: Partnership with private education sector on the prevention of child/youth terror grooming; initiation of Third-Party Monitoring through civil society and non-government organizations to provide an independent perspective on the delivery of support to Barangay Development Program.

Promotion of Inter-Civilization Dialogue

Under the National Action Plan for Unity, Peace, and Development (NAP-UPD) 2025-2028, among the Philippines' initiatives include the Nationwide Summit of Peace Advocates, which bring together former rebel leaders for dialogue and collaboration; and the Dialogue with civil society representatives on the NAP-UPD.

Under Pillar 1 or the Prevent Workstream of the Philippines' National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (NCTS), the country has conducted various peace initiatives such as Localized Peace Engagements with CPP-NPA-NDF members resulting in 142 local peace agreements in 2024.

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

The Department of National Defense actively supports various counter-terrorism and counter violent extremism (CT and CVE) efforts under the ADMM and ADMM-Plus, particularly noting the following:

The ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group (EWG) on Counter-Terrorism (CT) was established in 2011 for the specific purpose of promoting consultations and practical cooperation in CT and CVE. The ASEAN Our Eyes (AOE) was established

under the ADMM in 2018 with a view to facilitate strategic information exchange on terrorist, radicalization, and violent extremist threats by capitalizing existing secured platforms for information-sharing under the ADMM. The Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological, and Radiological (CBR) Defense Experts was established under the ADMM in 2018 to shore up counter-terrorism cooperation to encompass niche threats such as CBR attacks.

The digital component of terrorist threats is actively discussed at the ASEAN Cyber Defense Network (ACDN), ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Center of Excellence (ACICE), and the ADMM-Plus EWG on Cyber Security (CS).

Cooperative Counter-Terror Action on Border Security

The 13th ADMM adopted the Concept Paper on the Role of ASEAN Defense Establishments in Supporting Border Management in 2019 in an effort to foster cooperation among ASEAN defense establishments on cross-border challenges, including terrorist movement, and encourage interaction with other relevant mechanisms in this area with other relevant frameworks, such as the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and the ASEAN Chiefs of Police Conference (ASEANAPOL).

On Foreign Terrorist Fighters, the Philippines has been a destination for FTFs for many years. The Daesh took advantage of the Philippines' porous borders in 2017-2018 and this continues to pose a serious security threat. FTFs used the smuggling routes in Malaysia and Indonesia in moving into the Philippines via Mindanao, before and during the Marawi crisis in 2017. To strengthen border control, the Philippines adopted the Advance Passenger Information System (APIS) overseen by the Bureau of Immigration to enhance detection capabilities against terrorists and criminals. The Philippines is also part of the Trilateral Cooperative Agreement (TCA) together with Malaysia and Indonesia for joint sea and air patrols, coordination, and intelligence sharing. The TCA has successfully countered threats from piracy, terrorism, and trafficking in persons.

Measures against Terrorist Financing

In June 2021, the Philippines was placed in the Financial Action Task Force Grey List with the observed low level of effectiveness in combating terrorism financing. This stems from findings such as the transfers in 2018 amounting to around 1 million euros from an international donor to CPP-led NGOs and 570 thousand euros of disbursement to a CPP-led people's organization and the CPP-NPA unit in a region. A terrorism financing case was eventually filed against the parties involved. In 2018 there were also findings of several chain of deposits in varying amounts from 2000 to 4700 USD involving members of a Daesh-inspired terrorist cell from a number of countries going to the female relatives of known terrorists in the Philippines.

Among the key reforms that the Philippines has implemented with respect to combating terrorism financing (TF) is demonstrating an increase in TF identification, investigation, and prosecution of TF cases; along with the enhancement of the effectiveness of the targeted financial sanctions framework for terrorism financing. The Philippines, through inter-agency efforts, has filed 237 TF cases against 484 personalities financing terrorism, and have already obtained 6 convictions.

The Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) is the central anti-money laundering/counter-terrorism financing authority and the only financial intelligence unit of the country. The AMLC is also the money laundering/terrorism financing investigator, and the government representative in TF cases as the initiator of Freeze Order proceedings, and initiator of civil forfeiture proceedings. To address TF, the Philippines utilizes two laws, the terrorism financing and suppression act of 2012 and the anti-terrorism act of 2020.

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

Non-Proliferation

The Philippines continues to reinforce its leadership role in arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament through its active participation in several international high-level engagements. This was reaffirmed during the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 NPT Review Conference, where the Philippines emphasized its enduring commitment to transparency and accountability, particularly from Nuclear Weapon States.

The Philippines also supports the universalization and full implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), contributing to the global verification regime through the hosting of three stations of the CTBTO International Monitoring System (IMS).

The Philippines drew attention to the work of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO in a public lecture featuring Executive Secretary Dr. Robert Floyd on 18 March 2025 in Manila. A Regional Workshop on the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) was also held on 18-19 March 2025 to rally commitment to the international prohibition on the use, production, stockpiling, and transfer of cluster munitions. Subsequently, the Philippines, co-chaired with Australia and New Zealand, the 16th ARF Intersessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ISM on NPD) on 20-21 March 2025.

The Philippines, is likewise actively cooperating with partners in advocating for the resumption of negotiations toward the adoption of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) at the Conference on Disarmament (CD). The Philippines joined high-level

representatives from Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, and the United States in launching the Friends of a FMCT initiative in New York on 23 September 2024, on the margins of the UN General Assembly High-Level Week.

Moreover, the Philippines remains a strong proponent of humanitarian disarmament. It participated in the Fifth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) held in Siem Reap, Cambodia from 25 to 29 November 2024. At the Conference, the Philippines reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to a mine-free world, recalling its early support for mine action dating back to 1995 when it destroyed its entire stockpile of anti-personnel mines. The Philippines advocated for a human rights-based approach to victim assistance, the integration of mine action in peace processes, and the inclusion of indigenous peoples and women in mine action efforts. It also acknowledged the emerging challenges posed by climate change and the continued threat posed by the use of improvised mines by non-state armed groups.

On small arms and light weapons (SALW), the Philippines participated in the Fourth Review Conference (RevCon4) of the United Nations Programme of Action (UN PoA) on SALW from 18 to 28 June 2024 in New York. The Philippines advanced key priorities to fully apply the PoA including the incorporation of mental health, the regular disposal of weapons beyond use, and during implementation of peace agreements, reflecting its experience in the Mindanao peace process. The Philippines also actively contributed to the establishment of the Open-ended Technical Expert Group (OETEG) tasked with strengthening PoA implementation through improved data collection, stockpile management, and international cooperation.

On biological weapons, the Philippines continues to engage in discussions on international cooperation under Article X of the Biological Weapons Convention, emphasizing that assistance must be responsive to the capacity and capability needs of developing countries.

The Philippines, in partnership with the Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (FRS), hosted a two-day regional seminar on “Ballistic Missile Developments in Asia: Reducing Risk Through Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs)” on 22-23 January 2025 in Manila. It also held back-to-back regional workshops on “Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Compliance and Verification” and on “Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Disinformation” on 18-19 February 2025.

The Department of Foreign Affairs spoke at the 2025 Conference on Disarmament High-level Segment held on 24 February 2025 in Geneva. Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Charles C. Jose underscored the Philippines’ unwavering commitment to dialogue, cooperation, and collective action as the most

appropriate means to address enduring challenges posed by nuclear weapons and the weaponization of outer space.

At the Third Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT RevCon), held on 28 April to 9 May 2025, the Philippines co-sponsored several working papers, including on reducing risk of nuclear conflict, supporting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education, upscaling the non-power applications of atomic energy, and enhancing transparency and national reporting on NPT implementation.

The Philippines strongly advocates for the adoption of legally binding rules to prevent the weaponization of artificial intelligence and ensure the responsible use of emerging technologies. The Philippines, in partnership with like-minded states, has submitted a draft Protocol VI of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to regulate lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS). The Philippines follows a dual-track approach of pushing for a normative framework that would constrain potentially unfriendly states from using LAWS, while concurrently promoting access to fully benefit from the military application of AI and semi-autonomous systems.

Finally, the Philippines is looking to host the 31st session of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF) on 18-12 November 2025 in Cebu City. The APRSAF is the largest space-related conference in the region, with over 40 countries participating in its events aimed at promoting cooperation in space activities.

On emerging technologies, the Philippines is actively contributing to the Open-ended Working Group on the security of and in the use of information and communications technologies (OEWG on Cybersecurity), and the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (GGE-LAWS), promoting inclusive, norm-based approaches to responsible innovation and use. It also participated in the Vienna Conference on Autonomous Weapons Systems, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Regional Conference on the Peace and Security Aspect of Autonomous Weapons Systems.

In outer space governance, the Philippines continues to advocate for the elaboration and operationalization of the duty of “due regard” under Article IX of the Outer Space Treaty.

Demonstrating its commitment to regional dialogue, the Philippines also participated in the 19th Asia Senior-Level Talks on Non-Proliferation (ASTOP) in Tokyo, a key platform for confidence-building and coordination among regional stakeholders. At a regional workshop on the sidelines of ASTOP, the Philippines reiterated its longstanding support for the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic

Missile Proliferation (HCoC) as a unique and vital multilateral confidence-building mechanism. As the first ASEAN Member State to subscribe to the HCoC and a former Chair of its Subscribing States, the Philippines reaffirmed its call for universalization of the Code, enhancement of transparency measures, and strengthened regional capacity to address missile proliferation. It underscored the importance of transparency tools such as annual declarations and pre-launch notifications in building trust.

Domestically, the Philippines continues to strengthen its strategic trade control frameworks to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It co-hosted the 2024 Strategic Trade Management Summit in Manila from 23 to 25 April 2024, which brought together Indo-Pacific stakeholders to enhance interagency coordination, export control systems, and regulatory compliance. The Summit affirmed the Philippines' growing leadership in integrating trade facilitation with international security obligations.

In parallel, the Philippines and Singapore, with support from Japan and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), conducted the first-ever UNSCR 1540 Peer Review Exercise in Southeast Asia. The inaugural review was held in Manila from 28 to 29 May 2024, followed by a second consultation in Singapore from 4 to 5 September 2024. These exercises enabled detailed and collaborative assessments of participating countries' implementation of export controls and non-proliferation obligations under UNSCR 1540, culminating in the development of an outcome document that supports stronger regional coordination and compliance.

These multi-pronged efforts reaffirm the Philippines' principled commitment to advancing global disarmament, safeguarding human security, and promoting rules-based international cooperation in an increasingly complex strategic environment.

iii. Transnational Crime

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

The Philippines retained the highest rating for Anti-Trafficking efforts in the 2024 US State Department Report on Trafficking in Persons. It continued to fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, maintaining its Tier 1 status for the eighth consecutive year. This commitment is only strengthened by the adoption of the 4th National Strategic Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons (2023-2027) addressing key areas: 1) Prevention and Advocacy, 2) Protection and Reintegration, 3) Prosecution and Law Enforcement, and 4) Partnership and Networking. This is anchored in the Philippines' obligations under

the ASEAN Convention on Against Trafficking in Person, and a result of the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking's (IACAT) consultation with Philippine government agencies, local-government units, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, and victim-survivors.

The Philippines' demonstration of serious efforts to combat trafficking in persons are observed through adopting IACAT's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to identify and monitor trafficking-related corruption cases, prosecuting and investigating alleged traffickers, disseminating rules and regulations for the amended anti-trafficking law, and sentencing all traffickers to crucial prison terms (US Department of State, 2024).

In the 2024 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons of the UN Office for Drugs and Other Crimes, women, girls, and children remain to be more vulnerable to trafficking, with up to 61 percent of victims identified as female (UNODC, 2024). Most of them are exposed to sexual exploitation, forced labor, or mixed labor and sexual exploitation. Most of these cases happened either through physical or virtual means. The Republic Act No. 11930, or the "Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse of Exploitation Materials (CSAEM)" Act came into effect in July 2022 to address online sexual exploitation, involving the IACAT to monitor promotion of advertisement of trafficking online.

The Philippines has been significantly promoting women's rights by strengthening its mechanisms for gender mainstreaming, securing women's health, and advancing education and training opportunities for women (UN Women, 2024). During the 69th annual Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69), the Philippines held a side event to discuss strategies to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and the *Pasay Declaration* (DFA, 2025). In 2024, the Philippines also launched its National Action Plan to End VAW (NAP EVAW) 2025-2030 placing it as one of the countries with a national policy addressing VAW that is overseen by a national mechanism mandated to monitor and review its implementation (Philippine Commission on Women, 2024).

Online platforms have been misused for nefarious ends, from online sexual exploitation to illegal recruitment. Cases of Filipinos traveling overseas under the belief of an employment opportunity that ends in forced labor or slavery have been recorded. Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) have also been recruited online, only to be trafficked abroad. Scam hubs across Southeast Asia have become rampant and have victimized a huge number of Filipinos deceived by job opportunities as call center agents abroad, only to be deployed as online scammers and detained in illegal consecrated camps.

There was also a growing number of Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGO) operations in the Philippines, enabling exploitation of the Filipino

workforce under illegal operation schemes. These scam operations in the country are only a portion of the expanding transnational chain of criminality spreading across ASEAN. In the case of the Philippines, Senate Deputy Minority Leader Risa Hontiveros has been promoting the creation of the “Anti-POGO Act” to deconstruct such transnational scam operations in the Philippines. It is also in support of the crackdown of scam hubs in ASEAN that victimized Filipino migrant workers and the pursuit of international cooperation to dismantle such illegal operations (Bacelonia, 2025).

Different Philippine agencies have adopted programs to address trafficking-in-persons. With illegal recruitment as a predominant form of trafficking in persons, the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) carries out various initiatives and programs to educate prospective OFWs, including partnering with local government units and NGOs. There are various bilateral and multilateral cooperation initiatives in combating trafficking, such as the Philippine Internet Crimes Against Children Center (PICACC), and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Philippines and the United Arab Emirates on Cooperation in Combating Human Trafficking. The Philippines also extends assistance to trafficking victims, their families, and communities with comprehensive and holistic psychosocial services for victim-survivors, through the Department of Social Welfare and Development’s (DSWD) Recovery and Reintegration Program for Trafficked Persons.

As for addressing transnational crime at sea, the Department of National Defense (DND) continues to closely work with Indonesia and Malaysia to counter transnational security threats in maritime areas of shared concern under the auspices of the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA). Forms of cooperation pursued under this framework include coordinated patrols, maritime training activities, and information sharing.

The last (26%) iteration of the Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines (INDOMALPHI) Joint Working Group Meeting (JWG) on the TCA was hosted by the DND on November 28, 2024. During which, the meeting noted that there continues to be zero kidnap-for-ransom incidents within the maritime areas of shared concern since 2021. The Philippines and Japan co-chairs the ADMM-Plus EWG on Maritime Security (MS) for the 2024-2027 cycle, with the theme “ASEAN Seas of Cooperation: Enhancing Maritime Security and Protection in a Changing World”. As part of the Work Plan, the DND seeks to bolster practical cooperation in support to operations against non-traditional maritime security challenges, including illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUUF), marine environmental crimes, and sabotage to critical undersea infrastructure.

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

Over the past few years, the Philippine government monitored and conducted operations to limit scam hubs, in the guise of Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGOs) or Internet Gaming Licensees (IGLs), which were involved in cyber scams, fraud, trafficking in persons, kidnap for ransom, tax evasion, money laundering and drug trafficking, among other crimes.

The Philippines reiterates its commitment to combat transnational crimes in the region, particularly drug trafficking, human trafficking, money laundering and cybercrimes, through bilateral cooperation with ASEAN Member States and active participation in various ASEAN-led initiatives, including the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and through the implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime.

At the national level, the Philippine Center on Transnational Crime (PCTC), created under Executive Order No. 62, dated 15 January 1999, is at the forefront of government efforts against transnational crime, with particular focus on illegal drug trafficking, cybercrime, trafficking in persons, smuggling, money laundering, and terrorism, among others.

The PCTC is mandated to explore and coordinate information exchanges and training with other government agencies, foreign countries, and international organizations. Further, the PCTC-INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) Manila actively participates locally and internationally in various activities, programs, and projects concerning counterterrorism and other transnational crimes.

In bilateral meetings at the sidelines of the 92nd INTERPOL GA (ASEAN MS and Dialogue Partners), Canada mentioned a recent raid of a precursor and opioid superlab in British Columbia, which they said involved illegal drugs meant for transport to the Philippines. The Philippine National Police mentioned that there was one Canadian national in the Philippines' custody over illegal drugs and made Canada aware that "legacy bad guys" were in the former's prisons. Meanwhile, discussions with Vietnam revolved around the number of Filipinos and Vietnamese going to each other's country, and the crimes happening, including involvement in the cyberscam centers (illegal POGOs), drugs, and theft. These spaces for dialogue give countries ample opportunity to discuss common issues of concern and potential strategies for collaboration and cooperation to effectively resolve these issues.

The Philippines has demonstrated its dedication to combat transnational crimes through the initiatives of the Philippine Center on Transnational Crime (PCTC) and

the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission (PAOCC), which lead operations and cooperate with other law enforcement agencies.

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During this period, Philippine government agencies communicated with relevant foreign diplomatic missions accredited to the Philippines in order to provide assistance to their respective foreign nationals and assist in expediting the repatriation or deportation of victims, as the case may be. This was the Philippines' way of demonstrating commitment and readiness to cooperate and provide assistance during the course of investigation, and uncovering of human trafficking cases and other transnational crimes in the region.

Last year, the Philippines demonstrated high-level political commitment to combat transnational crimes, including online scams, through the issuance by the President of an Executive Order imposing an immediate ban on offshore and internet gaming in the Philippines, which was fully implemented by 31 December 2024.

The Philippines reiterates its commitment to combat transnational crimes in the region, particularly drug trafficking, human trafficking, money laundering and cybercrimes, through bilateral cooperation with ASEAN Member States and active participation in various ASEAN-led initiatives, including the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and through the implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime.

Moreover, the tremendous impact of climate change in the ASEAN region has caused catastrophic displacement that has eventually affected human mobility in the region. The ASEAN Migration Outlook called for the establishment of climate-driven migration policies. During the CSW69 Side Event "Accelerating Progress on the BPfA on Women and the Environment through a Care-Centered Just Transition," the Philippines discussed its priorities to support this venture, namely: 1) Public policies must adopt a comprehensive approach to address the interconnected crises of care and climate; 2) Strengthen care services through formalization and fair wages, ensuring climate-resilient infrastructure, and creating green jobs; and 3) Implement gender-responsive policies backed up by data and account for the disproportionate impacts on women, while empowering local communities to ensure that care systems remain strong and effective, even during climate disruptions (Philippine Commission on Women, 2025).

iv. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Natural disasters have contributed to shaping Philippine history and policies on disaster management. The country's extensive experience in disaster management has translated into sound policies on disaster risk reduction and management for the Philippine bureaucracy.

The Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 or RA 10121 paved the way for a paradigm shift in the country's disaster management system, from one that is primarily focused on response and preparedness, to one that is focused on reducing and managing disaster risks. It was crafted to address the need to adopt a disaster risk reduction and management approach that is holistic, comprehensive, integrated, and proactive in lessening the socio-economic and environmental impacts of disaster including climate change, and promote the involvement and participation of all sectors and all stakeholders concerned, at all levels, especially the local community.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Framework (NDRRMF) of 2011 and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP) 2020-2030 serve as vital guidelines and goal posts in directing, coordinating, and harmonizing the Philippines' efforts in disaster management. The NDRRMF was reviewed and revised so as to align with the principles and policies stated in the DRRM Act of 2010. NDRRMF was needed to guide national and local efforts on disaster risk reduction, to develop a common understanding of DRRM, and to create a criteria for benchmarking the effectiveness of disaster risk reduction measures as a tool for evaluating progress.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP) 2020-2030, was approved during the 4th Regular National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) Full Council Meeting on 30 October 2020. The NDRRMP 2020-2030 is the updated version of the NDRRMP 2011-2028, which was developed in fulfilment of the requirement of Republic Act No. 10121, otherwise known as the "Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010."

The NDRRMP is a roadmap of disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) that sets out goals and specific objectives for reducing and managing disaster risks, and strengthening institutional arrangements and capacity at all levels that will contribute to gender-responsive and rights-based sustainable development. Led by the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), the 10-year NDRRMP went through consultations among NDRRMC member agencies, Regional Disaster Reduction and Management Councils (RDDRM), Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Offices (LDRRMOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the academe, private sector, development partners, humanitarian assistance actors and other stakeholders at various levels to ensure a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach in the development of the plan.

The updated NDRRMP establishes linkage between disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM), climate change adaptation (CCA), and human security by focusing on climate and disaster risks. The plan targets twenty-three (23) outcomes, fifty (50) outputs and two-hundred-six (206) activities which will be reviewed and assessed in three separate review timelines during its implementation.

The NDRRMP intends to: 1) provide strategic direction and guidance to national government agencies (NGAs), local government units (LGUs), civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector, and development partners on disaster and climate-resilience actions in the Philippines; 2) strengthen disaster and climate risk governance by clarifying the roles, accountabilities, strategies, and activities of disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) stakeholders at all levels; 3) strengthen linkages and interoperability of the DRRM thematic pillars; 4) ensure the convergence of and synergy between DRRM and CCA; and 5) contribute to the achievement and coherence of global (Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 - 2030, Paris Agreement, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2015 - 2030, International Health Regulations (IHR), New Urban Agenda), regional (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Disaster Risk Reduction Framework, ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response, Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030), and national (Ambisyon Natin 2040, Philippine Development Plan 2017 – 2022, National Framework Strategy on Climate Change (NFSCC), NCCAP 2011 - 2028, and NSS) development and policy agenda.

The Philippines recognizes its role in global disaster management and actively participates in global and regional initiatives to strengthen disaster response, while advocating for global and regional cooperation in disaster risk reduction.

The Philippines actively participates in the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR), leveraging it to promote Philippine disaster risk reduction efforts and align with global best practices. The GPDRR provides a valuable platform for the Philippines to learn from other countries' experiences and share its own expertise in disaster risk reduction. Participating in the GPDRR helps the Philippines align its disaster risk reduction policies and practices with global standards and frameworks.

The Philippines also hosts regional platforms, like the 2024 Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR), to further advance regional cooperation in disaster risk reduction. The Philippines partnered with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) to host the 2024 APMCDRR from 14 to 18 October 2024 at the Philippine International Convention Center in Manila. The APMCDRR is the main platform in Asia and the Pacific to monitor, review and enhance cooperation for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 at the regional level. The conference brought

together governments, intergovernmental, international, national and civil society organizations, the private sector, science, academia and stakeholder groups to accelerate progress in reducing disaster risk. As the first regional platform since the adoption of the Political Declaration of the Sendai Framework Midterm Review, the APMCDRR 2024 was held under the working theme “Surge to 2030: Enhancing ambition in Asia-Pacific to accelerate disaster risk reduction”. The conference provided an important opportunity to review risk reduction efforts, share innovative solutions and make actionable commitments to accelerate disaster risk reduction by 2030 in the world’s most disaster-prone region.

The Philippines has also been an active participant in regional disaster management initiatives. Through the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC)-Office of Civil Defense, it has participated in humanitarian aid to disaster-ravaged communities in the ASEAN region, including the 28 March 2025 Myanmar earthquake when it sent an 89-member Philippine Inter-Agency Humanitarian Contingent (PHIAC) and a 3-person group in the ASEAN-ERAT to the same country, ASEAN-ERAT deployment to Tropical Cyclone Mocha in Myanmar on 19-29 May 2023, ASEAN joint needs assessment in connection to the civil unrest in Myanmar, June 2022 and ASEAN-ERAT deployment and deployment of NDRRMC relief items during the Magnitude 7.5 Sulawesi Earthquake response operations, September 2018.

The Philippines has also been supportive of training and capacity building programs that will be crucial in using application technologies and ICT assets as well as participation in ASEAN activities and programmes that prioritize support for localization of disaster management. Recognition, respect and strengthening the independence of the leadership and decision-making of local actors would be key to humanitarian and disaster response.

The Philippine delegation also took part in the ARF Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction, Preparedness, and Response in Jakarta, Indonesia last 22-24 April 2025. This meeting is in preparation for a new Work Programme of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER).

AADMER, the only legal agreement in the world that covers disaster risk and reduction, serves as the foundation for disaster management initiatives in ASEAN and provides guidelines for mechanisms to substantially reduce disaster losses in lives and in the social, economic, and environmental assets, and to jointly respond to disaster emergencies through concerted national efforts and intensified regional and international cooperation. AADMER is also the basis for the establishment of the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance (AHA) Center, which covers the aspect of operational response.

The ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Center) works closely with ASEAN member states to provide a

coordinated response to disasters in the region, with one of the satellite warehouses located in Camp Aguinaldo.

The AHA Centre does not take overall lead in ASEAN response operations, where contingency teams from assisting ASEAN member countries still work directly with the host government or authorities. It is worth noting that relief goods for Myanmar were flown from an AHA Center satellite warehouse in Camp Aguinaldo, which was inaugurated as the third warehouse in the ASEAN region in 2019.

The Philippines is increasingly enhancing its disaster reduction and management capabilities, with the recent deployment of the Philippine contingent to Myanmar last 01 April 2025. This serves as a concrete demonstration of the Philippines' commitment to the solidarity of nations espoused by the international community in responding to natural calamities.

v. Maritime Security

The Philippines, as a maritime and archipelagic state, regards maritime security as a top priority. The country remains fully committed to the peaceful resolution of maritime and territorial disputes, management of crimes at sea, safety of navigation, and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources, following international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.

The Philippines underscores the value of partnerships towards thwarting threats to maritime security 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, including poaching; the deliberate destruction of the marine environment, especially coral reef ecosystems; and dangerous maneuvers that increase the risk of collisions at sea.

In light of recent maritime incidents and developments in the West Philippine Sea, such as in Ayungin (Second Thomas) Shoal, Bajo de Masinloc (Scarborough Shoal), Escoda (Sabina) Shoal, Rozul (Iroquois) Reef, Pag-asa Cay 2 (Sandy Cay), and Zamora (Subi) Reef, the Philippines calls upon South China Sea littoral states, including user states, to adhere to international law, especially UNCLOS and the 2016 Arbitral Award, and respect the Philippines' sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction over its maritime domain.

The South China Sea Disputes

The Philippines advocates for a peaceful, stable, secure, and prosperous South China Sea. Peaceful approaches to the South China Sea disputes are paramount for the Philippines; this includes non-coercive measures, friendly and cordial consultations, negotiations in good faith, and a healthy environment conducive to dispute settlement. In pursuing these peaceful avenues, the Philippines stresses

that such approaches uphold international law, including UNCLOS, and the rules-based international order.

All of the Philippines' actions are consistent with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, the 1982 UNCLOS, the 1982 Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes, and the 2016 South China Sea Arbitration. Actions that employ the use of force or threat of use of force, including acts of intimidation, and unilateral interpretation of international frameworks, subvert the collaborative and shared stewardship in the South China Sea.

During the 8th anniversary of the 2016 Arbitral Award, Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique A. Manalo emphasized that the Award reflects the Philippines' unwavering commitment to the rule of law and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The Philippines appreciates the continuous and growing support expressed by the international community for the Award; this development is a testament that the Award is a useful basis for the peaceful management and resolution of differences at sea.

The issuance of the Advisory Opinion on Climate Change by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) on 21 May 2024 also presents new opportunities for cooperation in protecting and preserving the marine environment in the context of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the adverse effects of climate change, and ocean acidification. The ITLOS cited the 2016 Arbitral Award, further reinforcing the Award's final and binding status under international law.

