

2005 ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM STATEMENT ON INFORMATION SHARING AND INTELLIGENCE EXCHANGE AND DOCUMENT INTEGRITY AND SECURITY IN ENHANCING COOPERATION TO COMBAT TERRORISM AND OTHER TRANSNATIONAL CRIMES

Issued in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 29 July 2005

The Chairman of the ASEAN Regional Forum, on behalf of the ARF participating states and organization, issues the following statement:

Recognizing that:

Terrorism and other transnational crimes pose significant threats to the peace, order, and security of our countries and our peoples;

Effective regional and global action requires a comprehensive approach and international cooperation reflecting best practices built upon agreed norms, standards, institutions, and international agreements; in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other applicable principles of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law;

Every state has a duty to refrain from organizing, instigating, assisting or participating in terrorist acts in other states or acquiescing in organized activities within its territory directed towards to the commission of terrorist acts;

Links between corruption and the proceeds generated by transnational crime could undermine and threaten legitimate commerce and finance and support terrorist and other criminal activities;

Effective information and intelligence exchange among states is an essential contribution to efforts to combat terrorism and transnational crime and must be carried out in a well-managed, responsible and systematic manner, including appropriate protections for sensitive and national security information obtained from other and adequate respect for and protection of personal privacy and other human rights;

The integrity and security of national identity, travel and other documents is a vital contribution to ensuring the security of our citizens and to identifying, apprehending and prosecuting terrorist and other offenders.

Committed to:

Further strengthening effective cooperation among ARF participants in these efforts while noting the progress that has already been made, encourages ARF governments to further enhance their efforts and commitment to combat terrorism and other transnational crimes on a voluntary basis in a more comprehensive manner, taking into account resources and capacity of ARF participants and in accordance with international law and their respective national laws through information-sharing and intelligence exchange, cooperation in combating document fraud, and law enforcement cooperation. In particular, through the following efforts:

Information Sharing and Intelligence Exchange

- To better exchange relevant information and intelligence in a timely, effective systematic manner on the basis of bilateral, sub-regional, regional or other information-sharing agreements, bearing in mind that such information and intelligence shall not be further disclosed or disseminated without the official authorization of the originator;
- to strengthen cooperation for the effective and appropriate sharing and exchange of information, particularly on terrorist and other transnational criminal activities, for the prosecution of the perpetrators of such activities, while protecting the confidentiality of individual information, in accordance with domestic laws;
- to ensure that adequate national protections for sensitive and other information obtained from foreign partners are in place and effective;
- to ensure that the privacy and other rights of individuals about whom personal information is exchanged between states are respected and protected;

Combating Document Fraud

- to implement more secure and fraud-resistant national documents based upon internationally-agreed standards and containing appropriate biometric identifiers and to foster cooperation on adoption of Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTD), with biometrics if possible;
- to criminalize, investigate, and prosecute the possession or creation of fraudulent national identity, travel and other documents from any country;
- to actively participate in the elaboration and implementation of new international document standards through ICAO and other international, regional and functional organizations;
- to actively contribute on an ongoing basis to the INTERPOL database of lost and stolen travel documents, bearing in mind other effective channels of cooperation that exist;

Law Enforcement Cooperation

- to strengthen ARF law enforcement cooperation on the basis of bilateral and multilateral agreements and through the use of existing mechanism, in particular INTERPOL and its I-24/7 communications network for the exchange of information;
- to further strengthen international capacity building cooperation and assistance including through existing regional centers, such as *inter alia*, the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA), the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT), the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) and the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

ARF participating states and organization are to regularly review the progress of these and other efforts to further strengthen cooperation against terrorism and other transnational crimes at the 4th and subsequent ARF Inter-Sessional Meetings on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime.