



BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

2021



# ASEAN SECURITY OUTLOOK



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## FOREWORD

On behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, it gives me great pleasure to present the Fifth Edition of the ASEAN Security Outlook.

Since its inauguration during Brunei Darussalam's Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2013, the publication has continued to provide crucial information on political-security issues of common concern as well as on the security approaches of ASEAN Member States to address such issues.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has required all countries to adapt to the changes and rise of new security-related challenges. The pandemic has accelerated ASEAN's digitalization process and changed the way work is conducted, which in turn has brought new security threats to the region. The reliance of online technologies, as a result of the pandemic, has given way to an increased frequency of cybercrimes and placed urgency on the need for countries to enhance their respective cybersecurity measures in order to ensure a secure and safe cyberspace for their people.

Emerging and persistent regional security issues demand collective efforts by all countries in the region in a coordinated and timely manner. Therefore, it is important for ASEAN Member States to work collectively to find ways to ensure that the peoples of ASEAN can continue to live in a peaceful, secure and prosperous region. This year, ASEAN is pursuing a Strategic and Holistic Initiative to Link ASEAN Responses to Emergencies and Disasters (ASEAN SHIELD) across the three ASEAN Community Pillars, with a view to better protect the society, economy and the broader developmental agenda, as well as to enable a strategic, holistic, coordinated and cross-pillar response in mitigating impacts of emergencies and disasters that have affected or may affect the Southeast Asian region.

This year's publication comes at a key time for ASEAN, as it contends with evolving global and regional security challenges, faces changing realities in the region and continues to respond to its need to be people-centered and people-oriented. In this publication, ASEAN Member States share their outlook and efforts on how to ensure a peaceful and secure region in this new normal.

Allow me to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to all ASEAN Member States for their contributions to this publication.

**The Honourable Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof**

Chairman of the 54<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM)

Minister of Foreign Affairs II of Brunei Darussalam

## INTRODUCTION

The publication of the ASEAN Security Outlook (ASO) reflects ASEAN's collective effort to promote transparency between ASEAN Member States by sharing their perspectives and concerns on the regional security environment, national defence and security policies, and contributions to regional security.

Published biennially, the ASO likewise takes stock of ASEAN's collective contribution to regional peace, security and stability, which runs along two tracks: fostering relevant values, norms and principles and undertaking tangible security cooperation.

In the first track, ASEAN has upheld values, norms and principles enshrined in various documents such as the *ASEAN Charter*, *ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025*, *Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia* (TAC), *Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality Declaration* (ZOPFAN), the *Declaration of the East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations* (EAS Bali Principles), the *ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific* (AOIP), and *Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea* (DOC). These values, norms and principles are manifested in the activities conducted by ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and mechanisms that constitute the second track, such as the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and East Asia Summit (EAS).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Security Concerns**

In regard to security concerns, all ASEAN Member States share the view that COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact nationally and regionally. These include the human toll it has taken, the damage to the economy and the people's livelihoods, and the disruption to social welfare as well as political stability.

Some Member States also outline how the pandemic has increased the region's vulnerability to existing security challenges. As more people stay home and spend their time online due to pandemic-related restrictions, terrorist and extremist groups have taken advantage of the increase in the use of the internet to spread propaganda and disinformation, attract followers and recruit new members. Furthermore, as the pandemic-induced utilisation of digital products and services, such as for remote working and e-banking, increased, threats to the security of digital infrastructure and to users' privacy have also multiplied.

In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, Member States identified a range of shared security concerns from traditional security such as the competition between major powers and territorial disputes including in the South China Sea to non-traditional security such as transnational crimes, natural disasters, maritime security, climate change and cybersecurity. The table below provides a snapshot of the security concerns as identified by the ASEAN Member States:

Concern/ Issue	BN	CA	ID	LA	MY	MM	PH	SG	TH	VN
Competition between major powers	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Non-proliferation and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Terrorism and violent extremism	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs)	√	√	√				√		√	
Transnational crimes, e.g.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Concern/ Issue	BN	CA	ID	LA	MY	MM	PH	SG	TH	VN
trafficking in persons, people smuggling, irregular movement of persons, illicit drugs trafficking, arms smuggling, international economic crime and cybercrime										
Natural disasters	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Maritime security	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
Territorial disputes	√	√	√	√		√	√			√
South China Sea			√		√		√	√	√	√
Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing			√		√		√		√	√
Marine environment protection, including marine debris			√		√		√		√	
Cybersecurity	√	√	√		√			√	√	√
Climate change				√	√	√	√			√
Food security				√	√				√	√
Water security					√					√
Transboundary haze pollution					√					
Environmental degradation							√			
Developments in Myanmar							√		√	√
Korean Peninsula							√	√		
Energy security				√	√					

As seen in the table, all ASEAN Member States have identified competition between major powers, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and violent extremism, transnational crimes and natural disasters as shared security concerns. While these are not new concerns, terrorism and violent extremism, transnational crimes and natural disasters are transboundary threats which have directly impacted the safety, survivability and well-being of the people of ASEAN, irrespective of age, race, gender and social standing. Even as the region struggles to respond and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, terrorists have continued their attacks such as the bombings in Jolo, Philippines in August 2020 and in Makassar, Indonesia in March 2021.

All ASEAN Member States are also concerned that the competition between major powers could escalate and lead to tensions or even conflict in the region. Meanwhile, Member States are all committed to maintain Southeast Asia as a region free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), and thus ASEAN supports regional and international measures to prevent the proliferation of such weapons. In this respect, one Member State shares the concern that the impasse in relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) could lead to conflict, especially considering that the DPRK possesses nuclear warheads and has continued to carry out ballistic missile tests.

Southeast Asia is geographically located between two oceans. As such, maritime security is a concern identified by all nine maritime ASEAN Member States, underscoring the importance of the maritime domain to Member States' history, prosperity and security. It is therefore not surprising that territorial disputes are also identified as a security concern by the majority of Member States since competing maritime claims, such as in the South China Sea, have led to increased tensions and near conflicts between claimant states, threatening the security and stability of the region. Furthermore, several Member States identified as concerns maritime-related issues namely illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and marine environment protection, including marine debris. IUU fishing has directly caused revenue loss for coastal communities and is carried out by illegal organised groups and on certain instances receives the support of state authorities, which has led to cases of near conflicts between coast guard vessels. Meanwhile the proliferation of marine debris threatens the health of fish stocks and marine biodiversity as plastic containers pollute the seas and endanger marine species.

Another issue identified as a security concern by most (seven) Member States is the security of cyberspace, and, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, provided the means for people to digitally connect and conduct their day-to-day activities. On the other hand, cyberspace has created new vulnerabilities and threats as more people use digital products and services. More than any other security issue, cyberspace recognises no

national borders or boundaries, and thus addressing cybersecurity issues demands cooperative and collaborative approaches.

Natural disasters are often linked to climate change, which is an issue identified by several (five) Member States. Rising global temperatures have led to rising sea waters and shifted wind and water currents, causing more frequent and intense floods as well as droughts. Furthermore, a number of Member States highlighted the effect of climate change to the security of food and water, as the floods and droughts have disrupted food harvests and reduced the availability of clean water.

Other notable issues of concern to Member States are energy security, transboundary haze pollution and environmental degradation. A continuous and uninterrupted energy supply is crucial for economic and social development of any country. Transboundary haze pollution has gravely affected people's health and lives over the years. Environmental risks caused by deforestation, pollution, unsustainable agricultural and fishing practices, and rapid loss of biodiversity negatively impacts the health of the natural environment and threatens sustainable economic development as well as food security in ASEAN.

Lastly, a few Member States share their concerns over recent developments in a fellow Member State. The crisis in Myanmar has been cited as a test for ASEAN's ability to manage an internal crisis, and the Five-Point Consensus, which was agreed to at the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on 24 April 2021, serves as a basis for ASEAN's constructive engagement with Myanmar.

It should be noted that Member States emphasise the transboundary and cross-cutting nature of issues such as terrorism and violent extremism, transnational crimes, cybersecurity and natural disasters, and call for the strengthening of cross-sectoral and cross-pillar coordination and collaboration to address these issues.

### ***National Contributions to Promoting Regional Security***

ASEAN Member States also outline in detail their efforts to address their security concerns at the national, regional and global levels. At the national level, domestic implementation of ASEAN agreements and conventions, such as the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP), ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT) and ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP) are highlighted. Some Member States also highlight the preparation, amendment and adoption of national legislation to address their security concerns,

including on trafficking in persons, transboundary haze pollution, illicit drugs trafficking, counter-terrorism and violent extremism, and cybersecurity.

At the regional level, all Member States share the importance of cooperation and collaboration in dealing with security challenges alongside each other, as manifested in their respective contributions to the work of ASEAN Sectoral Bodies.

The contributions include the implementation of the *Work Plan of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism* (ASEAN PoA PCRVE) or *Bali Work Plan 2019-2025*, the *Bohol TIP Work Plan 2017-2020* and the *ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016-2025*, finalisation of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the ASEAN Our Eyes initiative, an intelligence-exchange platform for countering terrorism and violent extremism. Likewise notable are the operationalisation of the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI), which provides a rapid, reliable and confidential means of communication for ASEAN Defence Ministers to manage crises or emergency situations, and the establishment of the ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee (ASEAN Cyber-CC) as the primary mechanism to discuss and coordinate on cybersecurity issues in ASEAN.

Cooperation in dealing with security challenges likewise are undertaken and pursued with ASEAN's external partners and through ASEAN-led multilateral mechanisms such as the ADMM-Plus, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Plus One, ASEAN Plus Three (APT) and East Asia Summit (EAS). Some of the notable developments in these platforms include the conduct of multilateral exercises under the ADMM-Plus such as the Cybersecurity Table-Top Exercise (TTX) in August 2019, the convening of ARF workshops on various issues including dispute resolution and law of the sea, nuclear risk reduction, aviation security and enhancing maritime law enforcement cooperation, and the convening of the Special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on COVID-19 in April 2020.

These various mechanisms constitute the ASEAN-centred regional architecture. As ASEAN confronts the changing regional strategic landscape, due in part to the intensified strategic competition between major powers and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, ASEAN-led mechanisms continue to be avenues for all parties to engage one another and discuss issues that concern them as well as to explore cooperation. As such, Member States have reaffirmed their support for ASEAN Centrality in the regional architecture as a means not only to promote ASEAN's interests *vis-à-vis* the competing interests of external parties but also to ensure peace, security and stability in the region.

Meanwhile at the global level, several Member States (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam) share their contributions to international

peacekeeping and peace monitoring missions, including the missions conducted under the United Nations mandate in the Central African Republic, Lebanon, and South Sudan. Furthermore, almost all ASEAN Member States have ratified and/or signed the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which entered into force in January 2021, in addition to signing onto landmark treaties such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), including the Additional Protocols to Safeguard Agreements, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT) with a view to contributing to global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. The TPNW represent the next steps in achieving a world free from nuclear weapons, thus creating a more peaceful and stable global environment and complementing ASEAN's own advocacy to promote the region as a nuclear-weapons-free zone.

### ***Individual National Defence Policies***

The ASO 2021 provides a platform for the ASEAN Member States to share their respective national policies on defence and security. A common thread that runs across their national defence policies is the importance of ensuring that defence personnel and equipment are sufficiently prepared to defend the nation and address current and future security challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and emerging technologies in the military sphere.

There is also a shared sense that cooperation with external partners is a key aspect of their defence policy. While multilateral defence cooperation with external partners is pursued through the ADMM-Plus, individual Member States likewise pursue bilateral defence cooperation.

Five submissions in this edition contain figures on defence expenditures (for 2021), which range (based on current exchange rates) from a low of approximately USD 458 million (Brunei) to a high of USD 9,521.28 million (Indonesia), indicating the defence expenditures appear to be proportional to the geographic size of a country. Four submissions also contain an indication of the defence expenditure as percentage of the country's GDP. The figures range from a low of 1.18% to a high of 2.8%. These figures indicate that defence expenditure do not constitute a substantial proportion of their respective domestic production. One AMS (the Philippines) shared that its defence expenditure is 4.57% of its national budget.

Three Members States acknowledged in their submissions that their respective defense budgets for 2021 had modest increases from their 2020 expenditures (.68% for Brunei, 16.3% for Indonesia and 7.13% for the Philippines). Given the current state of good defense relations among ASEAN Member States, the increases reflect the need to have

greater capability to address a wide array of security concerns and not borne by the intention to develop military capabilities per se.

### ***Future Trends in Regional Security***

Looking ahead, the ASO 2021 offers some perspectives regarding future trends in regional security. With transmissible variants creating new surges of COVID-19 cases in the region, pandemic recovery would remain to be a top priority for ASEAN Member States in the immediate future. Meanwhile, competition and rivalry between major powers could continue to intensify. There is also the apprehension over the increasing likelihood of miscalculation in regional flashpoints such as the South China Sea. Relying more on the internet and cyberspace would also further vulnerability to cybercrime and cyber-attacks. And emerging technologies in defence and security, such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and autonomous weapons and systems, would present new challenges to militaries.

In light of these future trends, ASEAN Member States have emphasised the importance of strengthening regional cooperation, including through the ASEAN-led mechanisms, to increase ASEAN's effective response to current and future challenges. Furthermore, ASEAN unity and coordination should be improved to ensure creativity and flexibility in responding to such challenges.

On a final note, the ASO 2021 serves as a useful and important reference on how ASEAN views the regional security landscape and on the measures that have been undertaken to address current and future defence and security issues and challenges. It is hoped that this publication would help provide readers with views on ASEAN's collective response and efforts in realising the ASEAN Community.

**H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi**  
Secretary-General of ASEAN

## ASEAN'S CONTRIBUTION TO REGIONAL PEACE, SECURITY, AND STABILITY

ASEAN's contributions to regional peace, security and stability are along two tracks: (1) through fostering relevant values, norms and principles and (2) by undertaking tangible security cooperation. This chapter recalls those principles and dovetails them with current undertakings as well as take stock of recent developments within ASEAN towards regional peace and security.

### **A. ASEAN Principles, Vision, Goals on Regional Peace, Security, and Stability based on ASEAN documents**

Since its establishment in 1967, ASEAN has upheld the values, norms and principles enshrined in various documents such as the *ASEAN Declaration*, the *ASEAN Charter*, the *ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025* (APSC Blueprint 2025), the *Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia* (TAC), the *Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality* (ZOPFAN), the *Declaration of the East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations* (EAS Bali Principles), the *ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific* (AOIP), and the *Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea* (DOC).

#### **Promoting Rules-Based Regional Order**

Signed on 8 August 1967, the *ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration)* defines the goals of ASEAN to promote regional peace, stability and prosperity. ASEAN envisioned an integrated, peaceful and stable community, anchored on regional cooperation. In this regard, ASEAN promotes its fundamental principles, shared norms and values as codified in the *ASEAN Charter*, which entered into force in December 2008. In addition, the Charter provides ASEAN with a legal status and institutional framework to support its Community building process.

An exercise to review the implementation of the *ASEAN Charter* has commenced. The review is meant to identify achievements and outstanding issues regarding the Charter's implementation focusing on ASEAN's functions and operations, as well as the application of ASEAN norms, values and principles. A Scoping Report on the Review of Implementation of the ASEAN Charter was submitted to the 27<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Coordinating Council Meeting (ACC) in 2020. With the final Scoping Report having been adopted by the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) in June 2021, the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR) is in the process of undertaking the review, focusing on the provisions on the ASEAN Organs, Entities Associated with ASEAN, Rules of Procedures on Conclusion of International Agreements of ASEAN as well as the Guidelines for ASEAN's External Relations.

Anchored on the *ASEAN Charter* and other ASEAN instruments, the *ASEAN Community Vision 2025*, including the *APSC Blueprint 2025*, were developed and adopted in 2015 to enhance ASEAN political and security cooperation. The Blueprint highlights four elements of Community building, namely, (1) rules-based, people-oriented, people-centered Community; (2) peaceful, secure and stable region; (3) ASEAN Centrality in a dynamic and outward-looking region; and (4) strengthened ASEAN institutional capacity and presence.

Midway into 2025, a mid-term review of the *APSC Blueprint* was undertaken in 2020. At the time of the review, 96% (278 out of 290) of action lines contained in the Blueprint have been acted upon, leaving 12 action lines to be implemented. To date, two additional action lines have been acted upon. Only 10 action lines thus remain to be addressed.

The review likewise revealed that the implementation of the Blueprint is on-track with all action lines slated to be implemented by mid-term having been acted upon as of 2020. According to the review, two in every ten activities evaluated have high impact; more than 80% of the activities are expected to be sustained; and four in every ten activities are seen to have long lasting effects. It is noted that various ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)-Plus have enabled ASEAN to be the driving force in the regional political security architecture, thereby allowing ASEAN to promote peace, security and stability in the region.

### ***Advocating Nuclear Non-Proliferation***

Promoting Southeast Asia as a region free of nuclear weapon and other weapons of mass destruction is another contribution of ASEAN to regional peace, security and stability, with the *Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty* signed in 1995 serving as a framework. The Treaty, among others, prohibits ASEAN Member States from manufacturing or acquiring nuclear weapons. It manifests ASEAN's commitment to contribute to global efforts in disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful application of nuclear technologies. Complementing the treaty is a protocol where Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) are encouraged to sign unto. Consultations with the five NWS in regard to their signing of the protocol are being pursued.

Meanwhile, the *Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty (PoA) 2018-2022*, currently being implemented, identifies measures and actions to be taken by the State Parties to (1) ensure compliance with the undertakings of the Treaty; (2) resolve outstanding issues pertaining to the signing and ratification by the NWS of the *Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty*; and (3) enhance cooperation with the International

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other partners in the area of nuclear safety, security and safeguards.

Work is ongoing to implement the *ASEAN-IAEA Practical Arrangements on Cooperation in the Areas of Nuclear Science and Technology and Applications, Nuclear Safety, Security and Safeguards* signed in 2019. Meanwhile, progress is observed in the work of the ASEANTOM (ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy) to finalise an *ASEAN Protocol for Preparedness and Response to a Nuclear or Radiological Emergency*. Two ASEAN's external partners have likewise requested to forge formal partnerships with ASEAN in nuclear security and peaceful application of nuclear technologies through capacity building and human resource development activities.

### ***Fostering Peace, Freedom, Neutrality, Amity and Cooperation***

To promote regional peace, security and stability, ASEAN has upheld the principle of neutrality. Signed in 1971, the *Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) Declaration* is the first document that outlines ASEAN's vision towards security cooperation for the region. ZOPFAN is about ensuring that the Southeast Asian region is free from interference by outside powers while broadening the areas of cooperation for solidarity and concerted strength of ASEAN as a whole.

Signed in 1976 (six years after ZOPFAN), the *Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC)*, is another key instrument towards peace, security and stability in ASEAN. The TAC embodies universal principles of peaceful co-existence and friendly cooperation among States in the Southeast Asia. The signatories of the TAC are guided by the following principles: (1) mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all nations; (2) the right of every state to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion; (3) non-interference in the internal affairs of one another; (4) settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful means; (5) renunciation of the threat or use of force; and (6) effective cooperation among themselves.

Amendments to the TAC in 1987, 1988 and 2010 have paved the way for the accession of countries in the region and other non-regional parties. Since then, non-ASEAN countries have acceded to the TAC. All five permanent members of the UN Security Council (UNSC) are Parties to the TAC. To date, there are currently 33 non-ASEAN countries, which have acceded to the TAC bringing the total of High Contracting Parties (HCP) to 43. Since 2019 when the last ASO was released, the following countries have formally signed the treaty: Bahrain, Colombia, Cuba, Germany, Peru, and South Africa. In addition, Denmark, the Hellenic Republic, the Netherlands, the State of Qatar, the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates will join the growing list of HCP upon

the conclusion of the formalities of their accession. Accession of non-regional countries reflect their support of, and commitment to the principles that the TAC represents, and therefore their support of ASEAN as a whole.

In the interest of strengthen regional cooperation in promoting peace, stability and prosperity, the *Declaration of the East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations* also known as the *EAS Bali Principles* was adopted in 2011. To promote friendly and mutually beneficial relations, the Declaration echoed the principles enshrined in the TAC and underscored the enhancement of regional resilience, as well as the enhancement of mutually beneficial cooperation in the EAS and with other regional fora.

In view of uncertainties pose by the regional and global geo-political and geo-strategic shifts, which may affect ASEAN's economic and security architecture, the ASEAN Leaders adopted the *ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)* in 2019. To enhance ASEAN leading role in promoting an open and inclusive cooperation in the region, the Outlook reaffirms ASEAN's principles, including the ASEAN Centrality, transparency, inclusivity, rules-based, non-intervention, mutual respect, mutual trust and mutual benefit, and respect for international law as the foundation of cooperation.

Identified in the Outlook are four areas of cooperation, namely, (1) maritime cooperation; (2) connectivity; (3) the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and (4) economic and other possible areas of cooperation. ASEAN's external partners have manifested their support to the AOIP. These include the US, Australia, Japan India, Germany, France and most recently the European Union (EU) and the Russian Federation

### ***Promoting maritime cooperation***

Maritime cooperation, particularly in the South China Sea, has been pursued by ASEAN. In 2002, ASEAN and China signed the *Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC)*. The document embodies their collective commitment to promote peace, stability, and mutual trust and to ensure the peaceful resolution of disputes in the South China Sea.

Further to this, the ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers endorsed the *Guidelines for the Implementation of the DOC* in 2011. A *Joint Statement on the Full and Effective Implementation of the DOC* was also endorsed by the Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) with China in July 2016. The implementation of the DOC is ongoing with various projects and activities being implemented, as outlined in the *Work Plan on the Implementation of the DOC for 2016-2021*. The Work Plan identifies projects and activities that ASEAN and China would conduct to implement the DOC, with a view to enhancing trust and

confidence among parties and creating a conducive environment for the COC negotiations. The activities in recent years focus on the following topics, among others (1) marine environmental protection; (2) building military-to-military confidence; (3) cooperation among maritime law enforcement agencies/coast guards; and (4) cooperation in ensuring just and humane treatment of fishermen in the South China Sea.