The Philippines continuously pushes for substantive and pragmatic cooperation under the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC). It may be recalled that, pending a comprehensive and durable settlement of the disputes, the parties to the DOC may explore or undertake cooperative efforts in areas such as marine environmental protection, marine scientific research, safety of navigation and communication at sea, search and rescue operations, and combatting transnational crime—including, but not limited to, trafficking in illicit drugs, piracy and armed robbery at sea, and the illegal trafficking of arms.

From 9 to 11 April 2025, the Philippines hosted the negotiations to conclude the COC during the 47th Meeting of the ASEAN-China Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the DOC (JWG-DOC). The Philippines remains hopeful that ASEAN and China will continue to work constructively toward achieving the shared goal of concluding the COC in accordance with the timeline set by the adoption of the Guidelines on Accelerating the Early Conclusion of the Code of Conduct, with a target year of 2026.

The Philippines and China continue to engage through the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism (BCM) on the South China Sea. At the 9th BCM held in Manila on 2 July

2024, the Philippines and China, noting recent incidents at Ayungin (Second Thomas) Shoal, agreed on the principles and approaches for a Provisional Arrangement on Rotation and Reprovisioning (RORE) missions to the BRP *Sierra Madre*. The arrangement aims to prevent misunderstandings and miscalculations during the Philippines' lawful RORE missions and to de-escalate tensions, without prejudice to either side's respective positions in the South China Sea. As of 24 April 2025, the arrangement has enabled seven incident-free RORE missions by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

The two sides also signed the Arrangement on Improving the Philippines-China Maritime Communication Mechanisms and agreed to explore its operationalization. In addition, the parties discussed the possible resumption of the Joint Coast Guard Committee (JCGC) between their respective coast guard authorities and the convening of an academic forum to promote cooperation in marine scientific and technological research.

During the 10th BCM, convened in Xiamen, Fujian on 16 January 2025, China and the Philippines further agreed to reinvigorate the platform for coast guard cooperation and identified ocean meteorology as an area of focus for a future workshop on marine scientific cooperation.

Philippine National Efforts in Promoting Maritime Security

The Philippines adopted into law Republic Act No. 12064 (Philippine Maritime Zones Act) and Republic Act No. 12065 (Philippine Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act). These maritime laws improve the country's ocean governance capacity, reinforce its maritime policies for economic development, and uphold national security. Specifically, the Philippine Maritime Zones Act eliminates the legal ambiguities surrounding the country's maritime zones in congruence with UNCLOS, while simultaneously enforcing the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award. Meanwhile, the Philippine Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act designates appropriate sea lanes and air routes in Philippine archipelagic waters to facilitate the continuous, expeditious, and unobstructed passage of foreign vessels and aircraft.

On 15 June 2024, the Philippines made a partial submission to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) on its entitlement to an extended continental shelf (ECS) in the West Palawan Region (WPR) located in the West Philippine Sea/South China Sea. The submission affirms the Philippines' maritime entitlements in accordance with the 1982 UNCLOS and demonstrates its commitment to the responsible application of its processes. The Philippines emphasizes that this submission represents a constructive step towards future dialogue on delimitation matters and other forms of cooperation with relevant coastal States moving forward.

The Foreign Service Institute (FSI), as the Department of Foreign Affairs' institutional consultant, convened the Law of the Sea Academy for ASEAN diplomats (LSA ASEAN) on 16-18 September 2024. The LSA ASEAN sought to promote a better appreciation and understanding of the law of the sea among Southeast Asian states, as well as foster regional collaboration in addressing common challenges in the maritime domain. Through a series of lectures delivered by high-caliber experts and practitioners, the LSA ASEAN aimed to strengthen participants' foundational knowledge of the UNCLOS, including issues such as dispute settlement mechanisms, maritime boundary delimitation, and the management of ocean resources.

Fostering a Coordinated, Interagency Approach to Maritime Security

Following the promulgation of Executive Order No. 57, Series of 2024 that established the National Maritime Council (Council), the Philippine government has placed due emphasis on addressing numerous maritime security issues. The Council, which has convened five (5) times since its establishment, provides the member agencies with a platform to discuss and explore various approaches to address maritime security issues at the policy level.

The Council, including through the Presidential Office for Maritime Concerns (POMC) as its secretariat, has provided a coordinated approach to decision making when handling maritime concerns. This solidifies the Philippine government's resolve for a stronger approach to improve its maritime security and maritime domain awareness to be able to further contribute to regional security.

Establishing the national policy and strategic framework for maritime security

The Council intends to initiate a comprehensive and strategic framework that aligns with current maritime challenges and opportunities. This will be pursued through the development of an updated national maritime policy, which will be supplemented by a national maritime security strategy. The policy will establish the core principles that the Philippine government will follow towards maritime security and guide the formulation of strategies. Subsequently, the strategy will translate the principles set in the policy into short- to medium-term objectives and approaches that will be pursued by the Philippine government. It is envisioned for the strategy to cover threats including piracy; transnational crime; illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing or IUUF; smuggling; and human trafficking, among others.

The policy and strategy will essentially be designed to address domestic maritime security gaps and to safeguard sovereignty, territorial integrity, and maritime jurisdiction from evolving threats. In effect, the Philippines will undertake its role in upholding a rules-based order in the maritime domain in its part of the region.

Strengthening maritime domain awareness capabilities

Ensuring the responsiveness of a country's capabilities in understanding maritime threats that affect its surrounding waters is key to effectively contribute to regional peace and stability. Accordingly, the Council, through the POMC, conducted the Maritime Domain Awareness Capability Assessment tackling the gaps and determining opportunities for capability development with regard to the Philippines' maritime domain awareness. The assessment is anticipated to serve as a key reference of Council-level policies that will enable the Philippines' maritime agencies to harmonize mandates, streamline maritime operations, and be provided with support for capability development.

Regional and International Cooperation on Maritime Security

The Philippines convened several maritime-oriented bilateral mechanisms with Australia, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The bilateral maritime dialogues serve as a platform for the Philippines to comprehensively and substantively discuss maritime-related issues and concerns. It also enables the country to explore and expand the scope of maritime cooperation with its partners.

The Philippines unwaveringly supports and actively participates in 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), the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), and the East Asia Summit (EAS).

Beyond ASEAN, the Philippines recognizes the value of multilateralism in the maritime domain and actively advocates for international frameworks and dialogues with partners to address current and emerging maritime challenges.

The Philippines and the European Union held the second Sub-Committee on Maritime Cooperation (SCM) on 29 October 2024 in Manila. The SCM explored partnership between the Philippines and the European Union on bolstering the safety and security of seafarers, maritime domain awareness, coast guard cooperation, and addressing non-traditional security threats.

On 10 December 2024, the Philippines, Japan, and the United States convened a Trilateral Maritime Dialogue in Tokyo, Japan. The triumvirate dialogue featured open and dynamic discussions focusing on strategic perspectives concerning regional maritime issues. The dialogue served as a "durable foundation for coordination and cooperation in addressing challenges and complexities of the regional maritime landscape."

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), along with like-minded armed and defense forces from Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States, held various multilateral Maritime Cooperative Activities (MCA) within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone (EEZ). These MCAs sought to bolster the participating armed and defense forces' interoperability and cooperation, underscoring the vitality of regional cooperation to address current and emerging maritime security challenges. The exercises also upheld the freedom of navigation and overflight, including other lawful uses of the seas under UNCLOS, and promoted peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

During the High-Level Think Tank Seminar on ASEAN-China Relations on 21 February 2025, the Philippines, through the Foreign Service Institute, raised the importance of science diplomacy as a platform for fostering collaboration between ASEAN and China on shared environmental objectives. This approach would include comprehensive resource assessments, joint marine biodiversity conservation efforts, capacity-building for science diplomacy, and coordinated climate action and resilience strategies.

The Philippines promoted its strategic approaches to maritime security, underscoring the country's firm and consistent advocacy for international law and the rules-based international order, particularly the UN Charter, the 1982 UNCLOS, and the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award, during a side event of the 10th Our Ocean Conference held in Busan, Republic of Korea, on 28-30 April 2025. Moreover, the Philippines highlighted that the maintenance of peace and stability in the South China Sea is of fundamental interest for the international community.

The Philippines remains committed to proactive engagement with relevant coastal States and maintaining open, proper, and constructive channels of dialogue and communication to manage differences in the South China Sea.

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) recognizes the opportunity for the Philippines to strengthen ties with its partners from the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to enhance the region's capacity to address maritime threats and safeguard maritime security. Since the ARF's adoption of the 2003 Statement on Cooperation Against Piracy and Other Threats to Maritime Security, ASEAN Member States including the Philippines have continuously implemented measures such as improving patrols in archipelagic waters and enhancing training for maritime law enforcement and defense agencies. In line with ARF workplans, the PCG actively contributes data and progress reports to the ARF Unit, supporting the development and periodic review of legal guidelines and best practices for regional maritime law enforcement.

Legal and Investigative Measures

To operationalize these legal commitments, the PCG launched a comprehensive Investigation Manual developed in partnership with the Canada Border Services Agency. This manual standardizes procedures for maritime criminal investigations, arrest protocols, and case filings, ensuring that enforcement actions are both systematic and rights-compliant.

Capacity Building and Training

The PCG continues to build regional capacity through joint training and exercises. In January 2025, the U.S. Embassy organized a Boarding Officer Course to enhance boarding, inspection, and evidence-handling capabilities among participants. Similarly, in August 2024, the Philippines and Vietnam held their first-ever joint Coast Guard exercise, focusing on search-and-rescue operations and onboard fire prevention—highlighting cooperation even amid unresolved maritime disputes.

Maritime Domain Awareness and Technology

Recognizing the importance of real-time situational awareness, the PCG has partnered with the Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA) to utilize satellite imagery and space-based sensors for maritime zone monitoring. This effort is further supported by the U.S.-backed expansion of the Vessel Traffic Management System (VTMS), which now includes ten new centers to significantly enhance vessel tracking, navigational safety, and environmental monitoring.

International Exercises and Joint Patrols

The PCG participates in coordinated patrols and maritime exercises under ARF and the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP). These include joint operations in the Sulu-Celebes Seas, boarding and information-sharing drills, and regional cluster meetings to harmonize rules of engagement and reduce the risk of escalation among member states. In particular, despite the reduction in alert levels in the Zamboanga-Basilan-Sulu-Tawi-Tawi (ZAMBASULTA) region, the PCG maintains vigilant monitoring to deter kidnappings and prevent terrorist activities by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). It also works closely with maritime law enforcement agencies in Malaysia and Indonesia to track cross-border movements of terrorist groups. Additionally, the PCG is addressing a rise in armed robbery incidents in port areas, where perpetrators have escalated to using force and threats against crew aboard docked vessels. In response, the PCG is expanding patrols around key ports and coordinating with local law enforcement to dismantle local support networks behind these incidents.

Modernization and Fleet Expansion

As part of its long-term transformation, the PCG is advancing under the Four-Part Coast Guard Modernization Act introduced by Senator Win Gatchalian in December 2023. The plan includes acquiring new offshore patrol vessels through Japanese soft-loans and engaging French shipbuilder OCEA for additional patrol craft, thereby extending the maritime coverage and operational endurance of the PCG.

Information Sharing and Partnerships

Newly signed defense accords with Japan—including an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement and a bilateral information-sharing pact—will streamline logistical support, joint training, and intelligence exchange. The Philippines also aims to finalize Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with Australia for drone surveillance capabilities and with Canada for legal assistance in maritime prosecutions.

Legislative and Policy Reforms

To reinforce its institutional capacity, the Philippines is conducting policy reviews to align the mandates of the PCG with international standards such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and ARF preventive frameworks.

In view of the foregoing, the comprehensive engagement of the PCG under the ARF framework has fortified both legal structures and operational capacities to address piracy and other maritime threats. The PCG has significantly enhanced its maritime domain awareness and interdiction capabilities by leveraging international partnerships, advanced technologies, and targeted training. Moving forward, ongoing fleet modernization, expanded vessel traffic management, satellite-based surveillance, and legislative reforms will further cement the Philippines' resolve to protect vital sea lines of communication and uphold regional maritime security in the Indo-Pacific.

Forging stronger ties with like-minded countries

The Presidential Office for Maritime Concerns (POMC) also engages with representatives of like-minded nations to discuss shared interests and potential areas of cooperation on maritime security and domain awareness. Likewise, the POMC aims to continue participating in bilateral and multilateral engagements, as well as international mechanisms aimed towards promoting regional peace and stability.

National Initiatives on Strengthening the Blue Economy

As a maritime and archipelagic state, the Philippines continues its initiatives to strengthen the blue economy by embedding it into national policies. These efforts aim to ensure the sustainable development and conservation of the Philippines' marine resources and improve the maritime governance in the country.

The Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 integrated the blue economy to national development initiatives, particularly in agriculture and agri-business (National Economic Development Authority, n.d.). This integration includes the full implementation of the Philippine Fisheries Management Act, sustainable management of the country's Fisheries Management Areas, and agriculture modernization initiatives to ensure the food security of the country.

The blue economy concept is also operationalized in the *PAGTANAW 2050*, a foresight study by the National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) which identified the blue economy as one of its key operational areas in pursuit of sustainable economic development. The Maritime Industry Development Authority (MARINA)'s Maritime Industry Development Plan 2028 also incorporates the blue economy through the promotion of green shipping including ports and shipyards, contributing to a safer maritime transport industry in the country (MARINA, 2024).

Philippine government agencies including the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Energy (DOE) have incorporated the blue economy concept into their respective plans to align their operations with sustainable development goals.

As of 19 May 2025, the Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council (LEDAC) prioritized four key legislations related to maritime governance and the blue economy (Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council, 2025). Three of these said legislations have been enacted: (i) the Philippine Economic and Natural Capital Accounting System (PENCAS) Act; (ii) Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act; and (iii) Philippine Maritime Zones Act. The remaining bill, the proposed Blue Economy Act, a policy which seeks to establish a national blue economy framework for the sustainable use of marine resources and development of ocean industries, is yet to be passed.

Reaffirming the Philippines' commitment to responsible utilization of its natural resources, the country enacted Republic Act No. 11995 or the Philippine Economic and Natural Capital Accounting System (PENCAS) Act on 22 May 2024. The law institutionalizes a comprehensive system for valuing and accounting for the

country's natural resources and environmental assets, enhancing the Philippines' ability to monitor and value both terrestrial and marine resources.

On 14 March 2025, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga announced the formation of the Ocean Environments Task Force (OETF). The OETF is tasked with developing a science-based framework for ocean risk governance, environmental security, and a comprehensive national ocean environments policy (DENR, 2025a). Plans are also underway to establish the Ocean Environments Bureau (OEB) within the DENR to address climate change and marine environment-related challenges.

The DENR will establish six pilot marine scientific research stations that will serve as innovation and action hubs dedicated to the protection, conservation, and sustainable use of marine resources for current and future generations. These research stations will also contribute to a better understanding of the coastal and marine environments of the country for informed decision-making, management and sustainable development towards an inclusive and climate-resilient future (DENR, 2024).

Regional Engagements

The Philippines recognizes the importance of regional collaboration in protecting marine ecosystems through hosting key regional institutions. The Philippines hosts the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) in Los Baños, Laguna which has conservation initiatives such as the ASEAN Heritage Parks Programme, ASEAN Green Initiative, ASEAN Biodiversity Outlook, and the ASEAN Biodiversity Dashboard among others.

The Philippines hosts the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) in Quezon City. In this regard, the country hopes for substantive cooperation on the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia Implementation Plan 2023-2027. To strengthen regional fisheries capacity, the Philippines hosts the Aquaculture Department (AQD) of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) in Tigbauan, Iloilo, Panay Island. The Philippines also values the contribution of the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) in promoting regional cooperation on sustainable marine economic development and marine environmental protection.

Global Engagements

The Department of Foreign Affairs-Maritime and Ocean Affairs Office (MOAO) convened the Philippine National Stakeholders Consultation Workshop on 19-20 November 2024 to prepare for the 3rd United Nations Oceans Conference (UNOC3) (DFA, 2024b). The workshop focused on creating a consolidated report, recommendations, and voluntary commitments for submission at UNOC3. The

event covered four main themes: (i) marine and coastal ecosystem conservation and pollution addressing; (ii) ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus; (iii) sustainable fisheries management and artisanal fisheries; and (iv) sustainable ocean-based economies. The discussion also addressed strengthening UNCLOS and international law implementation, promoting international cooperation, and mobilizing financing for SDG 14.

From 28 to 30 April 2025, the Philippines participated in the 10th *Our Ocean Conference* in Busan, Korea, announcing new domestic initiatives to address marine pollution and biodiversity conservation (DFA, 2025c). The five voluntary commitments were made by the Philippines, valued at USD60 million, namely: (i) collection of 80 million kilograms of marine waste by 2030; (ii) long-term resilience for marine biodiversity conservation and partnerships in Palawan by 2028; (iii) marine turtle nesting protection in Ilocos Sur by 2028; (iv) sustainable sports and youth athlete engagement towards a culture of responsibility in marine conservation; and (v) creation of an oceans environment policy and task force bureau.

The Philippines welcomes the adoption of the Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement, establishing equitable, holistic, and sustainable management of marine resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction under UNCLOS. The country signed the Agreement on 20 September 2023 and is committed to being among the first countries to ratify it and actively contribute to its institutional arrangements.

In support of the said Agreement, the Philippines participated in the Preparatory Commission for the Entry into Force of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction on 14-25 April 2025, advocating for transparency, inclusivity, and efficiency in decision-making processes, emphasizing the importance of the Scientific and Technical Body and marine scientific research in understanding the marine environment. The Philippines also called to strengthen scientific institutions in states adjacent to such areas.

DFA Secretary Enrique A. Manalo engaged his counterparts at the 28th Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) of the Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to discuss matters concerning the expansion of the Philippines' partnership with CARICOM member states on health, maritime training, education, among others. (DFA, 2025b). He highlighted the Philippines' and CARICOM's commitment towards climate justice, resilience and sustainability, and oceans governance and maritime security based on the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of The Sea. Secretary Manalo also met with CARICOM Secretary General Ms. Carla Barnett to explore pathways for collaborating on climate adaptation, agriculture, ocean governance, biodiversity, and sustainable development.

In September 2024, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) gathered member states to discuss the *Initiative for Regional Cooperation on Ocean-based Climate Action* which concerns (i) the protection and enhancement of blue carbon ecosystems; (2) net zero shipping and maritime connectivity; (3) acceleration of the deployment of ocean-based renewable energy; and (4) advancing ocean-climate resilience (DFA, 2024a).

The Philippines was re-elected to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Council in 2023 during the 33rd IMO Assembly held in London, United Kingdom, reflecting the pivotal role of the Philippines in global shipping and the international maritime community (Department of Transportation, 2023). In line with the Philippines strong support for climate action, the country donated USD40,000 allocated for climate training and development cooperation activities at sea (DFA, 2025a).

The Philippines currently hosts the Loss and Damage Fund, which is dedicated to providing assistance to developing countries in responding to economic and non-economic loss and damage brought by the adverse effects of climate change (Presidential Communications Office, 2024).

To address the country's challenges related to plastic waste, the DENR launched the National Plastic Action Partnership (NPAP). This initiative is supported by the World Economic Forum's Global Plastic Action Partnership, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the Coca-Cola Foundation (Moaje, 2025). This initiative is aligned with the Philippine Development Plan, the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act, and the Philippine Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption and Production, and the Philippines' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to climate action.

The Philippines also launched its National Blue Carbon Action Partnership (NBCAP), bringing together various stakeholders and experts to address issues and negative impacts on blue carbon ecosystems. During the launch, the National Secretariat for the NBCAP was established and will spearhead the following activities: (i) creation of the Philippines NBCAP Leadership Steering Group and Task Force; (ii) development of a science-based roadmap that identifies policy, collaboration, and investment needs; and (iii) implementation of the said roadmap with assistance and support from the Blue Carbon Action Partnership and its members (Friends of Ocean Action, 2025).

Philippine Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations

In the more than six decades following its maiden involvement in peacekeeping operations with the deployment of the Limbas Squadron, which was composed of personnel from the Philippine Air Force, to assist in the *Operation des Nations Unies au Congo* (ONUC) in 1963, the Philippines has taken pride in being one of the

most active contributors to United Nations peace operations worldwide, sending out almost 15,000 Filipino peacekeepers to 21 different peacekeeping operations and special political missions across the globe.

Even prior to the institutionalization of peacekeeping operations, the Philippines had already shown its commitment to peace and security, being one of the countries to participate in the UN Command (UNC) in Korea in 1950. Such has been the Philippines' participation that the UN has lauded Filipino peacekeepers, not only for their important role in ensuring peace and security, but also for their many contributions to the long and difficult process of post-conflict rehabilitation (Foreign Service Institute, 2021).

Throughout the years of Philippines involvement in UN peacekeeping operations worldwide, it has, inevitably, participated in activities that deal with matters pertaining to its immediate vicinity and the wider Asia Pacific region. Examples of such operations are the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), where the Philippines has been considered a top "troop-contributing country" (TCC) along with Croatia and the Republic of Korea; the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET), to which the Philippines sent representatives to be included in the 270 civilian police deployed ; the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), where deployed Filipinos served as force commanders (Ian & Mayer-Rieckh, 2005); and the United Nations Security Force in West New Guinea (UNSF), with Philippine police officers temporarily being employed in the operation to fill the posts vacated by Dutch officials (Gruss, 2005).

Even beyond whatever goodwill it may help foster with its geographic neighbors, Philippine activity in Asian and ASEAN-based peacekeeping operations also serves as a manifestation of the continued significance of regional organizations. This is reflected in the fact that while peacekeeping operations tend to have a larger, global scope, the UN has made a point of identifying cooperation and partnership with more region-oriented organizations—such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)—as an invaluable aspect of the process of peacebuilding and conflict-prevention, helping ensure that operations and activities remain timely and relevant.

As UN Secretary-General António Guterres stated, "...[A]t this time of increasingly complex challenges for global peace and security, cooperative and inclusive multilateral efforts, including strong partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations, are essential," a belief best exemplified by the endorsement of ten ASEAN member states of Secretary-General Guterres's "Action for Peacekeeping" initiative and the pledging of six ASEAN countries, including the Philippines, to the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System. Similarly, the ASEAN and the UN have looked into possible joint exploration of developing early warning arrangements and threat analysis (United Nations, 2020).

During the 2025 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial in Berlin, Germany, Philippine Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. expressed the Philippines' commitment to deploy more Filipino troops in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions worldwide. These contributions build upon the Philippines' existing pledges, which include a quick reaction force company and a military construction engineering company.

The Philippines will also host the 2025 ASEAN Peacekeeping Staff Exercise in September 2025, underscoring the country's dedication to fostering regional cooperation and strengthening partnerships between the United Nations and regional and regional, and sub regional organizations.

The Philippines has pledged to host the UN Triangular Partnership Programme Training Courses in the ASEAN region in the Calendar Year 2029 to 2030, and also pledged to provide certified military mobile training teams to enhance peacekeeper preparedness in addressing both emerging and persistent challenges. The country is also proud to meet the Secretary-General's 2025 targets under the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy, and as part of its continued commitment, has pledged to increase the deployment of women peacekeepers across all roles (Nepomuceno, 2025).

Through its active participation and leadership in UN peacekeeping initiatives, the Philippines continues to exemplify, demonstrate, and act upon its continued and unwavering commitment to peace and security, both globally and regionally.

vi. Security of Information and Communications Technology

Artificial Intelligence

The Philippines firmly supports banning fully autonomous weapon systems, aligned with its commitment to international humanitarian law and the protection of human rights. Regarding semi-autonomous systems, the country advocates for strict regulatory oversight to ensure meaningful human supervision, promoting the ethical and responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) in defense. Consistent with this stance, the Philippines does not possess or operate fully autonomous weapon systems within its defense and security capabilities.

The Philippines remains actively engaged in international efforts to promote responsible state behavior in cyberspace and the ethical use of AI, particularly in the military domain. It advocates for a rules-based approach to AI governance in defense. The Philippines participated in the 2024 Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain (ReAIM) Summit in the Republic of Korea on 9-10 September 2024, reaffirming the outcomes of the 2023 Manila Meeting on Indo-Pacific perspectives. These engagements reflect the country's commitment to

ensuring military AI applications are ethical, accountable, and environmentally sustainable (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2024).

The Philippines and Canada have embarked on the ICTs Security work stream of the ASEAN Regional Forum on a two-year co-chairship arrangement beginning in 2025 (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2025). Calls for regional cyber cooperation were prominent during the 7th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of ICTs (ISM on ICTs Security) and the 15th ARF Open-Ended Study Group on Confidence Building Measures to Reduce the Risk of Conflict Stemming from the Use of ICTs (OESG) held in Manila on 25-26 March 2025 (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2025).

While the Philippines' AI governance framework remains dispersed across various agencies, significant institutional progress has been achieved with the establishment of the Center for Artificial Intelligence Research (CAIR), initially under the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). CAIR has since been strategically repositioned under the Department of Education (DepEd) as the Education Center for AI Research (E-CAIR), underscoring the government's emphasis on non-security AI applications, particularly in educational sector. This shift reflects the Philippines' progressive approach towards expanding AI implementation across civilian domains.

Cybersecurity

On 04 April 2024, the Philippine government issued Executive Order No. 58, s. 2024, mandating all government agencies to adopt the National Cybersecurity Plan 2023–2028 (NCSP), developed by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT). The NCSP serves as a comprehensive roadmap to protect national institutions, public resources, and citizens from evolving cyber threats, aligned with global, regional, and domestic cybersecurity challenges. It supports the Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028 by advancing the digital economy and sustainable development goals. The NCSP also complements existing legislation, including the Cybercrime Prevention Act and the Data Privacy Act, reinforcing legal protections against cybercrime, misinformation, and AI-driven cyber risks.

The NCSP features an extensive Results Framework with three outcomes, namely: 1) The State and its People in cyberspace are proactively protected and secured; 2) Increased Cybersecurity workforce capabilities; and 3) Strengthened Cybersecurity policy framework.

The NCSP calls for strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation in cybersecurity. The Philippines actively supports multilateral cyber governance by promoting norms of responsible behavior outlined in the 2015 UN GGE Consensus Report. Regionally, it enhances collaboration within ASEAN, notably through

support for establishing the ASEAN Regional Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT), aimed at improving information sharing, cyber exercises, and capacity-building across member states (Cyber Security Agency Singapore, 2024).

The Philippines has participated in and hosted various ASEAN forums, demonstrating a commitment to regional cooperation, namely:

- ARF Series of Workshops on Terminology in the Field of Security of and in the Use of ICTs in Confidence Building, April 2023, online (Co-chairs: Cambodia, Russia)
- ARF Series of Workshops on Countering the Use of ICTs for Criminal Purposes, online (Co-chairs: Thailand, China, Russia)
- ARF Workshop on Fostering Professionals in the Field of Security of and in the Use of ICTs, 13 June 2023, Hanoi, Vietnam (Co-chairs: Vietnam, Republic of Korea)
- ARF Points of Contact Directory on ICTs Security (Co-chairs: Malaysia, Australia)
- ARF Workshop on the Protection of ICT-Enabled Critical Infrastructure, 6-7 June 2024, Singapore (Co-chairs: Singapore, European Union)
- 7th Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting, 25 -26 March 2025, Manila (Co-chair: Canada of the ICTS Security Work Stream, ARF)
- 15th Open-Ended Study Group on Confidence Building Measures to Reduce the Risk of Conflict Stemming from the Use of ICTs (OESG), 25 -26 March 2025, Manila (Co-chair: Canada of the ICTS Security Work Stream, ARF)

Efforts continue to strengthen cybersecurity capabilities through training programs, partnerships with international organizations, and active engagement in regional initiatives such as the ASEAN CERT Incident Drill and the APEC Cybersecurity Strategy. Further, other actions taken to promote security of and in the use of ICTs include developing trust among ARF Participants through confidence-building measures (CBMs); information sharing; capacity-building measures; and practice of voluntary and non-binding norms of responsible State behavior.

