

# 2022 CHAIRMAN’S STATEMENT OF THE 29TH ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM

*Issued in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 5 August 2022*

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## 2022 CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE 29TH ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM

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1. The Twenty-Ninth Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 5 August 2022. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Prak Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia.
2. The Meeting was attended by the Foreign Ministers and Representatives of ARF Participants and the Secretary-General of ASEAN. The list of delegates appears as **ANNEX I**.
3. The Meeting recognised the severe challenges and disruptions caused by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic to the well-being of people, the socio-economic development and the sustainability, stability and security of the region and the world at large. The Meeting emphasised the importance of enhancing regional and international solidarity and cooperation towards a collective and effective response to and swift recovery from the pandemic. In this regard, the Meeting acknowledged the progress made this year in the ARF, especially in the context of the post-pandemic recovery efforts.

### OVERVIEW OF THE ARF PROCESS

4. The Meeting reiterated the importance of the ARF as a key platform for dialogue and consultation on regional political and security issues of common interest and concern and reaffirmed the need to further enhance its effectiveness and maintain its relevance in the evolving regional security architecture. In this respect, the Meeting acknowledged with satisfaction that the ARF, through the active contributions of all ARF Participants, has continued to progress as an important multilateral platform for political-security dialogue and cooperation, as well as promoting confidence building measures and preventive diplomacy in the region. The Meeting was pleased with the progress made in the implementation of the ARF Ha Noi Plan of Action II (2020-2025) (HPOA II) despite the COVID-19 disruption and noted the Executive Summary of the Status of Implementation of the HPOA II as prepared by the ARF Unit which appears as **ANNEX II**.
5. The Meeting recognised that the ARF has played a constructive role in enhancing mutual understanding and trust as well as promoting transparency in the region. The Meeting noted with satisfaction that the number of ARF activities on preventive diplomacy continued to increase, while confidence-building measures continued to be strengthened. The Meeting underlined the importance of sustaining the momentum and encouraged ARF Participants to undertake further preventive diplomacy activities in accordance with the ARF Work Plan on Preventive Diplomacy and consistent with the principles reflected in the ARF Concept and Principles of Preventive Diplomacy.
6. The Meeting stressed the importance of enhancing the ARF's relevance and effectiveness in addressing the increasingly complex challenges amidst the continuously evolving regional landscape. In this connection, the Meeting noted that the ARF has been successful in the promotion of peace and stability in the region through enhanced cooperation in the areas of disaster relief, counterterrorism and transnational crime, maritime security, non-proliferation and disarmament, peacekeeping operations, defence cooperation, and security of and in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). The Meeting further recognised the importance of continuing to make the ARF relevant in addressing shared challenges in a strategic and holistic manner.

7. The Meeting reaffirmed the role of ASEAN as the main driving force of the ARF in the evolving regional security architecture. The Meeting further reaffirmed the importance of upholding the principles of decision-making by consensus, noninterference and moving at a pace comfortable to all ARF Participants, and reiterated the necessity of equal and inclusive participation and cooperation of all ARF Participants.

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF DISCUSSIONS ON REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES**

8. The Meeting deliberated on cooperation and joint efforts to address various traditional and non-traditional issues. The Meeting commended the region's continued commitment to addressing the complex challenges posed by terrorism, violent extremism conducive to terrorism (VECT), and transnational organized crime against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, including through cross-sectoral and cross-pillar cooperation in border management and combating terrorism, trafficking in persons, and illicit drugs. In this connection, the Meeting was encouraged by the efforts of all ARF Participants in supporting the implementation of the ARF Work Plan on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime and the active participation in the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CTTC). The Meeting took note of the implementation of the Work Plan of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (PoA PCRVE) 2019-2025 (also known as Bali Work Plan). The Meeting also took note of the ongoing work under the ambit of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) in facilitating strategic information exchanges on countering terrorism, VECT and radicalisation and the ADMM-Plus endeavours toward sharing experiences and best practices, as feasible, and enhancing relevant capacity-building.
9. The Meeting recognised the increasing importance of security of and in the use of ICTs to economic growth and addressing the challenges arising from the rapidly changing ICT environment. In this regard, the Meeting welcomed and encouraged new initiatives undertaken to further promote confidence building measures and trust through the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of ICTs (ISM on ICTs Security) and, where appropriate, other relevant ASEAN-led mechanisms. The Meeting underlined the need to strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation in ensuring ICTs security, given its cross-sectoral nature. In this regard, the Meeting appreciated the work of the ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee (Cyber-CC), and noted that the ARF Points of Contact Directory on Security of and in the Use of ICTs could further contribute to strengthening coordination efforts. The Meeting noted the existing terminological challenges in the field of security of and in the use of ICTs and the need to tackle this issue to facilitate practical cooperation and enhance mutual understanding within the ARF. The Meeting took note of the adoption of the ASEAN Regional Action Plan on the Implementation of the UNGGE Norms of Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace at the 2nd ASEAN Cyber-CC and the launch of ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy 2021-2025 at the 2nd ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting (ADGMIN). The Meeting also took note of the work of the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Cyber Security which focuses on forging a common understanding and confidence-building.
10. The Meeting further noted that the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN), a collaborative platform to facilitate the development of smart and sustainable urban development, has identified the safety and security of networked infrastructure as one of its six priority areas.