Moving forward, ASEAN and China have also been in negotiations in regard to a Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea since 2018, with the first reading of the Single Draft COC Negotiating Text (SDNT) being completed in July 2019. Notwithstanding the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, ASEAN and China remain committed in pursuing the negotiations. During the 19<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-China SOM-DOC, held in June 2021 in Chongqing, China, they agreed for the Joint Working Group on the DOC (JWG-DOC) to resume textual negotiations via virtual platforms while highlighting that physical meeting remain the primary modality of negotiations. The 31<sup>st</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> JWG-DOC held in July 2021 have resulted in the provisional agreement on the Preamble section of the SDNT, which was announced at the Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) Plus 1 Session with China in August 2021.

Maritime cooperation is indeed a key agenda for ASEAN. With the aim of having a holistic, integrated and comprehensive approach in addressing maritime security challenges and strengthen cooperation, the ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) was established in 2010, followed by the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), which involves ASEAN's external partners, in 2012. These platforms serve as fora for dialogue and coordination among concerned agencies on maritime-related issues. The 10<sup>th</sup> AMF and the 8<sup>th</sup> EAMF held in December 2020, exchanged views on emerging maritime issues including the blue economy, prevention of incidents at sea, dispute resolution mechanisms and applicability of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and trafficking in persons in the fisheries industry.

### ***B. Developments in ASEAN Security Cooperation in Promoting Regional Peace, Security, and Stability***

#### ***ASEAN and Regional Security Cooperation***

##### ***i. East Asia Summit***

First convened in 2005 and currently composed of 18 participating countries, the East Asia Summit (EAS) serves as the premier Leaders-led forum to promote dialogue and cooperation on strategic, political, security and economic issues of common interest and

concerns in the region. To strengthen ASEAN cooperation in promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in the region, the *Declaration of the East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations* was adopted in 2011. In November 2020, the EAS Leaders adopted the *Ha Noi Declaration on the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the EAS* reaffirming their commitment to further strengthen the EAS process to retain its relevance and enhance EAS cooperation in response to emerging issues and challenges.

Over the years, the EAS has adopted various documents to promote security cooperation, including the *EAS Statement on Cooperation to Combat Transnational Crime* and *EAS Leader's Statement on Combating the Spread of Illicit Drugs* (2019); *EAS Statement on Countering the Threat of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Returnees* (2018); *EAS Statement on Countering Ideological Challenges of Terrorism and Terrorist Narratives and Propaganda* and *EAS Statement on Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism* (2017); and *EAS Leaders' Statement on Enhancing Regional Maritime Cooperation* (2015).

Given that the EAS is an integral component of the evolving regional architecture with ASEAN as a driving force, the EAS continues discussions among EAS Ambassadors in Jakarta with optional participation of similarly-ranked officials from capitals. The discussions reaffirm the importance of ASEAN Centrality and the need to further reinforce the ASEAN-centred platforms in the regional architecture.

## **ii. ASEAN Regional Forum**

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) serves as a key regional platform for constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and concerns, with ASEAN as the driving force. In responding to challenges and in an effort to foster cooperation among its 27 participants, the ARF has adopted a three-stage approach of (1) promotion of confidence building measures, (2) development of preventive diplomacy mechanisms, and (3) development of conflict resolution mechanisms.

In September 2020, the ARF adopted the *ARF Ha Noi Plan of Action II (2020-2025)*. This Plan of Action will guide the Forum for the next five years, in the areas of maritime security, counter-terrorism and transnational crime, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) security, disaster relief, non-proliferation and disarmament, peacekeeping operations and defence, as well as to reinforce confidence building measures and preventive diplomacy cooperation and enhance the ARF's institutional capacity.

The ARF's commitment to address emerging security challenges has been reflected by the adoption of several Statements including the *ARF Statement on Cooperation in the Field of Security of and in the Use of ICTs in the Context of International Security*; *ARF Statement on the Treatment of Children Recruited by or Associated with Terrorist Groups*; and *ARF Statement on Enhancing Cooperation to Prevent and Respond to Infectious Disease Outbreaks* in September 2020. A *Joint Statement to Promote Youth, Peace and Security Agenda at the ARF* has likewise been issued by the 28<sup>th</sup> ARF held in August 2021. As one of the ASEAN Chair's deliverables, this is meant to instill an appreciation for peace and sense of responsibility among the youth towards a peaceful and secure region.

### **iii. Regional Defence Cooperation**

Defence cooperation continues to progress particularly in addressing regional security challenges. The ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and the ADMM-Plus have seen positive developments in promoting practical cooperation, including among others, expanding areas of cooperation such as establishing a Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR) Defence Experts in 2019. Meant to strengthen regional preparedness specifically against CBR threats, the Network currently has 40 experts from almost all ASEAN Member States, and actively organises workshops to build experts' capacity and nurture cooperation in areas where awareness remains relatively low. Moreover, the ADMM's efforts to further operationalise its crisis response mechanisms continue, particularly in the area of counter-terrorism as well as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR).

In addition to its core undertakings, the ADMM has likewise contributed in the collective effort to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ADMM Retreat in February 2020 issued the *Joint Statement by the ASEAN Defence Ministers on Defence Cooperation Against Disease Outbreaks*, which provides the impetus for the ADMM to pursue relevant initiatives to help address the health crisis. Since then, the ASEAN Center of Military Medicine (ACMM) has regularly published "spot reports" to monitor the regional COVID-19 situation, organised a table-top exercise to identify gaps in the readiness of ASEAN military medical services (MMS), convened workshops to exchange best practices on pandemic-handling, and developed quarantine guidelines. Through the Network of ASEAN CBR Defence Experts, biological experts have met to exchange information on laboratory diagnostic capabilities and discuss potential scientific collaboration, including on harmonising protocols for the transport of biological samples. Similarly, the ASEAN Military Medicine Conference provides a platform for military health professionals to discuss relevant issues surrounding the pandemic, such as resource management and health technology.

The seven Experts' Working Groups (EWGs) under ADMM-Plus have completed the 2017-2020 cycle last year. All EWGs successfully conducted their respective exercises, including the inaugural cyber security table-top exercise. After a short hiatus in 2020 because of the pandemic, the EWGs recently commenced with the 2021-2023 cycle. Aside from field training exercises, workplans under this cycle have introduced some new elements, notably the development of the *Cyber Security Framework* and the *Maritime Security Road Map*, and the organising of a Project-based Community Medical Deployment which will allow military medical services to respond to non-crisis situations. Also worth noting is the commitment in advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, not only in peacekeeping but also in other areas such as HADR and maritime security.

The defence sector has likewise undertaken a stocktaking exercise in 2021 to assess how the ADMM and the ADMM-Plus have developed thus far. The exercise underscored the need to synergise the ADMM and the ADMM-Plus' initiatives, adopt innovative approaches for the ADMM-Plus EWGs, enhance cross-sectoral cooperation, and strengthen ASEAN-driven processes. These preliminary recommendations will form future strategies in moving forward. In regard to strengthening ASEAN-driven processes, the 15<sup>th</sup> ADMM adopted the *Concept Paper on the ADMM's External Engagements*, which presents workable and ASEAN-centred solutions to real problems that the ADMM has encountered given its increasing engagements with participants in the ADMM-Plus, other external partners and non-state entities.

The 15<sup>th</sup> ADMM has also decided to continue with the annual convening of the ADMM-Plus. Commenced in 2018, the annual ADMM-Plus has been found to have enhanced dialogue and practical cooperation between ASEAN and Plus Countries, strengthened ASEAN Centrality in the regional security architecture, and strengthened Plus Countries' commitment to the region. It has also invigorated the Plus Countries' engagements with ASEAN. This reinforces the commitment contained in the *Joint Declaration by the ADMM-Plus Defence Ministers on Strategic Security Vision of the ADMM-Plus*, which was adopted in 2020 as the ADMM-Plus entered into its second decade.

## ***ASEAN and Security Challenges***

### **i. COVID-19 Pandemic**

Notwithstanding the political and economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, ASEAN has sustained its efforts to work for regional peace and stability even while adopting specific measures to address the pandemic. These include (1) the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund; (2) ASEAN Regional Reserves of Medical

Supplies (RRMS) for Public Health Emergencies; (3) ASEAN Strategic Framework on PHE (ASF-PHE); (4) ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF); (5) ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement Framework (ATCAF); and (6) ASEAN Regional Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED).

To date, progress have been noted in regard to these initiatives. Resources from the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund has enabled ASEAN to collaborate with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in regard to the procurement of vaccines for ASEAN Member States and the ASEAN Secretariat. Following the launching in 2020 of the ASEAN RRMS, which will stockpile and distribute essential medical supplies to support affected ASEAN Member States in need, a proposal to set up the ASEAN Plus Three Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies (APT RMS) is currently being considered.

The ASEAN Strategic Framework on PHE (ASF-PHE), adopted in 2020, is meant to enhance ASEAN's preparedness and resilience to public health emergencies. Likewise adopted last year is the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its attendant Implementation Plan, which provides a whole-of-community strategy to address the pandemic and recover from its effects. The initiatives outlined in the Framework are on track of being implemented. More recently, the ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement Framework (ATCAF) has been finalised. Work to establish the ACPHEED is also on-going with a number of ASEAN's external partners having provided relevant resource support for its establishment.

## **ii. Transnational Crime**

The threat of transnational crime in the region continues to evolve. Given this, ASEAN law enforcement agencies under the ambit of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), remains committed to address terrorism, cybercrime, illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, arms smuggling, sea piracy, money laundering, international economic crimes, illicit trafficking of wildlife and timber and people smuggling. Notwithstanding the challenges posed by the pandemic, the implementation and renewal of the work programme to fulfil the *ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transnational Crime 2016-2025* are moving forward. New modalities have been explored for continued cooperation under the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and its working groups.

Forging ahead with ASEAN cross-sectoral and cross-pillar cooperation, the AMMTC as the Lead Sectoral Body in addressing terrorism has adopted the *Work Plan of ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism*

(*ASEAN PoA on PCRVE*) 2018-2025, which also referred to as the *Bali Work Plan (2019-2025)*. A total of 19 ASEAN Sectoral Bodies/Organs/Entities have committed to implement the *Bali Work Plan*, which has likewise received support from ASEAN Dialogue Partners and other external parties. As the Lead Sectoral Body for cross-sectoral cooperation in address trafficking in persons (TIP), the AMMTC is also leading a final review of the *Bohol TIP Work Plan 2017-2020* and the development of the succeeding work plan.

### **iii. ASEAN Cooperation Against Illicit Drugs**

ASEAN has adopted a zero-tolerance approach against illicit drugs and remains steadfast towards a drugs-free region, as evident in the collective efforts through the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD) and its mechanisms. Under the framework of ASEAN-Narcotics Cooperation Center (ASEAN-NARCO), the annual ASEAN Drugs Monitoring (ADM) Report 2019 was successfully published in 2020 and work is on-going towards an ADM Report 2020.

Upon the completion of the first internal review of the *ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016-2025*, which highlighted a successful implementation rate of 79%, the Mid-Term Review of the Work Plan is expected to be completed in 2021. Considering the extension given to implementation period of the ASEAN Cooperation to Tackle Illicit Drug Production and Trafficking in the Golden Triangle from 2020 to 2022, efforts in mitigating drug problem in the Golden Triangle continue. The Mid-Term Review of ASEAN Cooperation Plan is currently underway.

### **iv. Security Amidst Porous Borders**

While border management cooperation promotes connectivity, ASEAN needs to ensure that transnational criminal groups could not take advantage of ASEAN's connectivity across land and maritime borders of its Member States. Strengthening cooperation in this area was outlined in the *ASEAN Leader's Vision Statement on a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN: Rising Above Challenges and Sustaining Growth* adopted by the 36<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in June 2020.

To chart the future of cooperation on border management, a new plan of action on cooperation in immigration and consular matters is being deliberated by the ASEAN Director-Generals of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM). Complementing this effort, an *ASEAN Border Management Cooperation Roadmap* is being finalised. To provide necessary assistance to nationals of the ASEAN Member States facing consular difficulties in Third Countries,

the *Guidelines on Consular Assistance by ASEAN Member States Missions in Third Countries to Nationals of Other ASEAN Member States* has been put in place.

#### **v. Cybersecurity Cooperation**

To recall, in 2018, the ASEAN Leaders issued the *ASEAN Leaders' Statement on Cybersecurity Cooperation* and called for greater cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member States on cybersecurity policy development and capacity building initiatives. Acknowledging the need to strengthen collective effort to address cybersecurity challenges, ASEAN has established the ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee (Cyber-CC) in November 2020, with a view to strengthening cross-sectoral and cross-pillar coordination on cybersecurity policies and on multidisciplinary measures to respond to the rapidly growing challenges in cyberspace. Meanwhile, sectoral bodies under the political security community pillar continue to contribute in addressing cybersecurity. SOMTC, for example, has a Working Group on Cybercrime and has operationalised multi-year programmes of the ASEAN Cyber Capability Desk (ASEAN Desk) lodged at the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation in Singapore.

The defence sector for its part has the ASEAN Cyber Defence Network and the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence (COE). The establishment of this centre will complement the ASEAN Cyber Defence Network in promoting regional exchanges, interactions and cooperation on cybersecurity matters. The centre will enable information sharing and capacity building among ASEAN defence establishments against cyberattacks, disinformation and misinformation.

There is also the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ISM on ICTs Security). This is meant to provide a platform for ARF participants (1) to promote mutual understanding as well as to discuss and coordinate ARF's efforts on ICTs security; (2) to implement the ARF Work Plan on Security of and in the Use of ICTs; and (3) to enhance trust and confidence through capacity building. In September 2020, the 27<sup>th</sup> ARF adopted the *ARF Statement on Cooperation in the Field of Security of and in the Use of ICTs in the Context of International Security* that calls for, among others, the need to promote confidence building, mutual trust and transparency, and enhance cooperation in enabling States to secure its ICTs and ensure its peaceful use.

#### ***Other Developments in Promoting Peace, Security and Stability in ASEAN***

##### **i. Women, Peace and Security**

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has likewise gained momentum in security cooperation. To recall, the *Joint Statement on Promoting Women, Peace and Security* adopted at the 31<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Summit in 2017, recognised the importance of women’s participation in the political, security, and justice sectors as well as women’s full participation in peace processes as negotiators, mediators, and first responders, including in the prevention of violent extremism is encouraged.

To support the WPS agenda, the first Regional Symposium on Implementing Women, Peace and Security Agenda in ASEAN was held in 2019, which led to the establishment of an Advisory Group on Women, Peace and Security consisting of representatives from the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC). In March 2021, the ACW and the ACWC in consultation with relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and Entities launched the ASEAN Regional Study on WPS, which proposes WPS policy and programme level recommendation to achieve greater stability and peace in the ASEAN region.

In 2020, two significant undertakings relative to the WPS agenda were held. These include the ASEAN Ministerial Dialogue on Strengthening Women’s Role for Sustainable Peace and Security, which reiterated ASEAN’s commitment to promote gender equality and empowerment of all women, and the ASEAN Women Leaders’ Summit with “Women’s Role in Building a Cohesive, Dynamic, Sustainable and Inclusive ASEAN Community in a Post COVID-19 World” as its theme.

It is worth noting that the WPS agenda is being advanced through various ASEAN mechanisms. The ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), for example, identified women empowerment and the promotion of gender equality as part of the objectives of the *ASEAN Plan on Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (PoA PCRVE) 2018-2025*.

The WPS agenda in the ASEAN Defence Minister Meeting (ADMM) is spearheaded by the ASEAN Peacekeeping Centers’ Network (APCN), with the 7<sup>th</sup> APCN Meeting in 2019, agreeing to include the WPS agenda in all APCN Meetings and to establish a list of gender focal point to enhance training for female deployment in United Nations peacekeeping missions. At the ADMM-Plus, the Experts’ Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations (EWG on PKO) has advanced the WPS agenda, by including in its objectives the focus on female participation and protection of women and girls in peacekeeping. The ADMM also seeks to promote women participation in the ASEAN Defence Interaction Programmes (ADIP).

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) also expressed commitment to advance the WPS agenda through its *Joint Statement on Promoting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda*, which was adopted in 2019. Likewise, the issue of WPS is also included in the *ARF Ha Hoi Plan of Action II (2020-2025)*, adopted in September 2020. As a follow-up to the Joint Statement, Indonesia, Thailand and Canada co-chaired ARF Workshop on Women, Peace and Security held in March 2021. The Workshop exchanged views on methodologies to advance the WPS agenda in the ARF as well as to strengthen regional coordination mechanisms on WPS. Notably, the East Asia Summit (EAS) also issued an *EAS Leaders' Statement on Women, Peace, and Security* in 2020.

## **ii. Human Rights, Peace and Security in ASEAN**

Human rights is important in sustaining peace, security and stability. In accordance with the *ASEAN Charter*, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) was inaugurated in October 2009 and vested with the mandate of an ASEAN human rights body.

AICHR has since evolved as a key forum on human rights, playing a major role in shaping human rights agenda and advocacy in the region. It identifies emerging rights issues and advocates for rights-based policy responses and remedies, including but not limited to preventing human trafficking and addressing the needs of victims of trafficking in persons, and preventing and countering the rise of radicalisation and violence extremism, from a human-rights based approach.

Given the COVID-19 pandemic, AICHR has raised the matters of challenges about protecting the rights of vulnerable groups and recommended rights-based measures to mitigate the pandemic's negative impact. Respect for human rights, including economic, social, cultural, and civil and political rights has proven to be vital to the success of the public health response and recovery from the pandemic. AICHR has contributed to regional dialogues on the economic and societal challenges brought about by the pandemic, measures for integration and contribution to the Implementation Plan of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) as well as initiatives to the future implementation of the Strategic and Holistic Initiative to Link ASEAN Response to Emergencies and Disasters (ASEAN SHIELD), a key deliverable of Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN chairmanship. Forging ahead with the *Five-Year Work Plan of AICHR 2021-2025*, AICHR pledges to retain its public outreach and increase impact in mainstreaming human rights, and thus reinforcing a culture of respect for human rights in ASEAN.

### I. SECURITY CONCERNS IN THE REGION AND NATIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY POLICIES

#### a. Security concerns common to the ASEAN Community

##### **Traditional security concerns**

Despite longstanding territorial disputes and competing overlapping maritime claims in the region, ASEAN has persisted in its efforts towards peaceful settlements of territorial and jurisdictional disputes. In the defence sector especially, 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. 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.

##### **Non-traditional security concerns**

There is a growing concern on the global reach of terrorism and the spread of violent and extremist influence in societies. Since the defeat of the self-proclaimed Islamic State, the movement and returning of fighters to their countries of origin, the spread of its radical ideological narratives and influence on terrorist-linked groups and sympathisers have made Southeast Asia vulnerable. This trend can be seen with the Catholic church bombing in Makassar followed by gunfire exchange in a police headquarters in Jakarta in March 2021, as well as the arrests of radicals over the years within the region. These events are grave reminders that the region's peace and stability is affected by terrorist groups and individuals. Moreover, the trends of attacks by groups or individuals such as those witnessed through the New Delhi riots in 2020, cloaked under the guise of religion and nationalism, reaffirms the importance of deeper understanding and closer cooperation among security law enforcement agencies, as well as with the community as a whole.

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

Daulah (JAD) in Indonesia and Al-Shabaab in Somalia. These groups actively leverage the pandemic as divine intervention to continue inflicting violence and expand their influence.

It must also be recognised that there is a nexus between terrorism and transnational crime, which undermine public safety and security. The advent of technologies and accessibility of the Internet, which has been heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic, has further widened the security implications of terrorism and transnational crime. These developments also point the need for more cross-cutting cooperation, including in addressing cyber threats and crimes. The IS utilised the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to reinforce anti-China and anti-Shiite sentiments by declaring the pandemic as 'divine retribution' for alleged crimes against Muslims. This had further intensified IS operations in Indonesia and Philippines. The use of the cyber domain for terrorism can also be observed through propaganda promotion by right-wing nationalist and extremist groups, as well as violence justification against Muslims and Asians in the United States.

Natural disasters have been a recurrent challenge in the Asia Pacific region, as it continues to experiences disasters from floods, severe storms, droughts, tsunamis to earthquake in the region. Although the focus has been directed to fighting COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of natural disasters added pressure to the region's population and stretched the already limited Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) resources. Fortunately, the region has been increasing its preparedness over the last few years as it strengthens its coordination in HADR effort. Under the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), ASEAN aims to build on the progress and develop a region of resilient nations that are coordinated in mitigating the effects of disasters in pursuit of safer communities and sustainable development and increasingly through cross-pillar cooperation.

The fluidity of existing security issues and the diversity of the region reiterate the need for multilateral approaches to address challenges affecting the region and promote synergy with other relevant sectoral bodies on managing the complex disaster landscape. The momentum of cooperation between and among countries in various multilateral mechanisms and levels of participation have continued to endure in the region. This has been reflected by efforts and initiatives in countering terrorism and maritime security in ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), ADMM-Plus and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as well as the implementation of the legally binding regional agreement, ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) and the latest work program 2021-2025 which will further enhance regional cooperation and coordination in disaster management and response. The impacts of non-traditional and traditional security challenges alike also

underscore the need for a holistic approach with wider involvement from all sectors and levels of society.

## **b. Individual National Defence Policies**

### **The United Nations Register on Conventional Arms (U.N.R.O.C.A.)**

As outlined in the Defence White Paper, the Royal Brunei Armed Forces are continuously engaged in their military modernisation programme, which broadly includes working towards upgrading and enhancing the armed forces' capabilities such as Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), mobility and firepower.

### **Military Expenditure**

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

## **c. National contributions to promoting regional security**

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

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

### **Trust and confidence through Practical Cooperation in ADMM**

The ADMM and ADMM-Plus have provided added value to strengthen Brunei Darussalam's defence and military capacity and capability development. With a view to contributing to regional security, Brunei Darussalam as the Chairman of ADMM in 2021 has further progressed defence cooperation. On 15 and 16 June 2021, the 15<sup>th</sup> ADMM and 8<sup>th</sup> ADMM-Plus respectively convened virtually. During the 15<sup>th</sup> ADMM, several Concept Papers championed by Brunei Darussalam were adopted, revised and noted accordingly. Firstly, the Concept Paper on Enhancing the Usage of ASEAN Direct

Communications Infrastructure as Defence Communication Architecture in the ADMM Process, which intends to include multilateral capability for the second phase and expanding its use-case to include ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting Leaders and the Working Group. Secondly, the revision of the Concept Paper on ASEAN Defence Interaction Programme, which aspires for sustainability of the programme. Thirdly, the Stocktaking Paper on the ADMM and ADMM-Plus, which serves as a significant review of progress of both ADMM and ADMM-Plus, as well as laying the foundation for a Strategy Paper of Future of ADMM, to be adopted by 2022.