4) ROLE OF ARF

a. National contributions to enhancing the ARF and regional security

As a founding member of ASEAN, the Philippines regularly emphasizes the importance of close multilateral action towards regional security through defense cooperation that is guided by ASEAN Centrality and an ASEAN-led regional architecture. In this light, the DND continues to actively engage with and through ASEAN, primarily via the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus, and their support mechanisms and military meetings. Aside from dialogue which encourages trust and transparency, these platforms provide opportunities

for practical cooperation on shared security challenges, to include maritime security, counter-terrorism, cyber security, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, among other areas. In these platforms, the DND regularly emphasizes the need to uphold a rules-based international order and the integrity of processes international law provides for peaceful resolution of fundamental differences. The DND further maintains the call to strengthen the collective commitment of States to preserve peace and stability, and rebuild trust in multilateralism.

b. Future of ARF

As ARF co-chair of three ARF Inter-Sessional Meetings, the Philippines continues to play an active and constructive role towards the full and effective implementation of the Hanoi Plan of Action II.

In line with the mandate given by the ARF Ministers to assess the progress of implementation of action lines under each area of cooperation and to lead discussions on the implementation of the HPOA II, the Philippines, as co-chair of the ISM on NPD, ISM on ICTs Security, and ISM on CTTC, has conducted with its co-chairs an initial assessment of the current status of implementation of the HPOA II.

As the end of term of the HPOA II (2020-2025) looms, the Philippines looks forward to contributing to the development of the Post-2025 ARF Plan of Action, taking into consideration the lessons learned from the implementation of the HPOA II with the end of view of ensuring that the new POA aligns with the existing work plans of the various work streams and remain responsive and relevant in the evolving political security landscape.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA (SOUTH KOREA)

1) OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Today's regional security landscape is characterized by increasing complexity and uncertainty, as strategic rivalries deepen and geopolitical tensions persist. The ongoing nuclear and missile provocations of North Korea, tensions in the South China Sea, and the war in Ukraine continue to undermine regional and global stability. The economic and security dimensions are becoming more interconnected, with issues such as climate change, supply chain disruptions, and energy insecurity posing serious challenges. Non-traditional security threats, such as cyber security threats, further compound these risks and demand coordinated regional response.

Against this backdrop, the vision set forth in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific to promote peace, stability, and prosperity is both timely and pertinent. The realization of an open, transparent, inclusive, and rules-based regional architecture requires the effective functioning of ASEAN-led mechanisms, underpinned by the principle of ASEAN Centrality. In this regard, the role of the ARF has become increasingly significant as a platform for inclusive dialogue and confidence-building among regional stakeholders in pursuit of a sustainable and resilient future. The ROK, as a founding member of the ARF, reaffirms its steadfast commitment to supporting ASEAN and the ARF's efforts in facilitating peace and stability in the region.

Regarding the regional security environment, despite its economic hardship and dire human rights situation, North Korea continues to escalate tension on the Korean Peninsula with ongoing nuclear activities and a series of missile provocations. In 2024, North Korea launched about 50 ballistic missiles, including a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile, in violation of the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs). In September 2024 and January 2025, North Korea disclosed its weapons-grade uranium enrichment facilities, reiterating its intention to produce nuclear weapons exponentially. North Korea continued to conduct simulated tactical nuclear attack drills targeting the ROK, while repeatedly emphasizing that its policy of advancing nuclear capabilities is irreversible. Recently, North Korea unveiled a multi-purpose destroyer which it claims to be capable of loading nuclear missiles. At the launching ceremony, its leader emphasized "the range of employment of its pre-emptive striking capability is not limited to any place or to any line." These clearly demonstrates that Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs pose a direct threat not only to the Korean Peninsula but also to the regional security and beyond.

Since North Korea declared that the two Koreas are the "Two Hostile States" in late 2023, it has pursued physical separation from the ROK, including demolishing parts

of the inter-Korean railways and road connections along the Gyeongui Line in the second half of 2024 and fortifying regions near the Military Demarcation Line. In addition, North Korea launched more than 6,000 balloons carrying waste and trash over a total of 32 occasions toward the ROK from May to the end of November 2024. North Korea has also employed a combination of tactics, such as Global Positioning System jamming in border areas to stir public anxiety.

By deepening its military cooperation with Russia, North Korea continued to pose threat to the peace and the security of both Asia and Europe. On June 19, 2024, Russia and North Korea signed the “Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty” during President Vladimir Putin’s visit to North Korea, which stipulates broad cooperation including mutual military assistance in the event of war. North Korea continued to supply Russia with munitions and ballistic missiles and deployed around 15,000 troops to Russia, deepening illegal military cooperation to an unprecedented level. This military cooperation constitutes a serious violation of international norms, including the United Nations Charter and relevant UNSCRs.

In light of North Korea’s continued provocations, it is more important than ever for the international community to maintain its firm commitment to the complete denuclearization of North Korea and send a clear message that it will never accept North Korea’s possession of nuclear weapons. The ROK will continue its efforts to bring North Korea back to dialogue while responding firmly to any provocation.

Meanwhile, the international community’s vigilance and united response to North Korea’s sanctions evasion is becoming increasingly critical. Following the dissolution of the United Nations Security Council Panel of Experts in April 2024 due to Russia’s veto, the ROK has continued working closely with the international community to address this gap in the sanctions monitoring mechanisms and to uphold the integrity of the United Nations Security Council sanctions regime. As a result, the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team (MSMT) was formed in October 2024 by 11 UN Member States, including 6-member states of the ARF. The ROK will continue assisting the full implementation of the UNSCRs that address North Korea’s weapons of mass destruction program by publishing information based on a rigorous inquiry into sanctions violations and evasion attempts with MSMT participating states.

North Korea is also expanding its threats in non-traditional security domains. It has systematically engaged in crypto-currency theft and money laundering to secure illicit funding for nuclear and missile development programs. In 2024 alone, North Korea reportedly stole a record amount of \$1.34 billion USD. This figure represents over 60% of global crypto-currency theft in the same year. Since 2023, the ROK has been working with ASEAN member states to strengthen their awareness and response capabilities against North Korea’s illicit cyber activities.

Meanwhile, North Korea's human rights and humanitarian situation remains deeply concerning. Since a UN Commission of Inquiry report highlighted the dire human rights situation in 2014, no discernible change has occurred. To improve the human rights situation in North Korea, the ROK is strengthening cooperation with the international community and raising the issue in international fora. In June 2024, as United Nations Security Council president, the ROK chaired the council's opening briefing on the North Korean human rights situation. During the fourth Universal Periodical Review in November 2024, the ROK made recommendations concerning the grave human rights situation in North Korea. In the meantime, the ROK has maintained its position to provide humanitarian assistance to North Korea regardless of the political situation.

The ROK also remains attentive to the evolving security environment in the Asia-Pacific, including situation in the South China Sea and Myanmar. The South China Sea stands as a critical maritime domain, serving as a vital artery for global trade. A third of the world's maritime commerce, including critical energy shipments, transit through this waterway, making its stability paramount for the global economy and security.

Given the immense importance of the South China Sea, the ROK consistently upholds its principled stance. The ROK emphasizes the critical importance of freedom of navigation and overflight, a rules-based order, and the adherence to international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). These are fundamental principles for international maritime stability.

Regarding the ongoing consultation on the Code of Conduct for the South China Sea, the ROK expects the CoC to be consistent with international law and not to undermine the rights and benefits of the states that utilize the South China Sea.

With regard to the situation in Myanmar, the ROK expresses its deep concern over the worsening situation in Myanmar since the military declared a state of emergency in 2021. The humanitarian crisis has further intensified following the severe earthquake that struck Myanmar on 28 March. To facilitate recovery and ensure the delivery of aid to those affected, the ROK calls on all parties in Myanmar to uphold the announced ceasefire and immediately halt all violence.

The ROK has consistently urged the Myanmar military to change course, cease violence without delay, and fully implement ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus. As a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (2024-2025), the ROK will continue to engage with the international community and support ASEAN's efforts to resolve the crisis peacefully.

Humanitarian assistance for the people of Myanmar is urgent amid these ongoing challenges. In 2024 alone, the ROK has provided more than USD 23 million in humanitarian aid through international organizations. In 2025, immediately after

the earthquake, the ROK contributed USD 4 million to address the population's urgent needs. The ROK will maintain its active support and closely monitor the evolving situation to meet the needs of the Myanmar people as they navigate these difficult circumstances.

Given the current security environment, ASEAN-ROK cooperation has become increasingly important in mitigating security uncertainty and enhancing regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. In this context, it is noteworthy that with the celebration of the 35th anniversary of the ASEAN-ROK dialogue relations in 2024, ASEAN and the ROK adopted the Joint Statement on the establishment of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) at the 25th ASEAN-ROK Summit. The CSP, as the highest level of partnership that ASEAN establishes with its Dialogue Partners, not only reflects the mutual trust and profound significance that ASEAN and the ROK place on one another, but also provides a foundation for further strengthening strategic cooperation and communication at all levels and in all forms. Within the framework of the CSP, ASEAN-ROK cooperation will focus on 3 core areas that are aligned with the ASEAN Community's 3 pillars: Political-Security, Economic, and Socio-Cultural.

Regarding the political-security sector, ASEAN and the ROK will further strengthen cooperation and undertake concrete efforts in both traditional and non-traditional security areas. In the economic sector, the ROK will support ASEAN's digital transformation through initiatives such as the Korea-ASEAN Digital Innovation Flagship Project (KADIF). Also, to assist ASEAN's effort to combat climate change, the ROK launched the Partnership for ASEAN-ROK Methane Action (PARMA). In particular, the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation on Methane Mitigation (AKCMM), which is the first project under PARMA, will contribute to ASEAN establishing policies and institutional frameworks to enhance its capacity for methane reduction across the region. With respect to the socio-cultural sector, the ROK is making efforts to enhance human resources through capacity building and scholarship programs for future generations in ASEAN.

A new ASEAN-ROK Plan of Action for the 2026-2030 period will be adopted at the ASEAN-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting in July 2025 reflecting the priorities of ASEAN as identified in the ASEAN Community Vision 2045. Building on this momentum, the ROK remains committed to maintaining its ASEAN centered foreign policy approach.

2) NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

a. Overview of National Security and Defense Policy

The Government of the Republic of Korea has established and is promoting a National Security Strategy to contribute to freedom, peace, and prosperity in the security domain. The ROK Government is firmly committed to maintaining security

while pursuing denuclearization, with the goal of establishing peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and throughout the region.

To realize its defense vision of a strong, advanced, and elite military, the ROK Armed Forces are formulating and implementing comprehensive defense policies. The ROK will maintain a robust security posture to solidify lasting peace on the Korean peninsula, and will continue its efforts to transform into a high-tech, AI and science based military force prepared for future multi-domain warfare through the 'Defense Innovation 4.0' initiative.

Furthermore, the ROK Armed Forces are actively advancing defense diplomacy and the Indo-Pacific Strategy to contribute to global security beyond the Korean peninsula. Defense exchanges and security cooperation are being vigorously expanded, particularly within the Indo-Pacific region, through a wide range of bilateral and multilateral frameworks, thereby strengthening regional peace and stability.

b. Data contribution to ARF Arms Register (as of 2024)

- i. Total Defence expenditure on annual basis:
 - a) Defence expenditure (in KRW billions): 59,424
 - b) Defence expenditure as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP): 2.33%
 - c) Defence expenditure per capita (in KRW billions): 0.001

3) NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL SECURITY

a. Counter-terrorism

Terrorism and violent extremism continue to pose a grave threat to international peace and security. With the global increase in the use of the Internet and social media during the pandemic, terrorists and violent extremists are stepping up their attempts to spread violent extremism content through online platforms. The ROK stands firm in its position that terrorism should be eradicated and not be tolerated in any form. As a member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) for the 2024-2025 term, the ROK is redoubling its efforts to combat terrorism at the national, regional, and global level.

Recognizing the challenges and opportunities related to new technologies in countering terrorism, the ROK government is working closely with the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) to make the world safer and less vulnerable to technology-enabled terrorism through the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Since 2017, the ROK government has been providing annual contributions for various UNOCT programmes.

In 2021, the ROK government took part in the UNOCT Global Counter-Terrorism Programme to help countries strengthen their border security and increase their capacity for countering and preventing terrorism. As a follow-up activity, the ROK government co-hosted a workshop in October 2022 together with the UNOCT to promote best practices in border security and management in the Southeast Asia region. Additionally, in 2023, the ROK government worked with the UNOCT on Countering Terrorism in Travel and Transport in Africa as part of the efforts for launching the UN Joint Appeal for Counter-Terrorism in Africa.

In addition, the ROK government has also been actively engaging in cooperation with the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED). In 2023, CTED delegations visited the ROK to assess the country's implementation of relevant UNSC Counter-Terrorism resolutions. Following this, the final country visit report was adopted in October 2024, and a follow-up implementation report was submitted in May 2025, demonstrating ROK's continued commitment to UN Counter-Terrorism efforts.

The ROK government is also making broader participation 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 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 UNSC resolutions 1267, 1988, 1989, and 2253 to prevent terrorist-related financial flows into domestic institutions.

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

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery system continues to present significant challenges to the global community. In particular, North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs remain a serious threat to regional and international peace and security. The ROK will continue to faithfully implement relevant UNSCRs and strengthen its cooperation with ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Participants until the complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement of all of North Korea's WMD and ballistic missiles programs is achieved.

The ROK remains firmly committed to the full implementation of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT), which has been the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. The ROK has actively participated in the NPT review process and will continue to work with other States Parties, including in the 11th NPT Review Conference in 2026, to achieve balanced progress across all of its three pillars and to maintain and further strengthen the NPT regime.

In order to facilitate progress in nuclear disarmament, the ROK has also engaged in the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament Initiative as one of the co-chairs of its subgroup 2, the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV), and in the Stockholm Initiative. Furthermore, the ROK will closely cooperate with its partners to achieve concrete deliverables and will continue to seek an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and its universalization. The ROK also calls for the commencement of negotiations of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT).

In response to the growing risk of WMD terrorism, the ROK is working toward a full implementation of UNSCR 1540. The ROK welcomes the unanimous adoption of UNSCR 2663 in 2022 to extend the mandate of the 1540 Committee to November 2032. The ROK has been making efforts to implement UNSCR 1540 effectively, as it is vital to prevent WMDs and related materials from falling into the hands of terrorists. Such efforts include financial contributions for a national workshop on the effective implementation of the UNSCR 1540 in the Lao PDR in 2023 and for strengthening the national implementation of UNSCR 1540 in Africa in 2024.

As one of the original States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the ROK will continue to participate in international efforts to support and strengthen the non-proliferation regime and prevent chemical weapons use. The ROK believes the Centre for Chemistry and Technology (CCT), which opened in 2023, will serve as a technical hub to strengthen the capacity of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and all States Parties. As the first State Party to have made voluntary contributions to the CCT project in 2017, the ROK will continue its support for the successful operations of the CCT. Since 2012, the ROK has been hosting the annual Seoul Workshop on the Peaceful Development and Use of Chemistry in collaboration with the OPCW to facilitate regional cooperation in chemical safety and security.

The ROK has supported the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) since its ratification. The ROK welcomes the adoption of the Final Document at the 9th BWC Review Conference in 2022. During the Review Conference, the ROK held a side event on biorisk management and presented the outcome of the ARF Table Top Exercise on Response Capabilities to Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Incidents, which the ROK, the Philippines, and the U.S. co-hosted in June 2022. The ROK actively contributed in the Working Group discussions on strengthening the Convention in 2023 and 2024 and will continue its contribution to reinforcing the BWC.

The rapid advancement of emerging technologies in diverse areas, including artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous weapons systems, and outer space, carries multiple impacts to the current international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In response to them, the ROK has taken active part in the relevant fora on

specific disarmament issues, including the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). The ROK is also leading international efforts to build norms and governance around the responsible use of AI in the military domain. The ROK, along with the Netherlands, Singapore, Kenya, and the United Kingdom, co-hosted the second Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military domain (REAIM) Summit in Seoul in 2024, where diverse multi-stakeholders including industry, academia, civil society, and international organizations were gathered together to enhance understanding of the agenda and promote cooperative dialogue. The second REAIM Summit culminated in the adoption of the “Blueprint for Action,” which contains a contemplation on the impact of AI on international peace and security and key principles for the responsible military application of AI. Furthermore, in order to address the international peace and security implications of AI in the military domain in a more inclusive and intergovernmental setting, the ROK and the Netherlands introduced a resolution on “AI in the Military Domain and its implications for international peace and security” at the 79th session of the UNGA First Committee, which was adopted with the overwhelming support from 165 Member States.

The ROK has also constructively engaged in the UN Open-ended Working Group on Reducing Space Threats through Norms, Rules, and Principles of Responsible Behaviours and the Group of Governmental Experts on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) to contribute to developing norms in these areas, and will continue these efforts by fully engaging in the discussions in the Open-ended Working Group on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space in All Its Aspects.

As a reliable and long-standing supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the ROK imposes strict control over illicit transfers and diversion of conventional arms while respecting the principles of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Drawing on its advanced national control system and best practices, the ROK served as the President of the ninth session of the Conference of States Parties to the ATT in 2023. The ROK, as a vice-President for the Eleventh Conference of States Parties this year, will continue to not only actively promote the treaty's universalization but also seek to strengthen inter-agency cooperation for effective implementation of the provisions and for transparency among State Parties and private sector entities. The ROK reaffirms its commitment to establishing the highest possible common standards for arms transfers.

The ROK has relentlessly sought ways to strengthen the global counter-proliferation regime and made effective contribution in relevant international efforts such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). As part of such efforts, the ROK has been attending the annual PSI Operational Experts Group (OEG) meetings and Asia-Pacific Exercise Rotation (APER) exercises. Following the ROK's hosting of the High-Level Political Meeting (HLPM) and Eastern Endeavor 23 in 2023, the ROK will take greater role in this year's meetings and Pacific Shield 25 to

enhance the interdiction capabilities of participating countries. Furthermore, the ROK welcomes the recent endorsement of the PSI by African states, following Morocco's hosting of the African political meeting and outreach event in 2024. The ROK will continue working closely with PSI partners to strengthen global counter-proliferation efforts.

Since 2001, the ROK and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs have co-hosted the annual ROK-UN Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues. The 23rd conference was held in Seoul in November 2024 under the theme of "The BWC at Fifty: Strengthening Global Biological Security in a Rapidly Evolving Technological Landscape." The two-day conference brought together over one hundred experts from governments, international organizations, industry, and academia. Pending the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the BWC in 2025, the participants discussed new biological threats arising from the convergence of emerging technologies such as AI with biology, and explored the international community's response. The ROK-UN Joint Conference will continue to provide a forum where experts from diverse fields can exchange their views on disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

The ROK has been championing youth engagement in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The ROK has been serving as a champion for Action 38, "Establishing a platform for youth engagement" of the United Nations Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, and has led the adoption of a biannual resolution titled "Youth, Disarmament, and Non-Proliferation" since 2019. In carrying out the resolution, the ROK hosted diverse events and programs to promote youth participation, including the Korean Youth Envoys for Disarmament and Non-proliferation since 2023. The ROK will continue and reinforce its efforts to promote youth engagement in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation through diverse programs and activities.

c. Transnational Crime

ASEAN SOMTC (Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime) has been a major platform to discuss transnational crimes such as terrorism, arms smuggling, illicit human and drug trafficking. It facilitates exchange of best policies and experiences on related issues, and enable the participating countries to collaborate on capacity building, training and sharing of information.

In this regard, the ROK participated in the 15th ASEAN SOMTC + ROK in July 2022, and the 3rd AMMTC + ROK. ROK shared its preventive measures and responses to effectively deal with such crimes, and stressed the importance of effective regional and international cooperation in law enforcement, investigation, and monitoring.

The ROK has been stepping up its efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers pursuant to its Criminal Act and, by doing so, to identify and protect

victims of human trafficking. The ROK enacted the Act on the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons and Victim Protection in April 2021, which requires establishing government-wide measures to prevent trafficking in persons and enhance support for the victims. Under Article 13 of the Act on the Prevention of Human Trafficking and Protection, etc. of Victims, which came into effect in January 2023, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family developed indicators for identifying victims of human trafficking and issued a public notice in March 2023 with the aim of detecting and protecting victims of human trafficking, including women, foreigners, and other vulnerable groups, as early as possible. To promote the use of the indicators, the Ministry recommends that related agencies (prosecutors, judicial police officers, immigration officers, and officers working with foreign nationals) actively use the indicators and refer identified victims to protection facilities.

Furthermore, the ROK is putting in a special effort to prevent human trafficking and violation of human rights by workers in the marine and fishing industry. For instance, the ROK annually conducts annual crackdowns to protect the victims of human trafficking and prevent humanitarian crimes.

Moreover, the ROK has actively participated in international discussions on the prevention of human trafficking. In 2023, the ROK attended the 8th Bali Process Senior Officials Meeting and Ministerial Conference, where it shared national legal frameworks on human trafficking and discussed ways to enhance international cooperation in this area. In 2024, the ROK also participated in the 12th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), where it exchanged information on recent trends in transnational organized crimes such as human trafficking and explored effective methods of international cooperation among member states.

Drug trafficking is another urgent issue that affects not only one country, but the surrounding regions and continents which is linked via drug flow routes. Illicit drug crimes undermine political and economic stability and it is imperative that countries maintain close coordination in both information exchanges and regulatory responses.

To tackle this issue, the Republic of Korea hosted the 2024 Anti-Drug Liaison Officials' Meeting for International Cooperation (ADLOMICO), where major drug enforcement agencies from around the world convened to explore effective countermeasures against drug trafficking. In addition, the ROK has established an 'International Cooperation System for Striking the Origin Point' through the mutual dispatch of dedicated drug investigators resulting in the successful apprehension of drug smugglers.

Moreover, in response to the growing number of transnational crimes, the ROK has made concerted efforts to establish an effective response system to address these

new threats. The ROK has launched several specialized joint investigative teams targeting organized crime, cybercrime, and financial crimes, including the Joint Investigation Team on Financial and Securities Crimes, the Virtual Asset Crime Joint Investigation Unit, the Voice Phishing Joint Investigation Task Force, and the National Fiscal Crimes Joint Task Force. These teams bring together prosecutors, police, and other relevant government agencies to ensure a rapid and expert response through close cooperation and integrated investigations. In particular, the Virtual Asset Crime Joint Investigation Unit, launched in July 2023, operates a collaborative and robust response mechanism. Since its establishment, the Unit has tackled a wide range of crimes, including scam coins, market manipulation, illicit over-the-counter trading, and fraudulent deposit schemes. As of now, it has charged 74 suspects and seized criminal proceeds worth approximately 84.9 billion KRW (roughly 62 million USD), making significant progress in tracing complex virtual asset flows and recovering illicit gains.

The ROK is also actively strengthening its international cooperation framework to respond to transnational and emerging crimes. Since 2020, our government has contributed approximately 12 billion KRW (roughly 8.9 million USD) over six years to support the UNODC's Korean Project, which aims to enhance investigative capacity and establish cooperative networks to tackle corruption and transnational crimes in Southeast Asia.

d. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

The ROK has actively responded to humanitarian needs caused by emergency disasters such as earthquakes, typhoons, infectious diseases, and protracted humanitarian crises in conflict areas such as the Gaza Strip, Myanmar, and Ukraine. To alleviate the suffering of the affected people and to minimize damage from disasters, the ROK government provided approximately 203 million US dollars in humanitarian assistance in 2024.

In response to unexpected disasters, which are growing in size and frequency due to factors such as climate change, the ROK government provided approximately 29 million US dollars to help relieve the damage caused by unexpected disasters such as the landslide in Papua New Guinea. It also helped ASEAN countries to overcome natural disasters including the floods in Laos, the typhoon in Viet Nam, and the heavy rain in Nepal. In addition, the ROK provided humanitarian assistance in response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. Regarding protracted humanitarian crises such as those in the Gaza Strip and Myanmar, it provided humanitarian assistance to help improve the humanitarian situations in these countries.

Given that Asia-Pacific is a disaster-prone region, the ROK is playing a constructive role in strengthening regional cooperation in disaster management and relief. While serving as co-chair of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief

along 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 supported countries such as Bangladesh, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam to develop disaster risk reduction strategies in cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The ROK is also seeking to share best practices, and localized approaches to raise awareness on potential disaster risks and to take further steps in establishing contingency measures at the local and national levels. In 2024, the ROK further strengthened cooperation with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) by providing unearmarked funding in a multi-year format in order to support UNDRR's core mandates stated in its Work Programme 2022-2023 and its new Strategic Framework 2022-2025.

Moreover, the ROK government is supporting the capacity building of ASEAN member states in disaster management through the ASEAN-ROK Cooperation Fund. Specifically, the ROK has been carrying out the Operationalizing the ASEAN Standards and Certification for Experts in Disaster Management (ASCEND) project with the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management since 2020 to create a regionally recognized certification scheme for disaster management professionals and ensure and promote higher standards and quality in managing disasters within the region. The ASCEND project will benefit the general public of the ASEAN region by improving the quality of disaster management and emergency response, thereby contributing to reducing damage caused by disasters and improving the resilience of communities.

The ROK will continue its efforts to address the gap between growing humanitarian needs and available resources and to ensure that the resources efficiently reach those in the greatest need.

e. Maritime Security

Among the wide range of issues pertaining to maritime security, the ROK has taken an active role in countering and preventing piracy and armed robbery against ships in the region and worldwide.

At the regional level, the ROK has actively participated in regional maritime security forums, including the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ISM-MS) and the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP).

Ever since the ROK became a party to ReCAAP in 2006, it has continuously contributed to the organization. The ROK has sent Korean staff to the ReCAAP Information Sharing Center since 2007. Moreover, the ROK has made voluntary financial contributions to ReCAAP to support regional capacity building. The ROK

provided approximately 90,000 USD annually from 2008 to 2012 and, from 2013 onwards, the ROK's annual contribution has reached 130,000 USD—nearly a fifty percent increase—to broaden its role and scope in combating piracy in Asia.

The ROK is also taking an active part in the global efforts to combat piracy. The ROK started deploying the Cheonghae Unit to the high seas off the coast of Somalia in 2009, and since then the unit has been conducting convoy missions as part of the Combined Task Force under the command of the Combined Maritime Forces. The Cheonghae Unit has also been participating in the European Union Naval Force's Operation Atalanta since February 2017 to protect the vessels of the African Union Mission and the World Food Programme, among others.

Also, since 2009, the ROK has played an important role in the Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activities (originally, the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia). Until the group announced its plan to close the trust fund by 2021, the ROK had contributed a total of 1.7 million USD to the fund, with the aim of helping strengthen the capacity of coastal states in countering piracy.

The ROK has also been a member of the G7++ Group of Friends of the Gulf of Guinea since 2013 to facilitate international cooperation promoting maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. The ROK participates in working groups focusing on maritime domain awareness, education, training, exercises, and operations.