11. The Meeting exchanged views on various challenges relating to maritime domain, and shared concern over piracy, illegal fishing, the degradation of marine ecosystem and biodiversity caused by the high and rapidly increasing levels of marine debris and marine pollution, especially marine plastic litter and microplastics. The Meeting, therefore, noted the progress of various maritime cooperation through raising public awareness, practical engagements, and continued constructive dialogue and the importance in coordination among various frameworks in addressing maritime challenges under the ARF and other ASEAN-led frameworks such as the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), the ADMM, the ADMM-Plus, the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), as well as other similar arrangements such as the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery (ReCAAP).
12. The Meeting noted the need to further strengthen cooperation on disaster management, taking into account the region's vulnerability to natural disasters, climate change and rising sea levels. The Meeting underlined the importance of enhancing capabilities and capacities of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts in the region through the sharing of information and exchange of best practices under the ambit of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ISM on DR). The Meeting also noted that under the ambit of the ADMM, work is ongoing to facilitate expeditious and coordinated deployments by ASEAN Member States' militaries in times of disaster.
13. The Meeting reiterated the importance of strengthening international and regional cooperative efforts in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as advancing the ultimate goal of the elimination, and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the peaceful uses of chemical, biological and nuclear technology. The Meeting was pleased to note that the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ISM on NPD) continues to provide a platform for dialogue and exchange of views on non-proliferation and disarmament issues. The Meeting noted with appreciation, and encouraged the continued implementation of the Practical Arrangements (PA) between ASEAN and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Cooperation in the Areas of Nuclear Science and Technology and Applications, Nuclear Safety, Security and Safeguards, which was signed in September 2019.
14. The Meeting reiterated the importance of mine action in national rehabilitation and sustainable development and welcomed efforts to promote mine action at the global level, including at the United Nations. The Meeting commended the role of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC) as a centre of excellence in promoting ASEAN's efforts to address the issue of explosive remnants of war (ERW) for Interested ASEAN Member States and raise awareness of the danger of ERW among affected communities. The Meeting expressed appreciation to ASEAN's Partners in contributing to the undertaking of projects and operationalisation of the ARMAC.
15. The Meeting also exchanged views extensively on the recent political-security developments and expressed concern over the international and regional volatility and challenges to peace, stability and socio-economic progress posed by geopolitical rivalries and tension. The Meeting highlighted the foremost necessity to sustain the dynamism of collective efforts, with a strong sense of togetherness, to build trust and confidence, engender peaceful coexistence and amicable resolution to disputes and differences, as well as emphasis on jointly addressing human development issues.

16. The Meeting expressed concern over the recent surge in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) testing and ballistic missile launches, which reflects an increased tension on the Korean Peninsula and threatens peace and stability in the region and in the world. The Meeting called on the DPRK to fully comply with all relevant UNSC resolutions, and refrain from conducting further nuclear and missile tests. The Meeting also urged for utmost restraint and refraining from all actions that would hinder the resumption of a meaningful dialogue, and stressed the importance of sustained and peaceful talks among all concerned parties in order to realise lasting peace and stability in a denuclearised Korean Peninsula. The Meeting reiterated support for the international efforts to bring about the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner, including through utilising ASEAN-led platforms such as the ARF in promoting a conducive atmosphere for peaceful dialogue amongst the concerned parties. Some Ministers emphasised the importance of addressing issues of humanitarian concerns of the international community, including the immediate resolution of the abductions issue.
17. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea and recognised the benefits of having the South China Sea as a sea of peace, stability and prosperity. The Meeting underscored the importance of the full and effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety. The Meeting was encouraged by the progress of the substantive negotiation towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) consistent with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Meeting emphasised the need to maintain an environment conducive to the COC negotiations, and thus welcomed practical measures that could reduce tensions and mitigate the risk of accidents, misunderstandings, and miscalculation. The Meeting stressed the importance of undertaking confidence building and preventive measures to enhance, among others, trust and confidence amongst the parties and reaffirmed the importance of upholding international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.
18. The Meeting discussed the situation in the South China Sea and took note of concerns expressed by some countries on the land reclamations and activities, and serious incidents in the area which have eroded trust and confidence, increased tensions and may undermine peace, security and stability in the region. The Meeting reaffirmed the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities and avoid actions that would complicate the situation, and pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. The Meeting emphasised the importance of non-militarisation and self-restraint in the conduct of all activities by claimants and all other states, including those mentioned in the DOC that could further complicate the situation and escalate tensions in the South China Sea.
19. The Meeting expressed concerns over the recent cross-Strait development, which could destabilise the region and eventually could lead to miscalculation and serious confrontation. While many countries reiterated the One-China Policy, the Meeting underlined the importance of maximum restraint, refrain from provocative action and adherence to the principles enshrined in United Nations Charter and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), so as to avoid open conflicts among the major powers and prevent unpredictable consequences.