In recognising the importance of developing an ASEAN early warning system to prevent the occurrence and/or escalation of conflicts, the 8<sup>th</sup> ADMM has adopted the concept of establishing and maintaining the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI), introduced by Brunei Darussalam. ADI sets to provide a permanent, rapid, reliable and confidential means by which any two ASEAN Defence Ministers may communicate with each other at mutual decisions in handling incidences or emergency situations. This communication platform aims to prevent or defuse misunderstandings and reduce miscalculations, therefore, preventing escalation and promoting quick response cooperation in emergency situations.

The ADI is launched in phases. The first phase, which is in the form of an IP-based mechanism, was launched on 24 October 2017, after the ADMM-Plus Meeting in Clark, Pampanga, the Philippines. The ASEAN Member States conducted an ADI Exercise on 21 February 2019 that tested the functionality of the system successfully and operationalised the SOP itself.

In addition to this, the ASEAN Defence Ministers adopted the Concept Paper on Expansion of the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI) to Plus Countries at the 13<sup>th</sup> ADMM in July 2019, held in Bangkok, Thailand and the Concept Paper on Enhancing the Usage of ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure as Defence Communication Architecture in the ADMM Process at the 15<sup>th</sup> ADMM in June 2021. More recently, Brunei Darussalam and the Republic of Philippines co-chaired the 6<sup>th</sup> Ad-Hoc Working Group Meeting on ADI in July 2021. The meeting deliberated on the way forward for ADI Phase 2 and the current status for Phase 1.

Additionally, Brunei Darussalam views interactions among ASEAN defence and military officials as an important aspect to ensure enduring relations among ASEAN's future leaders. The essence of the ASEAN Defence Interaction Programme (ADIP) is in building trust and understanding and develop mutual respect and instill the habit of mutual cooperation. Thus far, Brunei Darussalam initiated one activity under the programme in 2014, with Malaysia conducting the second iteration in January 2018.

ADMM Logistics Support Framework (LSF) was another initiative introduced, intending to strengthen logistics cooperation that will enable the military forces in the ASEAN region to address non-traditional security challenges, including but not limited to HADR, Search and Rescue (SAR), Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) and anti-piracy in a coordinated and effective manner. Upon the validation and verification of LSF in a Table-Top Exercise (TTX) by all ASEAN Member States in January 2016, the LSF was endorsed by the ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting (ADSOM). In moving forward, Brunei Darussalam looks to the possibility of integrating the framework into the works of ASEAN Militaries Ready Group on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (AMRG) and utilizing the framework in the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group (EWG) on Military Medicine Project-Based Community Medical Deployment (PCMD) under the co-chairmanship of Brunei Darussalam and Australia for cycle 2021 - 2024.

Within the ADMM-Plus, the progress in the seven ADMM-Plus EWGs in the areas of HADR, Military Medicine, Maritime Security, Counter-Terrorism, Peacekeeping Operations, Humanitarian Mine Action, and Cyber Security had brought forward the EWGs to the next cycle beginning in 2021. Brunei Darussalam is fully committed and supportive of ADMM-Plus endeavours and has worked alongside the Plus partners. This includes hosting the inaugural multinational ADMM-Plus HADR and Military Medicine Exercise in 2013 together with the respective EWGs co-chairs which were China and Viet Nam, as well as Singapore and Japan. Brunei Darussalam also co-chaired the EWG on Maritime Security with New Zealand from 2014 to 2017, culminating into the ADMM-Plus Maritime Security and Counter-Terrorism Exercise that took place in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore, and a Maritime Security Field Training Exercise in New Zealand. For the 2021-2024 EWG, Brunei Darussalam is working closely with Australia as co-chairs of the EWG on Military Medicine.

The work of the EWGs has fostered understanding among ADMM-Plus countries, and promoted capacity building and interoperability among the militaries of the ADMM-Plus. More importantly, these have contributed towards deeper trust and strengthened military-to-military relations among the armed forces of the ADMM-Plus. Practical cooperation in the EWGs contributes to ASEAN's collective response in addressing non-traditional security challenges, all of which are encapsulated in the purpose and intent of the EWGs. This is especially evident in the EWG on HADR, where increased integration of HADR in the broader ASEAN disaster response mechanism fuelled efforts for closer coordination between military and civilian responders.

Brunei Darussalam also continues to support and participate in the various initiatives related to regional defence cooperation, notably with continued liaison presence at the Information Fusion Centre (IFC) and by extension, the Changi Regional Humanitarian

Assistance and Disaster Relief Coordination Centre (RHCC), as well as its membership in the ASEAN Centre for Military Medicine (ACMM).

### **Cooperative deployments in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations**

Brunei Darussalam also remains committed to participating in peacekeeping and peace monitoring operations. Since 2008, the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) has been involved in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), in which 345 RBAF personnel have been deployed to UNIFIL, embedded under the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF). Throughout the thirteen years of RBAF's involvement in the UNIFIL, the RBAF has increased the number of personnel in its contingent from five (5) in 2008 to thirty (30) in 2021. RBAF has also made progress in the agenda of women in peace and security, where six (6) female members of the RBAF have served in various peacekeeping operations.

The International Monitoring Team (IMT) had begun its efforts in peace monitoring on the southern island of Mindanao, the Philippines since 2004. For the 2020-2021 peacekeeping mission, the 16<sup>th</sup> contingent comprises eight (8) RBAF personnel and one (1) personnel from the Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF). Brunei Darussalam also contributes to the Mindanao peace process through its membership in the Independent Decommissioning Board (IDB) alongside Turkey and Norway since 2014, in which there are four (4) RBAF officers who are currently serving in the IDB Verification, Monitoring and Assistance Team (IDB VMAT) in Mindanao. The continued commitment in the IMT reflects the goodwill and confidence of Brunei Darussalam's contributions, albeit modest, in regional security.

Brunei Darussalam actively supports HADR efforts around the region. The RBAF provided assistance during the aftermath of the tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia in 2004 and Typhoon Haiyan in Tacloban, the Philippines in 2013. RBAF also delivered assistance to Nepal, where it sent one (1) RBAF medical officer, four (4) RBAF paramedics and three (3) Gurkha Reserve Unit personnel to join the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) personnel under RHCC for "Operation Kukri" in support of the HADR efforts after an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8 struck in April 2015.

These deployments have deepened interactions and engagements of RBAF with its ASEAN and other foreign counterparts and have contributed to Brunei Darussalam's defence diplomacy. At the same time, these efforts showcase the RBAF image as a professional force that is able to contribute meaningfully, alongside Brunei Darussalam's support towards regional and global efforts to bring about peace and stability.

## **Support towards non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control and disarmament**

Brunei Darussalam supports disarmament efforts and the non-proliferation of all types of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) at both the regional and global level. Brunei Darussalam signed the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in 1995 and is a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Brunei Darussalam is also party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention (BWC), and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). In 2018, Brunei Darussalam also signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

## **II. FUTURE TRENDS ON REGIONAL SECURITY**

### **Managing dynamic major power relations**

In an increasingly integrated, interconnected and interdependent world, countries around the region are not free from global risks in political, security, economic, and technological aspects. Today's regional security environment has become more unpredictable as countries' economic and security interests become more intertwined. The onset of weakening economic growth due to geopolitical tensions and COVID-19 has further enveloped an environment of uncertainty. The advent of technology has elevated globalisation and interconnectivity between countries, leading to the disappearance of borders and any physical limitation.

Major Powers have been actively engaging the region - proving the importance of the region in the geo-political scenes specifically as it is located in the nexus of major power countries. Over the years, ASEAN has been known as a hub of dialogue and consultations, to organise engagements and enhance cooperation despite disputes and tensions, notably through ADMM-Plus, ARF, and East Asia Summit (EAS) with ASEAN Centrality at the helm. To this end, major powers have continued to work closely through ASEAN frameworks and with Southeast Asian countries respectively. While these are positive indications of ASEAN's important role in the region, the increasing competing institutional concepts and strategies may pose challenges to ASEAN-led arrangements and ASEAN's own management of major power dynamics.

ASEAN is widely known to provide a neutral platform for large and small countries to promote their interests in a developing regional architecture. With this in mind, ASEAN needs to continuously work together to advance the ASEAN Community in political-security, economic, and socio-cultural pillars. More importantly, principles in the ASEAN Charter needs to be reinforced by ASEAN and ASEAN-related regional institutions.

## **Environmental concerns and the role of security**

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stressed that the global population are entering a period known as 'climate emergency' and that climate change is real and human activities are the main cause. The concentration of greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere is directly linked to the average global temperature on Earth. These environmental threats, which include extreme weather events, failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation, and major natural disasters, are forecasted as among the top three biggest global risks and top five threats that would have great impacts.

Undoubtedly, climate change will further exacerbate climate-induced events such as flood and droughts which have already affected Southeast Asia, in that disasters have become more frequent and severe. The trend of rising global sea levels will likely continue and expose low-lying communities to coastal inundation. Coupled with increased population densities and urbanization, would result in losses of varying magnitudes, both for economic growth and peoples' livelihood.

As a region that comprises developing countries that depend on the sea for sustainable economic growth and sustenance, climate change would, directly and indirectly, affect countries in the region. Fluctuating global temperatures will affect water temperatures and subsequently, fish breeding grounds. Unsustainable and unregulated fishing aggravate the availability of resources, contributing towards a growing trend of depleted fish stocks. According to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation, 90 percent of the world's fisheries are fully exploited or facing collapse. Reports have also indicated that there may not be enough fish to catch by 2048. This has consequently pushed fishermen to venture further into areas beyond their countries. For Southeast Asian countries that are dependent on seafood for sustenance and income, the impact of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture could heighten Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing and lower the threshold for a likely armed response, as countries defend their sovereignty over economic resources in their maritime domain.

While risk management and preventive measures are key in addressing the impacts of extreme weather and natural disasters, as well as in IUU fishing, the role of security agencies, including defence, in supporting relevant sectors or agencies remains important. The upward likelihood trends of these challenges require continuous improvements in regional cooperation and collaboration, whilst also building resilience in local communities.

## **Emerging and disruptive technologies implications to security**

Though the rapid technological advancements have brought endless opportunities to countries, regionally and globally, there have been mounting concerns that these new technologies may also pose serious challenges. New threats and vulnerabilities related to the emerging technologies brought wider security implications in the region.

As the world faces the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic, the acceleration of technological developments such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), 5G, cloud computing, robotics and big data analytics, becomes more apparent. While countries in Southeast Asia progressively embrace and integrate these technologies into their everyday lives, some countries are still exploring these emerging technologies, and ultimately exploring their position with the advent of the fourth industrial revolution. This can be seen from the region's highest share of global growth in key technology metrics such as R&D spending, tech-company revenues, venture-capital funding and the increased number of Asian governments' partnership with the private sectors in technological development.

Among the challenges, Southeast Asian countries are no stranger to cyber-attacks, with increasing data breaches and the spread of fake news through social media, thereby influencing political processes/outcomes in a country. These internal disruptions affect state relations and heighten risks to international security in the long term. All these make the prospects to regulate and control complex technological changes challenging. According to the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI), which ranks nations based on their legal, technical, and organisational institutions, educational and research capabilities, as well as cooperation in information-sharing, a massive gap still persists among ASEAN Member States.

### **I. SECURITY CONCERNS IN THE REGION AND NATIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY POLICIES**

#### **a. Cambodia's Perspective of ASEAN**

The maintenance of ASEAN Centrality in ASEAN centric regional institutions is important for peace and stability in the region. ASEAN, as the driver of the ASEAN centric institutions, has contributed to regional peace and stability and economic growth. However, ASEAN is concerned at expansion of the of East Asia Summit (EAS) that could affect ASEAN Centrality and in focusing on political and security issues. The increasing strategic competition and rivalry between major powers raised tension in the region that could affect peace and stability. ASEAN Centrality in the emerging multilateral and multilayered regional security institutions is the key to managing the power rivalry among the big countries, so the peace and stability can be assured.

The region today is confronted with many non-traditional issues such as terrorism, transnational organized crime, epidemics, natural disaster and also traditional security such as sea and land terrorism dispute, nuclear and conventional arms proliferation and also political and legal disputes. These impacts have all become more prominent and are getting more serious since our region are very much interdependent on each other. As interdependence increase in the Asia-Pacific, countries are addressing security challenges by enhancing multilateral cooperation and engaging in specific collaborative efforts to solve issues, especially in the both non-traditional and traditional security fields.

#### **b. Individual National Security and Defense Policies**

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

The ultimate goal of the DWP2021 is to reshape Cambodia's national defense objectives towards 2030 through a carefully defined strategy of safeguarding peace, defending national interests, and strengthening international cooperation and engagement. Cambodia's defense policy intends to promote a stable, secure, and rules-based order approach by pivoting on five (5) key defense priorities which consist of border defense; internal security; military reform; international cooperation and engagement; and military professionalism.

Border defense is the top defense priority for Cambodia. This consideration is based on several factors. Overlapping maritime territorial claims are unlikely to be resolved in the near future and Cambodia must remain subtle in avoiding any kind of violent tensions. Cross-border illegal activities are of a concern including narcotics, arms and human trafficking, and other trans-boundary crimes. In response to these challenges and threats, we believe that the effort of maintaining political and security dialogues through existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms is vital in guaranteeing peaceful, stable, and developed borders with our neighboring nations.

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

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

Over the next 10 years, the RCAF will undertake its reform process aiming at restructuring defense and military institutions, improving military personnel management and human resource capabilities, simplifying roles and responsibilities, and upgrading platforms

which will modernize land, sea, and air defense capabilities. As a result, this will see the RCAF increasing its continuous participation in exercises and activities within the ASEAN frameworks.

### **3. National contributions to promoting regional security**

#### **i. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)**

From the end of 2019 until now, COVID-19 has been a serious challenge affecting the societies in ASEAN and the world, such as politics, economy, stability, security, tourism, human rights and serious health issues.

The global unrest caused by the COVID-19 epidemic has put some ASEAN Member States in a state of emergency, others entirely shut down the country, and flights have been suspended or canceled worldwide, affecting seriously the business sector, tourism and the economy, while the big and small meetings in the world are held through video conferencing.

In response to this situation, all ASEAN Member States as well as the whole world have actively participated in the fight against the spread of COVID-19, in which for the issues in regard combatting against Covid-19, the Royal Government of Cambodia has:

- Collaborate on education and implementation accordance with World Health Organization standards.
- Cooperate with the governments having border with Cambodia in notifying, distributing information, organizing forces to prevent illegal border crossings, and conducting 14-day quarantine.
- Agreed to exchange goods by using trailers by changing the towing head at the border area.
- Take care to treat people who are COVID-19 positive and respect the ethnic traditions and customs of cremation for those who have died of COVID-19.
- Educate about social distancing, wear mask, wash the hands, avoid entering crowded rooms, closed rooms with no light in and out, and reduce the use of air conditioners.
- Greetings each other with Khmer salutation gestures. Where there is an outbreak of COVID-19, take infected people to cure, close the outbreak area, and quarantine those directly or indirectly contact with infected people.

COVID-19 has been affecting economic social activities such infection from night club and Drug use.

Additionally, other nontraditional threats such as natural disasters have also been increasingly prevalent to our global environment.

As far as natural disasters are concerned, relentless typhoons, hurricanes, landslides, and massive earthquakes in our region have increased in frequency at an alarming rate possibly due to the impact of climate change.

Furthermore, traditional threats such as drug trafficking, human smuggling, illicit arms trade, piracy, and other violent extremist movements have affected our daily lives and well-being as well.

Disasters such as these often outweigh the capabilities of our respective governments, and individual nation states to quickly deal with, respond, and assist.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has been continuing working endlessly with ASEAN Member States, civil societies, national and international non-governmental organizations to establish and ratify new law concepts, procedures, guidelines, regulations, management.

In addition, the RCAF and the Royal Cambodian Gendarmerie (RCG) have been implementing, and participating through either bilateral or multilateral exercise activities on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations with ASEAN militaries as well as regional militaries in line with the ASEAN Charter, agreement, protocol and other existing mechanism; and is committed to support all defense cooperative activities conduct by the ASEAN militaries, regional militaries.

To further contribute to national and regional ASEAN security, the Royal Cambodian Government, the RCAF, and the RCG have carried out measures in disaster relief operations through the implementation of national legislation, and national policy; as well as through the establishment of National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM).

Additionally, the RCAF and the RCG will increase its participation in both bilateral and multilateral defense cooperative activities; particularly in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Operations (HADR).

Furthermore, the RCAF is anticipated to send its officers to participate in the 4<sup>th</sup> Japan-ASEAN HA/DR table-top exercise in February 2021.

These activities are the integral part in turning vision into reality through forming partnership and collaborative engagement.

Additionally, it improved multinational operational capabilities in HADR and HADR medical planning processes as a whole. Undoubtedly, disaster preparedness and readiness are the key element to the strategic blueprint for the ASEAN Community, and regional partners to hedge against this uncertainty as well as the key element to promote a successful outcome and turning vision into reality.

In summary, continued effort to strengthen relationship and closer cooperation while implementing more frequent pragmatic defense cooperative activities among the ASEAN militaries, and regional partners will, undoubtedly build trust, confidence, professionalism and partnership.

Militaries, and regional partners will possess the capabilities, skill sets, and intellectual knowledge to respond to these challenges while anticipating and preparing for those of tomorrow.

To succeed, we must harness and integrate all aspects of our capabilities, intellectual knowledge, and work closely with allies, friends, and partners in our ASEAN.

In conclusion, the promotion of defense cooperation and implementing more pragmatic defense cooperative activities among ASEAN Member States, and partner nations through either bilateral or multilateral exercises would undoubtedly enhance our military's tactical, operational, and strategic capability in which eventually helping to strengthen our nation security, regional security, and the world security as a whole.

## **ii. Maritime Security (MS)**

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

In response to maritime threats, the Royal Cambodian Government established the National Committee for Maritime Security (NCMS), which put into place overarching constitutional provisions, national strategy and vision for Maritime Security. NCMS is a national inter-agency mechanism responsible for leading two (2) primary missions: (1)

defending the country's maritime sovereignty and (2) managing cohesive maritime law enforcement for the Kingdom of Cambodia. Identifying the Maritime Security requires operations from all involved agencies of the government beyond defense. NCMS facilitates and provides cohesions for national cooperation strategically and tactically. NCMS has organized a large-scale biennial national training exercise named MOHAROU-EL since 2017, aimed at strengthening collaboration and inter-agencies skills. Furthermore, Cambodia has participated in almost all forms of maritime security fora including ARF, AMF, EAMF, ACGF, EAS, ADMM, ADMM-Plus, etc. Cambodia is still an active member of the Southeast Asia Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation (SEAMLEC) that was changed from Southeast Asia Maritime Law Enforcement Initiative (SEAMLEI).

The Royal Cambodian Navy (RCN) plays a pivotal role in defense 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 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 participations including intelligence, education, joint patrol, operations, logistics, visits of high-ranking officials and organizing interaction platforms such as ASEAN Multilateral Naval Exercise (AMNEX), ASEAN Navy Chiefs' Meeting (ANCM), ANCM-Staff Meeting, ASEAN Navy Young Officers' Interaction Program (ANYOI), Guidelines for Maritime Interaction, ASEAN Cadet Sail and International Liaison Officer (ILO) to be stationed at the Information Fusion Centre (IFC) with the aim of promoting mutual understanding, effective working in solidarity, enabling its navy to adapt and respond positively when dealing with unexpected circumstances. Moreover, the RCN has been actively participating in international activities including International Fleet Review (IFR), ASEAN-China Maritime Exercise (ACMEX), ASEAN-US Maritime Exercise (AUMX), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF), ASEAN Security Outlook (ASO) and other international activities. And the RCN will participate in new exercise ASEAN-Russia Maritime Exercise which is planned to conduct this year.

Cambodia has developed maritime security policy and has also joined a number of 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.

### **iii. Military Medicine (MM)**

Cambodia has participated in all the organized for in ADMM-Plus framework and also put commitment to work with ASEAN Member States and its partners as follows:

- Minimizing the transmission of infectious diseases and optimizing health quality also physical education to prevent and eradicate other infectious diseases such as Malaria, HIV/AIDS, H7N9, and Chikungunya, etc.
- Regardful to response and collaborate with ASEAN and ASEAN-Plus in term of disasters occur in the region of ASEAN or international
- Keep conducting the humanitarian action program to make the benefit for the troop and troop's family also the people in the region of ASEAN
- Enhancing the capacity building of human resource by continuing education in local and international training course, SMEE, Conference and Exercise
- Immediately rescuing and treatment to insure health stability and maintain the level of good health
- Base on the real situation and ability, we make effort to install modern medical equipment for quality improvement.

### **iv. Counter-Terrorism (CT)**

Although Terrorism is not the main regional focus during the present of the world-wide pandemic of COVID-19, it remains a threat to security and stability. The Kingdom of Cambodia took no short cut in improving and building fighting capability to prevent, deter, and combat against terrorism in order to ensure peace, stability, and good security cooperation in the region and throughout the region and the world.

The Kingdom of Cambodia has firmly supported international cooperation for better collaboration in communication and information sharing from relevant ministries and institutions for a rapid deterrence, prevention, response, and recovery of terrorist threats. Cambodia continues to closely monitor the current known potential link to terrorist activities, organize crime networks, and other illegal immigration activities. The RCAF continues to extend its engagement with key nations such as the People's Republic of China, the United States of America, the Commonwealth of Australia, and ASEAN Member States in effort to continue to improve and enhance Cambodia's counter terrorism capability.

The Kingdom of Cambodia continues to promote international and regional cooperation through intelligent sharing and problem solving while enhancing ASEAN defense against extremist group in the present and the future.

The RCAF continues to thrive through bilateral and multilateral engagements such as:

1. Developing various counter radicalization initiatives via specialized seminars and educational programs.
2. Enhancing Maritime security policies and measures via National Committee of Maritime Security and its maritime Counter-Terrorism component.
3. Implementing new measures between internal forces and international partners to improve and strengthen land and sea border security through close monitoring and tracking of extremist group and its resources.

#### **v. Peacekeeping Operation (PKO)**

Armed conflicts are changing rapidly Intra-state, rather than inter-state conflicts:

- Engaging a changing profile of armed groups using terrorist tactics, including targeting of peacekeepers
- Inter connected with organized crime
- Host to the unregulated spread of a new generation of weapons

Our peacekeepers have become targets. Peacekeepers often go where no one else is prepared to go, and they put their lives at risk every day. Not a single month passes without an attack on peacekeepers.

Political solutions are increasingly elusive. We are seeing many long-running conflicts that are difficult to end. With the closure of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), several missions are deployed in the face of weak political agreement, diminished consent and stalled peace processes with vague exit strategies.

Mandate have grown broad and complex. Peacekeeping missions have been given staggering tasks and wide-ranging responsibility. At the same time, regional partnerships, though critical, are often unable to deliver the necessary political impact.

Peacekeeping continues to face performance issues and continued need for:

- Well structured, equipped and trained force
- Participation of women in peacekeeping
- Accountability for perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse and other forms of misconduct

Restrictions on freedom of movement affect peacekeeping effectiveness:

- Prevents swift responses on the ground
- Hinders efforts to protect civilians
- Prevents investigation of human rights violations
- Undermine safety and security by blocking needed supplies and equipment

- Damages and destroys UN property

There is a need for strong commitment by all actors in support of peacekeeping efforts, from political to operational issues, to achieve peacekeeping excellence.

#### **vi. Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA)**

In the ASEAN Member States and in the region, Cambodia has been intending to lead in Humanitarian Mine Action by providing de-mining, EOD contingents to participating in the UN missions. At the same time, the Ministry of National Defense of Cambodia has been looking to expand and strengthen cooperation among ASEAN Members States as far as in the region and the world. In reality, the second cycle of ADMM-Plus EWG on PKO was co-chaired by Cambodia Center of Excellence in De-mining and the Republic of Korea in 2015 to establish a center of Excellence in De-mining that will receive funding from ADMM-Plus countries and ASEAN Member States in technical training and materials.

In the regional context, Cambodia has actively supported the establishment of ASEAN's Peacekeeping Center in sharing experience, best practice and lesson learnt with others. In 2016, Cambodia, the Republic of Korea, Viet Nam and India successfully conducted a combined Field Training Exercise on Peacekeeping Operations and Humanitarian Mine Action under ADMM- Plus framework. This exercise clearly defined as the first step to accomplish by combining the peacekeeping forces from the ADMM-Plus states in capacity building to support the United Nations Peacekeeping missions.

In 2017, Cambodia conducted an ASEAN Regional Mine Field Management course for UNPKO that was participated in class training from ASEAN Member States, Mongolia and China and local trainees from CMAA and NPMEC with financial and technical supports from the international instructors such as France and the United States.

In 2018, Cambodia conducted a second training course on the ASEAN Regional Mine Field Management for UNPKO that was joined by ASEAN Member States, Mongolia, China and Colombia and local trainees from CMAA, UNDP, ICRC and NPMEC and a technical training support from France, the United States and China.

In 2019, Cambodia conducted a third training course on the Regional- ASEAN De-mining Technique Training of Trainer for UNPKO that contributed from ASEAN Member States, Mongolia, China, Republic of Korea and local trainees from CMAA, UNDP, ICRC and NPMEC with a technical training support from international instructors from France, the United States, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation.

## **vii. Cyber Security**

As the world has advanced at an astonishing pace of transformative technology developments, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is now an utmost essential part of daily life for everyone. As it has arguably contributed to growth and transparency for the country, it has inevitably brought with it numerous impacts and threats in terms of Cyber security. In the midst of 5G technology and Internet-of-Things (IoT) progressively transformed our entire network ecosystem, for countries lacking adequate cyber security measures it may arguably face-not just security threats to individual-but national security. Moreover, the coronavirus pandemic has also created new challenges as employees are encouraged to work from home across all sectors. As a consequence, changing workplace environment to digital platforms calls for a greater focus on cyber security.

Cambodia has fully embraced the fruits of the new cyber world in the last 5 years, despite decades of tragic history and catching up with rapid advancement of ICT. Expected to become an upper-middle-income country in 2030 (UNDP 2018) along with its remarkable development in technology, Cambodia has been facing high threats of cyber-attacks. In 2018, Cambodia has recorded the highest number of cyberattacks with more than 26 million attacks.

While the global technology landscape has evolved with the emergence of big data, cloud computing, Fintech, artificial intelligence, deep learning, virtual reality, augmented reality, and the IoT. However, while Cambodia may have been one of the slow adopters of these emerging technologies, it has placed the country under drastic vulnerability to cyberattacks. Cambodia has not yet had in place a solid protection mechanism or institution tackling national cybersecurity. Although, Cybercrime Law has been drafted since 2014, aiming to struggle against cyber related crimes including the spread of fake news. This case become prominent when the Facebook Page of Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen was hacked in February 2019 in an attempt to cause political and social turmoil. On that note, Social Media has been one of the phenomena as the way it revolutionized daily life habits of communication and interactions. With 9.7 million internet users and social media users, Cambodia has nearly 60% of its population actively online which also means these numbers are exposed to a lot of risk regarding security breach, data privacy and false information.

Indeed, Cambodian Military has yet to be impacted by the threats of cybersecurity as much due to its dated conventional military hardware and Command and Control (C2) system is not fully digitalized. Nonetheless, the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces has outlined its strategies for 2030 in the 2023 Defense White Paper in developing Cybersecurity Capabilities based on six (6) pillars, namely; cyber legal framework,

integrated whole-of-government approach structure, cyber technical development, capacity development, international cooperation, and national research and development center for cybersecurity.

ASEAN has taken cybersecurity issue extremely seriously and it has been more prominent than ever before amidst the coronavirus pandemic. The increase in complexity and the technology dependency during this pandemic have evoked ASEAN and other nations to act on tightening cybersecurity. Three (3) new initiatives and concept papers were being proposed by Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, and Singapore, respectively, at the ADSOM WG, held on 2-3 February 2021, namely; the enhancing usage of ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI) as Defense Communications Platform, the establishment of ASEAN Cyber Defense Network (ACDN) and the concept paper of ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Center of Excellence. These proposals have amplified the importance of cyber domain and how governments shall work together to deepen regional cooperation and collaboration, under the international law and United Nations Charter, in the realms of promoting an open, secure, stable, accessible, peaceful ICT environment.

### I. SECURITY CONCERNS IN THE REGION AND NATIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY POLICIES

#### a. Security concerns common to the ASEAN Community

##### **Traditional and non-traditional security concerns**

Southeast Asia region is the new center of gravity world economic growth. Some of the economic countries had grown significantly, while ASEAN's economy serves as the third fastest-growing major Indo-Pacific economy in the past decade, after China and India. As a critical hub for global trade, an estimated one-third of global shipping transits through the South China Sea. It also relies on the Strait of Malacca, which connects the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean with the Indian Ocean.

As a new growth center, Southeast Asia too is now at the center of global strategic competition. In six decades of global power have made the region as a promising economic powerhouse, this has been well exemplified by the intensity of major powers relations and partnership established in the region. With such enormous economic potential as well as the center of connectivity in two major seas and continents, Southeast Asia areas could subsequently trigger security challenges, both traditional and non-traditional threats. Southeast Asia's economic growth at large has implications for development of its own military power. From the top 20 world population, 9 countries are in Asia Pacific, and the most modern and largest armed forces are also present in Asia Pacific. This further strengthens the strategic position of the Southeast Asia nations itself.

Indonesia views that regional architecture security is accorded by a peaceful and stable maritime domain. Southeast Asian waters and its surrounding area should set ready to face off new challenges and opportunities resulting from geopolitical changes in the maritime environment given the fact that the waters are of vital importance to both world and region's economy, trade, and connectivity.

Indonesia also stresses the importance of regional resilience in keeping the peace and security of the region, including the health regional resilience. Regional resilience could once be realized from national resilience of each individual ASEAN Member States, while noting that a peaceful and stable region is essential to the ASEAN Community Building efforts.

The pandemic that currently ravages the world and the region started from the end of 2019 has also brought enormous impact to the political stability, regional security

challenges as well as the economic slowdown. Nonetheless, the COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped security landscape, including through exposing emerging threats such as the cyber threats, with a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable communities, pandemic also deepened the prevailing inequalities. It has exacerbated existing risks and revealed new challenges, including to peace and security.

Despite the pandemic, maritime environment is still being persistent geostrategic rivalry theater which increases the risks of the security challenges. The overlapping claims in the South China Sea area must also underscore the necessity for peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It is therefore crucial that all parties to refrain from activities that may escalate tensions, and to implement the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) fully and effectively.

Indonesia's position is clear that peace and stability in the South China Sea, even though Indonesia is not a claimant state in the territorial dispute in the area, should always be maintained. Indonesia appreciates the start of negotiation of the Single Draft Negotiating text of COC since early 2019 and successful resumption of the second reading in the mid-2021 which has resulted in provisional agreement on the Preamble section after delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Indonesia remains of the view that expediting the substantive and effective COC negotiation process is essential to achieving the main objective to govern the behavior of states in the region.

Indonesia would also like to highlight the non-proliferation and disarmament of weapon of mass destruction (WMD), in over the years, ASEAN remains steadfast in its efforts to attain a world free of nuclear weapons, including the through the importance of all Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) to sign the Protocol to the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon Free Zone treaty. Indonesia reaffirms its support for ASEAN to bridge differences and encourage the submission of the biennial SEANWF Resolution through UNGA to reaffirm ASEAN's commitment to engage the NWS. ASEAN should also carefully examine the looming threats of extra-regional military interventions and rivalries that could weaken ASEAN's neutrality, if the growing tensions continue to play out in the region,

The terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism remain a threat to international peace and security amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The internet for terrorist purposes become a permissive platform amid the pandemic, the misuse of internet significantly increases as it eases the way for terrorists' propaganda, recruitment, planning, preparation, and financing purposes to work out. One that remains our concerns in the region also comes from the illicit drug production and trafficking in the region, although pandemic has kept on going up in 2021, it did not affect such transnational crime take place in the form of

digital networks, such as the emergence of Dark Net markets, also known as crypto markets which provide largely anonymous platform for trading a range of illicit goods and services.

The issue of irregular movement of persons, including its connection with people smuggling and trafficking in persons in our region is also of great importance for Indonesia. The nexus of irregular movement of persons and transnational crimes requires our collective efforts to address the root causes and other contributory factors, whether at origin, during transit or destination. Indonesia becomes a transit country in irregular migration with accommodating nearly 300,000 migrants via land and sea. According to UNHCR, there are around 10,585 refugees dwelling in Indonesia that are officially registered by the organization as of July 2019. The majority of these migrants are from Afghanistan (56%), Somalia (10%), and Myanmar (5%). As of mid-2020, Southeast Asia was also a home to more than 290,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, mostly Rohingya from Myanmar. Indonesia hosted 13,515 people. In this regard, Indonesia upholds the principle of shared responsibility as well as a balanced approach between law enforcement and humanitarian response to tackle the challenges.

Both present traditional and non-traditional challenges exert effects on the ASEAN Community Building progress. Starting from geopolitical dynamics in the region, ASEAN must strengthen the regional security architecture based on the principle of ASEAN unity and Centrality, with ASEAN staying firmly in the driver's seat. With the regional cooperation combatting pandemic, Indonesia concurs that comprehensive recovery needs a robust regional cooperation. For this purpose, Indonesia is of the view that maintaining ASEAN unity and cohesiveness would be the main key to overcome these challenges and turn them into cooperation.

## **b. Individual National Defense Policies**

In 2021, Indonesia has enacted the main policy of national defense that particularly gives a focus on the COVID-19 pandemic measures and how the defense resources help the national efforts.

First, continue the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, through increasing defense capacity in the form of infrastructure and health services at the Ministry of Defense and TNI Hospitals. Second, the preparation of National Defense Human Resources through the establishment of the IDU Undergraduate Program. Third, strengthening the function of fostering defense resources and developing national logistics reserves. Fourth, continuing the development of the TNI's posture to fulfill basic strengths through modernization of defense equipment for land, sea, and air dimensions, as well as

personnel development by applying the policy principles of right sizing and proportional grows adjusted to the development of TNI units. Fifth, the formation of reserve components for the land, sea and air dimensions that are tailored to the needs of the dimensions to strengthen the main components. Sixth, strengthening defense and security cooperation, especially with ASEAN countries and the South Pacific region. Seventh, strengthening defense in strategic strait areas by strengthening the coastal missile defense system and coastal surveillance system. Eighth, the development of the national defense industry by increasing the promotion of cooperation and implementing counter-trade policies, local content, and offsets to improve industrial capabilities. Lastly, Ninth, the development of defense areas that rely on large islands independently, by preparing reserves of food, water, energy, and other national infrastructure facilities to create a defense logistics center that is spread throughout the Republic of Indonesia.

In achieving this policy, the budget allocation for defense expenditures in the fiscal year of 2021 is recorded at Rp. 137.2 trillion. The number increased 16.3% compared to last year which reached Rp. 118 trillion with total number of active personnel in national armed forces is 800,000.

### **c. National contributions to promoting regional security**

#### **Defense Cooperation**

Indonesia has actively contributed to the work of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus in promoting regional peace and security through dialogue and cooperation. Indonesia has played an active role in promoting peace and enhancing cooperation in the Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean region through ADMM and ADMM-Plus, including by initiating the Discussion Paper on ASEAN Outlook on the Indo Pacific (AOIP) from Defense Perspective which was welcomed by ASEAN Defense Ministers at the 15<sup>th</sup> ADMM on 15 June 2021.

During 2021, Indonesia has also actively participated in the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups via video conference, in all seven (7) areas of cooperation. Indonesia takes its role in promoting and enhancing defense cooperation in the field of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) by co-chairing the ADMM-Plus Experts Working Group (EWG) on HADR together with India for the period 2021 - 2024. Indonesia has successfully hosted the 16<sup>th</sup> ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR on 28-29 April 2021 via video conference, which was the first meeting during the co-chairmanship. The meeting is aimed to discuss the work plan of the fourth cycle of EWG on HADR and to exchange experiences of disaster relief during pandemic situation.

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

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

## **Counter Terrorism**

### *- AMMTC/SOMTC Mechanism*

Indonesia as the voluntary lead shepherd on counter-terrorism has initiated two (2) documents focused on addressing the issue of radicalisation and violent extremism, through a cross-sectoral and cross-pillar approach within the ASEAN context.

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

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

Countering Radicalisation and Violent Extremism; and (d) Partnership and Regional Cooperation.

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

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

To further implement the Bali Work Plan, Indonesia’s proposal to host the ASEAN – U.S. Regional Workshop on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE): Taking Stock of Ongoing and Emerging Threats and Trends as well as the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Partners Meeting as part of the Implementation of the Bali Work Plan had been endorsed by SOMTC on 9 October 2020 and postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bali Work Plan MTF Meeting will also be conducted back-to-back with those two activities.

On 10 June 2021, Indonesia has organized through video conference, the 17<sup>th</sup> SOMTC Working Group on Counter Terrorism. The Meeting discussed the progress and way forward of ASEAN on countering terrorism. The Meeting also discussed the challenging issues such as the misuse of internet for terrorism and the use of finance technology terrorism funding. The pandemic has prevented some projects/activities to be conducted as scheduled, nevertheless the country proponent keep consulting with their partner to realize those pending activities.

- *ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Mechanisms*

On a broader scope, through the ASEAN Regional Forum consisting of 27 participating states, including the EU, Indonesia has initiated two (2) documents focusing on addressing the issue of violent extremism, namely: The ARF Statement on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism, adopted at the 26<sup>th</sup> ARF held on 2 August 2019, in Bangkok, Thailand. This Statement is the first of its kind for ARF

leaders in addressing the threat of terrorism and violent extremism at the ARF; and the ARF Statement on the Treatment of Children Recruited by or Associated with Terrorist Groups, adopted at the 27<sup>th</sup> ARF held on 12 September 2020 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam. The statement can be used as a reference for other derivative ASEAN documents related to the treatment of children associated with terrorist groups.

- *International Context*

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

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

In this context, Indonesia sees it necessary to establish an international standard minimum rule on the issue of treatment of children associated with terrorist groups with the support of the international community. The rule should incorporate three (3) priority areas, namely:

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

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

The preparation of the RAN PE itself refers to the four (4) pillars of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (UNGCTS), one of which emphasizes efforts to solve root problems and prevention, as well as the UN Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism issued on 15 January 2016.

Furthermore, Indonesia also continues to take advantage of opportunities for cooperation under the framework of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (UNGCTS) through collaboration with the United Nations Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), Terrorism Prevention Branch-United Nation Office for Drugs and Crime (TPB-UNODC), and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (UNCTED).

Indonesia itself has signed and ratified eight (8) international conventions related to terrorism which are in line with Indonesia's national interests, as a form of Indonesia's commitment and consistency in efforts to combat global terrorism. In addition, outside the framework of the United Nations. Indonesia plays an active role in the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF), as the initiator and co-chairs of the Countering Violent Extremism Working Group (2019 – 2021) with Australia.

The said working group specifically discusses the issue of handling and overcoming violence and extremism in the community through various programs and initiatives.

### **Indonesia's Efforts at the National Level**

#### *- The adoption of the revised Anti-Terrorism Law*

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

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

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

Indonesia has adopted Presidential Regulation Number 7 of 2021 on the National Action Plan (NAP) to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism that Leads to Terrorism 2020 – 2024.

The NAP consists of three (3) pillars, namely: (1) prevention, including national preparedness, counter-radicalization, and deradicalization; (2) law enforcement, protection of witnesses and victims; strengthening national legislative framework; and (3) international partnership and cooperation.

The NAP consists of 130 Action Lines, mostly related to prevention efforts. The overall aim of the NAP is to secure the protection of citizens from violent extremism that leads to terrorism, by addressing the drivers of violent extremism, namely (1) conditions conducive

and structural context and; (2) radicalization process, the so-called “push and pull factors”. The NAP takes on the whole of government and society approach. The NAP will be implemented by around 48 relevant ministries and agencies, with the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs).

On 16 June 2021, the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism that Leads to Terrorism 2020-2024 was officially launched by the Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia. The NAP also includes measures to prevent and combat terrorist financing. The NAP complements the National Strategy to Prevent and Combat Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing. The measures are aimed at preventing and disrupting terrorist activities, such as through the postponement of transactions and freezing of assets without delay.

- *Initiatives of Soft Approach*

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

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

### ***Non- Proliferation, Disarmament, and Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy***

Indonesia views that multilateralism remains an effective modality in the process of disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons to achieve the goal of the NPT, namely a world without nuclear weapons.

Indonesia believes that we need to emphasize the importance of implementing the three (3) pillars of the NPT in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner so that the treaty can remain credible and relevant in responding to the trust deficit challenge between NWS and NNWS commitments.

Indonesia in its capacity as the Coordinator of the NAM Disarmament Working Group has made efforts to raise support and dialogue so that the 2020 NPT RevCon implementation can produce progressive outcomes for the sustainability of the treaty, namely:

- Implementation of Regional Dialogue and Consultation on NPT: Towards PrepCom 2017, in Jakarta, 2017; and
- Implementation of Regional Dialogue and Consultation on NPT: Towards PrepCom 2018, in Jakarta, 2018.

The progress of the implementation of the pillars of disarmament under the NPT should become a priority for state parties, particularly in relation to the implementation of Article VI. The disarmament pillar has stagnated as well as low trust and political will comes from the NWS. Therefore, there is an urgency of gradual constructive dialogue and negotiation by NWS to be held, including through bilateral and plurilateral fora in encouraging the process of implementing arms control and nuclear disarmament commitment.

The NWS dialogue, without exception, must discuss expanding the scope of nuclear weapons specifications and its supporting technology, equipped with a robust and transparent verification mechanism with the goal of general, complete, and irreversible disarmament. A security cooperation and dialogue as an effort to build confidence measures, increase trust and predictability to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in military doctrine.

On the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)*, 7 July 2017, the United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons Leading Towards Their Total Elimination was held in 2 (two) sessions, 27-31 March 2017 and 15 June-7 July 2017 in New York. Indonesia is one of the Vice Presidents of the Conference representing the Asia Pacific region. The meeting adopted the TPNW by voting with 122 countries in favor, 1 country against and 1 country abstaining. No nuclear weapons state / P5 was present at the TPNW conference and related pre-conference meetings.

The adoption of the TPNW is a follow-up to the process of discussing legal steps, provisions, and legal norms to achieve a world free from nuclear weapons, which has been outlined through a series of meetings under the UN General Assembly since 2015. The Indonesian Foreign Minister, representing the Indonesian Government, signed the treaty on 20 September 2017 on the sidelines of the 72<sup>nd</sup> United Nations General Assembly in New York, USA. Currently, the Government is preparing for the ratification of the treaty.

Since its adoption until 25 June 2019, there are 84 countries that have signed the TPNW and 46 of them have ratified it. In accordance with Article 15, the TPNW enters into force 90 days after the instrument of ratification of the 50 shall be submitted to the Secretary General of the United Nations as the depository of the Treaty.

Indonesia views that TPNW as a significant achievement in the global efforts to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Based on the same expectation, Indonesia became one of the first 50 countries to sign the treaty on 20 September 2017. TPNW is an international legal framework governing the prohibition, possession, development, production, transfer and acquisition of nuclear weapons.

State parties together with civil society groups to intensify concrete efforts to ensure that the TPNW can be applied (entry into force). Indonesia urges other UN member countries to become part of the TPNW as a form of commitment to creating a peaceful and stable global environment. Currently, Indonesia is in the process of ratifying the TPNW into law. There is also the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament (SI) which involves 16 countries, including Argentina, Canada, Finland, Ethiopia, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. This initiative was launched at the ministerial level meeting on 11 June 2019 which resulted in A Ministerial Declaration that outlines the challenges faced related to the issue of nuclear disarmament, as well as the efforts that can be made to advance the discussion of the issue ahead of the NPT RevCon 2020.