Moreover, the ROK made financial contributions totalling 800,000 USD to the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Djibouti Code of Conduct Trust Fund to strengthen the judicial capacity of Somalia and its neighbouring countries in tackling piracy from 2009 to 2017. The ROK also provided 100,000 USD annually to the IMO West and Central Africa Maritime Security Trust Fund from 2018 to 2020. Since 2021, the ROK has provided around 200,000 USD annually, in light of the recent rise in piracy attacks near West Africa. The ROK assisted training programs together with the IMO for maritime security officers from the Gulf of Guinea countries and provided equipment to facilitate communication between the region's maritime operations centers.

f. Cybersecurity

The rapid development of information and communications technology is opening up new possibilities for fostering social and economic development, but at the same time it is posing potential risks. The recent increase in the number of malicious cyber activities and the level of sophistication of such activities is raising significant challenges to international peace and security.

In response to the changing security landscape, the ROK launched a new version of the National Cybersecurity Strategy in February 2024. The new strategy covers a broader strategic scope, with a special focus on enhancing more robust defense

capabilities against cyber threats and deepening international cooperation.

Given the transnational nature of cyberattacks and threats, strong partnerships at the bilateral, regional, and international levels are key to protecting cyberspace from malicious cyber activities. The ROK remains committed to promoting mutual understanding and working together to address cybersecurity challenges. In this regard, the ROK has engaged in bilateral cyber consultations with 13 countries and two organizations (the EU and NATO). In particular, the 14th ROK-NATO Cyber Policy Consultation was held in Seoul in January 2025 to reaffirm the commitment to promoting international cyberspace stability and deepening cooperation on cybersecurity.

The ROK has been an active and constructive member of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ISM on ICTs Security) and the ARF Open Ended Study Group on Confidence Building Measures. The ROK also expects that the confidence building measures adopted at the recent ISM on ICTs Security will produce a synergy effect with the ROK-led capacity building projects currently underway in the ASEAN region, such as the training sessions held by the Asia-Pacific Cybercrime Capacity Building Hub (APC-Hub), ASEAN Cyber Shield Project, Capacity Building for Responding to Cryptocurrency Heist in ASEAN Region, and the regional education and training program of the Asia Pacific Information Security Center. Especially, ASEAN Cyber Shield Project aims to nurture the best cybersecurity experts and contribute to the development of the ASEAN Member States cyber security response capabilities and related industries by promoting good competition, knowledge and experience among the best talents in the ASEAN region. The ROK also attends the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) Experts' Working Groups (EWG) on Cyber Security.

At the international level, the ROK made meaningful involvement in the work of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and contributed to producing a consensus-based final report. The ROK will continue to participate in OEWG-2021-2025 and, to this end, will continue contributing to the drafting of the Annual Progress Report.

The ROK also participated in the Pall Mall Process, which is an international, multi-stakeholder initiative aiming to identify and implement political commitment to tackle the proliferation and irresponsible use of commercial cyber intrusion capabilities (CCIC). The ROK took part in the second Pall Mall Conference in Paris and decided to support the Code of Practice, which recalled the application of international legal and normative frameworks and made practical recommendations on a number of different political levers, in April 2025.

In addition, the ROK has actively participated in the discussions on the UN Convention against Cybercrime aimed at establishing a global framework for joint responses to cybercrime, thereby contributing to the consensus adoption of the Convention on 8 August 2024. In order to strengthen international cooperation on cybercrime, the ROK also submitted a letter of intent to the Council of Europe in October 2022 and was invited to accede to the Convention on Cybercrime (Budapest Convention) in February 2023, with a view to acceding to the Convention on Cybercrime (Budapest Convention) in the near future

4) ROLE OF THE ARF

a. Contributing to Advancing the ARF and Regional Security

As a founding member, the ROK is committed to realizing the ARF's vision 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 confidence building measures and preventive diplomacy activities during the inter-sessional year of 2024-2025, which include the Inter-Sessional Support Group Meeting, Inter-Sessional Meetings, and the Defense Officials' Dialogue, along with other workshops and seminars.

In particular, this year, the ROK co-chaired the 17th Meeting of the ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) in Kuala Lumpur with Malaysia. Through the Meeting, the participants of the ARF were able to conduct in-depth discussions on regional dynamics among major powers, as well as traditional security issues, including the South China Sea, the political and humanitarian crisis in Myanmar, and continued nuclear provocations and military actions from North Korea. The Meeting served as an opportunity to exchange views on emerging security issues, particularly digital security in the context of transnational crime. In addition, the importance of ASEAN-led multilateralism grounded in ASEAN Centrality was reaffirmed, and several constructive proposals were made to enhance the visibility of ARF EEPs, such as early warning systems, working groups and joint expert research.

Furthermore, the ROK will co-chair the workshop "ARF Concept Paper on Best Practices for Port State Measures to Combat IUU Fishing" for the Inter-Sessional Year 2025-2026. Through this workshop, regional cooperation on maritime security is expected to be further promoted. The ROK looks forward to working closely with ARF Participants in securing peace and stability and building confidence in various fields such as counter terrorism, maritime security, transnational crime, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and other security-related areas.

b. Future of the ARF

Since its establishment in 1994, the ARF has played an essential role in promoting regional peace and stability as a unique intergovernmental forum for multilateral

security cooperation. The ARF has served as an effective platform for exchanging views on common security threats, identifying common ground as well as difference for confidence-building among countries in the region.

Moreover, today's dynamic security landscape in the region requires the ARF to harness its strengths to the fullest. The international landscape today is becoming increasingly complex, volatile, and unpredictable. The growing complexity of the security environment has increased the importance of working in concert with other regional mechanisms, such as the ADMM+ and the East Asia Summit. Also, in times of such uncertainty, it is imperative that the countries within the region work together to foster shared prosperity and strengthen mutual trust.

Now, the time has come for the ARF to evolve beyond its role as a platform for dialogue and to intensify efforts toward confidence building and preventive diplomacy. In this regard, it is essential that ARF participants make the forum more efficient and effective. In addition to candid and open exchange of views and active participation of ARF participants, the voices of the private sector and the youth, who are also important stakeholders in the future of this region, need to be heard as well.

In line with these objectives and the vision of the ASEAN-ROK CSP, the ROK will continue to contribute to ASEAN-led mechanisms, particularly the ARF by participating and co-chairing ARF Track 1 activities to implement the Ha Noi Plan of Action II. The ROK will endeavour to adopt and implement new Plan of Action of the ARF as well. Through these efforts, the ARF, as a platform for enriching and expanding our understanding of security and bringing joint responses, will strengthen peace in the region.

RUSSIA

1) REGIONAL SECURITY LANDSCAPE

Political and security situation in the Asia-Pacific region continues to deteriorate. It is expanding activity of the "collective West" countries aimed at building up their military capabilities and projecting it to the region in order to get overwhelming strategic superiority that escalates the situation and provokes an arms race.

The extension of NATO's military and political potential to the Asia-Pacific region is a serious challenge to regional stability and security. The network of bloc structures set up by the West to address this task is jeopardizing the ASEAN-led architecture of an open and equal interstate dialogue and cooperation, destroying the established trade, transport, logistics, technological and other chains of interaction in Asia. The regional space for positive cooperation is shrinking, while national sustainable development goals are becoming less achievable.

One of the main sources of tension in Asia-Pacific is the Taiwan issue that remains among the major reasons for aggravations between China and the US. Despite the Trump's return to power in January 2025, the United States continues to pursue a policy of active support for Taipei, keeping up arms supplies, military and technical, trade and economic cooperation. At the same time, 2024-2025 saw a slight decrease in the number of dangerous incidents, which may indicate attempts to maintain controlled tensions by the parties involved. The Russian side consistently reiterates that there is only one China and the PRC government is the only legitimate government representing all of China with Taiwan being an integral part thereof.

The South China Sea (SCS) remains an area with high risk of conflicts due to the territorial disputes between the number of countries in the region. Russia stands for settling them within the framework of international law, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, on the basis of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the SCS (DOC) and the 2011 Guidelines for the Implementation of the DOC. The Code of Conduct in the SCS being drafted by China and ASEAN Member States should become an effective mechanism for disputes resolution. The involvement of non-regional forces in solving territorial disputes, as well as the increasing number of naval exercises in this area under the pretext of "ensuring freedom of navigation" with the participation of the United States that has been refusing to accede to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea for 30 years now, and of its allies, only contribute to complicating the situation.

The international efforts to resolve the situation in Myanmar shall be conditioned by the steadfast commitment to the principle of non-interference with domestic affairs of sovereign states. Russia opposes attempts to use the UN mechanisms and

UN Security Council to put political and diplomatic pressure on Nay Pyi Taw. The Western course of toughening sanctions against the Myanmar authorities while supporting the radical opposition is destructive. Such steps undermine the regional community's efforts to restore peace in the country and pose a direct threat to the security of neighbouring states and Southeast Asia as a whole. The Russian side supports the willingness of ASEAN and its Malaysian Chairmanship to give additional impetus to the efforts to implement the Five-Point Consensus in close cooperation with the Myanmar authorities.

The situation on the Korean Peninsula is still complicated due to the provocative steps by the United States, the ROK and Japan leading to subregion's large-scale militarization with American nuclear capabilities engaged. To prevent dangerous developments, measures need to be taken to reduce tension and relaunch the diplomatic process aimed at peaceful conflict settlement based on the principle of indivisible security and mutual trust. The Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the Russian Federation and the DPRK, signed on 19 June 2024, serves the interest of maintaining security in Northeast Asia.

Japan's rapid remilitarization, attempts to revise the "peaceful" provisions of its Constitution, as well as active preparations for joint strategic exercises with the United States similar to the NATO's "nuclear missions" are of serious concern. Russia is concerned about Tokyo's efforts to engage NATO member states in promoting narrow bloc-style regional formats in Asia-Pacific with an anti-Russia and anti-China background, as well as the systematically enhanced demonstrative naval activity in the Far East with the participation of the armed forces of NATO countries.

Despite the counterterrorism and anti-drug efforts by the Afghan authorities, the spreading menace of terrorism and drug trafficking stemming from the territory of Afghanistan remains a significant factor in the regional security deterioration. ISIS and other terrorist organizations such as the Islamic Movements of Uzbekistan and Eastern Turkestan, Jamaat Ansarulla, Al-Qaeda, etc. are still active in the country. Afghanistan remains one of the world's largest suppliers of opiates (80%). There is a high level of drug-related crime and increased methamphetamine production. The steps taken within the Moscow Format of Consultations, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the mechanism of Afghanistan's neighbouring countries play an important role in the Afghan settlement and country's integration into regional economic systems.

2) DEFENSE POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND INTERNATIONAL MILITARY COOPERATION IN ASIA-PACIFIC

The activities of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in Asia-Pacific are carried out in compliance with international norms and bilateral agreements and

aimed at strengthening peace and security in the region by developing bilateral and multilateral military-to-military contacts with Asia-Pacific countries.

A special role in maintaining regional stability belongs to the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) where Russia (together with the Lao PDR) oversees humanitarian mine action in 2024-2027. This work is focused on harmonization of approaches of ADMM-Plus countries to humanitarian mine action in Asia-Pacific, discussing promising anti-mine equipment development and high-tech equipment, robotic system and unmanned aerial vehicle uses during humanitarian demining operations, as well as organizing specialized tabletop training and exercises.

The Russian Defence Ministry actively promotes ties with key partners in Asia-Pacific, primarily China, India, the DPRK, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh as well as ASEAN Member States. Regular joint exercises and mutual ship visits contribute to the enhanced ties in the defence sphere.

Experts from the International Mine Action Center of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation continued to provide assistance in clearing Lao territory of explosive remnants of the Indochina War and training de-miners from among Lao military personnel.

3) NUCLEAR AND MISSILE DISARMAMENT, NUCLEAR SECURITY, AND NON-PROLIFERATION OF WMD IN ASIA-PACIFIC

Misguided "containment and coercion" policy by a group of states of the "collective West" aimed at undermining the strategic balance and building up their own power capabilities to the detriment of other countries' security, result in the escalated tensions in the Asia-Pacific region.

They are multiplying their military alliances, coalitions and quasi-alliances in order to create security-threatening permanent military outposts directly on their opponents' borders. There is a significant increase in the intensity and scale of military training activities carried out by these alliances with the deployment of a wide range of forces and means, including operational and potential nuclear weapon delivery means.

Destabilizing military-technical programs are being implemented, such as: building the regional segment of a global and multi-domain missile defence system; advanced deployment of high-precision missile systems, including ground-based medium- and shorter-range missiles; further development of "extended nuclear deterrence" capabilities and schemes providing, among other things, for joint "nuclear planning" and relevant "integrated operations" with the participation of formally non-nuclear allies. Such a course, based on bloc thinking, is fraught with serious armed conflicts, including the risk of using nuclear weapons.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains a crucial element of the international security system that directly influences the situation in the Asia-Pacific region. Political differences should not affect deliverables of the upcoming 2026 NPT Review Conference aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

The development of cooperation between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States within the AUKUS partnership entails the risk of the nuclear States' infrastructure emerging in a formally non-nuclear country bound by the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (the Treaty of Rarotonga). Despite the assurances of no intention to transfer nuclear weapons while implementing the project, the actual probability of its deployment in Australia is increasing. Plans for a qualitative build-up of military capabilities within AUKUS and the latter's extension to include Canada, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea and Japan destabilize security situation in the Asia-Pacific region, reduce the level of mutual trust and provoke an arms race.

Russia is open to consultations with ASEAN Member States to sign as soon as possible the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty of 1995) with standard reservations and an interpretative statement, which are becoming ever more relevant in the context of a deteriorating international security environment.

There is still a danger of an arms race in outer space and turning it into a springboard for aggression and war, which could have a direct impact on Asia-Pacific. The draft treaty on prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against outer space objects, proposed by Russia and China, as well as the international initiative/political commitment on no-first placement of weapons in outer space (NFP), both address this negative trend. Cambodia, China, the DPRK, Indonesia, Laos, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam co-sponsored Russia-proposed resolution on NFP at the 79th Session of the UN General Assembly.

4) COMBATING INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND TRANSNATIONAL CRIME IN ASIA-PACIFIC

There is a growing terrorist and extremist threat in the Asia-Pacific region due to an increase in activity of international terrorist organizations, including Al-Qaeda and ISIS, which are replenished with foreign terrorist fighters returning to Southeast Asia from armed conflict zones. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are widely used for propaganda of radicalism and violence, spreading disinformation and undermining trust between society and the state.

In this context, cross-regional cooperation in combating terrorism and extremism is becoming increasingly important, where the pivotal role should belong to states and their competent bodies that determine the necessary methods of addressing those challenges taking into account the national interests and specifics. We advocate an equal dialogue based on agreed modalities while rejecting unilateral approaches imposed by certain countries trying to monopolize the anti-terrorist and anti-extremist agenda.

Russia is interested in promoting cooperation in counter money laundering and terrorist financing in compliance with relevant universal international legal instruments.

Given a surge in dangerous synthetic substances production and illegal traffic in Asia-Pacific, the rapid spill over of drug trafficking and propaganda to online format, enhanced multilateral cooperation in the fight against the drug threat in compliance with the three UN drug control conventions is becoming ever more urgent. We welcome the initiative by ASEAN to create a drug-free Southeast Asia. We regularly exchange best practices with regard to countering new drug crimes, including illicit use of ICTs for drug trafficking and money-laundering.

Accommodating ASEAN partners' requests, Russia has expanded its advanced training courses for their law enforcement bodies covering counter-terrorism, combating drug crime, illegal migration, human trafficking, ICT crimes, as well as the security provision for major public events.

We attach great importance to the development of counter-terrorism and anti-criminal cooperation within regional frameworks, including specialized mechanisms of the ARF, ADMM-Plus and ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Partnership. The annual ASEAN-Russia Consultations of the High Representatives for Security Issues (the latest round was held in Moscow on 28 May 2025) also serve these goals. The International Counter-Terrorism Database of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation contributes to increased efficiency of information exchange. It is accessible to 47 states, including Brunei, Cambodia, India, the Republic of Korea, Laos, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam.

The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) remains a major regional security pillar. In 2024 Russia launched the process of establishing of a Universal Centre for Countering Challenges and Threats to the Security of the SCO Member States on the basis of RATS. Its specialized structures will address the issues of information security, transnational organized crime and drug trafficking.

5) INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION SECURITY IN ASIA-PACIFIC

Russia is seeking to develop multilateral cooperation in the field of international information security, especially bearing in mind the growing transboundary threats in digital sphere in Asia-Pacific.

The basis for it is the establishment of a fair legal regime governing the information space including the AI, with the UN coordinating role. The UN Convention against Cybercrime, developed on the Russian initiative and adopted in December 2024, is a significant achievement in this area. The next step is to agree on comprehensive legally binding norms aimed at preventing conflicts in the ICT environment, within a future single-track permanent negotiating mechanism to replace the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of ICTs after 2025.

Secure and stable operation and development of the national Internet segments need to be promoted on the basis of equal participation of states in the Internet governance. It is important to prevent, through a joint effort within the International Telecommunication Union, interference into domestic affairs using low-orbit Internet satellite systems.

The development of practical international information security cooperation within the ARF is particularly important, including the implementation of the ARF Work Plan on Security of and in the Use of ICTs of 2015. Russia emphasizes the importance of promoting a pragmatic, depoliticized agenda, implementation of confidence-building measures. A good example is the Russian initiative to hold the ARF Workshop on the Capacity-Building in the field of Countering the Use of ICTs for Criminal Purposes.

The ASEAN-Russia Dialogue on ICT Security-Related Issues is developing successfully. Its fourth meeting (Sochi, 25 October 2024) reaffirmed readiness of the participants for further deepening of contacts, including through line agencies. Major regional conferences, in particular the 9th Singapore International Cyber Week (14-17 October 2024), provide a good opportunity for an exchange of views.

The information security centre/division of the future Universal Centre for Countering Challenges and Threats to the Security of the SCO Member States is intended as an effective platform for developing joint steps in this sphere. Russia as well attaches great importance to the cooperation in this field within the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) where Russia, together with China, is the Coordinator of the Security of and in the Use of ICTs thematic area. Specialized seminars are held regularly, including those aimed at raising awareness of CICA Member States in this area.

6) HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF IN ASIA-PACIFIC

Russia continues to promote regional cooperation in disaster management and humanitarian assistance. In this context, the ARF is regarded as one of the key platforms, and Russian experts regularly participate in the ARF ISMs on Disaster Relief and the ARF seminars.

They also interact with partners within the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) Asia-Pacific Regional Group. In particular, they took part in the INSARAG Asia-Pacific International Earthquake Response Exercise held in Lahore and Islamabad (Pakistan) in October 2024.

Great importance is attached to practical cooperation and experience sharing with ASEAN. A number of ASEAN Member States sent their search and rescue teams to the Safe Arctic - 2025 exercises in the Arkhangelsk Region of Russia (1-5 and 29-30 January 2025).

Assistance is provided to ASEAN states that have suffered damage as a result of disasters and catastrophes. In September-November 2024, EMERCOM of Russia delivered 67 tons of humanitarian aid to Vietnam and Myanmar affected by the devastating typhoon Yagi. As part of assistance to Myanmar in managing the consequences of a major earthquake March-April 2025, a Russian EMERCOM joint emergency rescue team (264 people), an airmobile hospital, and 158 tons of humanitarian aid, including food and medical supplies, were sent to the country.

Russia shipped 867 tons of sunflower oil to Myanmar in 2024 and 195 tons of preserves to Laos in 2024-2025 within the framework of the UN World Food Programme.

7) REGIONAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE AND TRENDS OF MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY IN ASIA-PACIFIC

The ongoing Western attempts to undermine ASEAN effectiveness, damage ASEAN-led mechanisms and erode the foundation of its practical cooperation pose existential threats to the existing regional security and cooperation architecture.

Russia has always stood for preserving and strengthening the established system of interstate relations in Asia-Pacific, based on the norms of international law, peaceful settlement of disputes, a culture of compromise and mutual respect, and the freedom of each country to choose its national development path.

The Russian initiative to develop the Eurasian security architecture serves these aims. It implies a system of cross-agreements and institutions that guarantee the indivisible security for all its participants. The Greater Eurasian Partnership is intended to be its economic foundation with the goal to create a common space

of equal cooperation through the synergy of the leading transcontinental cooperation organisations, including the SCO, ASEAN and the EAEU that deal with similar tasks of keeping our common "Eurasian home" stable and prosperous. In this process, we view ASEAN and ASEAN-led frameworks as key partners which have accumulated vast experience of inclusive interaction and aligning interests between the nations.

The ARF remains the major regional platform for developing confidence-building measures and introducing preventive diplomacy tools in the region. Further consolidation of the Forum, enhancing its practical output, preventing the shift of its focus to politicized and irrelevant topics are high on the agenda. An atmosphere of constructive and equal dialogue, as well as the readiness of all participants without exception to follow the high ARF inclusivity standards are the prerequisites for achieving these goals.

SINGAPORE

1) OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

We are facing intensifying global challenges, including major power rivalry, nationalistic and protectionist tendencies, and a weakening of the multilateral rules-based order. There is mutual suspicion and distrust between the US and China. There is growing uncertainty in the trajectory of US-China relations. There are ongoing humanitarian crises in Gaza and Myanmar, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, has brought into focus the importance of the fundamental norms of international law and the UN Charter, which prohibit acts of aggression against sovereign states. Non-traditional security threats including terrorism and cybercrime remain unabated. It is now all the more important that ASEAN and its partners continue using ASEAN-led mechanisms to strengthen mutual confidence and trust, enhance practical cooperation to tackle common challenges, and uphold the multilateral rules-based order. These mechanisms include the ASEAN Plus Three (APT), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), East Asia Summit (EAS), and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). 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 continue to enjoy peace and security. A strong defence also provides us with the space and freedom to act independently and safeguard the interests of our people. Over the years, Singapore has invested steadily and prudently in defence 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 augmenting civilian frontline services.

3) NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL SECURITY

Singapore firmly believes in the value of diplomacy and dialogue to enhance regional and international stability by minimising the potential for misunderstanding and miscalculation, as well as enhancing responses to common security challenges. 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 in the importance of a rules-based, open and inclusive regional 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 actively contributes to the ADMM and ADMM-Plus. In 2024, Singapore and Brunei co-sponsored “A Future-Ready ADMM and ADMM-Plus Strategy Paper which refreshed the ADMM-Plus Experts’ Working Groups (EWGs) for continued relevance to ADMM-Plus members whilst reinforcing ASEAN Centrality. The Strategy Paper also enhanced the EWG Observership Programme to meaningfully engage non-Plus observers. Singapore also worked with Laos and the Philippines to co-sponsor the ADMM-Plus EWGs Observership Protocol paper which aims to standardise the implementation of the EWG Observership Programme. Under the Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR) Defence Experts, Singapore contributes to strengthening regional capacity to deal with CBR threats. Since its inaugural meeting in 2019, the Network has kept up a steady momentum of meetings, training and workshops in each of the C, B, and R domains, covering topics of interest such as scientific cooperation to deal with COVID-19. Regional and international experts are invited as resource speakers to exchange views and experiences. In 2024, the Network developed and launched a set of harmonised CBR sampling guidelines for adoption by all ASEAN Member States (AMS), to ensure that the region is able to effectively respond to CBR incidents. Singapore also co-organised the Network’s 6th Annual Meeting with Laos in Vientiane last year, where the guidelines were unveiled and future areas that the Network could venture into were discussed. The Meeting also brought the CBR defence experts on a site visit to the Industek Occupational Safety, Health and Environment (OSHE) Training Centre. Another area of contribution is in the cyber and information domains. In July 2023, Singapore officially opened the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence (ACICE), in order to enhance information sharing and capacity building among defence establishments against cyber and information threats. The opening was held in conjunction with the inaugural Digital Defence Symposium (DDS) – which brought together senior military and defence officials, renowned academics, and industry experts to discuss the latest developments in the cybersecurity and information landscapes, and the inaugural ASEAN Roundtable – which allowed the AMS to come together to exchange views on the implications of cyber and information challenges, and to explore areas of cooperation within the defence sectoral. The 2nd DDS and 2nd ASEAN Roundtable was held in July 2024. The 3rd DDS and the 3rd ASEAN Roundtable will be held in July 2025. The ACICE and

the ASEAN Cyber Defence Network's (ACDN) work are complementary to each other, promoting regional exchanges, interactions and cooperation on cybersecurity.

The ADMM-Plus enables practical cooperation among the 18 ADMM-Plus countries through the EWGs. The EWGs focus on 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 is committed to sustaining military-to-military cooperation and building trust among militaries through the EWGs and is actively participating in the fifth EWG cycle from 2024-2027 through the co-chairing of the EWG on HADR with New Zealand.

Singapore is also an active proponent of Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) among militaries and defence establishments. CBMs are useful guidelines particularly to reduce miscalculations and preserve a peaceful and stable regional security environment. Under Singapore and the Republic of Korea's (ROK) co-chairmanship of the EWG-MS from 2017-2020, the ADMM-Plus navies agreed to collectively adopt the Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS) Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES). CUES is regularly practised at several ASEAN naval exercises, including the 2018 ASEAN-China Maritime Exercise, the 2019 ADMM-Plus Maritime Exercise, the 2021 ASEAN-Russia Naval Exercise, and the 2023 ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise (AIME). Another CBM proposed by Singapore and adopted by the ADMM is the Guidelines for Air Military Encounters (GAME). GAME is the first multilateral air-to-air confidence-building measure of its kind. It provides airmen with a set of guidelines to enhance aviation safety and reduce miscalculations or unintended incidents between military aircraft. The ADMM has practised GAME on several occasions, most recently during the 9th ASEAN Air Forces' Junior Officers Interaction Programme hosted in Singapore in 2022. Singapore will work with the ADMM to explore opportunities for the expansion of GAME to the Plus partners.

Singapore also hosts the annual 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 21st SLD was held from 31 May to 2 June 2024. It had one of the strongest showings to date, featuring a slate of speakers from the US, China, ASEAN, and Europe. There were 53 Ministerial-level delegates and more than 40 senior defence officials, including Chief of Defence Forces, and prominent academics from 46 countries. There were five Heads of State / Heads of Government (and equivalent) in attendance: besides President of the Philippines Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. who delivered the Keynote Address, then-President-elect of the Republic of Indonesia GEN(Ret) Prabowo Subianto delivered a Special Address, Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte spoke on a plenary session on "Cross-Regional Security Order Challenges", President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

Dr José Ramos-Horta spoke on a plenary session on “Enhancing Crisis Management Amid Rising Competition”, and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy spoke on the seventh plenary on “Re-imagining Solutions for Global Peace and Regional Stability”. This year marks the 22nd edition of the SLD, which will be held from 30 May to 1 June 2025, with French President Emmanuel Macron delivering the Keynote Address, and Malaysian Prime Minister Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim delivering a Special Address. In the lead-up to the annual SLD, the IISS Sherpa Meetings supplement the SLD process by providing an inter-sessional platform for senior officials to engage in frank discussions on security issues.

(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. We support 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, and thus hosted the 8th AOE Working Group meeting in March 2024. The AOE enhances strategic information exchange on counter-terrorism among ASEAN defence establishments. To complement the AOE, we operationalised the Counter Terrorism Information Facility (CTIF) in January 2021 as an operational level CT information-sharing initiative. Singapore’s Network of ASEAN CBR Defence Experts facilitates information exchange and cooperation between CBR experts from all 10 AMS through its secure web portal and workshops, and its harmonised CBR sampling guidelines ensure a baseline standard for CBR Sampling in ASEAN and promote greater regional counter-terrorism preparedness against CBR threats.

