

ASEAN DEFENCE MINISTERS' MEETING-PLUS (ADMM-PLUS)

– CONCEPT PAPER –

Introduction

1. The establishment of the ASEAN Defence Sectoral body. The ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) in Kuala Lumpur on 9 May 2006 was a historic and significant milestone in ASEAN's evolution. For the first time since the formation of ASEAN, the ASEAN Defence Ministers came together in a formal meeting. This inaugural ADMM established the ASEAN Defence Sectoral body as an independent track reporting directly to the ASEAN Heads of State/Government. It is testimony to ASEAN's maturity and readiness to collectively address regional security issues through open and constructive dialogue, and through practical cooperation. The establishment of the ASEAN defence sectoral takes ASEAN one step closer towards the realisation of an ASEAN Security Community – a vision the ASEAN Heads of State/Government envisaged when they adopted the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II) in 2003.

2. The benefits of an open and inclusive security framework. Over the last few years, the political and security environment of the Asia-Pacific region has changed significantly. We now face a set of complex transnational security challenges on traditional and non-traditional security issues, such as terrorism and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Cooperation between countries, both within ASEAN and with countries in the larger Asia-Pacific, is required to address these challenges for the benefit of ASEAN countries. At the same time, non-ASEAN countries are also keen to engage ASEAN in the area of defence and security. Open and inclusive multilateral security frameworks are needed to facilitate the channels of communication and cooperation, both within ASEAN and between ASEAN and countries outside Southeast Asia.

3. Our engagement of extra-regional countries is for the benefit of ASEAN. The purpose is to bring expertise, perspectives and resources from extra-regional countries to bear on shared security challenges. At all times, ASEAN countries should collectively weigh the benefits of engaging extra-regional countries.

4. This Concept Paper sets out the principles and broad modalities in the event that the ADMM-Plus is established. The ADMM shall move forward in engaging ASEAN's friends and Dialogue Partners with the consent of all ASEAN member countries at a time deemed appropriate. The ADMM-Plus will be established when there is consensus amongst ASEAN countries, and at a pace comfortable to all. The principles serve to guide the evolution of the ADMM-Plus while maintaining flexibility on the timing of its actual establishment.

Objectives for Establishing an ADMM-Plus

5. Formal supporting documents. The Concept Paper for the Establishment of an ADMM, which the ASEAN Defence Ministers adopted at the inaugural ADMM on 9 May 2006, stated that the ADMM shall be "open, flexible and outward-looking" in actively engaging ASEAN's friends and Dialogue Partners in promoting peace and security in the region. Pursuant to this, the Protocol to the ADMM Concept Paper calls for the establishment of an ADMM-Plus to facilitate the ADMM's engagement of ASEAN's friends and Dialogue Partners.

6. In its efforts to engage ASEAN's friends and Dialogue Partners, the ADMM-Plus shall have the following objectives:

- a. To benefit ASEAN member countries in building capacity to address shared security challenges, while cognisant of the differing capacities of various ASEAN countries.
- b. To promote mutual trust and confidence between defence establishments through greater dialogue and transparency.
- c. To enhance regional peace and stability through cooperation in defence and security, in view of the transnational security challenges the region faces.
- d. To contribute to the realisation of an ASEAN Security Community which, as stipulated in the Bali Concord II, embodies ASEAN's aspiration to achieve peace, stability, democracy and prosperity in the region where ASEAN member countries live at peace with one another and with the world at large.

- e. To facilitate the implementation of the Vientiane Action Programme, which calls for ASEAN to build a peaceful, secure and prosperous ASEAN, and to adopt greater outward-looking external relation strategies with our friends and Dialogue Partners.