Indonesia was the only country from the Southeast Asian region invited to attend the meeting in Stockholm. SI meetings at the Ministerial and SOM levels have been held four (4) times, namely:

- Senior Officials Meeting Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament, Stockholm, Sweden, 27 – 28 November 2019, attended by the Ambassador of LBBP RI for Stockholm and representatives of the Center;

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Meeting of the Stockholm Initiative, Berlin, Germany, 25 February 2020 with the outcome of the Ministerial Declaration and Annex Stepping Stones Approach, followed by the Indonesian Embassy in Berlin; and
- Follow-up Video Call Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament and the NPT, 9 June 2020, represented by the Director General of KSM and accompanied by the Director of KIPS.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> Ministerial Meeting of the SI hybrid in Jordan, 6 January 2021.

In regional efforts to the disarmament and non-proliferation, Indonesia is of the view that ASEAN must continue to implement the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) (2018-2022) and further welcomes the efforts to strengthen ASEANTOM's institutional capacity have continued despite the challenges presented by the pandemic. The Five-Year ASEANTOM Work Plan 2021- 2025 was adopted at the Eighth Annual Meeting of the ASEANTOM in July 2019 via videoconference. Five (5) Technical Working Groups (TWGs) under the ASEANTOM to support nuclear capability development within ASEAN to respond to nuclear/radiological incidents will be established on the following areas: (i) emergency preparedness and response, (ii) radiation monitoring, (iii) hazard assessment and radiological dispersion modelling, (iv) radiological and nuclear security, and (v) public emergency communications.

While emphasizing the importance of the disarmament and non-proliferation, Indonesia also stresses that non-proliferation policies should not undermine the inalienable rights of States to acquire, have access to, import or export nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes.

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

Indonesia also participated in the Workshop on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage for ASEAN plus Three from 29 June to 1 July 2021 hosted by IAEA. The purpose of the event is to provide information on the international legal instruments on nuclear liability adopted under the auspices of the IAEA, with a focus on the 1997 Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. Additional purposes of the event are to advise on the development of implementing national legislation, and to provide a forum where

participants can exchange information on possible difficulties, concerns and issues that their countries may have with the international regime.

### ***Transnational Crime***

Transnational crime is a major threat to global security in Southeast Asia due to various factors, includes the geographical aspect. The ASEAN action plan in combating transnational crime 2016-2025 (Programme to Implement the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime), focuses on several types of transnational crime such as illicit drugs trafficking, human trafficking, piracy, arms smuggling, money laundering, terrorism, international economic crime, and cybercrime.

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

Based on the UNODC report "Transnational Organized Crime in Southeast Asia: Evolution, Growth and Impact" in 2019, the Southeast Asia region is considered vulnerable to transnational crime. Southeast Asia is surrounded by other regions such as East Asia, South Asia and Oceania which are also targets of transnational crime. The Southeast Asian region plays an important role in the illegal global trade in drugs, people, wildlife, timber, counterfeit goods and drugs as origin, transit and destination locations.

In addition to traditional routes by land, transnational crime by sea is also predicted to increase given the large sea area and limited resources that oversee the sea. For this reason, it is necessary to exchange information and cooperation among ASEAN Member States in preventing and enforcing the law against transnational crimes in the region.

#### ***- Illicit Drugs Trafficking***

Indonesia is committed to realize the Drug Free ASEAN vision. Under Indonesia's chairmanship in ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD) in 2020, Indonesia underlined the importance of integrated efforts from ASEAN Member States that encompasses the laws and regulations, law enforcement that includes demand and supply reduction, community engagement, and treatment and rehabilitation.

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

Indonesia has enacted Presidential Decree No. 2/2020 concerning the National Action Plan of Prevention and Combatting the Illicit Drugs Trafficking and its Precursors (*Rencana Aksi Nasional Pencegahan dan Pemberantasan Penyalahgunaan dan*

*Peredaran Gelap Narkotika dan Prekursor Narkotika (P4GN)*). It is reported that from June 2020, there was 20,327 narcotics cases with 26,629 perpetrators.

Some key legal instruments that Indonesia applied in combatting and controlling the illicit drugs trafficking, namely:

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

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

In ASOD, under Indonesia's chairmanship in 2020, several key milestones have been reached, including the adoption of TOR ASOD as well as the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016-2025.

Indonesia remains committed in the fight against drugs despite there is new development from the 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) on 2 December 2020 regarding the reclassification of certain types of illicit drugs to less restrictive schedules under the international drug conventions. To this end, Indonesia remains committed for zero-tolerance against narcotics abuse, especially cannabis to achieve a drug-free ASEAN.

During the 64<sup>th</sup> CND meeting on 12-16 April 2021, Indonesia's BNN has submitted a national statement. The meeting succeeded in adopting four (4) resolutions in which Indonesia co-sponsored two (2) resolutions, namely: Promoting alternative development as a development-oriented drug control strategy, including in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its Consequences; and Improving data collection on, and responses to, harmful effects of non-medical use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, or new psychoactive substances.

Indonesia encourages the availability and access of precursors for medical and scientific purposes while preventing the diversion of the use of precursors for illegal purposes, including through collaboration with other countries through exchange of data on the needs of precursors and illegal channels used in the manufacture of illegal drugs. Currently, Indonesia is also nominating as a member of the CND for the period 2024-2027, the election of which will be conducted through ECOSOC in 2023.

- *Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUUF)*

Maritime area in Indonesia has to cope with various security challenges. Indonesia's maritime and fisheries should put up some issues on how to curb the escalating practices of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (IUUF). Indonesia has 3 million square kilometers Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ) which put Indonesia on the 7<sup>th</sup> rank with the largest EEZ in the world as from the total of 3.25 million square kilometers of Indonesian water. This condition has made IUUF criminals recurring at the sea of Indonesia's territory. Given the fact that the IUUF practice has made the world suffer from USD 10 to 23.5 billion in losses annually and the COVID-19 pandemic, the amount of losses even increased up to USD 15.5-36.4 billion. For Indonesia, IUUF practice has led to USD 4 billion state losses annually.

The theft of fishery resources (IUU fishing) in Southeast Asia, especially in the South China Sea needs special attention. IUU fishing in Southeast Asia is carried out by organized groups and sometimes gets escorted by state authorities. This not only has a negative impact on the economic, social, environmental and law enforcement aspects, but can also lead to conflicts between state authorities. With the increasing human population and limited fisheries resources, competition for fishery resources is predicted to occur more frequently. IUU fishing needs to be addressed through regional mechanisms by prioritizing prevention and law enforcement. Indonesia also continues to encourage the mainstreaming of IUU fishing as a transnational crime so that there is harmonization of regulations and international cooperation that can reduce IUU fishing.

In 2019, the Indonesian Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) issued a study on Human Trafficking in the Fishing Industries. Based on this research, in the period 2010-2019 there were 383 Indonesian citizens who became victims of TIP in the fishing industry, and experienced various forms of exploitation such as forced labor, sexual violence, and physical violence.

Until now, the mainstreaming of fisheries crime as transnational crime is still hampered by the view that fisheries crime is solely a matter of fisheries management or administration so that it is regulated under the framework of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs).

At the 14<sup>th</sup> Crime Congress meeting in Kyoto, 7-12 March 2021, the Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs as Chair of the Indonesian delegation once again raised the importance of special attention to IUUF, especially in relation to transnational organized crime.

Indonesia consistently strives for fisheries crime to be included in the category of transnational crime through various multilateral forums, particularly under the framework of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and ASEAN cooperation.

Indonesia views that the problem of fisheries crime is not only seen from the context of fisheries management which only has administrative implications, but also has aspects of criminal law enforcement, with the involvement of criminal groups. It is therefore important to underscore that ASEAN also need to encourage cooperation in the exchange of information, cooperation between law enforcers, and capacity building in overcoming fisheries crime.

- *Trafficking in Person and People Smuggling*

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

Based on data from the National Police Criminal Investigation Unit in 2015-2019, that the modus operandi that was widely revealed was Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs) there were reported 297 (53.61%) cases; Indonesian Migrant Workers (TKI) there are 222 (40.07%) cases; Domestic Workers (PRT) 23 (4.15%) cases; there were 7 (1.26%) cases of selling children; There were 4 (0.72%) cases of the crew of the ship (ABK); and organs in 1 (0.18%) cases.

While Indonesia has ratified *ASEAN Convention on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* through The Act No. 12/2017, the ratification equips overall efforts to combat the TIPs in Indonesia. The advantages of ACTIP are: ACTIP is the result of a common understanding that has succeeded in accommodating the different interests of ASEAN Member States. To add, the UN Protocol on TIP is used as the minimum threshold for the preparation of ACTIP, so that in the end, ACTIP is beyond the protocol which gives added values for the enforcement of ACTIP. Protection and assistance to victims is carried out by upholding human rights, namely based on the principle of non-discrimination. This means regardless of ethnic background, religion, race.

Provisions for protection and assistance for TIP victims in ACTIP also introduces the concept of support and care. This concept can be seen clearly in Article 14 paragraph (14) of ACTIP which in principle emphasizes the obligation of the state party that protection must be comprehensive and not limited to formal legalism alone.

With the ratification of ACTIP, Indonesia does not need to form a new institution because Indonesia already has a Task Force for Handling the Crime of Trafficking in Persons put in place. The law is expected to increase the effectiveness of the prevention and eradication of the crime of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, as well as to provide protection and assistance to victims of the crime of trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

Indonesia had also conducted national consultation on 2019, in regard to the proposal on Strengthening the Implementation of the ACTIP through the Establishment of a System of National ACTIP Representatives to solicit views on the possible ACTIP monitoring and reporting mechanism.

As mentioned above, Indonesia has a National Task Force to Implement the National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Trafficking in Women and Children. The Task Force members include: State Ministry of Women Empowerment (MWE), Coordinating Ministry for People's Welfare (CMPW), Department of Social Affairs (DSA), Department of Manpower and Transmigration (DMT), Directorate General of Immigration (DGIM), Indonesian National Police (INP), Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to the National Plan of Action, the Task Force is responsible for coordinating data collection efforts. Since 2002, the Task Force has compiled annual reports which include some data on trafficking in persons gathered by members of the Task Force. In April 2021, Indonesia has made significant progress through the Presidential Regulation Number 22 of 2021 on the amendment of previous Presidential Regulation regarding the Task Force for Preventing and Combatting Trafficking in Persons. The amendment includes among others strengthening the related agencies with 9 new roles.

- *Cybercrime and Cybersecurity*

ASEAN has agreed on the TOR for the establishment of the ASEAN Cyber Coordinating Committee (ASEAN Cyber CC) as a single mechanism to discuss the cyber security issues in ASEAN. The first ASEAN Cyber CC Meeting was held in November 2020.

In addition to endorsing the 11 recommendations for voluntary and non-binding norms according to the 2015 GGE report, the ASEAN Cyber CC also aims to increase capacity in implementing the 11 recommendations, developing intra-ASEAN CBMs and capacity building.

At the ARF Inter-sessional Meeting on ICT Security (ARF-ISM ICT) in 2021, it was agreed that Indonesia together with South Korea, Australia, and Russia would become Co-Chairs for the period 2021-2024. In this regard, Indonesia has submitted an initiative to hold a Workshop on Implementing Norms in Cyberspace with an indication of implementation in August 2021, after endorsement at the ARF-SOM and AMM levels. The workshop aims to see the country's implementation of the 11 2015 UNGGE norms as well as a place to share experiences, best practices, and challenges between countries.

- *Maritime Security*

In the White Book of Indonesian Maritime Ocean Policy, Indonesia identifies seven (7) pillars of such cooperation, namely (1) Management of Marine Resources and Development of Human Resources; (2) Defense, Security, Law Enforcement and Safety at Sea; (3) Ocean Governance and Institutions; (4) Economic and Infrastructure of the Marine Sector and of Prosperity Enhancement; (5) Management of the Ocean Space and Protection of Marine Environment; (6) Maritime Culture; and (7) Maritime Diplomacy.

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

Indonesia strongly upholds law enforcement policies at sea to maintain the territorial integrity and protect Indonesia's marine area from threats, obstacles and disturbances. In doing this, maritime law enforcement in Indonesia is carried out by several agencies based on the division of maritime zones. For internal waters, territorial sea and archipelagic waters, law enforcement is carried out by Pol Air, BNN, DJBC and KPLP. To the extent of EEZ, law enforcement was carried out by the Navy, Bakamla and KKP. Lastly, the Indonesian Navy has primary responsibility in the EEZ.

With the operation of Indonesia Maritime Information Centre that officially launched in the 2020, had given a daily update on maritime situation in Indonesia. According to the IMIC biweekly report for the July 2021 period, there are several points on maritime events in Indonesian waters, with total of 52 incidents were reported consisting of maritime accidents, contraband smugglings, natural disasters, marine pollution, petty theft, drug trafficking and other. The most common incidents were maritime accidents with a total of 30 cases.

Indonesia has always encouraged cooperation related to maritime security in various international forums. Several collaborations with UNODC related to maritime security

include: the 10<sup>th</sup> Maritime Law Enforcement Dialogue (MLED) held on 21-22 July 2021 and the National Roundtable Discussion and Tabletop Exercise on Protecting Submarine Data Cables in Indonesia, 7 April 2021 and Joint VBSS (Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure) Training. At the national level, in following-up the resolution on the Protection of the Marine Environment from land-based activities, Indonesia had established Regional Capacity Center for Clean Seas (RC3S). During the workshop of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the AMF with the theme “An ASEAN’s Cohesive and Responsive Approach to Maritime Cooperation in December 2020, Indonesia gave a brief presentation on the successful submission of Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) in Sunda and Lombok Strait to the International Maritime Organization (IMO). This practice is beneficial in managing the ship traffic in order to improve the shipping safety in the two straits. Indonesia is now ready for the implementation of TSS, Indonesia intensifies the law enforcement patrol exercises in the field of traffic safety in the Sunda Strait and Lombok Strait TSS, including through Table Top Exercise.

In ASEAN Maritime Forum and Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum, Indonesia keeps encouraging to include the transnational crime at sea, including the irregular movement of person that links to the trafficking in person and people smuggling. In the maintenance of the stability in South China Sea, Indonesia reaffirms its support to promote the conducive environment in South China Sea through existing ASEAN mechanisms, such as the hotline communications among senior officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of ASEAN Member States and China, Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea in the South China Sea, as well as the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI) in the ADMM Process.

In ARF, Indonesia will be the Co-Chair for the period 2021 – 2022 on ARF ISM on Maritime Security together with Australia and South Korea. Indonesia and Australia will also host *ARF Workshop on Law of the Sea and Fisheries* this year.

## **I. SECURITY CONCERNS IN THE REGION AND NATIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY POLICIES**

### **a. Security concerns common to the ASEAN Community**

It is observed that amidst the globalization characterized by increased cooperation in a wide range of areas and intense competition, the international and regional environment continues to undergo complex changes due to various challenges both traditional and non-traditional.

In Southeast Asia, while making steady progress towards the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, ASEAN, as an intergovernmental organization, maintains its centrality and proactive role as the primary driving force in the relations with its external partners in a regional architecture that is open, transparent and inclusive through the ASEAN-initiated regional frameworks namely, the ASEAN Plus One, ASEAN Plus Three (APT), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) and Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) where each of those mechanisms has its own specific purposes, but complements and mutually reinforces one another that contributes to the common goal of peace and prosperity in the region and the world as a whole.

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

ASEAN achievements over the past 5 decades have been possible thanks to relatively peaceful and stable environments in the region and wider region and due to collective efforts and cooperation within ASEAN and between ASEAN and its external partners through ASEAN-initiated mechanisms based on the ASEAN Way of cooperation and in accordance with the particularity and reality of the region.

While witnessing remarkable achievements, ASEAN, like other regions of the world, faces various challenges which are transnational in nature, including, among others, transnational crime, terrorism, food and energy security, natural disasters, epidemics and pandemic, and climate change. In addition, geopolitical landscape is more diversified and economic globalization is confronted with the rising of tensions between major powers and protectionism policies.

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

To address such challenges, it requires not only enhanced cooperation within ASEAN, but also joint efforts with external partners of ASEAN so as to ensure regional peace and stability which is a precondition for socio-economic development of individual countries as well as for the strengthening of the ASEAN Community building.

#### **b. Individual National Defence Policies**

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

The objectives in the pursuit of the People's Comprehensive National Defence and Security Policy are to safeguard the national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, to protect national interests and the entire Lao multi-ethnic people, and to ensure security and social order that provide favorable environment for socio-economic development of the Nation as well as to contribute to the cause of peace, security, stability and development of the region and the world. The Lao PDR's consistent policy is to neither participate in any military bloc or alliance as its armed forces are for self-defence only, nor allow foreign military bases in the territory of the Lao PDR.

Safeguarding national security has always been the primary task of the Government of the Lao PDR and the common responsibility of all sectors as well as the entire Lao multi-ethnic people as stipulated in the Constitution of the Lao PDR.

#### **c. National contribution to promoting regional security**

Based on its foreign policy of peace, independence, friendship and cooperation and the People's Comprehensive National Defence and Security Policy of self-defence, the Lao PDR has strengthened its cooperation and relations with all friendly countries and

regional and international organizations around the world through both bilateral and multilateral tracks to enhance mutual understanding, trust and confidence in the region and the world, thereby ensuring a conducive environment for development cooperation as well as regional economic integration.

To date, the Lao PDR has established diplomatic relations with 146 countries and actively participated in multilateral cooperation frameworks, including ASEAN and ASEAN-initiated frameworks such as ASEAN Plus One, APT, EAS, ARF, ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), ADMM-Plus, ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Informal Meeting (ACDFIM), Shangri-La Dialogue, Xiangshan Forum, Moscow Conference on International Security, Japan-ASEAN Defense Vice-Ministerial Forum, Seoul Defence Dialogue (SDD), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), ASEANAPOL, INTERPOL, and UN, among others. In addition, the Lao PDR has been working closely with the international community to address non-traditional security challenges of common concern and interest such as terrorism, violent extremism, territorial disputes, illicit drugs, natural disasters, pandemic, climate change, irregular migration, refugee crisis, trafficking in persons and armed conflicts and confrontation.

**At the bilateral level,** the Lao PDR has conducted bilateral cooperation with its immediate neighbouring countries to tackle border-related issues, including transnational crime through established mechanisms namely Lao-Cambodia General Border Committee (GBC), Lao-China Joint Border Inspection Committee, Lao-Myanmar Provincial/Regional Border Committee (P/RBC), Lao-Thai General Border Committee (GBC) and Lao-Viet Nam Border Committee (BC).

**At the regional level,** the Lao PDR participates in a number of mechanisms to support efforts against terrorism and transnational crime such as the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) to further advance the work on anti-money laundering and counter-funding of terrorism in the country as well as to enhance cooperation with other countries in the region. The Lao PDR ratified the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism on 12 November 2012, Protocol to the ASEAN Charter on Dispute Settlement Mechanisms on 2 September 2016, and ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children on 28 April 2017.

In addition, the Lao PDR has over the past years successfully hosted, chaired and co-chaired the following meetings, workshops and trainings:

- 6<sup>th</sup> ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR Table Top Exercise (TTX) on 5-7 August 2015 in Vientiane;
- Workshop on Fundamentals of Nuclear Safeguards and Additional Protocol of IAEA on 5-8 October 2015 in Vientiane;

- 7<sup>th</sup> ADMM-Plus EWG on Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Relief (HADR) on 9-10 December 2015 in Tokyo;
- 8<sup>th</sup> ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR on 10 May 2016 in Tokyo;
- IAEA Vision on Facilitating Adherent to an Implementation of 2005 Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection on Nuclear Material (CPPNM) on 25-27 April 2016 in Vientiane;
- ADMM-Plus Military Medicine and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Exercise (AM-HEX) on 1-11 September 2016;
- 9<sup>th</sup> ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR on 14-16 December 2016 in Vientiane;
- 11<sup>th</sup> Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking (COMMIT) Senior Officials Meeting on 23-24 November 2016;
- 10<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-China Prosecutors-General Conference on 8-11 November 2016 in Vientiane;
- 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits and Related Summits on 6-8 September 2016 in Vientiane;
- 10<sup>th</sup> ADMM, 13<sup>th</sup> ACDFIM and other ASEAN and ASEAN defence-related activities under the Chairmanship of the Lao PDR throughout the year 2016;
- 5<sup>th</sup> ADMM-Plus EWG on Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) on 22-25 May 2017;
- Legal Training on Strategic Goods on 24-25 May 2017 in Vientiane;
- 17<sup>th</sup> SOMTC and its Related Meetings on 22-27 May 2017 in Vientiane;
- 7<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Chiefs of Military Medicine Conference (ACMMC) and Young ASEAN Military Medical Officers' Interaction Programme on 11-15 July 2017 in Vientiane;
- Training to Build Capacity of Southeast Asian States for Strengthening the Implementation of the UN Programme of Action on SALW on 6-7 June 2017 in Vientiane;
- Strategic Trade and Export Control on 12-16 June 2017 in Vientiane;
- Strategic Trade and Export Control Working Group on 10-14 July 2017 in Vientiane;
- Workshop on the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation on 17 July 2017 in Vientiane;
- 5<sup>th</sup> ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA, 22-25 May 2017, Vientiane;
- 6<sup>th</sup> ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA, 1-5 October 2017, Moscow, Russia;
- 7<sup>th</sup> ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA, 24-27 April 2017, Xiengkhouang, Lao PDR;
- 8<sup>th</sup> ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA, October 2018, Moscow, Russia
- 18<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief and 19<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief on 2-3 April 2019 in Vientiane and 19 May 2021 via Videoconference respectively;
- 9<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Defence Minister's Meeting –Plus EWG on Humanitarian Mine Action and Co-chairmanship Handover Ceremony on 3-6 December 2019 in Vientiane;

- 9<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Airport Interdiction Taskforce Meeting on 28 November 2019 in Vientiane; and
- Co-chaired the ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA with Russia in the second cycle 2017-2020

Currently, the Lao PDR is co-chairing with China and Canada for ARF ISM on Disaster Relief for the period 2018-2022.