(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 most recently served as a member of the IAEA's Board of Governors (BOG) from 2022 to 2024, and has hosted regional workshops on topics such as emergency preparedness and response, nuclear regulatory law, and nuclear safety and security. Singapore is also party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and supports its early entry into force.

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, in 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 became a High Contracting Party to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) in March 2024. The CCW, as a framework convention, has yielded important protocols that have further enhanced international law. Singapore's accession to the CCW underscores our commitment to international humanitarian law.

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. As a member of the PSI Operational Experts' Group (OEG) and the PSI Asia-Pacific Exercise Rotation (APER), we have hosted PSI exercises and meetings. In October 2021, Singapore hosted Exercise Deep Sabre, which was the fourth time Singapore hosted a PSI exercise. More recently, Singapore participated in the—APER Exercise *Pacific Protector* and the OEG meeting hosted by Australia in Sep 2024.

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 29th Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in November 2024. Pursuant to Article X of the OPCW, Singapore has been conducting the Emergency Response to Chemical Incidents training course on a biennial basis since 2009. The seventh instalment of the course was conducted in May 2023, which benefitted 9 participants from 7 of the OPCW Member States in Asia, and Singapore will continue to conduct the eighth run of the course in 2025. The course has been a platform for the sharing of experiences on the management of hazards. The Network of ASEAN CBR Defence Experts also organised a virtual technical workshop in May 2025 that was conducted by experts from the OPCW. Most recently, Singapore and the EU co-organised the ARF Workshop on Detection, Response, and Deterrence of Chemical, Biological, and Radiological Incidents in June 2024 via the Network of ASEAN CBR Defence Experts and the EU CBRN CoE. In addition, Singapore had contributed experts to serve on the Scientific Advisory Board of the OPCW between 2017 and 2019 and the Technical Requirement Team of the OPCW ChemTech centre between 2020 and 2021. Since 2024, Singapore has contributed a technical expert to serve on the OPCW Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) Temporary Working Group (TWG) on chemical forensics. In 2025, Singapore also contributed an expert to serve on the OPCW Central Analytical Database Validation Group. Singapore is also committed to the non-proliferation of biological and toxin weapons. We participated in the 9th Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in November 2022 as well as the Meeting of States Parties in December 2024, and have submitted returns on BWC CBMs annually since 2012.

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. Singapore also works closely with international partners on regional capacity building in this area. In October 2024, the U.S. Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS), U.S. Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS), Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and Singapore Customs organised The 11th Joint Industry Outreach Seminar on Strategic Trade Management, which provided invaluable opportunities for the industry to hear from the government regulators and private sector practitioners/experts, and enhance the industry's understanding of recent developments on strategic trade management. Singapore and the Philippines convened a 'United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) Peer Review Exercise on Export Controls' in May 2024, the first in Southeast Asia, to serve as a useful reference and facilitating the strengthening of the region's capabilities in

preventing the proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery to non-state actors.

Singapore also participates actively in international discussions on emerging technology domains, such as Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, outer space security, and military AI. We recognise that it will be more effective to have consensus and regulation early in the development of any new technology, and appropriate governance frameworks will be needed to safeguard international peace and security.

(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.

Financial Crime

Singapore strongly supports regional and global efforts against money laundering (ML) and terrorist financing (TF). We joined the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in 1992 and are a founding member of the Asia-Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), a FATF-Style Regional Body formed in 1993.³ We have been active contributors to the FATF and APG's work, regularly providing inputs on ML/TF typologies and other policy matters, as well as contributing experts and assessors to support the mutual evaluations of countries.

On 1 July 2022, Singapore assumed the Presidency of the FATF for a term of two years. In this capacity, we have spearheaded initiatives aimed at strengthening global asset recovery efforts. This includes enhancing countries' domestic capabilities and advocating for stronger regional and international cooperation to interdict and recover proceeds linked to criminal activities, including scams. We have:

- a. Singapore also worked with INTERPOL and Egmont Group at the FATF to **co-lead a project to counter the illicit funding of cyber-enabled fraud**. The project, involving over 80 jurisdictions, aimed to understand and combat online scam-related money laundering risks. The report was endorsed by FATF, INTERPOL, and the Egmont Group, and published on the FATF website in November 2023, including a set of best practices/recommendations to enable countries to effectively recover proceeds of cyber-enabled fraud. Subsequently, Singapore facilitated discussions and presented the findings at various international forums

³ FATF Style Regional Bodies (FSRB) are autonomous regional bodies which help to implement FATF's policies and Standards across the global network of over 205 jurisdictions (compared to only 40 FATF members) by conducting mutual evaluation of their members.

throughout 2023 and 2024, including FATF meetings, FATF-INTERPOL Roundtable, and the Egmont Group meeting.

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 the 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 provided 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 annual International Economic Crime Course (IECC). This course was attended by local and foreign participants from ASEAN countries and our regional partners such as China, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand. This course aims to help local and regional partners to keep abreast with latest financial crime trends, commercial crime methodology, investigation best practices as well as emerging crime risks with the increased adoption of digital assets. The course also includes a visit to the Anti-Scam Command (ASCom), where ASCom shared insights on strategies to combat scams.

The Singapore Police Force actively supports various INTERPOL operations aimed at tackling transnational financial crime.

- The ASCom participated in two such operations in 2024. The first was INTERPOL's Operation First Light, which involved more than 70 countries. During the operation, more than 1,000 persons were investigated and over 3,500 bank accounts were frozen in Singapore, leading to the recovery of more than \$16 million. In addition, a total of more than \$203,00 worth of virtual assets were blocked by the ASCom.
- The second was INTERPOL's Operation HAECHI V, which involved 40 countries. During the operation, the ASCom investigated more than 1,600 suspects involved in scams and money laundering, blocked more than 5,100 bank accounts and seized over \$54.8 million in Singapore. More than \$798,000 virtual assets were also blocked by the ASCom.
- Project RESCUE (2025) – CAD supported the course and meetings, which strengthened law enforcement capacity in South and Southeast Asia to investigate illicit financial flows linked to cyber-enabled fraud. CAD supported the project by sending officers for the courses and meetings.

Singapore has also taken a lead role in regional asset recovery assets as one of the nine steering group members of the Asset Recovery Interagency Network – Asia Pacific (ARIN-AP) since 2024, alongside fellow ASEAN members, Indonesia and Thailand. ARIN-AP aims to bring about improvements to the speed and reactivity of countries' asset recovery efforts on an informal basis, prior to countries utilising Mutual Legal Assistance.

On the bilateral front, Singapore has fostered strong partnerships through various initiatives, including a joint workshop with UK's His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) on trade-based money laundering in 2024. This workshop brought together more than 20 participants from ASEAN countries' financial crime bureaus, financial intelligence units, and anti-money laundering policy agencies. Singapore also conducts annual bilateral engagements with Malaysia's Commercial Crime Investigation Department/Royal Malaysia Police (CCID/RMP) and Vietnam's Ministry of Public Security (MPS).

Cybercrime

Singapore serves as the Lead Shepherd for Cybercrime within ASEAN. This role involves coordinating ASEAN's efforts to combat cybercrime, including capacity building, training, and information sharing among member states. Singapore also plays a crucial role in facilitating ASEAN's initiatives against cybercrime, including organising regional workshops and conferences. In 2024, the Singapore Police Force (SPF) Cybercrime Command (CCC) organised the ASEAN Cybercrime Conference, with the theme "Navigating the Digital Frontier: A New Era of Cyber Threats" to foster closer regional cooperation and address cybersecurity challenges specific to ASEAN member states. The conference saw speakers from companies such as Microsoft, TRM Labs and Group IB who shared on their role and efforts in combatting cybercrime. Speakers from the Home Team Science and Technology Agency, the US Federal Bureau of Investigations, and the Australian Federal Police also shared their experiences in combatting cybercrime. A total of 50 participants took part in the conference.

The Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) Working Group on Cybercrime (SOMTC WG on CC) is also another platform for ASEAN Member States to (i) discuss and adopt a coordinated approach to deal with cybercrime; (ii) follow up on recommendations on cybercrime from other ASEAN-related fora; and (iii) engage dialogue partners on cybercrime collaboration.

Under the SOMTC WG on CC, we worked with AMS to develop the ASEAN cybercrime roadmap, focusing on strengthening AMS cooperation to combat transnational cyber-enabled fraud and improve asset recovery. The roadmap identified 13 workstreams relating to information sharing, capacity building, coordination in joint operations, identifying gaps in asset recovery frameworks and discussions on a turnaround timeframe for the freezing of assets. To mark the

conclusion of the development phase of the cybercrime roadmap, an ASEAN declaration on cybercrime and online scams was drafted to signal our continued commitment to addressing this transnational threat together.

The ASEAN cybercrime roadmap and its key deliverables will continue to be monitored at the SOMTC WG on CC from 2024 to 2026.

We have also actively contributed to capacity and awareness building efforts. In conjunction with the Singapore International Cyber Week (SICW), the 7th ASEAN Cybercrime Prosecutors' Roundtable Meeting (ACPRM) and the 10th Senior Officials Roundtable on Cybercrime (SORC) were organised in October 2024. The former allows cybercrime prosecutors and law enforcement officers to share best practices and chart the way forward for better cooperation in this domain, while the latter provides a platform for high-level discussions among the ASEAN SOMTC Leaders and the Plus Three Dialogue Partner countries, industry experts and academia to discuss the latest threats, trends and solutions on cybercrime.

In November 2022, Singapore co-organised the Course on Cybercrime with Italy. The 3-day course, held in Rome for AMS and ASEANAPOL, explored the cybercrime fighting efforts of the Italian agencies and discussed strengthening cooperation between Italy and the ASEAN region. Due to the success of the cybercrime course, Italy has proposed the Project Falcone Borsellino to deliver a webinar and two face-to-face courses in Rome, Italy. The webinar titled 'Webinar on Cybercrime and International Economic Crime' was held from 6 to 9 May 2025 virtually. The remaining two face-to-face courses are expected to be conducted in the second-half of 2025.

In March 2023, Singapore co-organised the ASEAN-Australia Cyber Capacity Building Workshop in Singapore. Themed 'Recognising and Responding to Cybercrime Activity Presented or Exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic', the Workshop provided an overview of cybercrime trends, responses, and challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, along with case studies of operations against cybercrime. The second ASEAN-Australia Cyber Capacity Building Workshop on 'Investigating Online Child Sexual Exploitation' took place from 9 to 10 April 2025 in Singapore, and provided a platform for ASEAN member states to share cross-sectoral perspectives on the trends, responses, and challenges in combating online child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse material in their respective countries from the following ASEAN sectoral pillars:

- SOMTC
- Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY); and
- Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC).

Trafficking in Persons

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 combat TIP. Given the transnational nature of TIP threats, the Taskforce works closely with the foreign law enforcement agencies and Embassies, including through intelligence exchanges, joint investigations, and coordinated enforcement actions.

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 (BWP) 2017-2020, which were endorsed in 2015 and 2016 respectively. Upon the conclusion of the first BWP in 2020, building on the learnings, Singapore continued to support regional efforts and actively contributed to the development of the Bohol TIP Work Plan 2.0, which was endorsed in 2023. The APA and both iteration of Work Plan complement the ACTIP by outlining specific actions and policies to address the challenge of combatting TIP.

Beyond ASEAN, Singapore is 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. Singapore also collaborates with international law enforcement agencies on joint operations to combat TIP crimes. For example, Singapore participated in OPERATIONS LIBERTERRA II, INTERPOL's largest global anti-human trafficking operations from 29 September to 4 October 2024, which rescued 3,222 potential TIP victims and resulted in 2,517 arrests across 116 countries and territories. In addition, Singapore actively participates in international training initiatives and workshops on TIP, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Global Forum of Specialised Prosecutors held in Dec 2024. The forum brought together prosecutors handling cases of TIP and smuggling of migrants (SOM) to create a community of practice and strengthen cross-border cooperation in tackling these crimes.

Drug Trafficking

Singapore is firmly committed to the regional and international fight against drug trafficking. Singapore contributes actively at regional platforms such as the ASEAN

Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD) and ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Drug Matters (ASOD) which oversees the region's effort to combat drug trafficking. We have also supported capacity building efforts in the region. Annually, the Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) organised capability building workshops dedicated for international audience. The Singapore Drug Control Programme, a 4-day workshop, where Singapore shares its comprehensive drug strategies through site visits and physical demonstrations of our technologies. The workshops provided a platform for senior officials from various countries to exchange and share experiences and best practices in drug control. A total of 77 participants from over 36 countries have benefitted from the programme thus far of which eight countries were AMS. CNB also organised the 20th Integrated Narcotics Enforcement Programme (INEP) for AMS in 2024. 21 participants across nine AMS and Timor Leste, participated in the programme. Through INEP, participants had the opportunity to learn more about each other's drug enforcement experiences and hear from dialogue partners, such as the Australian Border Force and US Homeland Security Investigation, about their experiences and strategies in dealing with Transnational Serious and Organised Crime, both domestically and internationally. Having secured membership to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) for the term 2024 to 2027, we are committed to enhancing our contributions in capacity building and sharing of best practices, to boost AMS' capabilities to tackle drug trafficking. Notably, Singapore has pledged at the 67th CND to sponsor a chapter in the 2025 World Drug Report examining the societal impact of illicit drug use globally. The chapter will enhance our understanding of the world drug problem and aid in our collective efforts in developing strategies to address the harms that drugs bring to our communities.

(iv) Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Disasters can affect any country without warning. With the increasing frequency of climate-induced disaster, it is integral for Singapore to remain proactive in the field of disaster management while enhancing our HADR capabilities. Working on the principal of One ASEAN One Response (OAOR), Singapore readily and proactively contributes to disaster management and HADR-related initiatives and missions, and has pledged support to work in synergy with other ASEAN Member States to build a more disaster resilient ASEAN.

Singapore is the co-chair of two out of three of the working groups of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM). ACDM Working Group (WG) on Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PRR) and Global Leadership (GL). The ACDM WGs oversee the implementation of the five priority programmes including projects and activities enhancing regional cooperation in all aspects of disaster management including humanitarian assistance response.

From 2024-2027, Singapore is co-chairing the fifth cycle of the ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR with New Zealand. In this cycle, the EWG on HADR will seek to promote

both military-military and civil-military HADR cooperation amongst the ADMM-Plus countries, and strengthen regional awareness of the impact of climate change on HADR preparedness and response, to facilitate more effective and resilient HADR responses in the region.

Singapore successfully concluded the Chairmanship of the ACDM in 2021 that saw the launch of three new ASEAN Plus One mechanisms with China, Japan and ROK which will contribute towards the enhancement of the regional capacities and capabilities in disaster management and resiliency. The 6th ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Partnership Conference held in June 2021 generated pledges close to USD 11 million from 21 partners to support the implementation of the AADMER Work Programme 2021 – 2025. ASEAN also rallied support to operationalise the ASEAN Leaders' mandate for ASEAN's humanitarian assistance to Myanmar to be delivered through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) in support of Point 4 of the Five-Point Consensus.

The ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ERAT) is an official resource of ASEAN, under the ACDM, and is designed to support National Disaster Management Offices (NDMOs) of an affected ASEAN Member State in the aftermath of a disaster. Most recently, Singapore, represented by the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) deployed three ASEAN-ERAT officers to support the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre)'s on-the-ground response efforts during the M7.7 Earthquake in Mandalay, Myanmar, which focused on conducting rapid assessments and coordinating international humanitarian response. Over the course of 10 days, SCDF's ASEAN-ERAT officers conducted rapid assessments in Nay Pi Taw, Mandalay and Sagaing, conducting analysis to identify the critical needs of the affected communities. Operations entailed visits to numerous sites from 8 townships, including shelter areas, hospitals and collapsed sites for assessment.

In April 2025, Singapore co-organised the inaugural ASEAN-ERAT Level 3 (Team Leader) course with the AHA Centre, which was held in at the Civil Defence Academy. Upon completion of the course, participants are regionally recognised to lead emergency response operations under the ASEAN-ERAT mechanism. One officer from Singapore's Changi Regional HADR Coordination Centre (RHCC) participated as a facilitator at the ASEAN-ERAT Level 3 Course.

In August 2023, Singapore hosted the ASEAN Disaster Management Week (ADMW), which saw the inaugural ASEAN Disaster Resilience Forum (ADRF), a biennial forum which provides an avenue for ASEAN and non-ASEAN stakeholders to discuss topics related to disaster resilience in the region. The ADRF is one of the modalities to deliberate on methods to promote synergy and coordination among the relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, ASEAN Centres and Entities. The ADRF was held back-to-back with the ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster

Management (SPDDM) 2023, which has been held since 2015. The SPDDM is a keystone deliverable by ACDM Singapore, which charts long-term strategies for the ACDM and sharpens ASEAN's policy direction, strategic engagements and thought leadership in disaster management. Singapore will be hosting the 10th run of the SPDDM in August 2025. In view of it being 20 years of AADMER and 10 years of SPDDM, the event serves as an opportunity to reflect on two decades of regional cooperation in disaster risk reduction and emergency response, while forging the post-2025 vision for the ACDM. In addition, Singapore co-organises the ASEAN Senior Executive Programme in Disaster Management, (SEPDM) annually to nurture the planning and crisis management capacities and facilitate networking of the senior leadership cadre in the ASEAN disaster management fraternity. The SEPDM will be entering its 11th run in November 2025.

Singapore launched the RHCC in September 2014 which aims to provide a platform for both military-to-military and civil-military HADR coordination in support of the Affected State. The RHCC complements existing disaster response institutions – such as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the AHA Centre. RHCC's OPERA Computer Information System fuses information on assessed ground needs, status of deployments and key logistics movements to aid its partners and the Affected State in coordination and planning functions. 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, Thailand, the UK, the US, and Vietnam, which have attached International Liaison Officers (ILOs) to the RHCC or exchanged contact points for disaster relief.

In response to the 7.7-magnitude earthquake that struck Myanmar in April 2025, the Changi RHCC coordinated the delivery of two tranches of humanitarian aid to Myanmar, via the RSAF's C-130 aircraft. The first tranche comprised more than nine tonnes of relief supplies contributed by the AHA Centre, while the second tranche comprised more than 10 tonnes of aid supplies donated by various governmental and non-governmental organisations. Since Nov 2023, the Changi RHCC has been involved in the coordination of Singapore's relief efforts to affected populations in Gaza. Most recently in Feb 2025, Singapore's seventh tranche of aid was sent via RSAF's Multi Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) to Jordan for conveyance to Gaza.

Exercise Coordinated Response (Ex COORES) is RHCC's flagship table-top exercise co-organised biennially with USINDOPACOM's Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM) and a partner nation. Ex COORES allows both military and civilian stakeholders to come together and exercise responses towards a natural disaster scenario. Previous iterations of Ex COORES built military linkages, enhanced mutual understanding, and strengthened cooperation in disaster relief between international organisations, governmental agencies and non-government organisations. The most recent iteration of Ex COORES was held in October 2023 with CFE-DM and Laos Central

Disaster Management Office (CDMC), and saw international participation from 26 militaries and 25 civilian organisations, including the AHA Centre. The next edition of Ex COORES will be held in October 2025, in partnership with CFE-DM and the Vietnam National Committee for Incident, Disaster Response, Search and Rescue (VINASARCOM). The RHCC also supports training and capacity-building efforts by co-organising the UN Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord) course with the UN OCHA. The most recent iteration of the UN CMCoord course was held in Apr 2025, with participants from international and local IOs/NGOs, including the AHA Centre.

Singapore, through the SCDF, was classified as a Heavy Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team by the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) in 2008, and is notably the first country in the Asia-Pacific region to attain the classification. Singapore maintains a dedicated 80-member contingent on standby; codenamed Operation Lionheart, its core function is to provide urban search and rescue and/or humanitarian relief assistance to countries afflicted by major disasters. Most recently, the SCDF deployed an 80-member Operation Lionheart contingent to assist with USAR operations in response to the M7.7 earthquake in Mandalay, Myanmar. The Operation Lionheart contingent will be undergoing the INSARAG External Reclassification (IER) in August 2025.

Moving forward, ACDM Singapore remains steadfast in our commitment to building and nurturing a disaster resilient ASEAN. As the current AADMER Work Programme (AWP) 2020 – 2025 nears its completion, ACDM Singapore has been contributing and closely monitoring the development of the next AWP 2026 – 2030 to ensure that ASEAN stays abreast of developments in the field of disaster management.

Singapore will also be hosting the ASEAN Regional Disaster Exercise (ARDEX) in 2027. Conducted every 2 years, ARDEX is a full-scale simulation exercise that seeks to test, practise, review and evaluate ASEAN's emergency response and disaster management mechanism to test regional processes and capabilities, and is a key deliverable of the ACDM to ensure regional preparedness to disaster.

(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 and overflight. To this end, Singapore works with like-minded countries to uphold 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) cooperative measures should be in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, the relevant standards and recommended practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and instruments and conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). 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 15th MSP Joint Coordinating Committee was conducted in Jun 2024, where members agreed on the Resumption of MSP activities (following a hiatus during the COVID-19 pandemic) in the SOMS.

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 April 2009 seeks to facilitate information-sharing and collaboration to enhance maritime security. With operational linkages to 100 partners across 43 countries, the IFC serves as a platform for multinational and inter-agency collaboration to resolve common maritime security concerns, including piracy and armed robbery against ships, hijacking, search and rescue, weapons proliferation, human/arms trafficking, and smuggling. The IFC fuses, sense-makes, and

disseminates maritime information through its Real-time Information-sharing System (IRIS) to enable rapid collaboration between maritime agencies and the shipping community. The IFC also supports broader efforts to enhance regional capacity for maritime security through the conduct of exercises, workshops and other training activities. These include the annual Regional Maritime Practitioners' Programme (RMPP) and the biennial Maritime Information Sharing Exercise (MARISX). The IFC is also the permanent secretariat for the ASEAN Navy Chiefs' Meeting. Since January 2024, the RSN has also participated in Operation Prosperity Guardian under the ambit of the 39-nation Combined Maritime Forces' Combined Task Force 153: Red Sea Maritime Security. Our contributions have included operational planners and teams from the IFC to work with international partners to ensure the security of key sea lines of communication like the Red Sea.

Singapore is one of the founding members of 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, 21 States are Contracting Parties to the ReCAAP.⁴ Singapore has hosted the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) since its inception in November 2006, and has renewed its commitment to host the ISC for another 5 years, from 2022 to 2027. 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 shipping industry members alike.

The ReCAAP ISC has collaborated with partner organisations and the shipping industry, maritime training centres and institutes of higher learning to produce and review useful reference materials for the maritime community, such as the Regional Guide 2 to Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia in March 2022 and the 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. In November 2023, the ISC launched the online ReCAAP Data Visualisation Map and Panel (Re-VAMP) tool that enhances the delivery and analysis of key information on piracy and armed robbery incidents in Asia. 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).

⁴ The 21 countries are Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Denmark, Germany, India, Japan, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, the ROK, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the UK, the US, and Vietnam.

(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 step up their digitalisation efforts.

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). AMS subscribed in-principle to the 11 voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs at the 3rd AMCC in 2018, making ASEAN the first and still the only region to do so. At the 9th AMCC, the meeting recognised the heightened level of cyber threats, including the emergence of new threats to critical information infrastructure protection, ransomware, AI-security and cybercams.

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 issues was considered at the ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting (ADGMIN) in 2019. Its objective is to strengthen cross-sectoral coordination on cybersecurity while preserving the exclusive work domains of the sectoral bodies. Singapore chaired the 5th ASEAN Cyber-CC meeting in November 2024.

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 Regional Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) were noted, and the scope of work for the ASEAN CERT was agreed on.

The objective of the ASEAN Regional CERT is to promote and facilitate information sharing related to cyber incident response to complement the operational mandate exercised by individual national CERTs in each AMS. The ASEAN Regional CERT will focus on the following workstreams: information sharing, maintain the ASEAN points-of-contact network, cybersecurity trainings and workshops, regional cybersecurity exercises, international collaboration, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and cybersecurity awareness-raising. It would also include capacity building initiatives to better equip AMS' national CERTs with the tools and knowledge to deal with increasingly sophisticated cross-border cyber threats. Following AMS' agreement in 2020 to establish the ASEAN Regional CERT,

Singapore, in consultation with AMS, tabled an ASEAN Regional CERT Implementation Paper at the 2nd ADGMIN in January 2022, the Operational Framework (OF) at the 3rd ADGMIN in February 2023, and the Financial Model at the 4th ADGMIN in February 2024, which were all successfully adopted. AMS have agreed for Singapore to host and fund approximately USD10.1 million for 10 years to finance the ASEAN Regional CERT. The ASEAN Regional CERT has been launched in 2024 with a physical facility in Singapore. Its work is overseen by the ASEAN Regional CERT Task Force, currently chaired by the rotating overall coordinator Malaysia and comprising representatives from all ASEAN Member States. The Task Force looks forward to working with ASEAN Dialogue Partners to explore possible collaboration opportunities. The ASEAN Regional CERT will allow AMS to work together even more closely to further strengthen regional cyber resilience, in the face of increasingly sophisticated and transboundary cyber threats facing ASEAN, and the negative impact that such threats and successful attacks can have on the digital economy.

Singapore has also been convening an annual ASEAN CERT Incident Drill (ACID) for the last 18 years to strengthen the cybersecurity preparedness of AMS, exchange best practices in incident response, and enhance regional cooperation.

Alongside Malaysia and Japan, Singapore co-chaired the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ARF ISM on ICTs Security) from August 2018 to July 2021. 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. For the intersessional year, Singapore is co-sponsoring two proposals. The first is on a workshop on *National and Regional Approaches to Incident Management of ICT-Enabled Critical Infrastructure* with the European Union, and the second is on a workshop on the *ASEAN Checklist for the Implementation of the Norms of Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace* with the United States.

In support of international and regional capacity building efforts, Singapore has also organised several programmes under the ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence (ASCCE). The intent is to continue to work with fellow ARF Member States to enhance our collective competencies and exchange of perspectives in the policy, operational, technical and diplomacy domains of cybersecurity. Some examples of key capacity building activities include the United Nations-Singapore Cyber Fellowship (UNSCF) Programme which is co-organised with the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs. The UNSCF is open to all UN Member States, including ARF Member States and is targeted at Cyber Ambassadors and/or the heads/deputy heads of national agencies overseeing cybersecurity, with the sixth iteration recently concluded in May 2025. Singapore also conducted the ARF Workshop on Protection of ICT-Enabled Critical Infrastructure in June 2024.

In ASEAN, Singapore and Malaysia co-lead the efforts on norms implementation and have worked together with AMS to develop a Regional Action Plan (RAP) Matrix on Norms Implementation which was eventually approved at the 2nd ASEAN Cyber-CC meeting in November 2021. The RAP Matrix is ASEAN's commitment to implement the 11 UN voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, and is intended to serve as a guide for ASEAN Member States' implementation efforts. Following its adoption, the RAP Matrix remains a living document and can be reviewed whenever required. At the 4th ASEAN Cyber-CC meeting in November 2023, AMS agreed to review and update the RAP Matrix with their ongoing and future national and regional initiatives. AMS also have regular discussions on the progress of the RAP at platforms such as the ASEAN Network Security Action Council meetings. The annual review exercise for Sectoral Body initiatives under the RAP Matrix was presented by the ASEAN Secretariat at the 5th ASEAN Cyber-CC Meeting in 2024, and was subsequently acknowledged at the 5th ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting in January 2025.

In line with guidance from ASEAN Cybersecurity Ministers and Senior Officials at the ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity in 2018, Singapore worked with AMS to finalise the ASEAN Norms Implementation Checklist in support of the practical implementation of 11 voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour. The Checklist was further developed with AMS through workshops held over the course of 2024 and was completed and presented at the 9th AMCC. Subsequently, the Checklist was endorsed at the 5th ASEAN Cyber-CC and its endorsement was noted by ASEAN Ministers at the 5th ADGMIN in January 2025. The Checklist, the first regional checklist of its kind, was launched during the SICW24 and will serve as a reference for both AMS and extra-regional countries to build a safer and more secure cyberspace. Given this steady progress in ASEAN and ASEAN's commitment to norms implementation, ASEAN is well-positioned to contribute to the norms implementation discussions at the UN.

Multilaterally, Singapore participates actively in international discussions, including at the UN. Singapore has participated in and contributed to strengthening the rules-based multilateral order at the 6th UN Group of Governmental Experts (UNGGE) on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security and the inaugural Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on Developments in the Field of ICTs in the Context of International Security. Both processes concluded in 2021 with their respective consensus reports adopted by the UN General Assembly. The reports contained specific recommendations on how countries should work together towards an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful cyberspace. Singapore chairs the ongoing five-year UN OEWG on Security of and in the use of ICTs (2021 – 2025), which builds on the work of the inaugural UN OEWG and the sixth UN GGE. The OEWG (2021 - 2025) has successfully adopted three consecutive Annual Progress Reports by consensus in 2022, 2023, and 2024. This is a clear indication of the

commitment of States to work together towards building a common understanding on areas such as emerging threats; rules, norms and principles of responsible behaviour; and the application of international law to cyberspace. The Annual Progress Reports also set out an important roadmap for steps that the OEWG can take to foster practical international cooperation on capacity building, and CBMs, towards a safe and secure cyberspace. These efforts will contribute towards the way ahead for the future UN permanent mechanism on cybersecurity which will succeed the OEWG when it concludes in July 2025.

Singapore continues to participate actively in discussions that will shape the future UN permanent mechanism on cybersecurity. The discussions continue to gather much interest with many countries expressing support for a single-track outcome-oriented process.

Within the defence sectoral, the ADMM-Plus EWG on CS is a platform for defence establishments from ASEAN and Plus countries to enhance cooperation in addressing challenges to cybersecurity. Singapore actively participates in the EWG on CS to foster understanding, strengthen practical cooperation and support capacity-building efforts in the region. ACICE is also supporting the EWG on CS through the development and hosting of a web portal for the ADMM-Plus countries.

ACICE is part of Singapore's contributions to strengthen cooperation amongst AMS in building a safe, secure, stable and accessible cyber and digital space. Since September 2021, ACICE has circulated more than 120 monthly reports to AMS to raise shared situational awareness, provided updates on recent developments and trends, as well as tactics and techniques used by malicious actors in the cyber and information domains. These reports are also published on ACICE's website and LinkedIn page, to provide easy access to ACICE's products and updates on ACICE's events. ACICE's Malware Information Sharing Platform (MISP) and ACICE Chat enable AMS to access, read and share real-time information on cyber malware and other relevant cyber and information threats. The timely sharing of cybersecurity threat information leverages the collective knowledge of AMS for early warning, timely response and mitigation of cyberattacks. ACICE conducted two iterations of its cybersecurity course in February 2024 and 2025, and will conduct its inaugural information course in June 2025. These courses allow ASEAN military cyber practitioners to gain a deeper understanding of cybersecurity information issues and exchange perspectives on the challenges and threats across Southeast Asia. ACICE conducted the 3rd Advisory Board meeting in-person on 25 July 2024, with nominated representatives from all AMS as well as the ASEAN Secretariat in attendance. The Meeting exchanged views on how ASEAN defence establishments could cooperate in the cyber and information domains, as well as the research areas, activities and products that ACICE could work on. The 4th Advisory Board meeting will be held in July 2025. ACICE Experts Panel was formed in June 2023, and comprises 10 academics and industry professionals from diverse geographical

representation. It aims to advise ACICE on emerging trends and developments in the cyber and information domains. ACICE Experts Panel had its inaugural meeting in July 2023, two virtual meetings in January 2024 and 2025, and an in-person meeting in July 2024. The Experts Panel provided useful suggestions and feedback for ACICE to enhance its events and product offerings. The Experts Panel will meet again in July 2025.

Singapore continues to participate actively in discussions that will shape the future cybersecurity mechanism at the UN OEWG. The discussions continue to gather much interest with many countries expressing support for a single-track outcome-oriented process.

4) ROLE OF 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 growing fragmentation.

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 geopolitical 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 the increasing complex geopolitical environment 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.

THAILAND

1) OVERVIEW

Global and Regional Geopolitical Context

The Asia-Pacific region has become increasingly central to the geopolitical and economic strategies of major powers. Their ongoing competition shapes the regional security landscape, influencing both stability and the evolution of multilateral frameworks.

Shifts in geopolitics and global economy—including supply chain decoupling, technological rivalry, and emerging challenges to multilateralism—are testing the foundations of the existing international order. A key factor in this evolving dynamic will be how major powers choose to engage with one another: whether through retaliatory measures or constructive dialogue.

Role of ASEAN Centrality

Amidst these profound changes, ASEAN has consistently remained a steady and central force. ASEAN-led mechanisms—including the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)—continue to play an instrumental role in fostering multilateralism, regional cooperation, and dialogue. The ARF has demonstrated its value in maintaining peace and stability amidst an increasingly fragmented global environment.

In this context, the ASEAN-led regional architecture—comprising ASEAN Plus One, ASEAN Plus Three (APT), the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), and the ARF—has cultivated a broad and inclusive platform for cooperation. These mechanisms are more than mere meeting venues; they are space where norms are shaped, trust is built, and shared strategies can emerge. As the region remains caught between great power competition and non-traditional threats, such platforms are essential to transforming rivalry into cooperation.

Thailand's Commitment

Against this complex backdrop, Thailand steadfastly reaffirms its commitment to promoting strategic balance within the ASEAN-centred regional architecture. The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) serves as a valuable framework guiding ASEAN's engagement with external partners in an open, inclusive, and mutually beneficial manner. Thailand firmly believes this approach will significantly contribute to ASEAN's broader efforts to uphold peace, stability, and shared prosperity across the entire region.

As an active promoter of peace and shared prosperity, Thailand remains committed to working sincerely and constructively with all countries. We are determined to strengthen security cooperation both within the ASEAN region and with the broader international community. Thailand reaffirms its commitment to constructively collaborating with all partners within the framework of international laws and norms to advance peace, stability, and progress at the national, regional, and global levels.

2) REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The Asia-Pacific region continues to grapple with a range of persistent traditional and non-traditional security challenges that require international and regional dialogues and cooperation as well as continuous diplomatic engagements.

South China Sea

Rising tensions and provocative incidents in the South China Sea risk undermining regional peace, security, and stability. It is therefore essential that all parties concerned to exercise self-restraint and refrain from activities that could lead to miscalculation, confrontation or conflict.

ASEAN Member States and China are encouraged to maintain trust and confidence in the region through practical confidence-building measures, sustained dialogue, and win-win cooperation under the framework of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC). Thailand welcomes the conclusion of the Third Reading of the Single Draft Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) Negotiating Text in November 2024 by the ASEAN-China Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (JWG-DOC), which marks positive momentum towards an early conclusion of an effective and substantive COC. Thailand also had the honour of hosting the 43rd Meeting of JWG-DOC in Bangkok on 13-15 May 2024, where participants discussed ways to accelerate the negotiations and promote an effective and substantive COC consistent with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

All parties concerned should foster an environment conducive to the COC negotiations and peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. Full and effective implementation of the DOC and its measures remain essential to maintaining freedom of navigation and overflight above the South China Sea.

Korean Peninsula

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula remains persistent concern in the Asia-Pacific region. Thailand calls for early resumption of dialogue among concerned parties to prevent unintended escalation and create a conducive environment for a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Korean Peninsula. Any meaningful resolution must be pursued and agreed upon by parties concerned.

In this regard, the ARF can serve as a constructive platform for dialogue involving the DPRK and parties concerned.

Middle East

Thailand is concerned about the resumption of hostilities in Gaza and the continued retaliatory use of force in the region. Thailand urges that all parties to continue their efforts to negotiate and conclude the ceasefire and hostage agreement soonest as well as to ensure unimpeded humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip. We reaffirm our support for genuine and constructive dialogue between Israel and Palestine and for the two-State solution, by which the States of Israel and Palestine live side-by-side in peace and security, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

Thailand expresses its grave concern over the tensions between Israel and Iran. We urge both sides to exercise utmost restraint to prevent further deterioration of the situation and the expansion of conflict, which would inevitably affect innocent civilians. We extend our condolences to the victims and their families. We further call on all parties to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, and strive to resolve the situation through peaceful means, in accordance with international law, UN Charter and relevant UN resolutions.

India-Pakistan

Thailand welcomes the announcement of a ceasefire following the escalation in tensions in the wake of April 2025 attack in Pahalgam. We commend both sides for choosing the path of de-escalation, viewing the ceasefire as a vital step toward peace and stability of the two countries. Thailand reaffirms its support for resolving disputes through dialogue and peaceful means.

Ukraine

Thailand remains deeply concerned over this protracted conflict in Ukraine, which continues to cause devastating humanitarian consequences and damage to civilian infrastructure, while exacerbating global economic and security uncertainty. The ripple effects—including food insecurity, energy crises, and the displacement of refugees—are acutely felt across the Asia-Pacific region. Thailand

reiterates the importance of upholding international law and the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, particularly the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

All relevant parties must cease hostilities and exercise utmost restraint to prevent the situation from reaching the point of no return. Thailand supports the United Nations Secretary-General's proposal to establish effective humanitarian corridors and safe passage for civilians and critical supplies. We welcome all diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful resolution, including the recent initiative undertaken in Türkiye. It is essential that all parties concerned work closely together and address the concerns of all sides to achieve a sustainable and lasting peace.

Myanmar

Thailand fully supports the efforts of the ASEAN Chair and its Special Envoy in advancing the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus (5PC). The recent earthquake in Myanmar underscores the urgency of scaling up humanitarian and disaster response efforts—not only within ASEAN but also through broader regional and international partnership.

Thailand's commitment to supporting the 5PC was reaffirmed through its role in convening the Six-Country Informal Consultation convened in Bangkok on 19 December 2024, which brought together the Foreign Ministers and senior representatives of Myanmar, Lao PDR, Bangladesh, China, India, and Thailand. The meeting focused on strengthening cooperation to promote border peace and security, and to combat transboundary crimes, in support of a more stable and conducive environment for dialogue in Myanmar.

Building on this momentum, Thailand also hosted the Informal Consultation and the Extended Informal Consultation (EIC) in Bangkok on 20 December 2024. The meeting reaffirmed ASEAN's role in advancing the implementation of the 5PC and exchanged views on the situation and developments in Myanmar, as well as way forward—prioritising the provision of humanitarian assistance, emphasising the need to address the escalation in transnational crimes stem from the instability in Myanmar, calling for cessation of violence by all parties concerned, and affirming support for inclusive dialogue.

Constructive engagement remains essential. Thailand's bilateral experience—including in addressing transnational crimes, has shown that practical cooperation with all stakeholders, including Myanmar authorities, is necessary. With elections announced for the near future, Thailand joins ASEAN in calling for an extension of the ceasefire to support inclusive dialogue and to foster an environment conducive to a transparent, credible and acceptable electoral process.

Progress on two parallel tracks—enhanced humanitarian support and constructive engagement, both within ASEAN and through external partnerships—will be key to advancing the implementation of the 5PC, with the ultimate goal of achieving Myanmar-led and Myanmar-owned solutions.

Non-Traditional Security Threats

Beyond traditional security concerns, the region faces an increasingly complex array of non-traditional security threats, many of which are amplified by rapid technological advancements and interconnected global dynamics.

Cyber Threats and Transnational Crime intersections

Technological advancements—while offering immense benefits—have also introduced new and unpredictable challenges. Artificial intelligence, deepfake technology, and novel forms of cybercrime are enabling increasingly sophisticated transnational threats, compounding regional security.

These technologies allow perpetrators to operate globally while evading detection. Recent cases in Thailand underscored this trend, including arrests of alleged hackers and ransomware operators exploiting decentralised finance and blockchain technologies to conduct illicit activities across borders. This highlights the need for strengthened international cooperation to counter these evolving threats.

The intersection between international politics and transnational crime is becoming more complex due to digital advancements. While many cybercriminals operate independently, others may be linked to political agendas. Addressing these challenges requires enhanced intelligence sharing, capacity-building initiatives, and deeper regional collaboration. ASEAN must seize this opportunity—not only to respond but to lead. It can and should position itself as a platform for open, inclusive dialogue on these pressing issues.

Transnational Crime Syndicates

The transnational crime situation in 2024 continued to intensify due to the development and evolution of foreign criminal networks operating along the border of Thailand's neighbouring countries. These groups function as organised criminal syndicates, employing a range of illicit activities as revenue streams. As a result, transnational crimes are increasingly interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Key criminal activities include online fraud, illegal online gambling, human trafficking, illegal immigration, and money laundering. Thailand continues to be affected as a route for various forms of transnational crime, ranging from scam operations in border areas, human trafficking to cybercrime and environmental violations—

which pose serious threats to Thailand's economic and social stability, as well as its international credibility. There are also growing concerns about potential spill over effects from the situation in Myanmar.

To address these challenges, Thailand implements the National Strategy to Prevent and Combat Transnational Organised Crimes (2024-2027), build around three pillars: prevention, suppression and international coordination. Domestic legislation on organised crime, money laundering, human trafficking and cybercrime further strengthens the country's policy and legal frameworks.

Drug Trafficking

Thailand continues to be severely affected by the high volumes of methamphetamine production in the Golden Triangle, with large quantities being smuggled into the country. The increasing volume of seizures reflect rapid expansion of the regional methamphetamine market in Southeast Asia. In particular, methamphetamine tablets mixed with caffeine, or 'Yaba', remain the most prevalent drug in Thailand, dominating both trade and use.

Drug trafficking is increasingly intertwined with other forms of transnational crime, such as money laundering, human trafficking and cyber scams. The Royal Thai Government has identified the fight against illicit drugs as one of its top 10 national agendas, emphasising the need for cooperation with neighbouring countries to eliminate drug production sources and intercept smuggling along border areas.

In January 2025, the Royal Thai Government launched "Seal-Stop-Safe", an anti-drug operation based on three objectives: 1) Seal, by strengthening interdiction capacity at the border provinces; 2) Stop, by disrupting drug distribution networks; which led to 3) Safe, enhancing public safety and human security.

At the 68th Session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in March 2025, Thailand raised global awareness about the methamphetamine crisis in the Mekong region and garnered regional and international cooperation through series of activities. Together with Norway, Thailand co-presented a resolution titled 'Promoting research on scientific evidence-based interventions for the treatment and care of stimulant use disorders', which paves way for international cooperation to promote research on evidence-based interventions for the treatment of drug users of stimulant, particularly methamphetamine.

As a long-standing advocate of Alternative Development (AD) as a development-focused drug control strategy, Thailand hosted the Expert Group Meeting on Alternative Development, and the Royal Project International Conference 'From AD to SDGs: Empowering the AD to Address the Global Challenges' in December 2024, in Chiang Mai. Thailand has also advocated AD in the CND. At the 67th Session of CND in 2024, Thailand as the penholder, along with

Peru and Germany, co-presented a resolution entitled 'Celebrating the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development: effective implementation and the way forward', and at the 68th Session of CND in 2025, Thailand, Peru and Germany also co-presented a resolution entitled 'Complementing the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development'.

As host of the ASEAN Narcotics Cooperation Centre (ASEAN-NARCO) and lead shepherd on illicit drug trafficking under the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC), Thailand promotes intelligence sharing and capacity-building with ASEAN Member States, INTERPOL, and partners. In line with the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities against Illicit Drugs 2016–2025, Thailand co-hosted a regional meeting with Australia in September 2024 on the Safe Handling and Disposal of Illicit Drugs and Precursor Chemicals, facilitating the exchange of practical solutions and best practices. Thailand also continues its collaborative efforts with Mekong countries through the Safe Mekong Joint Operation (2024-2027), as well as a launch of law enforcement and information-sharing centre, the Safe Mekong Coordination Centre (SMCC) in 2015 to dismantle drug circulation in the Mekong sub-region.

3) NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION TO REGIONAL AND GLOBAL SECURITY

Thailand is actively committed to enhancing security and stability through a combination of robust national policies and proactive engagement in regional and international cooperation mechanism.

National Security and Defence Policy

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) of Thailand remains committed to advancing defence operations that deliver tangible outcomes, in alignment with the Government Policy and the Policy Statement of the Cabinet delivered by Prime Minister H.E. Ms. Paetongtarn Shinawatra to the National Assembly on 12 September 2024. The overarching objective is to enhance the capability and readiness of the Royal Thai Armed Forces to effectively address all forms of traditional and non-traditional security threats. At the same time, the Armed Forces are expected to uphold their role as a trusted and dependable institution dedicated to safeguarding the well-being of the Thai people.

To achieve these objectives, the Thai MOD prioritises the restructuring and modernisation of the Armed Forces to become more compact, technologically advanced, and resilient. These reforms aim to ensure operational effectiveness during peacetime, with the flexibility to scale up capabilities during periods of heightened security demand. Key areas of focus include upgrading defence platforms and systems, developing a skilled and professional force, strengthening

human resource development, and enhancing strategic mobility and joint operational capabilities.

In parallel, the Thai MOD is implementing a comprehensive strategy to strengthen Thailand's national defence industry. This includes promoting self-reliance through the domestic development of military technologies, fostering innovation in digital capabilities, and enhancing collaboration with the private sector to meet the demands of modern warfare.

Recognising the growing threats posed by transnational crime and cross-border security challenges, the Thai MOD has established a committee and operational mechanism for the Prevention and Resolution of Security Threats in Border Areas. This mechanism is driven by high-level consultations among commanders and senior officers from relevant security agencies. It plays a critical role in addressing pressing issues such as drug trafficking, illegal migration, wildlife and natural resource trafficking, and cyber-enabled scams including call-centre fraud.

The Thai MOD adopts a whole-of-government approach to border security through strengthened intelligence-sharing, enhanced readiness and presence of border patrol units, and the development of standard operating procedures (SOPs) to support integrated, coordinated, and timely responses. These efforts are further reinforced through civil-military cooperation at all levels.

To promote transparency and build public and international confidence, the Thai MOD has published its official policy statement, reflecting importance that Thailand has given to the enhancement of ASEAN-led security architecture and continues to contribute proactively to regional peace and stability.

At the regional level, Thailand actively participates in defence cooperation under the ambit of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), the ADMM-Plus, and other ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ARF. These platforms are instrumental in fostering mutual trust, promoting practical cooperation, and strengthening collective capacities to address current and emerging security challenges. Thailand's engagement spans a broad range of initiatives, including the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups, the ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine (ACMM), and other cooperative activities focused on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), maritime security, counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, and capacity-building to non-traditional security threats.

Data Contribution to ARF

Thailand attaches importance to transparency and confidence-building for effective arms control. Therefore, Thailand has regularly contributed annual reports on military spending and arms transfers under the UN Report on Military Expenditures (UNMilEx) and the UN Register on Conventional Arms (UNROCA).

Joint Exercises

The Cobra Gold joint exercise is co-hosted annually in Thailand by the Royal Thai Armed Forces and the United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM). This year of 2025 marks the 44th iteration of the exercise. A total of 7 primary participating countries were involved: Thailand, the United States, Singapore, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Malaysia. An additional 3 countries—China, India, and Australia—joined as supplemental participants.

Under the Multinational Planning Augmentation Team (MPAT) programme, 10 countries contributed staff, and 10 more participated as observers under the Combined Observer Liaison Team (COLT) framework. The exercise took place from 25 February to 7 March 2025, with primary training areas located in the Second Army Area (Royal Thai Army Region 2) and the Upper Gulf of Thailand. In total, 30 countries participated, with approximately 8,194 personnel involved in the exercise.

Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

Thailand has long supported the WPS agenda. It first developed National Measures and Guidelines on WPS 2017-2021, which included the establishment of Children and Women Coordinating Centre in Southern Thailand. The National Measures and Guidelines were extended for the period of 2023-2026.

Thailand—in coordination with UN Women—commenced the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS in 2023, with a focus on enhancing women's capacity in conflict resolution and in preventing all forms of violence against women. The NAP is guided by three core principles: (1) gender equality; (2) human rights; and (3) responsiveness to diverse needs of target groups. The draft NAP is currently under review by the National Committee on Policy and Strategy for the Development of the Status of Women and will be submitted to the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council for consideration and official endorsement.

On a regional level, Thailand hosted the WPS National Action Plan (NAP) Academy Workshop in Bangkok in June 2024, co-organised by the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR) and UN Women, under the project “Empowering Women for Sustainable Peace”, supported by Canada, the Republic of Korea, and the United Kingdom.

Counter-terrorism

In 2025, the Southeast Asian region continues to face terrorist threats, despite a noticeable decline in major terrorist activities compared to previous year. Groups affiliated with the Islamic State (IS) remain a concern, particularly due to their persistent efforts to disseminate propaganda and recruit new members. While

some organisations have gone dormant, various splinter groups remain operational and pose credible threats. The spread of online propaganda continues to fuel self-radicalisation across the region. The use of social media platforms such as Telegram, WhatsApp, and TikTok for ideological indoctrination, recruitment, and even operational planning saw a marked increase in 2024. Younger, often disfranchised, individuals are especially vulnerable to these narratives.

While no major attacks were reported in urban areas in 2024, there are indications of urban-based support networks, including logistical cells, sympathisers, and cyber recruiters. These developments highlight a broader challenge, as Thailand—given its central geographic location—continues to grapple with the risks posed by the transnational movement of foreign extremist elements.

In response, Thailand continues to implement its National Strategy on Counterterrorism (2021-2027), with a focus on prevention, preparedness, and regional cooperation. Recent amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Act and the Computer Crime Act have strengthened capabilities to monitor terrorist financing and counter cyber threats. Thailand continues to work closely with neighbouring countries to monitor cross-border movements, reinforce vigilance toward incoming travellers, and strengthen national security measures. Cooperation between government agencies, and engagement with both public and private sectors, plays a vital role in enhancing early detection and disruption of terrorism-related activities.

At the regional level, Thailand remains actively engaged in ASEAN's counter-terrorism efforts, including through mechanisms such as the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) and security-related engagement under the ASEAN Plus One, the EAS, ARF, and ADMM-Plus frameworks.

At the international level, Thailand continues to cooperate with international organisations and regional partners to monitor the movements of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and assess emerging trends in online radicalisation, in line with broader ASEAN-led frameworks.

Promoting Multiculturalism and Interfaith Dialogue

As a multicultural society, Thailand places strong emphasis on the promotion of interfaith and intercultural dialogue as a means to foster peaceful coexistence. By advancing mutual understanding among religious and cultural communities, and by upholding the rights of individuals to religious and cultural expression, Thailand strives to build a more inclusive society founded on equity, mutual respect, and a shared sense of belonging.

At the international level, Thailand has consistently advocated for peace processes and reconciliation efforts, while encouraging cooperation to promote mutual

respect, understanding, and peaceful coexistence. Since the establishment of the Group of Friends of the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations (UNAOC) in 2005, Thailand has remained an active member and partner in promoting dialogue among civilizations. These efforts contribute to the broader objectives of the United Nations' New Agenda for Peace, especially in areas related to preventive diplomacy and interfaith dialogue.

Thailand has supported a number of relevant resolutions adopted at the United Nations General Assembly, most notably resolution A/RES/54/115, which recognised the Day of Visak and its international commemoration at the United Nations Headquarters and offices.

Since 2000, Thailand, together with Sri Lanka, has co-hosted the annual commemoration of the "International Day of Vesak" at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and other UN offices. This initiative aims to raise international awareness of the Buddha's teachings and to highlight Buddhism's contributions to promoting a culture of peace, tolerance, and harmonious coexistence.

Domestically, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand guarantees freedom of religion for all individuals. The National Action Plan for Promoting Peaceful Coexistence in a Multicultural Society for 2023-2027 reinforces this principle by ensuring protection against discrimination based on religious or cultural background. A number of laws, policies, and administrative measures have also been adopted to uphold cultural rights and religious freedom, with the goal of bridging cultural divides and fostering meaningful cooperation grounded in mutual respect for diversity.

Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

Landmines

Landmines continue to pose serious risks to human security, public health, and regional development, particularly in border areas affected by past conflicts. Thailand has actively pursued demining operations in these areas, despite challenges in areas to be demarcated.

As Chair of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation for the term 2025–2026 under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), Thailand fully supports the universalisation of the Convention and the fulfilment of mine clearance obligations. The objective is to reduce risks associated with anti-personnel mines and to bring an end to decades of suffering. Thailand currently maintains no stockpiled anti-personnel mines and has successfully cleared and returned over 99 percent of previously contaminated land. Thailand also serves as Chair of the

Committee's Gender Focal Point and promotes gender equality and empowering of women in mine action operations.

Building on this leadership, Thailand continues to promote international cooperation and assistance at the regional level. This includes the sharing of knowledge, experiences, and best practices related to humanitarian mine action within ASEAN. Such cooperation enhances the effectiveness of mine action operations, improves safety and security, fosters economic prosperity, and ensures that no one is left behind—thereby contributing meaningfully to ASEAN's vision of a mine-free region.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Thailand upholds the policy not to develop, acquire, or proliferate any kind of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery, as well as fully observes commitments and obligations on non-proliferation of WMD.

Thailand reaffirms the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a cornerstone for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. The failure to adopt an outcome at the 10th Review Conference of the NPT has made it more important than ever for all parties to reaffirm their commitments towards implementing their obligations and undertakings under the NPT in all three pillars in a balanced manner. The upcoming 11th Review Conference will play an instrumental role in strengthening the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and it is crucial that States Parties put their collective efforts in strengthening the NPT review process, including by enhancing transparency and accountability to build trust and confidence amongst States.

As one of the first three countries to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), Thailand welcomes the successful conclusion of its First, Second and Third Meetings of States Parties in 2022, 2023 and 2025. Given that 94 States have signed the TPNW and 73 States are parties to the Treaty, it is crucial to promote universalisation of the TPNW, in order to ensure that a general and complete disarmament will finally be achieved. We look forward to working closely with all partners to promote the universalization efforts of the Treaty, leading up to the First Review Conference in 2026.

Thailand recognises the complementarity and synergy between various disarmament and non-proliferation instruments and frameworks, including the TPNW, the NPT, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. As an informal co-facilitator, together with Ireland, on the “Complementarity” of the TPNW, the NPT, and other instruments, Thailand believes that, through our collective will and efforts under different fora, we can accelerate progress towards our common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Thailand will continue to identify, explore and advance other aspects of

complementarity. Ensuring that these treaties reinforce one another is key to strengthening the global disarmament architecture.

Thailand welcomes the adoption of the *Pact for the Future* and its annexes by world leaders at the Summit of the Future in September 2024, providing a solid foundation for a peaceful and secure world. The document signifies a recommitment to the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and presents concrete steps across all aspects of disarmament, including emerging domains such as outer space and cyberspace. In this connection, Thailand looks forward to tangible cooperation and meaningful engagement between all UN agencies, Member States, and other stakeholders in realising the implementation of the Pact. 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.