20. The Meeting discussed the recent developments in Myanmar and expressed concerns over the prolonged political crisis in the country, including the execution of four opposition activists. The Meeting underscored the absolute necessity to implement, immediately and in full, the Five-Point Consensus agreed at the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on 24 April 2021 to support Myanmar's return to normalcy and the path of democracy. In this regard, the Meeting welcomed efforts made to help solve the crisis, including through the visits to Myanmar by Samdech Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, in January 2022, and by H.E. Mr. Prak Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, as the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar in March and in June/July 2022. The Meeting called for all parties to exercise utmost restraint and commence constructive dialogue to seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people of Myanmar. The Meeting took note of the views expressed on the necessity of a step-by-step and pragmatic approach, and on engagement rather than isolation to achieve an inclusive peace process that is Myanmar-led and Myanmar-owned. The Meeting also underscored the importance of ASEAN's continued support and efforts to bring peace, stability, promote harmony and reconciliation among the various communities, as well as ensure sustainable and equitable development in Rakhine State.
21. The Meeting reaffirmed the support for a more visible and enhanced role of ASEAN to support Myanmar by providing humanitarian assistance, facilitating the repatriation process, and promoting sustainable development in Rakhine State. The Meeting appreciated the work of the Ad-Hoc Support Team of the ASEAN Secretariat (AHAST) and efforts of the Secretary-General of ASEAN in leading the implementation of the recommendations of the Preliminary Needs Assessment (PNA), as well as the contribution from ASEAN Member States and some external partners in supporting ASEAN activities, such as the prioritised projects to facilitate the repatriation process and to promote inclusive and sustainable development in Rakhine State, including through providing basic services and creating livelihood opportunities for the displaced persons. The Meeting welcomed the outcomes of the 4th High-Level Coordination Meeting, particularly the endorsement of five additional projects to further advance the implementation of the recommendations of the PNA and looked forward to the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) when conditions allow and encouraged the Secretary-General of ASEAN to continue identifying possible areas for ASEAN to effectively facilitate the repatriation process.
22. The Meeting stressed the importance of and reiterated the continued support for Myanmar's commitment to ensure safety and security for all communities in Rakhine State as effectively as possible and facilitate the voluntary return of displaced persons in a safe, secure, and dignified manner in accordance with the bilateral agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh. The Meeting also welcomed the outcomes of the 5th Meeting of Myanmar-Bangladesh Joint Working Group (JWG). The Meeting looked forward and stood ready to support and facilitate the full implementation of the Arrangement on Return of Displaced Persons from Rakhine State between the Government of Myanmar and the Government of Bangladesh signed in 2017 and the renewed MoU between the Government of Myanmar, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which is valid until March 2023. The Meeting also underscored the importance of ASEAN's continued support and efforts to bring peace, stability, the rule of law, promote harmony and reconciliation among the various communities, as well as ensure sustainable and equitable development in Rakhine State.

23. With regard to the war in Ukraine, the Meeting reaffirmed the need to respect for sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity. The Meeting reiterated the call for compliance with the fundamental principles of international law, which are enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia. The Meeting underlined the importance of an immediate cessation of hostilities and the creation of an enabling environment for the peaceful resolution of conflict. The Meeting supported the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General in the search for a peaceful solution. The Meeting also called for the facilitation of safe and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance for those in need in Ukraine, and for the protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel, and persons in vulnerable situations. The Meeting also took note of the view that the root cause of the situation in Ukraine should also be addressed and the legitimate concerns of all countries must be taken into consideration.