**At the international level**, the Lao PDR is a state party and signatory to the following 6 Instruments under ASEAN Framework, 13 UN conventions on counter-terrorism, 5 UN Conventions on Transnational Organized Crime, 13 UN Conventions on Prohibition, and 7 Agreements of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

#### 6 Instruments under ASEAN Framework:

1. Instrument of Incorporation of the Rules for Reference of Unresolved Disputes to the ASEAN Summit to the Protocol to the ASEAN Charter on Dispute Settlement Mechanisms, Ha Noi, Viet Nam, 27 October 2010;
2. ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism, Cebu, the Philippines, 13 January 2007;
3. Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 29 November 2004;
4. Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, Bangkok, Thailand, 15 December 1995;
5. ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 21 November 2015; and
6. Protocol to the ASEAN Charter on Dispute Settlement Mechanisms, Ha Noi, Viet Nam, 8 April 2010.

#### 13 UN Conventions on Counter-Terrorism:

1. Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft (1963);
2. Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (1970);
3. Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation (1971);
4. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, Including Diplomatic Agents (1973);
5. Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (1979);
6. International Convention Against the Taking of Hostage (1979);
7. Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation (1988);
8. Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (1988);

9. Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf (1988);
10. Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection (1991);
11. Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel (1994);
12. International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (1997); and
13. International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

#### 5 UN Conventions on Transnational Organized Crime:

1. United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, New York, 15 November 2000;
2. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, New York, 15 November 2000;
3. Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, New York, 15 November 2000;
4. Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition Against Transnational Organized Crime, New York, 31 May 2001; and
5. Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, New York, 21 March 1950.

#### 11 UN Conventions on Prohibition:

1. Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, New York, 10 December 1976;
2. 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, Geneva, 10 October 1980;
3. Protocol I 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 on Non-Detectable Fragments, Geneva, 10 October 1980;
4. Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, Geneva, 3 September 1992;
5. Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, London, Moscow and Washington, 10 April 1972;
6. Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, Geneva, 17 June 1925;

7. Comprehensive Nuclear-Test –Ban Treaty, New York, 10 September 1996;
8. Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil thereof, London, Washington and Moscow (London, S, 11 February 1971, R, 19 October 1971), (Moscow, S, 15 February 1971, R, 3 November 1971) (Washington, S, 11 February 1971, R, 22 October 1971);
9. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, London, Moscow and Washington (S, 1 July 1968), (Moscow 20 February 1970, London and Washington R, 5 March 1970);
10. Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere in Outer Space and Under Water, London, Moscow and Washington, 8 August 1963;
11. Convention on Cluster Munitions, Dublin, 30 May 2008;
12. Biological Weapons Convention, Glance, 10 May 1972; and
13. Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, New York, 7 July 2017.

7 Agreements of the International Atomic Energy Agency:

1. Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency, New York, 4 November 2011;
2. Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, Vienna, 29 September 2009;
3. Agreement between the Lao PDR and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards in Connection with the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and Protocol, Vienna, 5 November 2014;
4. Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, Vienna, 10 May 2013;
5. Convention on Assistance in the case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, Vienna, 26 September 1986;
6. Fifth Agreement to Extend the 1987 Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (RCA), Bali, 15 April 2011 March 2011; and
7. Revised Supplementary Agreement Concerning the provision of Technical Assistance by the IAEA (RSA), 16 January 2014.

All in all, the Lao PDR is fully committed to promoting regional peace, security and stability and development cooperation and stands ready to participate in regional and international efforts in addressing common challenges facing the region based on its ability and in accordance with the principle of consent and upon request of an effected countries as well as the principles of respect for independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, among others.

**I. SECURITY CONCERNS IN THE REGION AND NATIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY POLICIES**

**a. Individual National Defence Policies**

**I. DEFENCE AND SECURITY**

Malaysia’s **Defence White Paper** (DWP) that was published in 2020 outlines Malaysia’s perspectives on national, regional, and global strategic trends, its **National Defence Framework**, as well as serving as a long-term blue print for defence planning to pursue Malaysia’s aspiration as a secure, sovereign, and prosperous nation.

The DWP acknowledges **Malaysia’s geostrategic importance**, being a maritime country with continental roots, flanked by the South China Sea and Pacific Ocean on one side and the Straits of Malacca and Indian Ocean on the other. It also emphasises the importance of *whole-of-government* and *whole-of-society* approach towards defence.

The DWP defines Malaysia’s defence strategy as centred on three (3) pillars, namely:

<b>Concentric Deterrence</b>	Malaysia’s national defence is pursued along the concentric areas that cover land, maritime, air and cyber electromagnetic domains. These are categorised into three (3) geographic areas:	
	<b>Core Area</b>	The land masses of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak; the territorial waters; as well as the air space above them.
	<b>Extended Area</b>	The Malaysian Maritime Zone (MMZ), strategic waterways, airspace and critical lines of communications.
	<b>Forward Area</b>	Covers locations beyond the extended area, where Malaysia’s national interests are involved.
<b>Comprehensive Defence</b>	Adopting the whole-of government and whole-of-society approaches to defend the country, in line with the spirit of Total Defence.	
<b>Credible Partnerships</b>	To build Malaysia’s credibility as a dependable partner through bilateral and multilateral defence cooperation with external partners, as well as to contribute to defence readiness, security needs and regional stability of Malaysia and its partners.	

## Total Defence Expenditure on Annual Basis

Defence Expenditure		
<b>Operating Expenditure</b>	RM11,355,404,800	USD2,724,948,358.61
<b>Development Expenditure</b>	RM4,505,188,000	USD1,081,106,738.34
<b>Total Defence Expenditure</b>	RM15,860,592,800	USD3,806,055,096.95
<b>Defence Expenditure as a Percentage GDP</b>	1.18%	
<b>Defence Expenditure Per Capita</b>	RM483.92	USD116.13

*\*Exchange rate as per May 2021 (USD1 = MYR4.1672)*

A safe and secured nation is vital for a robust, sustainable economic growth and wellbeing. The complexity of security threats, that is **transboundary** and **inter-linked** in nature, is capable of disrupting the peace and stability of a nation. Regionally, efforts are taken through various platforms to manage various conflicts/threats and to mitigate cross-border issues such as cybercrime, terrorism and organised crimes. These threats call for greater coordinated cooperation as well as mutual understanding among ASEAN Member States through dialogues and sharing of best practices, national experiences and information.

The strategic airspace and maritime areas, rich in hydrocarbons and sea-based produce, are protected and defended based on the principle of national sovereignty. While pandemics and infectious diseases have adverse effects on the nation's socio-economic wellbeing, there is a strong need to ensure that the national border are protected from any encroachments. Hence, integrated operations among government bodies are required to effectively curb the transmission of the COVID-19 pandemic and influx of illegal immigrants.

Malaysia's **National Defence Policy** demonstrates its vision in defending the national interests and upholding sovereignty. However, concerted efforts involving defence science, technology and industry are vital in forming successful domestic defence and security industry players. One of the key aspects is developing human capital that are competent in conducting research and development (R&D), as well as designing and inventing technologically advanced products that meet international standards. Malaysia also holds to its **principle of total defence and security**, involving governmental bodies, private sectors, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the citizens; as protecting the sovereignty and national defence requires the **collective responsibility** of the society.

## **MARITIME SECURITY**

In relation to **maritime security**, the increased presence of warships in the South China Sea could significantly heighten tensions in the region, impede freedom of movement, as well as raises the possibilities for miscalculations and incidents at sea. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing) activities also have caused coastal countries millions of dollars in lost revenues, destruction of maritime ecosystem, as well as negatively impacting the livelihoods of people depending on the sea.

In addition to physical presence, Malaysia has also incorporated electronic monitoring capabilities to enable better surveillance of maritime activities in its maritime zones, particularly in the Straits of Malacca. Two (2) systems are currently in place. These are the Sea Surveillance System (SWASLA) manned by the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) and the Automatic Identification System (AIS) operated by the Marine Department Malaysia.

### **i. MMEA Efforts and Approaches in Combating Unlawful Acts at Sea**

MMEA as the sole maritime enforcement agency have implemented appropriate measures and approaches to ensure safety security in the maritime area. Malaysia's maritime area is safe and stable.

The figures below show the decreasing armed robbery incidents reported in the Malaysian waters in the Straits of Malacca, the South China Sea and off the coast of Sabah and Sarawak in the past 3 years:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Straits of Malacca</b>	<b>South China Sea</b>	<b>Off the Coast of Sabah &amp; Sarawak</b>	<b>Total number of cases</b>
2020	-	-	-	<b>0</b>
2019	-	-	-	<b>0</b>
2018	1	1	2	<b>4</b>

MMEA strongly supports and reaffirms that the cooperation and coordination will remain the thrust for future enforcement effort nationally as well as regionally. It is only through continuous integrated approach among all states in the region that we can improve the security of the maritime domain against piracy and armed robbery. In this context, MMEA have successfully organized several seminars and programs to enhance cooperation among ASEAN member States and other regional states.

ii. **Malacca Straits Patrol (MSP)**

Malaysia believes that countries need to work together in ensuring security of maritime areas. Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore launched the Malacca Straits Patrols (MSP) in 2014. The MSP consists of two (2) components, namely the Malacca Straits Sea Patrol (MSSP); and the Eyes-in-the-Sky (EiS) air patrols. With the implementation of the MSP, comprehensive arrangement for maritime security in the Straits of Malacca has been achieved.

iii. **Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement between Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines**

Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines established the Framework for Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement between Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines on Immediate Measures to Address Security Issues in the Maritime Areas of Common Concern (Framework) in Jakarta, Indonesia on 14 July 2016. The trilateral cooperative Arrangement (TCA) was designed to intensify maritime security efforts to address kidnapping of seafarers by militant groups operating in Southern Philippines. The TCA includes maritime patrol, assistance to vessels in distress as well as the establishment of hotline of communication during security incidents and emergency.

iv. **International Acknowledgement**

All the efforts by Malaysia, either unilaterally or in cooperation with the other littoral States, contribute to the overall improvement of maritime security in the Straits of Malacca. The successes of the efforts have been acknowledged by reports worldwide, among others the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) weekly and annual reports. The de-classification of the Straits as a high-risk zone by the Joint War Committee of Lloyd's Market Association in August 2006 was another example of the fruitful outcome of the efforts by Malaysia and the other littoral States in ensuring the security of maritime navigation in the Straits of Malacca.

The strategic location and importance of the Straits of Malacca attracts attention from many countries. While Malaysia welcome the interests by these countries, Malaysia will not allow any country to conduct enforcement or patrol activities.

v. **ASEAN Our Eyes Initiative under ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)**

Malaysia is a member of the ASEAN Our Eyes Initiative which was adopted at the 12<sup>th</sup> ADMM in 2018. The Initiative aims to enhance information and strategic intelligence exchange in order to combat terrorism by utilising the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI), a secure telecommunication connection between the Defence Ministers of ASEAN Member States.

vi. **ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security (ADMM-Plus EWG on MS) since its establishment in 2011**

Malaysia is also a member of ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security (ADMM-Plus EWG on MS) since its establishment in 2011. Malaysia has actively participated in seminars, workshops and exercises with ADMM-Plus members. The activities are aimed at enhancing practical cooperation and confidence building measures between ASEAN and Plus partners in maritime domain, while promoting efforts towards safe navigation in the region.

Malaysia has also co-chaired and co-hosted a number of maritime security-related workshop and seminars with dialogue partners, such as:

- **ARF Workshop on International Cooperation on Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)** from 7 to 8 March 2018 in Tokyo, Japan (Co-chaired by Malaysia and Japan);
- **ARF Workshop of National Maritime Single Points of Contact (SPOC)** in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 27-29 August 2018 (Co-chaired by Malaysia, United States and Australia); and
- **ARF Workshop on Dispute Resolution and Law of the Sea** from 27 to 28 February 2020 in Dili, Timor Leste (Co-chaired by Malaysia, Australia and Timor Leste).

## II. **SOCIOECONOMIC**

From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Malaysia took a '*whole-of-government*' and '*whole-of-society*' approach in addressing the unprecedented health crisis. In addition, the Government of Malaysia executed a clear strategy which focused on three (3) thrusts:

- i. **expanding the healthcare delivery system** to prevent spread and tend to the infected;
- ii. **providing strategic fiscal injections** to safeguard the economy; and
- iii. **protecting the people's livelihoods.**

Whilst almost everyone is vulnerable to the economic impacts of COVID-19, those who are already facing the existing risk and degree of socioeconomic marginalization will be severely impacted. These groups include those with low-paying jobs, limited financial resources and largely in the informal sector. Besides that, income losses among the rural and urban poor families may lead to the increase of poverty and inequalities rate.

In combating COVID-19, which requires joint efforts from the health and economic sectors, the Government of Malaysia has taken a systematic strategy and holistic

approach in balancing between lives and livelihoods through the **6R National Economic Recovery Strategy**, as follows:

<b>Resolve</b>	To contain the virus by <b>imposing the various Movement Control Orders (MCO)</b> beginning in March 2020.
<b>Resilient</b>	To build resilience by introducing <b>Economic Stimulus Package</b> to assist the people and the economy.
<b>Restart</b>	To restart and recover the economy through <b>short and mid-term planning.</b>
<b>Recovery</b>	
<b>Revitalise</b>	To <b>revitalise the economy</b> comprehensively.
<b>Reform</b>	To <b>reform the structure of the economy</b> towards the new norms post-COVID-19.

Recently, the Government of Malaysia announced the **National Recovery Plan** to allow Malaysia to exit the COVID-19 pandemic. The Plan is based on scientific data and public health recommendations. In addition, the implementation of the **National COVID-19 Immunisation Programme** will be enhanced which will contribute to the improvement of economic activities and livelihoods of the people.

Moving forward, Malaysia will continue to emphasise the **inclusivity principle** in its socio-economic development particularly in ensuring no one is left behind. This is based on the premise that all citizens should benefit from the growth and development of the country, regardless of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status and location. In addition, the principle of sustainable development which have been embedded into Malaysia's previous development planning and will be reflected through incorporating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the upcoming **Twelfth Malaysia Plan, 2021-2025**.

**III. EMPLOYMENT**

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the employment and the **labour market landscape**. The Movement Control Order imposed by the Government of Malaysia and the need for businesses to adapt to the new norms as a preventive measure to curb the spread of COVID-19 have caused job losses and reduced incomes. Therefore, the impact of the pandemic on jobs and incomes has become one of the major threats to the labour market.

Based on the **Labour Force Survey 2020** by the Department of Statistics, the number of unemployed persons increased to 711,000 persons (2020) compared to 508,200 persons (2019). The unemployment rate which has been under 4% since 1995, indicated full employment has increased to 4.5% in 2020. According to the **Social Security Organisation (SOCSO)**, a total of 32,063 workers have lost their jobs between 1 January

2021 and 15 June 2021. The impact of the job losses and reduced incomes have transitioned many of displaced workers into informal employment.

The Government has announced targeted actions and introduced bold efforts to reduce the impact of the pandemic to the labour market. Among the actions and efforts initiated by the Government of Malaysia are as follows:

<p><b>National Employment Council (NEC)</b></p>	<p>The NEC was set up to execute the strategies to create and preserve jobs with the aim of creating <b>500,000 new jobs</b> by the end of 2021.</p>
<p><b>PenjanaKerjaya 2.0</b> under SOCSO</p>	<p>With the total allocation of MYR 2 billion, this programme is an enhanced version of the <b>Hiring Incentive Programme</b> which allows employers to hire new employees as well as applying for training courses to upskill and reskill the new employees.</p> <p>This programme is concurrent with the ongoing <b>Wage Subsidy Programme</b>, which was introduced to help employers to continue business operations and retain their workers.</p>
<p>Social protection for all workers</p>	<p>SOCSO has extended the coverage of the <b>employment injury insurance</b> to domestic helpers with the status of Malaysian citizens, permanent residents, and foreign workers from 1 June 2021.</p> <p>The <b>Self-Employment Social Security Scheme</b> was introduced on 1 June 2017 and has been made compulsory to the self-employed in the Passenger Transportation Sector which include taxi, e-hailing and bus drivers. It was extended to 19 other sectors from 1 January 2020.</p>
<p><b>Recalibration Plan for illegal immigrants</b></p>	<p>Due to the travel restrictions, most of the affected migrant workers are unwilling to leave the country or unable to travel back. The status of unemployed migrant workers has</p>

	<p>changed to illegal immigrants, and consequently, poses a security threat to the country as they have been hired to work illegally.</p> <p>In an effort to address this issue and to prevent certain sectors from experiencing a labour shortage as the recruitment of foreign workers is put on hold, the Government of Malaysia has introduced the <b>Recalibration Plan for illegal immigrants</b> since November 2020. Under this programme, illegal immigrants could be employed as foreign workers by employers subject to strict conditions.</p>
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**IV. FOOD SECURITY**

Food security was first defined in **Rome Declaration** in 1974 as “*availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices*”. The definition was further expanded later to include accessibility of food in both physical and economical aspect to fulfil active and healthy lifestyle. In 2001, the **Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations** (FAO) defined food security as a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Food security is multifaceted through the following four (4) dimensions which must be present at all times for the people to meet their dietary needs:

- i. Availability;
- ii. Accessibility and affordability;
- iii. Safety and nutrition; and
- iv. Stability.

Generally, food security in Malaysia is in good and stable situation through a good balance between local production and food import. According to the **Global Food Security Index** (GSFI) in 2019, Malaysia was ranked 28<sup>th</sup> out of 113 countries, compared to 48<sup>th</sup> position in 2018. Malaysia produces some of the food commodities and imports the balance of food needs to complement local production, including some of the main food products such as rice, beef, liquid milk and some temperate vegetables. In 2019, Malaysia imported around 35% of its rice need, 50% of vegetables, 10% of seafoods, 75% of beef and 40% of milk. On the other hand, Malaysia has exceeded 100% of its need in poultry meat and eggs. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the supply of

main food such as rice, vegetables, fruits, beef, poultry meat, eggs, fish liquid milk were sufficient and stable to fulfil domestic need.

One of the Government's efforts to improve food security is by boosting '**Self Sufficiency Level**' (SSL) in strategic agrofood commodities including rice, beef, poultry meat, poultry eggs, fish and vegetables. This will help to reduce reliance on imported food and improve balance of trade. Malaysia will continue to prioritize the development and modernization of agrofood sector through the **12<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan 2021-2025** with the focus on the following:

- i. modern technology application;
- ii. optimizing farm productivity;
- iii. improving efficiency of agrofood value chain; and
- iv. enhancing value added activities.

In addition, **National Agrofood Policy 2.0** (NAP 2.0) has been developed to catalyse modernization and transformation of Malaysia's agriculture landscape. NAP 2.0 for the period 2021–2030 is currently being finalized to outline the agrofood industry policy. Several global and domestic challenges, including the current COVID-19 pandemic which affect food supply were evaluated in formulating suitable policies. The main focus of NAP 2.0 (2021-2030) includes:

- i. Embrace **modernization** and smart agriculture;
- ii. Strengthen domestic market;
- iii. Create/produce **demand-driven and export-oriented products**;
- iv. Build talent that meets the demand of the industry;
- v. Advance towards **sustainable agricultural practices and food systems**; and
- vi. Create a conducive business ecosystem and robust institutional framework.

Under NAP 2.0, modernization of agriculture and food industries through science and technology will be prioritized, and will be further supported by the **12<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan**. The focus area is to develop a resilient agriculture sector towards **Industry Revolution 4.0** with the latest technology to increase productivity, minimizing cost and labour, while increasing competitiveness and product quality.

## **ENERGY SECURITY**

Energy security is always considered as a non-traditional security in many countries, including Malaysia. As a backbone for a country to function, a continuous and uninterrupted energy supply is crucial for economic and social development of any country. The energy supply chain is highly complex, and its future is uncertain due to unexpected changes and contrasting values, brought by new technology development, finance and demographics.

As challenging as it may be, energy security remains one of the main priorities of the Government of Malaysia. Under the **Energy Trilemma principles** that guide energy planning, energy supply security has been identified as one of the main pillars, apart from energy sustainability and affordability. The Government of Malaysia has introduced many initiatives and indicators to ensure energy can be supplied reliably and securely at an affordable price. These initiatives and indicators including:

- i. diversifying fuel types for electricity generation, and measuring the diversity by using Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) of below 0.5;
- ii. improving the energy self-sufficiency level;
- iii. diversifying fuel import sources;
- iv. introducing new technologies that are able to give energy supply interruption information in real-time through smart grid and smart meter;
- v. expanding redundancies in the system and strategic energy assets;
- vi. maintaining adequate buffer and reserve margins;
- vii. investing in energy infrastructures including gas pipelines and electricity connections to Singapore and Thailand as well as LNG Regassification Terminals; and
- viii. enhancing and expand regional energy trading.

In order to diversify fuel types and improve self-sufficiency, the Government of Malaysia has set a target of 40% **Renewable Energy power generation capacity** by 2035, an increase from 21% in 2020. Malaysia has diversified its fuel import sources since 2010, so that any global fuel supply shocks can be minimized and will not affect energy supply in the country.

The Peninsular Malaysia grid system is connected to Singapore and Thailand grids since 1984 and 2001 respectively, as part of the energy security measures. In 2011, electricity from both countries were supplied to Malaysia as Malaysia was facing energy supply shortages due to gas supply disruption. These bilateral interconnections are examples of how **regional connectivity** helps in mitigating energy supply disruption to consumers.

Malaysia has also signed the **Lao PDR-Thailand-Malaysia Power Integration Project (LTM-PIP) Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** in 2016 to allow Malaysia to purchase electricity from Lao PDR supplied through Thailand's transmission grid as part of the **energy supply diversification measures**. This MoU, first of its kind in ASEAN, is also to promote ASEAN integration and connectivity.

## **COUNTER-TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

The immediate result of the new norms and shift towards using more virtual spaces - saw an increase in the hours spent online by Malaysians. According to a survey report by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), people are spending more hours online in 2020 compared to 2018. Another survey by online database **Statista** reported the increase of internet user's penetration in Malaysia from 90% of the population in 2019 to 94% in 2020.

Consequently, the exponential growth in the use of the internet and cyberspace brought about by the new norms of working from home has created new areas of opportunities for threat actors to exploit the internet and cyberspace for malicious activities, including in the recruitment of potential terrorists through the social media. Evidently, this reveals that **terrorism and violent extremism remain a global issue** irrespective of what plaguing the world.

It is inevitable that more people will be vulnerable to **violent extremist's propaganda** and **online radicalisation** as they spend more time online. This trend pushed preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE) practitioners to address this vulnerability by **intensifying online counter-messaging efforts and building digital resilience in the community**.

Similarly, the rise in **online hate speech**, including hateful rhetoric, ethnic and religious insults, during the pandemic has become a real concern. This may contribute to the risk of stigmatisation, discrimination and hostility towards a certain group of people. These phenomena show signs of extremism and give rise to a relatively new spectrum of violent extremism in Malaysia.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also reinforced the existing **drivers of radicalisation** such as systemic poverty, unemployment, and personal losses or family members' death. For instance, the unemployment rate alone went up to 5.3% two months after the implementation of MCO. These drivers of radicalisation, compounded by perceived grievances and injustices, can be easily exploited to mobilise individuals or groups towards carrying out or supporting violent extremism.

Besides that, the increase in cyber-attacks could also threaten a country's critical infrastructures, as well as the country's defence, security, and financial sectors – which calls for closer cooperation among ASEAN Member States in the **timely sharing of intelligence and information** to fight terrorism, and related activities such as:

- i. the movement of terrorists across borders;
- ii. kidnap for ransom;
- iii. transboundary criminal activities;

- iv. piracy; and
- v. sea robbery.

Unfortunately, PCVE initiatives were also heavily affected by the MCO restrictions, as all physical capacity-building and training programmes were suspended. Besides, some initiatives which are non-physical such as counter-messaging also felt the consequence of the restriction. It impacted the sustainability of the counter-messaging ecosystem as the training to carry out such initiatives also had to be suspended.

## **V. NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT**

Malaysia reaffirms the role of the **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons** (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Malaysia had chaired the **2019 NPT Preparatory Committee**, which took place from 29 April to 10 May 2019 in New York, and will be chairing **Main Committee I on Nuclear Disarmament** during the 10<sup>th</sup> NPT Review Conference when it is convened. Malaysia looks forward to contributing towards a successful Review Conference, both in its national capacity and as Chair of Main Committee I on Nuclear Disarmament, and hopes that the upcoming Review Conference will bring States Parties together towards achieving the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, despite the challenges facing the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

On 30 September 2020, Malaysia ratified the **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons** (TPNW) thus becoming the 46<sup>th</sup> State Party to the Treaty. Ratifying the TPNW is Malaysia's tangible effort to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament on the international stage and reaffirms Malaysia's unwavering commitment and support towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Malaysia continues to support activities under the ambit of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) relating to disarmament and non-proliferation issues. Malaysia had Co-Chaired with Canada and New Zealand the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> **ARF Inter-Sessional Meetings on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament** (ARF ISM on NPD) in 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively, and continues to participate in ARF ISM on NPD meetings, most recently in June 2021.

Malaysia reaffirms the significance of the **Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty** as the disarmament and non-proliferation instrument in the ASEAN region. Malaysia welcomes the readiness of the Nuclear Weapon States to resume consultations on the **Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty**, and stands ready to engage the Nuclear Weapon States towards the resolution of outstanding issues pertaining to their accession to the Protocol.

Malaysia strongly believes that the total elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) must remain at the top of the international agenda. Malaysia is convinced that the complete elimination of such weapons would significantly contribute towards international peace and security.

In fulfilling the obligations stipulated under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 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.

With regard to arms control, Malaysia remains supportive of the **Arms Trade Treaty** (ATT), and had played a constructive role during the negotiations leading up to the conclusion of the Treaty. Malaysia is actively pursuing the ratification of the ATT domestically, and looks forward to being a State Party at the earliest opportunity.

As a State Party to the **Biological Weapons Convention** (BWC), Malaysia continues to fully adhere to its obligations under the Convention. **The Science and Technology Research Institute for Defence** (STRIDE) under the Ministry of Defence serves as the Lead Agency for the implementation of the BWC in Malaysia, and is responsible in ensuring that Malaysia continues to fully adhere to its obligations under the Convention. Malaysia recognizes the importance for States Parties to undertake necessary measures, including reviewing its constitutional process to implement the provisions of the Convention as stipulated under Article IV of the BWC. In demonstrating Malaysia's commitment to the BWC, Malaysia is in the process of finalising a comprehensive BWC Bill, which would reinforce the existing legislation such as the Arms Act 1960, Customs Act 1967 and STA 2010.

Malaysia is committed to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the **Chemical Weapons Convention** (CWC). The **National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention of Malaysia** (NACWC), which was officially established in September 2006 in conjunction with the promulgation 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 also moderated the 5<sup>th</sup> Article XI Workshop on 2 November 2020, in the capacity as the Interim Facilitator.

Malaysia is actively undertaking efforts to enact the **Atomic Energy Bill** which will allow Malaysia to ratify and accede to the various international instruments on nuclear safety and security such as the **Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM)** and its Protocol, the **IAEA Additional Protocol** and the **International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT)**. The Bill will also help strengthen Malaysia's efforts in the non-proliferation and disarmament field.

## **VI. NATURAL DISASTERS**

Recently, ASEAN has experienced multiple devastating earthquakes, major floods, numerous cyclones, and droughts that have severely affected its Member States. The vulnerabilities of the region are a result of the population growth, lack of coordination in urbanisation planning, environmental degradation, climate change, as well as the geological, hydro-meteorological, and man-made hazards. As a consequence, this has increased the frequency and impacts of the disasters we face today.

Each disaster is a profound reminder to enhance our readiness and preparedness at many levels. Since the signing of the **ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER)**, Malaysia and other ASEAN Member States have pledged to collectively:

- i. respond in the regional disaster preparedness;
- ii. coordinate effective utilization of the **ASEAN Standby Arrangements for Disaster Relief and Emergency Response**;
- iii. coordinate multi-national maritime search and rescue (SAR);
- iv. ensure effective and timely distribution of aid and humanitarian assistance (HADR) including in its management of consular assistance; and
- v. managing information and the media.

Malaysia will continue to support efforts to improve the **ASEAN Joint Disaster Response Plan**, and looks forward to the exercise that will stimulate two large-scale scenarios, namely the 'Metro Manila Earthquake', and 'Mentawai Megathrust Tsunami', as well as other relevant simulation exercises/training, such as the ARF Technical Exercise, and Training Course on Urban Search and Rescue (USAR).

Imminent calamities require close collaboration between civilian bodies and the military. Hence, it is important to note the unique focus and vision of every institution involved in the civil-military coordination of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

In this regard, Malaysia reiterates the importance of establishing standardized **ASEAN Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination** capacity building programs to cultivate effective coordination in times of disaster. Such initiative will contribute towards realising

the One ASEAN One Response, building trust and confidence between the disaster management entities and defence sector.

Malaysia maintains that the ARF is the strategic platform for ASEAN and its partners from other sectors to synergize and collectively execute HADR missions. Malaysia will continue to play an important role and make contribution on HADR. In this connection, Malaysia has mobilised HADR assistance to various countries in the region, such as Indonesia, Lao PDR, and the Philippines.

Malaysia is also a member of the **ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief** (ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR) since its establishment in 2011. Malaysia was the co-chair of the previous EWG on HADR cycle (2017-2020) with the United States. Malaysia actively participates in the EWG activities, meetings, conferences, and exercises with other ADMM-Plus members, particularly in capacity building through practical defence cooperation and confidence building measures between ASEAN and Plus Dialogue Partners in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

Correspondingly, Malaysia initiated the formation of the **ASEAN Militaries Ready Group (AMRG) on HADR** under the ambit of ADMM to facilitate the coordination and rapid deployment of ASEAN military personnel, assets, and capabilities to disaster areas within the ASEAN region under a single ASEAN banner. This is to promote ASEAN solidarity in responding to disaster, as well as to improve coordination, prevent redundancy in assistance provided and optimise the use of military resources during disasters. The proposal was adopted at the 9<sup>th</sup> ADMM in 2015, and the **Standard Operating Procedure of AMRG on HADR** was adopted at the 14<sup>th</sup> ADMM in 2020.

The Malaysian Armed Forces regularly mobilises HADR assistance to various countries in the region, such as through the utilisation of its Royal Malaysian Air Force transport planes to help transport aid to disaster affected areas.

Against this backdrop, Malaysia hosts the **World Food Programme United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot** (WFP UNHRD) in Subang, Selangor, which houses relief items ready to be transported to disaster-affected areas in short notice. The Depot is also part of the **Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN** (DELSA), which is a key mechanism for quick provision of relief items to ASEAN Member States facing disasters.

Malaysia has also set up the **Malaysian Field Hospital** at Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh in November 2017 to provide medical aid to Rohingya refugees. However, Malaysia has

closed down the Field Hospital officially in September 2020, due to the need for the field hospital to support COVID-19 treatment in Malaysia.

In line with “**One ASEAN, One Response 2020 and Beyond: ASEAN responding to disasters as One**”, Malaysia urges all parties to refine the critical role of the ASEAN Member States in establishing a sustainable and effective mechanism in the dynamic humanitarian landscape of the region through **ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management** (AHA Centre). The collaboration and support of the ARF Participants would help the AHA Centre become more impactful and relevant to the needs of the ASEAN Member States and wider ASEAN Community. ARF is also an important platform to chart the future direction of ASEAN’s disaster cooperation and take stock on the previous successes, weaknesses, and challenges.

Malaysia consistently continues to mainstream disaster risk reduction agenda into the planning and development process, in line with Malaysia’s commitment towards **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDG). Malaysia calls upon all ARF Participants to support the effort to achieve the seven global targets set by the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** (SFDRR) in 2015. Malaysia looks forward to improving the management of disaster risk, and to fully transform from managing disaster approach to managing disaster risk.

## **VII. WATER SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

The most pressing area of concern at the nexus of **climate change** and national security is that of **water security**. As outlined clearly in a recent World Bank Report, the effects of climate change will come through the water cycle - affecting food, energy, urban, and environmental systems as populations, cities, and economies continue to grow and strain increasingly limited water resources. The **continued impacts of climate change on water resources** (extreme floods and prolong drought/dry spell) and water supplies, if not properly managed through adaptation strategies, will have consequences on national, regional and international security.

Although the amount of total surface water is expected to slightly increase, particularly in context of Malaysia, the distribution of water varies greatly and becomes more uneven, with many water-stressed predicted becoming more so in the future, due to climate change and increase in demand.

Malaysia has experienced increased minimum, mean and maximum air temperatures. The increased rainfall intensity has significantly affected the river flows condition. Over the last decade more weather extremes had been experienced by the country. Major floods occurred in 2010, 2012 and 2014, with the 2014 northeast monsoon floods being

one of the worst in recorded history. This was followed by the impact of the 2016 very strong **El Niño** which resulted in **prolonged dry periods and associated water shortages, heat waves and wild fires**.

Recently, in January 2021, Malaysia experienced the relatively large episode of **monsoon floods**, especially in the east coast states of Malaysia, including in Sabah and Sarawak, which have resulted in economic losses.

A study by the **National Water Research Institute of Malaysia (NAHRIM)** on projected changes for future flood events by 2030 and 2050 showed that the subsequent increase in the magnitude of the flood peak flow can catalyse the occurrence of more extreme floods in the context of flood extension area.

Figure 1 shows the magnitude and projected changes in flood extent of selected river basins in Peninsular Malaysia. **Building resilience to natural climate variability and anthropogenic climate change requires systematic vulnerability and adaptation assessment.**

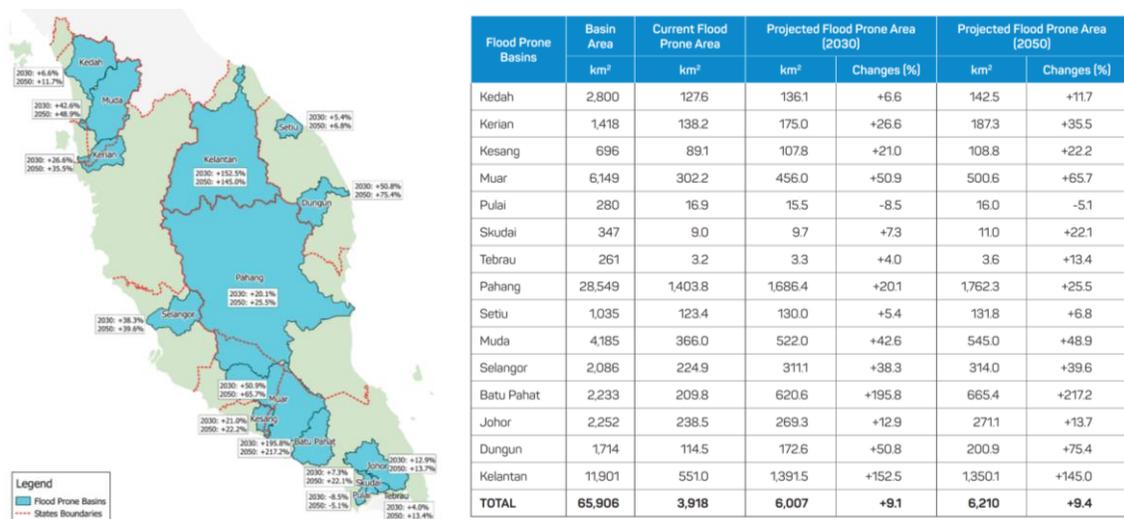


Figure 1:

Projected Changes in Flood Areal Extent for the Selected 15 Flood Prone Basins in Peninsular Malaysia

Both climatic and non-climatic drivers, such as extreme drought episode or prolonged dry spell, rapid population growth, **lack of coordination in urbanisation planning, industrialization and pollution**, factored the increasing number of water excess as well as water stress event that threatened the sustainability of our water resources. For countries in Southeast Asia that mainly rely on surface water as their water resource, changes in weather patterns and hydrological systems due to climate change will cause severely decreased water resource availability. Warm weather triggers more water use and exacerbates the extraction of water resources, which will change the operation

patterns of water usage and increase demand, resulting in water scarcity. The occurrence of prolonged drought upsets the balance between water supply and demand, significantly increasing the vulnerability of regions to damaging impacts.

NAHRIM has conducted **Water Stress Index (WSI)** assessment coupled with **Big Data Analytic (BDA)** system application to estimate future water stress area in Malaysia especially for 2030, 2040 and 2050. Figure 2 shows a sample output of projected WSI in spatial distribution for 2030 in Peninsular Malaysia with 4 different average scenarios based on AR4 IPCC. The red zone areas indicate the projected extremely high stress area due to very high future demand particularly for water supply and irrigation purposes as well as deficit of water availability locally.

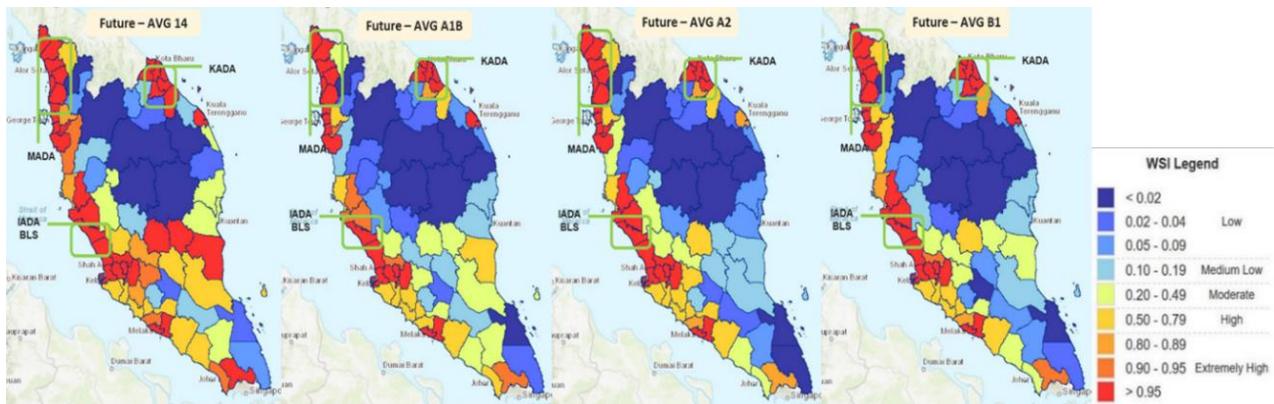


Figure 2: Projected Water Stress Index (WSI) for year 2030

Hydro climate studies with the application of new emerging technology, such as the BDA, are very useful in assessing and projecting climate variability to reduce gaps of its uncertainty, complexity and dynamic process. The field of **hydro climate informatics, sciences and computational sustainability** are rapidly growing and changing. The uncertainties of future climate, its impacts to water resources and environment could be quickly processed, analysed and projected as key information in addressing and managing future water-related risks. Possible changes, intensification and impacts to future water resources vulnerability and risk of extreme drought events could be identified and visualised through analytics on the hydro climate projections and development of WSI.

Malaysia could expect higher magnitudes of water-related incidents to occur in the future, as shown by the decreasing trend in water yield and alarming WSI categories of high and extremely high-water stress in irrigation, urbanised and highly populated areas, such as in major granary of paddy cultivation, the Klang Valley and Johor Bahru. Application and enhancements of emerging technology in the future, such as **incorporating crowd-**

**sourcing inputs** will be beneficial, especially in providing comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system regarding to climate and water-related risk management. Besides, with the automated and systematic process, the BDA technology has reduced the current manual process by humans, improved quality and efficiency in **mainstreaming climate change for sustainable and resilient future**.

Hydro-climatic or water-related disasters have caused serious disruptions to the functioning of a society/community, and resulted in widespread human, material or environmental losses. Regrettably, the urgency for **disaster risk reduction strategies with the linkages of climate change adaptation (CCA-DRR)** are often left unconsidered. The increase in the frequency of disasters and associated financial costs, places pressure for improved measures, tools and approaches to assess, adapt and mitigate disaster related risks. Disaster risk reduction aims to minimise disaster losses in the short-term and provide measures for prevention in the longer-term while adaptation responds to the risks of climate change, at the same time building future resilience.

To soften the impact of extreme events, the **Department of Irrigation and Drainage Malaysia (DID)** has developed two (2) decision support systems to forecast flood and drought events namely the **National Water Balance System (NAWABS)** and **National Flood Forecasting and Warning System (NaFFWS)**.

The NAWABS decision support system will combine real time data and climate forecasts with numerical models to provide information on current and projected water availability and demands on a basin scale, including uncertainty and risk. Additionally, NAWABS will provide multiple functions including **current and projected water availability, water use accounting, flow dependability** and an assessment tool to evaluate short-term operation options to ensure efficient water allocation.

NaFFWS is an effective and efficient **integrated flood forecasting and river monitoring system**, with flood warning dissemination capabilities using the national hydrological network data, radar data and various rainfall forecasts. The NaFFWS is a tool designed to forecast and issue warnings and advisories primarily to first-response agencies.

For Malaysia, through the **Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)** concept and approach, there is a need to build the capacity of water managers and others in developing strategies for coping with hydro-climatic disasters, such as floods and drought, within the context of water resources management. An added expectation is to improve the resilience of vulnerable communities, as well as to reduce the impact of extreme

events. The implementation of an appropriate strategy at the national and operational levels is also important focus.

The Government of Malaysia officially launched **the Roadmap for the Water Sector Transformation 2040** (WST2040), a national agenda to transform the water sector into a dynamic growth engine for the country in the future. In WST2040, one of the focus strategies in combatting the impacts of climate change and increasing resilient development, is to **enhance the linkages between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction** (CCA-DRR) with appropriate strategy, approach and impact assessment.

However, climate change is causing environmental degradation more rapidly than vulnerable populations and ecosystems can cope with and adapt to. There is a need to mobilise the capacity, knowledge, tools, political and financial support as well as the scientific expertise to increase resilience to climate change through adaptation. In mainstream adaptation to climate change into development programmes, Malaysia has spent a lot for this purpose, coupled with the efforts of developing the **National Adaptation Plan** (NAP), particularly in the water sector.

A number of adaptation policies/measures have been taken or drafted by several departments/agencies in Malaysia in accordance to the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs), as a collective effort to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

In addition, the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** is another aspect to be integrated into the national adaptation measures. The **New Urban Agenda** has also shown its importance as the main reference in drafting relevant policies/plans to drive a sustainable urban development at the local level.

In conclusion, climate change is a threat multiplier; it has the potential to exacerbate existing social, political, and economic tensions to devastating effect particularly on national water security context. Regional efforts and cooperation among ASEAN Member States based on strategic approach will help manage, prevent and mitigate the unavoidable the adverse impacts of climate change in the region.

#### **i. Transboundary Haze Pollution**

The haze situation in ASEAN region has deteriorated in the recent years. In 2019, forest fire incidents in neighbouring country have resulted to the increasing of the **Air Pollution Index** (API) readings especially on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia and western Sarawak.

Malaysia has demonstrated our commitment in mitigating the issue of transboundary haze pollution, through national efforts and regional cooperation to effectively implement the **ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution** and the **Roadmap on ASEAN Cooperation towards Transboundary Haze Pollution Control with Means of Implementation to achieve a Haze-Free ASEAN**. Various initiatives, actions and continuous efforts have been taken by Malaysia in strengthening national prevention, mitigation and management of land and forest fires to combat haze.

Malaysia has developed the **National Open Burning Action Plans** (2019) and revised the **National Haze Action Plans** (2018) to coordinate duties and responsibilities among all relevant government agencies in addressing issues related to open burning and haze. The Government of Malaysia will expand the number of patrols and enforcement activities in the areas which are prone to open burning and increase drone application for monitoring purposes especially during the hot and dry season.

In this regard, Malaysia urges ASEAN Member States to take the 2019 incident of transboundary haze experience seriously as it had affected the people's health and lives in this region. The commitment from all parties is essential in anticipating the haze phenomena with more preparedness and proactive approach to prevent the peatland fires which has been the main cause of haze.