Principles for an ADMM-Plus

7. The ASEAN Vision 2020 adopted by our Heads of State/Government on 15 December 1997 in Kuala Lumpur envisaged an outward-looking ASEAN that plays a pivotal role in the international fora. Our Heads of State/Government also envisioned ASEAN having an intensified and mutually beneficial relationship with its friends and Dialogue Partners based on equal partnership and mutual respect. In line with this vision, the ADMM agrees that the ADMM-Plus shall be guided by the following principles:

- a. *ASEAN is at the centre of the ADMM-Plus.* ASEAN shall be the primary driving force in the ADMM's interactions with ASEAN's friends and Dialogue Partners.
- b. *The ADMM-Plus will uphold ASEAN's principles* of non-interference, consensus-based decision making, national and regional resilience and respect for national sovereignty. It is a defence and security forum, not a military alliance.
- c. *The ADMM-Plus needs to be open and inclusive.* ASEAN's friends and Dialogue Partners are welcome and have a role to play in contributing constructively to the ADMM's efforts in promoting security and stability in the region.
- d. *Cooperation within the ADMM-Plus should be based on mutual respect and be in accordance with international law.* Measures to enhance regional security should be respectful of each country's sovereignty, conform to international norms of behaviour, and sustain the international institutions and laws that underpin a stable international order.
- e. *The ADMM-Plus is guided by a spirit of fostering collective responsibility through the development of common understanding on security issues.* The security and prosperity of all countries are closely intertwined. No single

country has the resources to deal with the range of transnational security challenges alone. A collective and cooperative approach is required.

- f. *The ADMM-Plus shall be an integral part of the ADMM.* The ADMM-Plus should aim to add value and complement the ADMM. It will be established as part of the formal ADMM.

Modalities for an ADMM-Plus

8. The ADMM-Plus shall have the following modalities:
 - a. The ADMM shall determine the areas and levels of interaction with defence establishments of extra-regional countries.
 - b. Applications to participate in the ADMM-Plus shall be submitted to the Chair of the ADMM who will then consult the other members of the ADMM. The ADMM shall only invite extra-regional countries to the ADMM-Plus upon the consensus of all ASEAN countries.
 - c. The ADMM-Plus should be held back to back with the ADMM, where appropriate.
 - d. The Chairmanship of the ADMM-Plus shall follow the Chairmanship of the ADMM. Retreats, special or emergency meetings of the ADMM-Plus may be held as necessary.
 - e. The ADMM, as the driving force of the ADMM-Plus, shall report to the Heads of State/Government on the outcomes of the ADMM-Plus.
 - f. The ADSOM shall take the lead in the preparations for the ADMM-Plus and its activities. The ADMM-Plus may set up a working group on specific issues as appropriate.
 - g. The ADMM agrees that a working group on the ADMM-Plus reporting to the ADSOM shall be set up to finalise the modalities of the ADMM-Plus.

- h. The processes of the ADMM-Plus shall be consistent with those of other related ASEAN processes in the ASEAN Security Community.

Conclusion

9. Over the years, ASEAN has taken significant steps to transform itself to meet the challenges arising from the changing strategic environment. The Bali Concord II, adopted by our Heads of State/Government in 2003, envisions an ASEAN Community that is dynamic, resilient and outward-looking. The ASEAN Charter, of which ASEAN member countries are working towards adoption by our Heads of State/Government at the Singapore Summit in November 2007, will be a significant step towards our vision of an ASEAN Community. The Charter will strengthen ASEAN's credibility and internal processes, acting as the platform to build ASEAN's linkages with the world.

10. Like ASEAN as a whole, the ADMM also needs to be plugged into the external environment. We have to actively engage friends and Dialogue Partners from outside our region as ASEAN's future is increasingly intertwined with that of the larger Asia-Pacific region. By plugging ourselves into the external environment, the ADMM-Plus will allow us to draw on the varied perspectives and resources of a wide range of non-ASEAN countries in addressing the security challenges of our region. A combination of cohesiveness amongst ASEAN countries and active external engagement will enhance ASEAN's resilience, and enable ASEAN to position itself to influence the development of constructive relationships between the major powers. This is necessary for peace and security in the region.

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