## **REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES OF THE CURRENT INTER-SESSIONAL YEAR (2021-2022)**

24. The Meeting was encouraged by the determination of ARF Participants in ensuring the operations of the ARF amidst the unprecedented challenges and severe disruption posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this respect, the Meeting expressed appreciation to Cambodia as the ARF Chair for its effective leadership and commended the ARF Unit for the effective and continued assistance rendered to the ARF Chair and Co-Chairs of ARF ISMs throughout the year.
25. The Meeting commended the work of the ARF Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) chaired by Cambodia on 9 June 2022 and the ARF Inter-Sessional Support Group Meeting on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy (ARF ISG on CBMs and PD) co-chaired by Cambodia and China on 17 May 2022.
26. The Meeting appreciated the valuable contributions made by the defence officials and emphasised the importance of greater interaction of the defence track in the ARF process. Noting the proposals on enhancing information sharing, strengthening linkages and interaction as well as coordination of activities between the ARF and other ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ADMM-Plus, the Meeting encouraged defence officials to continue discussions with a view of submitting recommendations for future consideration of the ARF Ministers. The Meeting looked forward to further assessment on the merit of such updates and the possibility of continuing this practice at subsequent ARF Ministerial Meetings.
27. Noting that the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected the operations of the ARF, the Meeting commended the Co-Chairs of the ARF ISMs on Maritime Security, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime, Disaster Relief, and ICTs Security and the Co-Chairs of other ARF annually-held meetings for their hard work in ensuring that cooperation in the respective areas continue to progress. The Meeting also noted the updates on the ARF Work Plan on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and welcomed the adoption of the ARF Work Plan on Maritime Security 2022-2026 which appear as ANNEXES III and IV.
28. The Meeting noted the successful conduct of the following ARF meetings and activities held in the Inter-Sessional Year 2021-2022:
- i. ARF Workshop series on Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Mitigation – Part Two: Study Tour, videoconference, 28-30 September 2021;
  - ii. 24th ARF Heads of Defence Universities/Colleges/Institutions Meeting (HDUCIM), Islamabad, Pakistan, 4-7 October 2021;
  - iii. ARF Workshop on Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, videoconference, 1-2 December 2021;

- iv. ARF Workshop on Law of the Sea and Fisheries, videoconference, 7-8 December 2021;
- v. ARF Workshop on Rules, Norms, and Principles of Responsible Behaviour of States in their Use of ICTs, videoconference, 9-10 March 2022;
- vi. 8th ARF Open-Ended Study Group on CBMs to Reduce the Risk of Conflict Stemming from the Use of ICTs, videoconference, 10 March 2022;
- vii. ARF Seminar on the Role of Youth in Building Digital Resilience to Prevent and Counter Terrorism and Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism (VECT), videoconference, 15 March 2022;
- viii. ARF Workshop on Countering the Use of ICTs for Criminal Purposes, videoconference, 15-16 March 2022;
- ix. 13th ARF ISM on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, videoconference, 5 April 2022;
- x. 4th ARF Workshop on Enhancing Regional Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation, videoconference, 6-7 April 2022;
- xi. ARF Workshop on Terminology in the Field of Security of and in the Use of ICTs in the Context of Confidence Building, videoconference, 7 April 2022;
- xii. ARF DOD, videoconference, 29 April 2022;
- xiii. ARF Workshop on Health Security and Pandemic Response and Recovery, Guam, USA, 4-6 May 2022;
- xiv. 9th ARF Open-Ended Study Group on CBMs to Reduce the Risk of Conflict Stemming from the Use of ICTs, videoconference, 10 May 2022;
- xv. 20th ARF ISM on Disaster Relief, videoconference, 11 May 2022;
- xvi. 13th ARF ISM on Maritime Security, videoconference, 12 May 2022;
- xvii. 18th ARF ISM on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime, videoconference, 12 May 2022;
- xviii. 4th ARF ISM on ICTs Security, videoconference, 13 May 2022;
- xix. ARF ISG on CBMs and PD, videoconference, 17 May 2022;
- xx. 3rd ARF Workshop on Aviation Security and Information Sharing, hybrid format, Manila, Philippines, 18-20 May 2022;
- xxi. ARF Workshop on Preventive Diplomacy for Sustaining Peace, videoconference, 1-2 June 2022;
- xxii. 19th ASPC, videoconference, 3 June 2022;
- xxiii. ARF SOM, videoconference, 9 June 2022;
- xxiv. ARF Table-Top Exercise on Response Capabilities to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Incidents, Manila, Philippines, 13-15 June 2022;
- xxv. ARF Earthquake Response Exercise on Urban Search and Rescue, videoconference, 22-24 June 2022;
- xxvi. ARF Symposium on Inclusive Processes for Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution, Hawaii, USA, 28-30 June 2022;
- xxvii. 4th ARF Workshop on Ferry Safety, 6-7 July 2022; and
- xxviii. 15th ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) Meeting, videoconference, 13 July 2022.