At the regional level, Thailand remains committed to advancing ASEAN's non-proliferation agenda, including through the establishment and implementation of the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty, or Bangkok Treaty, and the work of the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM). Thailand also remains committed to engaging with the Nuclear Weapon States on the signing of the SEANWFZ Protocol and with ASEAN Member States and partners on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology. Thailand also welcomes progress on preparation towards Timor-Leste's accession to the SEANWFZ Treaty. Thailand also continues to actively engage in the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ISM on NPD), and has supported ASEAN's contribution to the report pursuant UNGA Resolution 79/251 on the comprehensive study of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all their aspects.

Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Measures

Thailand firmly adheres to international law applicable in cyberspace and the norms of responsible State behaviour, fully supporting global and regional efforts to promote an open, secure, stable, accessible, interoperable, and peaceful ICT environment. Thailand recognises the transformative impact of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), quantum computing, and cloud systems on cybersecurity, along with the risks they pose.

In support of global cyber governance, Thailand has actively engaged in the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2025. We welcome the establishment and the implementation of the Global Points of Contact (POC) Directory as a tool for building confidence amongst States and mitigating the risk of cyber incidents, amongst the Initial List of Voluntary Global Confidence-Building Measures

adopted by the OEWG in its 2024 Annual Progress Report. Thailand looks forward to working with all partners on the establishment of a future permanent mechanism to foster dialogue on this issue under the auspices of the UN after the OEWG's mandate ends.

Recognising that cybercrime has increasingly become a major threat to the development of the global digital economy and to the well-being of societies, Thailand welcomes the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime on 24 December 2024, which is a significant milestone that will enhance international cooperation and mutual legal assistance in combating cybercrime, including offences related to online child sexual exploitation and abuse. Thailand views the conclusion of such instrument as crucial to the international efforts to address this pressing transboundary issue.

The 5th ADGMIN and Related Meetings, hosted by Thailand were held on 16–17 January 2025 in Bangkok, under the theme 'Secure, Innovative, Inclusive: Shaping ASEAN's Digital Future'. The Opening Ceremony was presided over by Her Excellency Paetongtarn Shinawatra, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand. The Prime Minister emphasised the importance of regional collaboration in developing a secure, sustainable and inclusive digital economy. The three key issues highlighted include: 1) Tackling online scams—a growing challenge for all countries that requires regional cooperation to establish a secure digital ecosystem with standardised measures to counter cyber fraud; 2) Addressing misinformation—an increasingly critical issue in the cyber world, where ASEAN should implement monitoring and verification mechanisms, as well as promote digital literacy among the public; and 3) Artificial intelligence (AI)—a transformative technology driving economic growth, but demands careful consideration of associated risks and ethical implications.

Complementing this, the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC) in Bangkok continues to play a vital role in strengthening the cybersecurity capabilities of ASEAN Member States to combat emerging cyber threats. Thailand deeply appreciates Japan's continued support for the centre. The Centre places their focus primarily on technical cybersecurity capacity building through hands-on training programmes, webinars, and competitions for the future generation of cybersecurity using Capture-the-Flag (CTF) format. Topics covered in these activities include cyber defence exercise with recurrence, malware analysis and operational technology training. We are pleased to note growing interest from various partners—both governmental and private, within and beyond the region—in organising workshops with the AJCCBC. Such partnerships provide valuable contributions to capacity building and help ASEAN address evolving cybersecurity challenges.

At the national level, Thailand continues to strengthen its cybersecurity efforts under the National Security Policy and Plan 2023–2027, which aims to enhance

cybersecurity defense capabilities, elevate national security standards, and reduce cybercrime incidents. In parallel, the Cybersecurity Policy and Action Plan 2022–2027 focuses on improving the protection and resilience of Critical Information Infrastructures (CIIs) against cyber threats.

Thailand Computer Emergency Response Team (ThaiCERT) actively monitors risks and provides support, reporting 1,076 incidents during October 2024–March 2025, including hacked websites, fake websites, financial scams, data leaks, vulnerability, data breaches, DDoS and ransomware.

Combatting Online Scam

Thailand continues to demonstrate its commitment to combatting online scam in its capacity as chair of the Working Group on Anti-Online Scam (WG-AS). The Working Group met most recently in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 22 April 2025 and continues to serve as a collaborative platform for information sharing, policy discussions, capacity building, and training aimed at tackling online scams across digital and telecommunications channels.

Key achievements of the WG-AS include the Report on Online Scam Activities in ASEAN (2023–2024) and the ASEAN Recommendations on Anti-Online Scams, both approved at the 5th ADGMIN. The Report highlights the current landscape of online scams in the region and aims to foster a deeper understanding to guide ASEAN Member States toward more effective and coordinated responses. Meanwhile, the Recommendations outline essential guidelines and provide key measures for ASEAN Member States to implement in tackling online scams across digital and telecommunication channels.

In line with the ASEAN Recommendations, Thailand has reaffirmed its commitment to regional cooperation by continuing to implement national strategies to address online scam issues and by reviewing and enhancing domestic laws related to cybercrime. For example, Thailand enacted the Royal Decree on Measures for the Prevention and Suppression of Online Crime B.E. 2566 (2023) to address critical concerns such as illicit SIM cards, mule accounts, and illegal telecom signals.

As part of its wider regional outreach, on 30 May and 2 June 2025, Thailand organised a special workshop on “Combatting Online Scams” to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Thailand-OSCE partnership. The event showcased Thailand’s comprehensive and coordinated approaches to detect, prevent, and counter online scams collectively, and aimed to strengthen regional and international cooperation among OSCE participating States and Partners for Cooperation. Thailand is also co-chairing ARF Seminar on Online Scam with China and Singapore in the next Inter-sessional year 2025-202 to advance efforts towards this end.

At the national level, Thailand has scaled up its domestic infrastructure to combat cybercrime. The Ministry of Digital Economy and Society has established the Anti-Online Scam Operation Centre (AOC) as a dedicated service point to counter the growing prevalence of online scams. The AOC, accessible via the 24-hour hotline number 1441, represents a critical step in the government's efforts to protect the Thai people from online fraud. It plays a crucial role in supporting victims by immediately suspending affected bank accounts upon request, facilitating problem-solving, expediting the return of stolen funds, and leveraging technology to suppress scams.

On the legal front, Thailand has made significant regulatory progress in 2025. On 13 April 2025, two new draft royal decrees were announced: the Draft Royal Decree on Digital Asset Business Operations B.E. 2568 (2025) and the Draft Royal Decree on Measures for the Prevention and Suppression of Technological Crime (No. 2) B.E. 2568 (2025). These proposed laws aim to enhance Thailand's capacity to prevent cybercrime—particularly concerning digital financial transactions and the misuse of digital assets for money laundering, and pave the way for stronger cross-agency data integration and the adoption of advanced technologies like AI for threat analysis and enforcement support.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Thailand continues to contribute actively to regional cooperation under the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), which will commemorate its 20th anniversary in 2025 as well as the development of the new AADMER Work Programme (2026–2030) is scheduled to be launched in October 2025 during the 13th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM) in Cambodia.

Thailand also works closely with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) to strengthen regional disaster management. Thailand co-hosted the AHA Centre Information Management Network (AIM-Net) Training, which supports Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) through big data and AI integration, and helps build a regional platform for disaster data management. Thailand also co-organised the Humanitarian Logistics Management and Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) Procedures Training, enhancing practical skills of participants from all ASEAN Member States in humanitarian logistics and cross-border procedures, while promoting standardisation and inter-agency cooperation.

In December 2024, Thailand hosted the Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Indian Ocean Tsunami, highlighting two decades of progress in early warning systems, particularly the development of an end-to-end multi-hazard early warning system. Thailand is also preparing to host the ASEAN-ERAT Localization Training, which will focus on strengthening national capacity in conducting rapid

damage assessments tailored to local contexts. During emergency situations, Thailand has facilitated the delivery of relief items through the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) Satellite Warehouse in Chai Nat Province. For example, during Tropical Storm Yagi, relief items were deployed to support affected populations in Myanmar and Thailand.

Following the Earthquake on 28 March 2025, Thailand deployed its personnel as part of the ASEAN-ERAT team to conduct rapid damage assessments alongside other ASEAN Member States. Thailand also deployed military personnel to assist humanitarian operations, while the Ministry of Public Health dispatched a Thailand Emergency Medical Team (EMT) to provide essential medical and public health services in the affected areas.

Maritime Cooperation

Maritime Security

Thailand's Maritime National Interests Protection Act B.E. (2019) promotes better coordination and consolidated responses to emerging threats. This act elevated the Thai Maritime Enforcement Coordinating Centre to the Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Centre (THAI-MECC), with increased authority and role in managing Thai maritime interests.

Thailand has been a part of the regional efforts to enhance maritime security, including the Malacca Straits Patrol Joint Coordinating Committee (MSP JCC) since 2008, the air patrol "Eyes in the Sky" since 2009, and the secondment of officers to the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP ISC).

In 2024, Thai-MECC and the EU has signed the IORIS and the Partnership Agreement (IPA) which allows both sides to enhance cooperation on information-sharing, real-time monitoring and training of personnel under CRIMARIO II project. Such agreement also strengthens Thai-MECC's position as a leading regional maritime centre to safeguard freedom of navigation and maritime domain awareness.

Thailand has actively advanced efforts to ensure protection and sustainable use of marine resources through both national and international initiatives. Domestically, Thailand has piloted Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) projects for its coastal areas to promote balanced use of marine space, reduce user conflicts, and conserve marine biodiversity, in line with its Blue Economy policy and national ocean governance strategies.

To further strengthen knowledge-based policymaking and stakeholder engagement in maritime domain, Thailand has established the National Maritime

Knowledge Management Centre in April 2025 which will serve as national maritime think-tank and a collaborative platform for academic institutions, relevant agencies and stakeholders to advance maritime research and maritime policy dialogue. It also aims at enhancing coordination across sectors, fostering knowledge dissemination, supporting evidence-based decision making in maritime governance as well as engage with broader regional and international partners.

Marine Ecosystem Protection

The Indo-Pacific region faces significant maritime security challenges that extend to the marine environment. These include issues related to plastic and marine debris, and the broader health of marine ecosystems.

Thailand is actively tackling marine debris through National Action Plan on Plastic Waste Management, Phase 2 (2023–2027), and the Roadmap on Plastic Waste Management (2018–2030), with particular emphasis on marine litter management. A key development is the Bill on Sustainable Packaging Management, adopting the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) principle to prevent difficult-to-recover single-use plastics from entering rivers and marine environments. Clear targets are set to recycle 100% of targeted plastic waste and cut plastic leakage into the ocean by at least 50% by 2030, in alignment with the ASEAN Regional Action on Marine Debris (2021–2025).

Thailand is also implementing Phase 2 of its Plastic Waste Management Action Plan (2023–2027), which focuses on promoting the use and production of environmentally friendly plastic products and reducing overall plastic use. In 2024, Thailand launched a new 5-year Marine Debris Action Plan (2023–2027) to strengthen efforts in preventing and reducing waste from entering the ocean, consistent with its national plastic waste strategy.

Various projects have been implemented to address waste generated from land-based activities. These include efforts to foster community participation in waste management and recycling in coastal provinces such as Ranong, Phang Nga, and Krabi. In addition, ecosystem protection activities around Koh Tao have been implemented, now covering more than 90 percent of convenience stores and retailers. The Koh Tao Tourism Business Association, together with 10 partnering organisations, has encouraged retailers and convenience stores to switch from selling beer in glass bottles—which are low-value recyclables—to aluminium cans, which are easier to collect and considered high-value recyclables. This measure aims to ensure that no glass bottle waste remains on the island or in the surrounding marine environment, as such waste could harm the ecosystem around Koh Tao, one of the most pristine and well-known dive sites in the Gulf of Thailand.

The Pollution Control Department of Thailand has taken significant steps to strengthen both national and regional capabilities in managing marine oil pollution. A comprehensive oil fingerprint database has been established, covering domestic crude oil, major imported oils, tar balls, and oil slicks. This database was developed using internationally recognised methodologies, including the Nordtest Oil Spill Identification and the CEN methodology (2012). To support consistent and accurate analysis, the Department has also developed a standardised manual for sample collection and analysis and established a specialised laboratory.

Capacity-building efforts include national training programs and regional workshops—organised with support from the Government of Japan—for ASEAN Member States. These initiatives focus on oil spill identification, fingerprinting techniques, and the development of national oil fingerprint libraries.

In parallel, under the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) framework, Thailand has proposed the Oil Spills and Tar Balls Management Project for inclusion in the 2022–2026 Operational Plan. This project aims to enhance regional cooperation and technical capacity in spill source identification, thereby contributing to the protection of the marine environment.

Thailand is also seeking support to further develop oil spill fingerprint tracking systems and create a regional oil fingerprint database. These tools would be valuable for monitoring and responding to oil spills in the environment.

At the international level, Thailand signed the United Nations Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ agreement) under UNCLOS in April 2025, underscoring its support for international cooperation in safeguarding marine biodiversity. To advance the ratification of the BBNJ Agreement, relevant agencies are in the process to review domestic laws and institutional frameworks, ensuring Thailand can effectively engage with and benefit from the mechanisms established under the Agreement.

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

Thailand recognises the significance of addressing Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and has consistently taken steps to strengthen fisheries governance. Thailand's 2nd National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, which has been in effect since 2021, strengthens marine resource management, monitoring and enforcement systems, enhanced traceability, and greater alignment with international obligations under the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU), including labour and human rights protections. Building on the progress made under both plans,

Thailand continues to pursue a whole-of-government approach to sustainable and responsible fisheries management.

In addition to its national efforts, Thailand also contributes regionally as the shepherd for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture under the ASEAN Coordinating Task Force on Blue Economy (ACTF-BE). In this capacity, Thailand will organise a workshop and study visit on “Small-Scale Marine Fisheries Data Collection for Fisheries Management in ASEAN” in 14-17 July 2025.

Initiatives to Counter Transnational Crime and Enhance Border Security

Thailand remains committed to fostering a secure, coordinated, and resilient ASEAN. In 2023, Thailand proposed the development of a non-binding ASEAN Border Management Cooperation Roadmap, building upon the Concept Paper adopted by the AMMTC in September 2021. This proposal was endorsed at the 26th ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM) Meeting in August 2023, and the draft Roadmap was presented at the 27th DGICM in 2024. The final version, following consultation with relevant sectoral bodies, is expected to be submitted to the AMMTC for adoption. The Roadmap offers actionable recommendations for addressing complex border security and socioeconomic challenges while supporting regional development.

Last but not least, Thailand also launched the Counter Trafficking in Persons Centre of Excellence (CTIP-COE) in 2024 to serve as a training facility for government officials, law enforcement, and civil society actors. The initiative, supported by Australia under the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking (ASEAN-ACT) Programme, enhances regional capacity on human trafficking and victim protection.

4) ROLE AND FUTURE OF THE ARF

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has consistently played a pivotal role in fostering dialogue and cooperation within the complex regional security environment since its establishment in the post-Cold War era.

National Contributions to Enhance the ARF and Regional Security

Established in response to an increasingly intricate regional security landscape, the ARF has served as a key platform for dialogue and cooperation. Thailand is committed to play an active and constructive role in the ARF process.

Thailand has contributed meaningfully to the implementation of the ARF Hanoi Plan of Action II (HPOA II) and related workplans of each Inter-sessional Meeting (ISM).

For the Inter-Sessional Year 2024–2025, Thailand co-chaired the ARF Workshop on Risk Reduction, Preparedness, and Response, Preceding the Renewal of AADMER, alongside the European Union, Indonesia, and China. This workshop, held on 22–23 April 2025 in Jakarta, featured a session by the Deputy Governor of Bangkok, illustrating the added value of multi-level and cross-sectoral engagement within the ARF framework. Activities under the ARF’s five ISMs—such as seminars, workshops, and, to a certain extent, statements—have contributed meaningfully to our collective efforts in confidence-building. As an active ARF participant, Thailand commends the steady progress made in this foundational stage.

Transition to Preventive Diplomacy

While the value of the confidence-building phase remains clear, it is equally evident that this phase has matured. It is time to pursue the long-envisioned transition towards Preventive Diplomacy, while continuing to reinforce confidence-building efforts.

As part of this commitment, Thailand has consistently advocated for the transition from confidence building measures to preventive diplomacy in line with the ARF Preventive Diplomacy Work Plan. In this spirit, Thailand has updated its national roster of ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs), now comprising experienced professionals from the fields of diplomacy, defence, and academia.

To this end, Thailand sees the merit in enhancing engagement with the EEPs, CSCAP and ASEAN-ISIS, as well as relevant partners, on topics such as early warning mechanisms, coordinated response in times of crises, and uses of open-source intelligence and information sharing.

Future of the ARF

Strategic competition and great power rivalry are manifesting in increasingly diverse and complex ways—from traditional security flashpoints to more diffuse forms such as economic fragmentation, technological decoupling, and the erosion of multilateral cooperation.

These challenges demonstrate not only the need for the ARF’s timely transition towards Preventive Diplomacy but also a collaborative effort to build a more resilient and responsive regional security architecture. Expanding the ARF’s agenda to address pressing non-traditional threats—such as cyber threats, and transnational crime—should also be considered. A more proactive and adaptive ARF, anchored in ASEAN centrality, will be better positioned to respond to the region’s evolving security environment and uphold its role as a cornerstone of the regional security architecture.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1) OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The United States is committed to achieving peace through strength, beginning with deterring aggression around the world and in the Indo-Pacific with its allies and partners. The United States stands ready to work with any country that is willing to preserve global and regional peace.

The Indo-Pacific region is of paramount importance to the United States, intrinsically linked to American prosperity and security. The United States is an Indo-Pacific nation with enduring Indo-Pacific interests. As such, the United States is committed to maintaining peace and stability through a robust presence and proactive engagement with allies and partners. The United States seeks collaboration on shared interests, grounded in practical cooperation and a commitment to regional stability.

For over 30 years, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has worked to advance stability and cooperation within the Indo-Pacific region through open dialogue and tangible cooperation, to find common understandings and solutions to emerging challenges. Through our engagement in the ARF, the United States affirms its commitment to working cooperatively to find solutions that reflect a shared respect for international law and mutual priorities. 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. The United States urges all ARF participants to engage with transparency, deliberation, and vision to deepen our collective cooperation and advance peace in the Indo-Pacific region for decades to come.

2) NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY

Overview of national security and defense policy

The United States is committed to peace through strength, where allies and partners share equally in preserving peace and stability. This common-sense approach encompasses three lines of effort: restoring the warrior ethos, rebuilding the U.S. military, and re-establishing deterrence. America First does not mean America alone. The United States pursues a multifaceted strategy that includes improving its forward force posture, strengthening the defense capabilities of allies and partners, and revitalizing its defense industrial base. Through enhanced military capabilities, joint exercises, and greater interoperability, the United States and its allies aim to create a strong deterrent against aggression, preserving peace and promoting prosperity worldwide, including throughout the Indo-Pacific.

Data Contribution to ARF Arms Register

A broad range of defense budget data is publicly available from the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller) here: [OUSD\(C\) - Budget Materials](#)

Total number of personnel in national armed forces

Table A-5. Active Component End Strength

Service	FY 2023 ¹	FY 2024 Request	FY 2024 Authorized	FY 2025
Army	453,551	452,000	445,000	442,300
Navy	332,322	347,000	337,800	332,300
Marine Corps	172,577	172,300	172,300	172,300
Air Force	318,698	324,700	320,000	320,000
Space Force	8,879	9,400	9,400	9,800
TOTAL	1,286,027	1,305,400	1,284,500	1,276,700

¹ FY 2023 actuals

Table A-6. Reserve Component End Strength

Service	FY 2023 ¹	FY 2024 Request	FY 2024 Authorized	FY 2025
Army Reserve	176,680	174,800	174,800	175,800
Navy Reserve	55,072	57,200	57,200	57,700
Marine Corps Reserve	33,036	33,600	32,000	32,500
Air Force Reserve	66,216	69,600	69,600	67,000
Army National Guard	325,066	325,000	325,000	325,000
Air National Guard	104,974	108,400	105,000	107,700
TOTAL	761,044	768,600	763,600	765,700

¹ FY 2023 actuals

3) NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL SECURITY

The United States has been a consistent ADMM-Plus Dialogue Partner since the beginning and looks forward to continuing to participate in the work of this important forum. Since 2011, the United States has co-chaired the Experts' Working Groups on Counterterrorism, Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief, Maritime Security, and Military Medicine (current).

In 2019, the United States co-hosted with Thailand the inaugural ASEAN-United States Maritime Exercise (AUMX) and plans to co-host a second iteration with Indonesia in 2025. Strengthening the maritime defense capacity of ASEAN nations contributes directly to maintaining peace and prosperity in Southeast Asia.

The United States' annual major military exercises with partners in the region, such as Super Garuda Shield, Cobra Gold, Balikatan, CARAT, and SEACAT, improve military interoperability, enhance maritime security, and strengthen relationships among participating nations.

Counterterrorism

The United States engages actively in multilateral and regional counterterrorism efforts, seeking to strengthen partnerships and to promote continued regional cooperation on counterterrorism measures. Terrorist groups, like ISIS, have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to direct and inspire attacks in the Middle East, Europe, and Asia, including the horrific terrorist attacks in the southern Philippines in December 2023 and Moscow in March 2024. It is critical that the United States and partners cooperate purposefully to counter terrorist groups and their propaganda and recruitment across continents. The United States seeks to encourage and support strategic counterterrorism policies in the Indo-Pacific by building institutional capacity to promote the rule of law and stay ahead of the threats and challenges that these groups pose through partnership with ASEAN members.

The United States is deeply concerned about ISIS's continued influence in Southeast Asia and the terrorist group's ability to inspire attacks in the region, particularly as the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) moves towards elections in 2025. 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 global police communications network (I-24/7). To help ensure passenger screening against INTERPOL's I-24/7 law enforcement databases, the United States is prepared to assist ASEAN member states in connecting ports of entry and automating the reporting of stolen and lost travel documents to INTERPOL. The U.S. Department of State 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. The United States also highly encourages global commitment to implementing UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2396 on countering terrorist travel and addressing the challenges associated with returning and relocating 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 U.S. government helped ASEAN establish a comprehensive, multidisciplinary work plan to implement the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism under the Manila Declaration 2019-2025, also known as the Bali Work Plan. The Department of State continues to support ASEAN's Working Group on Counter-Terrorism in leading the Bali Work Plan implementation effort. The U.S. Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism recently supported the development of the ASEAN Training of Trainers program to address disinformation and promote media literacy.

The United States co-chairs the ARF Counterterrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) workstream pillar with Bangladesh and the Philippines for 2024-2026, hosting the first Intersessional Meeting for the group in May 2024 and co-chairing the second in April 2025 alongside host Bangladesh. The ARF CTTC Work Plan contributes to regional security through work in its priority areas: Illicit Drugs; Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN); Trafficking in Persons; Countering Violent Extremism; and Border Security Management. The United States is co-leading efforts to combat illicit drugs, CBRN, and border security management.

Transnational Crime

The United States supports the region on a broad range of transnational crime issues through U.S. federal, state, and local experts and international and non-profit organizations. These programs include capacity building for law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate transnational crime cases, cooperate during interdiction efforts on land and in maritime environments, and facilitate international legal cooperation. Capacity building efforts often focus on specialized topics such as combating human trafficking, drug trafficking, and nature crimes, including wildlife trafficking; corruption; money laundering and financial crimes. The United States urges and promotes improved implementation of international obligations such as those in the UN Convention against Corruption, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), and the Budapest Cybercrime Convention to disrupt transnational organized crime. The United States calls for countries in the region to ratify or accede to the UNTOC Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air, to criminalize and disrupt migrant smuggling organizations. In addition, the United States works to protect regional economic activity 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 — a joint Thai-U.S. effort — continues to serve as a platform for advanced law enforcement training. The ILEA is an important platform for addressing areas of mutual concern, including transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, cybercrime, financial crimes, human trafficking, and border security. The ILEA promote regional law enforcement networks among partner states, builds relationships with the U.S. law enforcement community, and builds skills for law enforcement to cooperate on transnational criminal cases. 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 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.

Illicit drug production and trafficking are challenges 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 precursor chemicals. The U.S. government supports partner nation capabilities to disrupt the use, production, and trafficking of these substances by sharing best practices 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. We 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.

Cybercrime is a direct threat to the safety and well-being of all our people. Cyber criminals exploit our digital reliance, demonstrated by a global rise in online scams, ransomware, and other cybercrimes. Online scams emanating from Southeast Asia defrauded Americans of at least \$10 billion in 2024 alone, though these are conservative estimates due to underreporting. As criminals increasingly leverage technologies and the internet to commit crimes or use cryptocurrency to launder proceeds, coordination between law enforcement, judicial, cyber and digital officials and industry is required so criminals do not evade justice.

We continue to partner with ASEAN members to address all forms of human trafficking, including forced criminality and forced labor in online scam operations. Strategic, multi-disciplinary partnerships enhance the work of governments, the private sector, NGOs, and survivors to further investigations and prosecutions of traffickers, support victim identification and protection efforts, and develop

targeted prevention programs to combat human trafficking and proactively respond to emerging trends.

UNODC's Global Report on Trafficking in Persons is an important resource for all of us working to prevent and combat this crime. Among other useful features, the 2024 Global Report included a special section on "Trafficking in persons for the purpose of forced criminality to commit online scams in Southeast Asia."

We have robust, longstanding cooperation with many ARF participants to build capacity to combat these crimes, in addition to our collective efforts undertaken via the Budapest Convention and the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime.

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

The United States continues to uphold non-proliferation and disarmament commitments and looks forward to collaborating with ARF members to advance shared non-proliferation and security goals that make our world safer and more secure. The ARF provides a venue to raise critical and sensitive international security topics focusing on the importance of security and stability in the region.

In recent years, the risks of nuclear war and nuclear proliferation have increased. Russia has declined to return to compliance with the New START Treaty, which expires in less than a year. Simultaneously, Russia is developing novel nuclear weapons and continues to improve its suite of dual-capable delivery systems and is also developing a new satellite meant to carry a nuclear weapon as an anti-satellite capability into outer space. In the Indo-Pacific, China's expansion of its nuclear weapons arsenal should be a concern for ARF members. China has grown its nuclear weapons arsenal to over 600 warheads and developed novel delivery systems that pose a threat to the region and beyond. China has provided no explanation for this destabilizing nuclear weapons build-up or the CCP's intent. The DPRK continues to advance its unlawful ballistic missile program with more than 100 ballistic missile launches, each prohibited by UN Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs). Confronted with these challenges, the United States will continue to ensure our strategic deterrent remains safe, secure, and effective and that our extended deterrence commitments to our allies remain strong and credible.

The United States appreciated Australia, with co-chairs Philippines and New Zealand, hosting the 16th ARF Intersessional Meeting on Non-proliferation and Disarmament in Manila in March 2025. Discussions around the interdiction of weapons and missile components transshipments, misuse of military applications of emerging technologies, regional arms racing dynamics and arms control efforts, civil nuclear energy technology and cooperation, considerations on relevant space issues, reducing the risk of nuclear conflict in the Indo-Pacific, and critical supply

chains were welcomed, especially with the elevation of nuclear risk today. In the face of these challenges, the United States is working to address this strategic environment by deterring aggression in the Indo-Pacific and managing nuclear risk to achieve peace through strength.

The United States reaffirms its commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which remains the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. As we look forward to the 2026 NPT Review Conference, we will engage on ideas that advance the objectives of the NPT, whether on pursuing arms control dialogues, reducing the risk of nuclear conflict, ensuring full compliance with IAEA safeguards, or expanding access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The United States takes seriously its disarmament-related obligations and has worked in good faith to implement them. President Trump has made clear his readiness to have arms control dialogues, with the goal of reducing the risks of nuclear conflicts, and we have supported work to advance the global capacity for nuclear disarmament when the time is right. Our work with some ARF members through the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification over the past ten years has advanced collective understanding of the technology necessary to advance further nuclear disarmament treaties. Additionally, we continue to support efforts to promote the importance of risk reduction in disarmament-related dialogues and appreciated the Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND) initiative's efforts with respect to risk reduction as well as the efforts of cross-regional States, including many ARF members, to promote risk reduction at the 2025 NPT PrepCom.

The United States continues to encourage cooperation among ARF participants to prevent the use and re-emergence of chemical and biological weapons and their proliferation. The United States underscores the importance for all ARF states to work together to uphold the norms against the use of chemical and biological weapons and to fully comply with obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The United States urges support for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its work, as well as the BWC Implementation Support Unit (ISU), and to further support the universalization of both the CWC and BWC.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery, as well as the illicit spread of related materials, threaten the security of the entire international community. The United States will also continue to promote greater cooperation between the ARF and the UN Security Council 1540 Committee as well as its UN Office of Disarmament Affairs Secretariat, to support regional partners' efforts to fulfil their 1540 obligations. The United States encourages states to strengthen implementation of strategic trade control (STC) systems through legal and regulatory mechanisms, customs enforcement, and

border and port of entry security in order to mitigate proliferation activities. The United States has supported efforts in the ARF toward this end as well.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

ARF participant countries experience a variety of natural disasters, such as typhoons, floods, and earthquakes, as well as manmade crises and civil conflict that often result in significant financial and human costs. In response, the United States continues to provide humanitarian assistance to affected populations and works to reduce disaster vulnerability in communities and build national, provincial, and local response capacities. The United States supports programming to improve disaster response, providing governments with the information needed to make evidence-based policy decisions and preparations. U.S. government agencies are implementing programs to enhance the availability and accessibility of early warning information to reduce exposure to risks and build local capacity to prepare for and respond more effectively to emergency situations. The U.S. military also sponsors and participates in numerous HADR-related exercises with regional partners every year.

As an example of U.S. engagement, the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM) has supported more than 20 bilateral and multilateral HADR security cooperation, exercises, and academic and training engagements with ARF members between June 2024 and June 2025. These engagements have included civil-military coordination training courses, support to the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ERAT) training program, and mentorship to the ASEAN Regional Disaster Response Exercise (ARDEX).

CFE-DM and the Pacific Disaster Center helped develop an ASEAN Regional Disaster Response Simulation exercise to review and evaluate ASEAN's emergency response and disaster management mechanisms. Through this exercise, the United States hopes to help refine and build ASEAN's regional as well as ASEAN member states' national processes and capabilities.

Following the earthquake that struck central Myanmar in March 2025, the United States and Quad partners together contributed together over USD \$30 million in humanitarian assistance to support the communities affected. The U.S. Department of Defense responded in Thailand to support search and rescue efforts in response to the Myanmar/Thailand earthquake and delivered relief supplies in October 2024 after Typhoon Krathon hit the Philippines. U.S. government agencies provided emergency relief supplies and support to regional authorities in response to multiple typhoons throughout the region over the past year.

Maritime Security

The United States supports navigational rights and freedoms, including all the rights and freedoms relating to sea and airspace for all ships and aircraft, including military ships and aircraft, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Upholding UNCLOS is in the interest of the entire international community and remains vital to the peace, security, and prosperity of all nations. 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, the U.S. military presence in the Indo-Pacific region has played a vital role in undergirding regional peace, stability, and security. However, ongoing rapid military modernization, growing resource demands, transnational criminal activity and territorial and maritime disputes continue to pose potential instability risks.

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, the use of MLE vessels to coerce rival claimants and unsafe air and maritime behaviour raise the risk of miscalculation or conflict.

Regarding the South China Sea, the United States insists that disputes should be resolved peacefully, without the use of force or coercion. The United States encourages all parties to employ diplomatic and other peaceful avenues for resolving disagreements, including the use of 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, which is final and legally binding on the parties to those proceedings. We urge claimant countries to conform all their maritime claims to international law as reflected in UNCLOS. 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 and protects the rights and interests of third parties.

In the East China Sea, we remain concerned about China's provocative behaviour. We support calls for diplomacy and crisis management procedures to avoid a miscalculation or a dangerous incident.

The United States will employ whole-of-government resources in response to challenges in the maritime domain, including maintaining military presence and capabilities to protect our interests and those of our allies and partners against potential threats and challenges to the rules-based system in the maritime domain as reflected in UNCLOS.

The United States and Quad partners are implementing the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) to offer a near real-time, integrated, and cost-effective maritime domain awareness picture. This initiative will transform the ability of partners in the Pacific Islands, Southeast Asia, and the Indian Ocean region to fully monitor the waters on their shores.

The United States regularly conducts maritime exercises with regional partners to build confidence and maritime readiness. Cooperative activities such as Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT), Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT), and the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise foster bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the region. These are just a few of several engagements aimed to develop cooperation, promote common seafaring practices, and enhance mutual trust.

The United States is enhancing the capacity of partner nation coast guards, navies, and law enforcement and judicial sectors to address the broad scope of illicit maritime activity — ranging from illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing to human trafficking and the trafficking of arms and narcotics. Cooperative training programs supported by the U.S. Departments of Defense, Justice, and State, NOAA, and the United States Coast Guard deliver training and technical expertise.

The Oceania Maritime Security Initiative (OMSI) continues to operate with United States Navy Littoral Combat Ships (LCS) and United States Coast Guard Cutters. 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.

Information and Communications Technology Security

The speed and efficiency of information and communication technologies (ICTs) are of great benefit to commerce and development. At the same time, cybercrime introduces vulnerabilities that impact national and regional security and economic prosperity — especially in Asia, where e-commerce is a significant and increasing portion of many countries' economic growth. In a nationally significant cyber-incident, the unique nature of computers and computer systems, including the lack of external observables, and the difficulty in determining the nation or entity responsible, may lead states to act precipitously with significant consequences for strategic cyber stability and international security. To reduce the risk of conflict stemming from cybercrime 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 growing the ARF's role in Preventive Diplomacy and promoting regional cyber stability, the United States supports continued ARF dialogue on enhancing international computer and computer system stability via the 2015 ARF Work Plan on Security of and in the Use of ICTs. We support further 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.

4) ROLE OF ARF

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 implementation of the Hanoi Plan of Action 2020-2025 and an eventual successor plan of action, and will work diligently with ARF participants to fulfil the ARF's mandate to advance from confidence-building measures to preventive diplomacy, to effective conflict resolution.

Future of ARF

The ARF serves as an important platform for senior and working-level security policy dialogue and technical cooperation on regional security issues. The ARF's targeted agenda addresses common issues of interest for all ARF participants. 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 continued engagement in support of a safe and prosperous region. 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.

VIET NAM

1) OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Asia-Pacific has been undergoing complex and swift developments, marked by increased uncertainty and ongoing geopolitical shifts, putting the region under serious challenges, including security hotspots, major power rivalry, military buildup, and numerous non-traditional issues. The region has also witnessed a decline in confidence in democratic institutions, coupled with a rising trend of power politics and nationalism. Arguably, the regional security landscape has shifted from a soft balance model to a state of strategic fragmentation.

In this context, the adoption of ASEAN Community Vision 2045 has reaffirmed ASEAN's shared commitment to maintaining and promoting peace, security and stability in the region, as well as upholding ASEAN Centrality in the evolving regional security architecture.

In realizing these goals, ASEAN-led mechanisms have been consistently promoting openness, inclusiveness, dialogue and cooperation. To solidify an open, inclusive, transparent, and rules-based regional architecture, it remains paramount to uphold ASEAN's key principles and norms, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ), and other ASEAN-led documents.

The South China Sea has witnessed complex developments that escalate tensions, undermine regional peace and stability, and infringe upon the legitimate rights and interests of coastal states. Against this background, ASEAN maintains its principled position, emphasizing the need to enhance mutual trust; exercise self-restraint; avoid any activities that may cause misunderstanding, miscalculation, and further complicate the situation; uphold international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) while committing to settling disputes through peaceful means.

ASEAN also stresses the importance of ensuring the full and implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), thus contributing to a conducive environment for the negotiations and conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea, consistent with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.

After four years, the situation in Myanmar remains complicated. ASEAN has reaffirmed its support for Myanmar in seeking a peaceful and durable solution for the benefit of its people, particularly through the full implementation of the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus. ASEAN Member States also continue to facilitate and

provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Myanmar. It is imperative for all parties concerned to cease violence and work closely with ASEAN to create a conducive environment for inclusive national dialogue and for the urgent delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Non-traditional security challenges, including climate change, infectious diseases, water security, energy security, the widespread of high-tech crimes, as well as new challenges related to emerging technologies, are increasingly affecting the region. Transnational crimes are expanding, particularly in border areas; Cyber-threats have been intensified with advanced technology. Against this background, ASEAN-led mechanisms must be further strengthened to effectively address these emerging challenges.

2) NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

a) Overview of national security and defence policy

The overall goal of Viet Nam's national defence is to strongly defend the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Homeland; to protect national interests and people; to maintain political stability and a peaceful environment for national construction and development. Viet Nam implements a defence policy of peaceful and self-defensive in nature; Viet Nam resolutely and consistently settles all disputes and divergences through peaceful means in accordance with international law, actively and proactively prevents and repulses the risk of war, realises the motto of defending the Homeland from afar, and is prepared to fight against wars of aggression.

Viet Nam consistently advocates neither joining any the military alliance; siding with one country against another, giving any country permission to set up military bases or use its territory to carry out military activities against another countries nor using force or threatening to use force in international relations. At the same time, Viet Nam also promotes defence cooperation with countries to improve its capabilities to protect the country and address common security challenges. Depending on circumstances and specific conditions, Viet Nam will consider developing necessary defence and military relations on appropriate level with other countries on the basis of respecting each other's independence, sovereignty, territorial unity and integrity as well as fundamental principles of international law, cooperation for mutual benefits and common interests of the region and international community.

Viet Nam opposes arms race. As a responsible member of the international community, Viet Nam is keen on fulfilling its duties while actively cooperating with other countries to address emerging security issues, contributing to the protection of peace and stabilities in the region and the world.

b) Data contribution to ARF Arms Register

Viet Nam builds its military potential according to a unified strategy as required by the tasks of national defence and construction. The combat competency and readiness of the armed forces are expressed in their organisation, structure, weaponry, military art and science and technology, logistics warranty facilities, which are usually maintained, improved, and developed to meet the requirements of the people's war for safeguarding the Homeland.

Viet Nam's defence budget is in line with the country's socio-economic development speed, meeting the requirements of strengthening defence potentials for protecting the Homeland, but not becoming a burden of the country's economy.

3) NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL SECURITY

i. Counter-terrorism

Viet Nam strongly condemns and opposes all forms of terrorism, terrorist financing/sponsorship and harbouring, as well as opposes all kinds of interference in the internal affairs of other countries under the pretext of counter-terrorism. Viet Nam has participated in numerous counter-terrorism initiatives, contributing to the enhancement of regional security.

Viet Nam works closely with other ASEAN Member States in implementing the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism and the ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter Terrorism, while participating in various mechanisms such as the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC), ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM+), and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

Within the framework of ADMM and ADMM+, Viet Nam has participated in mechanism such as ASEAN Our Eyes Initiative (AOE), Virtual Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological, and Radiological Defence Experts, and ADMM-Plus Experts Working Groups on Counter Terrorism.

In 2024, Viet Nam hosted the first ASEAN Military Intelligence Community Leaders' Conference (AMICLC-1), which approved AMIC's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and Terms of Reference (TOR), marking the beginning of its operation and outlined directions for its future cooperative activities.

Earlier in 2024, Viet Nam also co-chaired with the United States and Mongolia the ARF Workshop on Strengthening Legal Frameworks to Combat Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Terrorism in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

The Workshop focused on strengthening the legal frameworks and capacities of the ARF participants to effectively prevent, detect, and respond to CBRN terrorism threats.

ii. Non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control and disarmament

Viet Nam is strongly committed to global disarmament and non-proliferation, actively supporting and contributing to the common efforts of the international community for peace, security and disarmament.

Viet Nam has a consistent policy to support all efforts on disarmament and non-proliferation, particularly the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and the global non-proliferation regime. In this connection, Viet Nam is a party to all major international agreements on non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS), Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (CWC), Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (BWC), etc.. Viet Nam was one of the first ten countries to ratify the TPNW in 2018.

At regional level, Viet Nam is actively contributing to ASEAN's effort to build a peaceful, free, neutral and nuclear-free Southeast Asia region, through the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ). Viet Nam is working closely with ASEAN Member States to encourage the signing of the SEANWFZ Protocol by the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS).

At national level, in March 2025, the Ministry of National Defence conducted a preliminary review of Viet Nam's efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) from 2019 to 2024 under the Government's Decree 81. Viet Nam is currently drafting a law on preventing and combating the proliferation of WMD, fulfilling its obligations under international treaties and comply with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540.

iii. Transnational Crime

Viet Nam has been actively and responsibly participating in ASEAN's cooperation frameworks on transnational crime prevention and control, while also working closely with international organizations to rigorously implement projects and programs combatting human trafficking.

In ASEAN, Viet Nam participates in frameworks to combat transnational crime,

focusing on information sharing and intelligence exchange, reaffirming its commitments to ASEAN's guiding documents including the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons (ACTIP); the Protocol on the Prevention and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons; and the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime.

Viet Nam is also engaging in the negotiation of the ASEAN Treaty on Extradition, and in the final stage of internal procedures to accede to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) Protocol against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air.

On bilateral level, Viet Nam cooperates closely with neighbouring countries in the Mekong basin to strengthen border management practices through the Regional Border Liaison Office (BLO) Network. This includes joint patrols and crime prevention initiatives along shared borders.

Viet Nam also strengthens cooperation with ASEAN's partner countries in capacity building, language training for law enforcement officers, and technical equipment and facilities supporting for combating transnational crime, coordinates cooperation and bilateral patrol activities with neighbouring countries.

iv. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Viet Nam is an active contributor to regional efforts on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, participating in meetings and joint training exercises on HADR, Search and Rescue (SAR) and relevant ASEAN mechanisms such as the ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR, ASEAN Militaries Ready Group (AMRG) on HADR, ASEAN Agreement on Disaster management and Emergency response (AADMER).

Within the ARF framework, Viet Nam works closely with regional countries to conduct and participate in disaster management training courses, to establish mechanisms for exchanging natural disaster warning, as well as supporting disaster response, strengthen the support and transfer of search and rescue facilities and equipment among ARF members.

On 5 June, 2025, Viet Nam, together with Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, co-chaired the 23rd ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief, in Colombo, Sri Lanka. In this meeting, Viet Nam proposed to resume ARF disaster response exercises and conduct a comprehensive review of the implementation of the ARF Hanoi Plan of Action II, including its disaster relief component, which will serve as the foundation for developing the next action plan.

In 2025, as part of a broader ASEAN effort to support Myanmar's recovery following a devastating earthquake, Viet Nam has deployed prompt humanitarian

assistance, including an emergency aid package worth \$300,000.

v. Maritime Security

Maintaining and promoting peace, stability, and security in the maritime sphere in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions is in the interest of not only regional countries but also the international community. The maritime domain, a critical hub for global trade and rich in natural resources, continues to present a complex and evolving strategic setting. The regional maritime security landscape is still marked by ongoing and new challenges.

The situation in the South China Sea remains a source of concern. Complex developments, including excessive maritime claims and unilateral actions that could complicate the situation or increase tensions, continue to require sustained attention and principled management. In the context of growing challenges in the South China Sea and broader Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions, Viet Nam has proved its engagement in regional maritime security cooperation to be active, pragmatic, effective, and increasingly strategic, especially via cooperative efforts.

There is a fundamental need to adhere to international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which sets out the comprehensive framework governing all activities in the seas and oceans. Viet Nam consistently reaffirms the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, safety, security, stability, and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the maritime sphere, particularly the South China Sea. Viet Nam also calls for all parties to exercise self-restraint, avoid the threat or use of force, and settle disputes through peaceful means, including full respect for legal and diplomatic processes, in accordance with international law, particularly UNCLOS 1982. Viet Nam has been strongly supporting the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety and is committed to working constructively with fellow ASEAN Member States and China towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea that is consistent with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.

Viet Nam's approach to maritime security is based on its firm adherence to international law and its initiative-taking involvement in regional and international cooperation. As a clear demonstration of its commitment to regional maritime security, and in line with the principles supported by ARF cooperative instruments, including those addressing piracy and other maritime threats, Viet Nam has made, and will continue to make, various positive steps and concrete contributions. Domestically, Viet Nam Coast Guard and other competent national maritime agencies have continued to improve their operational capabilities within Viet Nam's maritime zones. These activities include regular maritime patrols, systematic information gathering, and strict law enforcement operations

designed to prevent, deter, and stop piracy, armed robbery against ships, and other maritime crimes. Bilaterally, Viet Nam's Navy and Coast Guard have been productively coordinating with maritime law enforcement agencies of other regional countries to conduct practical cooperation activities, such as information sharing and joint training courses for capacity building, and joint patrols which contribute to maintaining peace and security in the waters and fostering cooperation.

Viet Nam has been actively engaging in various regional agreements and cooperation mechanisms of ASEAN and the region in maritime security which include: the ASEAN Naval Chiefs' Meeting (ANCM), ADMM-Plus EWG on Maritime Security, the Southeast Asia Maritime Law Enforcement Initiative (SEAMLEI), Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM); cooperation activities within the framework of the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP).

Looking ahead, Viet Nam is determined to further enhance the capacity of its relevant agencies to improve operational effectiveness, thereby contributing more to national and regional safety and security. Viet Nam will continue to actively seek and promote enhanced international and regional cooperation. This includes, among other things, continued participation in joint training exercises (subject to mutual agreement), coordinated maritime patrols where appropriate, and the systematic exchange of best practices and operational information with ARF Participants and other valued international partners. Furthermore, Viet Nam is strengthening its national efforts to combat IUU fishing through stricter enforcement of its national fisheries regulations, and strong participation in regional and international initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable and responsible fisheries management, along with more facilitation and endorsements on maritime science, technology, and surveillance infrastructure. Viet Nam also expresses its willingness to learn from the experience and guidance of other regional countries to combat IUU fishing in a more efficient way.

Viet Nam also reaffirms its commitment to proactively engaging in maritime search and rescue operations and contributing to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) efforts at sea, recognizing the growing importance of such operations in the face of climate change and its impacts.

Viet Nam believes that the ARF is an essential multilateral platform for constructive dialogue, confidence-building, and coordinating practical cooperative measures on maritime security. To further the ARF's contribution, Viet Nam will continue to support the strengthening of practical Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) and Preventive Diplomacy, including improving the implementation of CBMs like the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES), and fostering substantive dialogues to prevent incidents and reduce tensions at sea. It is also crucial to intensify cooperation against non-traditional maritime

security threats by boosting collaborative efforts through better information exchange and coordinated operational activities; strengthening regional cooperation frameworks against piracy and armed robbery against ships; improving collaboration in countering transnational maritime crimes; and addressing marine environmental degradation through shared initiatives. Additionally, promoting sustainable marine environment management through cooperative ventures in marine scientific research, climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies relevant to the maritime sphere, and concerted actions to combat marine pollution, especially plastic debris, should also be a key focus. Last but not least, Viet Nam has actively contributed by co-chairing ARF workshops on implementing UNCLOS and other international instruments to address emerging maritime issues and will continue such efforts. The most recent one – the 6th ARF Workshop on Implementing UNCLOS and other International Instruments, held in March 2025, has attracted much attention from international community, contributing to the joint effort to foster collective understanding and commitment to international law, especially UNCLOS.

In the pursuit of above objectives, Viet Nam is prepared to engage constructively and collaborate closely with interested partners to foster a maritime environment in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions in general, and the South China Sea in particular, that is peaceful, stable, secure, and prosperous for all.

vi. ICT Security

With the advent of the fourth industrial revolution, which has integrated new technology such as artificial intelligence and Internet of Things into all aspects of life, Viet Nam attaches great importance to ICT security and cybersecurity cooperation at all levels – global, regional, and national.

Pursuant to Resolution A/RES/79/243, the United Nations General Assembly has designated Ha Noi, Viet Nam, as the venue for the opening for signature of the “United Nations Convention against Cybercrime; Strengthening International Cooperation for Combating Certain Crimes Committed by Means of Information and Communications Technology Systems and for the Sharing of Evidence in Electronic Form of Serious Crimes”. In coordination with the United Nations, Viet Nam will host the Signing Ceremony for the Convention against Cybercrime and a High-Level Conference on this important occasion from 25-26 October 2025 in Ha Noi. This event signifies Viet Nam’s commitment to the global effort to combat cybercrime.

Regionally, Viet Nam is committed to actively and responsibly participating in the cooperation frameworks of ASEAN in general, and cooperation in information and communications technologies in the field of defence in particular, including the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence (ACICE), ASEAN Direct Communication Infrastructure (ADI) in the ADMM process, ASEAN Cyber Defence

Network (ACDN), ADMM-Plus EWG on Cybersecurity, ARF Inter-sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ISM ICTs), and the ARF Open Ended Study Group (OESG) on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) to reduce the risk of conflict stemming from the use of information and communication technologies.

Within ARF mechanism, Viet Nam has for years taken part in many initiatives on cybersecurity, including the 6th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the use of ICTs (ISM-ICTs); the 12th and 13th ARF Open-Ended Study Group (OESG) on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) to Reduce the Risk of Conflict Stemming from the Use of ICTs; the 2nd ARF Workshop on the Protection and Resilience of ICT-enabled Critical Infrastructure and the ARF Workshop on Countering the Use of ICTs for Criminal Purposes.

Viet Nam has also conducted various international cooperation activities on ensuring safety and cyber security, preventing crimes using high technology in various initiatives such as Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams (FIRST), Association of Asia-Pacific Computer Emergency Response Team (APCERT), Cybersecurity Alliance for Mutual Progress (CAMP), Global Forum on Cyber Expertise (GFCE).

In 2025, Viet Nam continues to take active part in the on-going progress of ICTs security negotiations to develop an international legal framework on cyberspace, cybersecurity and cybercrime at multilateral forums, under the auspices of the United Nations, including the UN Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on security of and in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) 2021-2025. Through coordinated efforts, Viet Nam wishes to promote international cooperation to tackle global cybersecurity challenges, confidence building measures and the provision of technical assistance for developing countries.

4) ROLE OF THE ARF

a) National contribution to enhancing the ARF and regional security

As a founding member of the ARF, Viet Nam is committed to actively and responsibly participating in various activities of the Forum with a view to further enhancing its effectiveness and relevance, and to further promoting the culture of dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and concern. In accordance with the country's strategy of comprehensive renovation and international integration, Viet Nam has been deepening and widening its participation as well as making more substantial contributions to important activities of ARF.

Through Viet Nam's ARF Chairmanship in 2010 and 2020, two key ARF guiding documents, namely the Ha Noi Plan of Actions to Implement the ARF Vision

Statement and the Ha Noi Plan of Action II (HPOA II), were developed with hundreds of action lines implemented, solidifying the regional practice of dialogue and cooperation, enhancing mutual trust and confidence as well as building capacity for the ARF Participants to better respond to emerging challenges in the region. Viet Nam also proposed and coordinated with other ASEAN Member States to develop the Guide to ARF Processes, Procedures, Practices and Protocol in 2020, serving as the basis for cooperation among the ARF Participants to promote a holistic and comprehensive process of streamlining and strengthening the ARF in the years to come.

Viet Nam assumed the co-chairmanship of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ISM-DR) for 2023-2026 period with Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Under this framework, Viet Nam hosted the 22nd session of the ISM-DR on 22 April 2024 and co-chaired the 23rd session on 5 June 2025 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Viet Nam is also leading the development of the ARF Work Plan for Disaster Relief 2024-2027, which will be the guiding document to further enhance regional capabilities for disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and response.

In 2024, Viet Nam co-chaired, with the United States and Mongolia, the ARF Workshop on Strengthening Legal Frameworks to Combat Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) terrorism.

In 2023 and 2025, Viet Nam co-chaired, with Australia, Canada, the EU, and New Zealand, two successive ARF Workshop (the 5th and the 6th) on Implementing UNCLOS and other international instruments to address emerging maritime issues.

Also in 2025, Viet Nam hosted the 2nd ARF Workshop on Women, Peace and Security: Recognising 25 Years of the WPS Agenda in Ho Chi Minh City to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council's Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), reaffirming the country's commitment to the WPS agenda.

In the intersessional year 2025-2026, within the framework of the ARF's Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ISM-MS), Viet Nam plans to co-chair, with Australia and Singapore, an ARF Workshop on the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ).

The aforementioned activities demonstrate Viet Nam's steadfast dedication to upholding the principles and achieving the objectives of the ARF, thereby contributing to the collective efforts in promoting Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and Preventive Diplomacy (PD) for peace, security, and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

b) Future of the ARF

Since its inception in 1994, the ARF has been serving as a key regional platform to foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues, involving major regional and global powers. With an agenda covering a wide range of issues, from peace-keeping to non-proliferation, from humanitarian assistance to disaster relief, etc., the forum has contributed to building trust, confidence, and advancing preventive diplomacy for peace, security, and stability in the region.

In the last 30 years, ASEAN itself has also evolved into a united, inclusive and resilient community, while the regional and international security landscape underwent enormous and unprecedented changes, especially over the last decade, bringing about new, multi-faceted challenges to the forum's original design and goals. The region is now populated with both ASEAN-led mechanisms and other grouping such as QUAD, AUKUS, and Squad. This has made it even more imperative for the ARF to renew its operational model and revitalize its activities to effectively address both existing and emerging issues, maintaining relevance and enhancing responsiveness.

First of all, it is vital to uphold the objectives and principles of the Forum, and continue steadfast support for ASEAN Centrality in the ARF process. The Guide to ARF Processes, Procedures, Practices and Protocol should continue to serve as a primary reference for any activity and initiative within the ARF.

Secondly, the ARF revitalization can be achieved through, among others, a more substantive ARF agenda and a new, balanced and inclusive Plan of Action (POA) aligned with the goals and measures set out in the recently adopted APSC Strategic Plan to implement the ASEAN Community Vision 2045.

Thirdly, revitalization of the ARF should be approached in a holistic manner, taking into account the regional security architecture established by ASEAN to ensure synergy and minimize duplications with ASEAN-led mechanisms such as ADMM+, AMMTC, and EAS. Participants are encouraged to leverage the unique strength of the ARF, such as its inclusiveness, extensive geographical coverage, and diverse membership.

Last but not least, admitting new participants to the ARF could bring about more substantial and significant contribution to the regional peace and security, while still committing to respect ASEAN Centrality.

By continuing to embrace the dialogue-and-consultation-based approach, the ARF can maintain its role and value as a key pillar of regional security cooperation, capable of navigating the future geopolitical landscape, thus contributing to the building of an open, transparent and inclusive regional architecture, anchored in

international law. In this process, Viet Nam is fully committed to working closely with all ARF Participants.