29. The Meeting also requested for Co-Chairs of these activities to submit the finalized Co-Chairs Summary Reports to the ARF Unit as the repository of all ARF documents for future reference.



## **PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE NEXT INTER-SESSIONAL YEAR (2022-2023)**

30. The Meeting was pleased to welcome the following Chair and Co-Chairs:
- i. Indonesia as Chair of the 30th ARF, ARF SOM and the 20th ASPC;
  - ii. Indonesia and Timor-Leste as Co-Chairs of the ARF ISG on CBMs and PD and ARF DOD for the Inter-Sessional Year 2022-2023;
  - iii. Indonesia, the ROK and Russia as Co-Chairs of the 5th ARF ISM on ICTs Security;
  - iv. Cambodia and China as Co-Chairs of the 14th ARF ISM on Maritime Security;
  - v. Brunei Darussalam and the ROK as Co-Chairs of the 16th ARF EEPs; and
  - vi. Malaysia and Sri Lanka as Co-Chairs of the 25th ARF HDUCIM.
31. Taking into account the disruptive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic to the work of the ARF, the Meeting agreed to extend Malaysia, the European Union (EU) and New Zealand's co-chairmanship of the ARF ISM on CTTC and extend the implementation period of the ARF Work Plan on CTTC until 2023. In view of ensuring continuity of the ARF's work on disaster relief, the Meeting supported the extension of Lao PDR, Canada and China's co-chairmanship of the ARF ISM on DR until 2023.
32. The Meeting noted that the Guide to ARF Processes, Procedures, Practices and Protocol should be utilised as a basic guideline for the conduct of all ARF activities and initiatives, including work plans, concept papers and statements. The Meeting also encouraged the Co-Chairs of activities to manage the schedule of their respective activities prior to the ARF SOM and preferably the ARF ISG on CBMs and PD.
33. The Meeting approved the List of Track 1 Activities for the Inter-Sessional Year 2022-2023 which appears as ANNEX V.
34. The Meeting reiterated the importance of equal and full participation for all ARF Participants to ARF activities.
35. In an effort to further contribute to the strengthening of cooperation to address the continuously evolving regional security challenges, the Meeting adopted the ASEAN Regional Forum Statement to Promote Peace, Stability, and Prosperity through Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy; the ASEAN Regional Forum Statement on Reiterating Commitment to Preserve Southeast Asia as a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone; and the ASEAN Regional Forum Framework on Inclusive Processes for the Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security Agendas in Confidence Building Measures, Preventive Diplomacy, and Conflict Resolution. The Statements and Framework appear as ANNEXES VI, VII and VIII.

## **FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE ARF PROCESS**

36. The Meeting highlighted the key role of the ARF HPOA II in paving the way forward for the ARF to become a more 'action-oriented' forum at a pace comfortable to all. In view of strengthening the work of the ARF and taking into consideration the period of implementation, the Meeting tasked the Co-Chairs of the respective areas of cooperation, proponents of adopted Statements and approved activities and other ARF Participants to determine the progress of implementation of the HPOA II and provide their input to the ARF Unit.

37. Taking into account the increasing activities and work of the ARF, the Meeting called upon ARF Participants to provide greater support to the work of the ARF Unit and reiterated the need to strengthen the ARF Unit with the necessary resources and manpower. The Meeting further noted that discussion on the restructuring of the ARF Unit is currently being deliberated among ASEAN Member States.
38. Recognising the cross-cutting and transboundary nature of regional security challenges, and emerging threats, the Meeting highlighted the importance of promoting complementarities, ensuring coherence and avoiding unnecessary duplication of efforts. In this respect, the Meeting acknowledged the importance of promoting cross-sectoral and cross-pillar coordination and encouraged ARF Participants to further strengthen and enhance sharing of information with other ASEAN-led mechanisms including the ADMM-Plus and the East Asia Summit.
39. The Meeting expressed their appreciation to the EEPs for their active contributions in support of the ARF process on issues of relevance to their expertise. In this regard, the Meeting encouraged the ARF EEPs to continue providing recommendations as deemed appropriate by their respective governments.
40. The Meeting welcomed the publication of the 2022 ARF Annual Security Outlook (ASO) presented by Cambodia and underlined the importance of the ARF ASO as an integral document to further promote transparency and confidence building among ARF Participants.