## ii. **Marine Litter**

**Illegal transboundary movement of plastic waste** is a serious environmental crime that requires global action and cooperation. While the management of waste including plastic is indeed a challenge, we cannot deny the fact that **plastic waste accumulation** in the country also contributed by the illegal transboundary movement of plastic waste into our country.

Since 2018, Malaysia has been working seriously to send back all containers of plastic waste that were brought in and did not fulfil the importation requirement. To date, **Malaysia has managed to return 246 containers of illegal plastic waste back to their country of origin**. This is done by pure dedication by different government agencies and cooperation from countries involved.

In the effort to address the issue of waste management nationally, Malaysia had been working actively to tackle the issue of marine plastic pollution. In October 2018, Malaysia had launched **Roadmap Towards Zero Single Use Plastics 2018-2030**, aiming to reduce the consumption of single use plastics for a cleaner and healthier Malaysia.

In addition, Malaysia has adopted the new entries on **Basel Convention Plastic Waste Amendments**, effective 1 January 2021, which will help member States to enhance the control of the transboundary movements of plastic waste and better define the contaminated plastic as hazardous waste under the Convention.

Malaysia would like to reaffirm our commitment in tackling marine litter issue under the **Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Plastic Debris in ASEAN Region**. In line with the proposed **ASEAN Regional Action Plan on Marine Debris**, Malaysia is in the process to finalize our **National Marine Litter Policy and Implementation Plan**, which is expected to be completed in 2021.

## **VIII. CYBERSECURITY**

The Ministry of Communications and Multimedia Malaysia (KKMM) through its agency, **CyberSecurity Malaysia**, receives cybersecurity incidents reports from the public and local organisations through the Cyber999 service provided by the **Malaysia Computer Emergency Response Team – MyCERT**, a department under CyberSecurity Malaysia. These incidents reported are classified into nine (9) categories, as follows:

- i. fraud;
- ii. intrusion;
- iii. intrusion attempt;
- iv. malicious codes;
- v. content related;
- vi. denial of service;
- vii. vulnerabilities;
- viii. spam; and
- ix. harassment.

For 2020, 10,790 incidents were recorded which was an increase by 0.17% compared to 10,722 incidents in 2019. Fraud has the highest number of incidents with 7,593 or 70.37% of the total incidents reported, followed by intrusion with 1,444 incidents or 13.38%. The rest of the categories recorded the remaining 1,157 incidents. The number of incidents is expected to rise in 2021. The number of total incidents increased from 2015 to 2020. Fraud incidents increased in the period between 2015 and 2019. Fraud showed a slight decrease in 2020 compared to 2019 but it was still the highest incidents reported within the nine incidents classification.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the digitalisation of consumers and enterprises, which have, in turn, caused in the increase of digital threats, including on banks, cloud servers and mobile devices. Similarly, the increasing remote working trend

has amplified the need for greater cybersecurity enterprises' security measures, which typically were not designed for a remote workforce of this scale.

In this regard, Malaysian government agencies and regulators have shown an acute awareness of the rise in cyber-attacks highlighted by several high-profile breaches reported in the mainstream media, and will continue to improve and adapt their compliance policies across broader sectors, which will impact all industries. Undeniably, the trust in the systems and data is critical for the Digital Economy to thrive.

Malaysia, through **CyberSecurity Malaysia**, is currently the Chair of the **Asia Pacific Computer Emergency Response Team (APCERT)**. APCERT is a cooperation of **Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs)** and **Computer Security Emergency Response Teams (CSIRTs)** to ensure internet security in the Asia Pacific Region based on genuine information, trust, and cooperation.

APCERT has 33 teams from 23 Asia Pacific economies as operational members. The bulk of APCERT activities are carried out through several working groups (WGs). Currently there are 10 WGs:

- i. Critical Infrastructure Protection;
- ii. Drill;
- iii. Information Sharing;
- iv. Internet of Things (IoT) Security;
- v. Malware Mitigation;
- vi. Policy, Procedure and Governance;
- vii. Secure Digital Payment;
- viii. Training; and
- ix. TSUBAME (packet traffic monitoring system to observe suspicious scanning activities in the Asia Pacific and other regions).

Malaysia is the convenor of the **APCERT Malware Mitigation Working Group** which was tasked to develop a framework for malware analysis and sharing of data samples among the members. The objective of this working group is to establish early malware detection and mitigation response within the APCERT community.

In addition, Malaysia has also developed the **Malaysia Cyber Security Strategy (MCSS)**, a strategic document that outlines the key objectives which will govern all aspects of cyber security planning and implementation in Malaysia until 2025. The strategy outlines five (5) Pillars and 12 implementation strategy that holistically touch all aspects of Malaysia's cyber security concerns, including:

- i. governance and management;

- ii. legislation and enforcement;
- iii. local industry development;
- iv. innovation and technology;
- v. research and development (R&D);
- vi. capacity and capability building;
- vii. awareness and education; and
- viii. international engagement and cooperation.

The global cooperation in cybersecurity affairs is addressed under Pillar 5 of the MCSS.

Strong international engagement plays an important role to effectively counter the evolving cyber threats. Malaysia is committed to adhering to the international commitments and obligations in relation to cyber security, at the regional, sub-regional and multilateral level. Malaysia also recognises the need to build capacity in cyber diplomacy.

In relation to cybersecurity law and enforcement, Malaysia is in the process of conducting a feasibility study on the requirement to **enact a specific cyber law**. Malaysia is also currently developing the **Capacity and Capability of Cyber Crime Enforcement** via coordinated effort by establishing a dedicated and integrated platform for information sharing between related enforcement agencies in Malaysia to ensure effective and swift response in combating cybercrime.

Not only that, Malaysia is actively involved in the ARF workstream on ICT Security cybersecurity issues, including in the ARF ISM on ICTs Security and ARF OESGs. Among the initiatives led by Malaysia are as follows:

- i. Malaysia has co-chaired three (3) **ARF ISMs on ICTs Security**; and 7 **ARF Open-Ended Study Groups** (OESGs), together with Japan and Singapore since 2018.
- ii. Malaysia is working with Australia on the **establishment of an ARF Directory of Cyber Point of Contacts**, which aims to reduce misunderstanding, and improve communication as well as connectivity among the ARF Participants. Currently, there are 20 ARF Participants that have participated in the Directory. It is envisioned that the Directory will establish better interaction and coordination between countries in response to cyber incidents.

Additionally, Malaysia is presently spearheading the development of the **Matrix-ASEAN Plan of Action on the 2015 11 UNGGE Voluntary, Non-Binding Norms of Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace**, to assist ASEAN Member States to stocktake on the initiatives to operationalise the norms. This initiative is one of the

activities under the **ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee** (ASEAN Cyber-CC), supported by Singapore and the ASEAN Secretariat.

The Matrix lists out the regional initiatives that are identified to improve ASEAN Member States' capacity and/or capability to implement the UNGGE Norms. It will also serve as the stocktaking reference for ASEAN Member States when developing the initiatives or activities to implement the UNGGE Norms.

## II. FUTURE TRENDS ON REGIONAL SECURITY

### I. EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN DEFENCE AND SECURITY

While existing traditional and non-traditional security challenges such as **major power rivalry** in the South China Sea, terrorism, transnational crimes, and natural disasters remain to be a source of concern in the ASEAN region, **emerging technologies in defence and security** have added a new dimension and complexity to the challenges faced in the region.

The rapid advancement of technology brought about by the exponential growth of the cyberspace and various new innovations opens up new possibilities and challenges including in the defence field. These changing security environments will affect the nature of future challenges.

Emerging technologies such as **Artificial Intelligence (AI), autonomous weapons and transport systems, quantum technology, robotics, hypersonic weapons systems and biotechnological human enhancements** will have a disruptive impact on defence and **revolutionise future military capabilities, strategy and operations**. It will also present new threats to the militaries, as these technologies cannot be countered using today's conventional weapons.

As the effects of the emerging technologies are still being studied, it is important for these technologies to be regulated, to ensure that these technologies benefit humans, **prevent excessive destruction** and loss of lives especially during armed conflicts, and prohibit the misuse and abuse of these technologies, as well as to prevent these technologies from falling into the wrong hands, such as terrorists.

Regional cooperation through ASEAN-led mechanisms, especially through the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus, helps build confidence among States, and reduces any possibility of miscalculation in the use of emerging technologies for defence.

## **II. COUNTER-TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

The terrorism landscape has been shifting. Since the Daesh's territorial defeat in Iraq and Syria, communities supporting the group online are transforming and becoming increasingly independent of its centralised media strategy. According to Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre's database, the digital networks of supporters are now increasingly producing their propaganda independent of the Daesh central media wing, Amaq News Agency, and as a consequence breaking the militant Islamist online ecosystem into multiple independent entities. In turn, this fragmentation and the increased autonomy of online Daesh supporters constitute a greater challenge in monitoring these less uniform and more diffuse actors. It calls for a more comprehensive **whole-of-society approach in PCVE** that directly targets digital hostile environments and to come up with an early warning mechanism for violent extremism.

The COVID-19 pandemic also brings in new avenues to be exploited by violent extremist. Mismanagement of the pandemic by the government - *real or perceived* - could be a selling point to sow distrust and disinformation among the vulnerable communities. It also solidifies the COVID-19 pandemic as the divine punishment narrative or equally as the xenophobic and anti-immigrant narratives. A systematic exit strategy is needed to prevent a prolonged pandemic crisis from becoming a conducive environment for radicalisation.

The surge in the extreme right ideology in Malaysia should also be monitored closely. Increasing intolerance in issues concerning race, religion and ethnicity continue to intensify and manifest in the form of hate speeches and racial hostility. It is not a direct imitation of the White supremacist ideology but a more contextualised version on the far-right spectrum. In April 2020, a Rohingya activist received death threats in the wake of fake news that the activist demanded that they be granted citizenship, which depicts a clear example of this worrying trend.

Lastly, a growing role of women as perpetrators of terrorism in Southeast Asia calls for a more **gendered-sensitive approach in PCVE**. Females have now taken part in eight out of the eleven suicide attacks committed from May 2018 through May 2021. The recent suicide bombing of a church in Makassar, Indonesia, and a shooting at a police headquarters in Jakarta have once again highlighted the potential of female terrorist operatives. The incidents could affect neighbouring countries if the contagion effect – the tendency of well-publicised acts of violence to trigger copycat acts – is not addressed properly.

## **III. CYBERSECURITY**

The technology of today is the convergence of the physical and digital world. The society has become highly dependent on the internet, digital technology, and its services to

complete their daily tasks, activities, and work/business operations. With the COVID-19 pandemic, more users have turned their focus to digital technologies. This brings forth new opportunities, challenges, and an interesting possible future for ASEAN.

According to AT Kearney in their report '**The ASEAN Digital Revolution**', by the year 2025, ASEAN could have all the key characteristics of an advanced digital economy with 35 cities having the potential of becoming smart cities. The increase of the digital population within ASEAN also meant an increase in the cyber-attack surface. The variety of target to choose from are enormous and various tools would be used by cybercriminals to achieve their objectives.

Data breach and ransomware are becoming more frequent and the most damaging within the ASEAN community. In fact, IBM released the Cost of Data Breach Report 2019 stating that the average organizational cost of a data breach in ASEAN is USD2.62 million and the average number of records per breach is 22,500.

ASEAN is on the path of becoming the **4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution region**, therefore we must constantly improve and aggressively expand on key sectors to ensure nothing is lagging. Cybersecurity is no longer a luxury but a necessity as cybercrimes is evolving to become smarter and complex with threat actors becoming more persuasive to manipulate potential victims.

The most common approach to combat cybercrime is to increase awareness among citizens and users. The latest news, issues, and practices need to be taught to avoid becoming victims of cybercrime. Improving **digital literacy** among citizens and ensuring the correct information is shared through proper channels. Education on technology at an early age will provide significant impact.

Collaboration is the key, especially when facing an attack in the cyberspace. The management must take the steps towards providing cybersecurity leadership. In addition, they should also ensure everyone in the organization is compliant and follows the cybersecurity plans or policy guidelines.

In Malaysia, cybersecurity is viewed as a comprehensive ecosystem, consisting of people, policy, and process. We try to adapt more innovative, resilience, and proactive approaches to stay ahead of cyber-threats.

Malaysia as a nation has successfully adopted a holistic approach to enhancing the security of its cyber environment. Whilst at the same time, as part of the global community, Malaysia also aims to strengthen its international cooperation, especially

within ASEAN, to respond to global cyber challenges. With such approach, we hope to be able to benefit and take advantages of a secure, resilient, and trusted cyber environment.

Moving forward, ASEAN will need to collaborate, standardise, or find a common ground in its cybersecurity rules and regulations to enable the ASEAN Member States to collaborate efficiently and effectively in combating cyber threats.

#### **IV. THE CONVERGENCE OF TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY ISSUES WILL NECESSITATE UNIQUE, SUITABLE RESPONSES**

Non-traditional security issues, mainly anchored on recovery from the pandemic and the environment will present new challenges to ASEAN. Pandemic recovery will be the catalyst for future security concerns, with a growing convergence of traditional and non-traditional threats. While there appears to be broad recognition of this trend, constructing mechanisms to address these challenges is imperative.

##### **i. Pandemic recovery and emergence of public health as a national and regional security priority**

Pandemic containment and recovery are likely to be a top priority for ASEAN Member States for years to come. Massive amounts of resources, including what is usually allocated for defence and security, are being channeled towards these efforts. Heavy Government spending to offset negative impact of COVID-19 will severely restrict fiscal capacity for some ASEAN Member States. As the coming budgets focus on prioritized sectors, the likelihood is high that defence and security focused spending could be curtailed.

##### **Border control/Illegal movements of people due to uneven recovery**

Migrant workers, legal or otherwise, will gravitate towards countries and economies that are stable and have recovered faster. This will only add to the existing trend of movements generated by those forcibly displaced. Unchecked movements will raise domestic security concerns and border tensions due to potential imports of new virus variants, undesirable groups, and clashes with badly affected segments of host countries.

##### **ii. Growing discontent within the most affected segments of society**

The pandemic disproportionately impacts certain segments of society such as the poor, women, those who work in the informal sectors, irregular migrants, SMEs, and youth. Regression in human capital development and the advent of a “*lost generation*” on children’s nutrition, learning and socialization indexes, have long term implications. Thus, economic recovery plans must focus on these groups, or the widening income gap will cause discontent, exacerbating insurgencies and existing security issues.

### **iii. Enormous costs of disasters**

ASEAN Member States are not immune to increasingly unpredictable natural disasters such as climate change, earthquake, flooding as well as man-made disasters such as haze. Such catastrophes cause casualties among people, untold damages to infrastructure and properties, food scarcity and halting economic activities raising concerns on issues such as food security issues and supply chain disruptions.

### **iv. Where there are commonalities, greater ASEAN unity and coordination is needed**

There is a need for mechanisms that increase ASEAN unity and coordination, in order to increase the effectiveness of ASEAN response. For example, while there has been a general acknowledgement that the COVID-19 pandemic is a regional challenge with clear impacts on regional security, responses have largely been framed as an intra-state issue. Without true and effective regional unity and coordination, COVID-19 and other emerging challenges will continue to aggravate the security sphere and overall governance in Southeast Asia.

### I. SECURITY CONCERNS IN THE REGION AND NATIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY POLICIES

#### a. Security concerns common to the ASEAN Community

Asia-Pacific is a strategically important region in the world. As Southeast Asia is typically included in Asia-Pacific region, some problems occurring in Asia Pacific region have threatened the peace, stability and security in the region. Southeast Asia region is strategically located between Eastern and Western hemispheres of the world. In South East Asia, the synergy of ASEAN Member States in the political, economic and cultural sectors, have largely contributed to regional security and stability. Yet, among the ASEAN Member States, issues such as border disputes between neighboring countries, multiple claims to certain islands, illegal border trades, transnational crimes, human trafficking and interference in the internal affairs of other nations are the problems that needed to be carefully tackled.

The military expansions of regional states, the issues of disputed islands in East Asia and the power rivalry of super powers are the regional security problems which can transmute from the form of a spark to a flame at any time. If the problems are not peacefully tackled, these situations will impact from state-level security to regional security. As mentioned above, there are not only traditional security threats to the Asia Pacific region, but also the non-traditional security threats to the region. The threats include international terrorism, production of WMDs, arms smuggling, transnational crimes, illegal drugs producing and trafficking, human trafficking, maritime security, natural disasters and climate change, epidemic of infected diseases and illegal migration. As the consequences of technology developments, the momentum of Globalization assists the spread of non-traditional security problems and such threats are likely to endanger the regional to global security.

#### b. Individual National Defence Policies

Myanmar Tatmadaw upholds the three (3) main national causes as the national policy and always takes the responsibility of national security and defence. Regarding the Defence of the Union of Myanmar, the article 42 of State Constitution (2008) has clearly promulgated that:

- (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 Defence 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 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 defence 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.

#### **Defence Budget (Military Expenditure)**

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar allocated Defence Budget **about US \$ 2.3 Billion (2.7 % of GDP) for 2020-2021 fiscal year.**

#### **c. National contributions to promoting regional security**

Myanmar joined ASEAN in 1997 and has promoted the regional cooperation. In the same year, Myanmar became a member of Bay of Bengal Initiative of Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and has promoted the cooperation with South Asian countries. After becoming the ASEAN Member State, Myanmar joined ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) which is the most important political and security platform in Asia-Pacific region and has participated in the dialogues and workshops organized by the ARF.

Myanmar has commenced the formulation of the bills for anti-terrorism since 2005. After carrying out the amending and adding the complements to the bills with regard to the funding terrorism and handing over of criminals, Myanmar signed the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Among Like-Minded ASEAN Member Countries. Moreover, Myanmar signed the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism-ACCT as member in 2007 and ratified the Convention in 2012.

Regarding anti-narcotic measures, Myanmar has attended annual Meetings of ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matter-ASOD as an observer before joining ASEAN. After

becoming a member of ASEAN in August 1997, Myanmar has annually attended the ASOD since its 20<sup>th</sup> meeting in Brunei Darussalam and has been implementing its resolutions.

There are no ASEAN militaries' meetings and exchanges hosted by Myanmar from June 2020 to April 2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic.

For regional cooperation, Myanmar signed the MOU for narcotic drugs control with China, Laos, Thailand, Viet Nam and Cambodia in 1993 and MOU for the Centre of Information Sharing in Asia-Pacific region was signed with ASEAN Member States and Republic of Korea in 2014. A 15-year project for total elimination of narcotic drugs was implemented from 1999-2000 to 2013-2014 through the adoption of five (5) measures, namely: (i) the elimination of poppy cultivation; (ii) eradication of narcotic drug use; (iii) preventative measures; (iv) organising local people to support the measure; and (v) cooperation with international organizations. Anti-narcotic measures are also conducted in real time collaboration with adjacent countries in the region. In order to meet Myanmar Anti-Narcotic Project's requirements, another 5-year drug elimination plan for the fiscal years 2014-2015 to 2018-2019 is currently being implemented. For the effectiveness of anti-narcotic measures, the Department of Narcotic Drugs Elimination was reorganized into Myanmar Police Force Narcotic Drug Suppression Division in 2013.

In order to develop the friendly relations with regional countries, senior officials from Myanmar Armed Forces have all paid goodwill visits to regional countries. Reciprocally, military leaders from regional countries have also paid goodwill visits to Myanmar. Senior military officials and related ministers from Myanmar have attended ASEAN defence-related meetings and participated in regional security activities. Moreover, Myanmar has participated in regional security exercises.

## **II. FUTURE TRENDS ON REGIONAL SECURITY**

As ASEAN is enclosed in the Asia-Pacific region, the security threats to the region are also challenges for ASEAN. International terrorism, production of WMDs, arms smuggling, transnational crimes, illegal drug producing and smuggling, human trafficking, maritime security, natural disasters, climate change, epidemic of infected diseases and illegal migration are the challenges not only for the region but also for the global security.

Act of terror still remains as one of the most challenging measures to the sustainable security in the ASEAN region even though sustainable security in fact focuses on four (4) interconnected, long-term drivers of insecurity: (i) climate change; (ii) competition over resources; (iii) marginalisation of the majority world; and (iv) global militarisation. The

underlying root causes for such acts of terror are affiliated with the stimulus such as politics, nationalism and religion. Regardless of type of terrorism, human resources and modernized technologies will compulsorily be required in order to conduct counter terrorism.

As the impacts of the security threats grow among ASEAN Member States, all Member States have compulsorily share the information related to counter terrorism. Any type of terrorism is to be the concerns of any country, and the common security threat for ASEAN Member States, the deeper cooperation among ASEAN militaries become necessary. Preventive measures and intelligence services should be sorted out as a high priority, additionally accompanying activities such as enhancing cooperation, reciprocal assistance in technology and training sectors, bilateral and multilateral support among countries and creating blockage in interconnection among terrorist extremist groups.

The acts of terror become the prominent threat in 21<sup>st</sup> century, and these terrorist activities are carried out by the individual groups or non-state actors. Some terrorist organizations are able to establish their connection not only with other organization within the country, but also with those from other countries and regions. Consequently, the cooperation among ASEAN Member States is necessarily required for conducting counter terrorism, otherwise the Safe Havens for the terrorist organizations will also be existed occurring their continuous attacks around the world.

ASEAN Member States have to enhance the bilateral and multilateral relations and deepen military and security cooperation to respond to the challenges relating to acts of terror which we are now confronting and support us building our future nations as to be peace, tranquil and developed. Coordination among countries will surely support for dissolving the problems and enable to confront the challenges. Moreover, the betterment of the relationship among the ASEAN militaries will ensure the successful implementation processes of counter terrorism.

With regard to the role of ASEAN armed forces, the contributions of the armed forces based on the principles of coordination and cooperation to the stability and peace of the region are critically required. In responding to the regional security challenges by the cooperation and principles of joint actions, the role of ASEAN armed forces should continue emphasizing on a more stable and secure region. Moreover, the non-traditional security threats such as natural disasters, terrorism, maritime security and transnational crimes, epidemics, food and energy security, human security, cybercrimes, climate changes and global warming are still regional concerns and the ASEAN armed forces should continue conducting the information sharing, capacity building, joint exercises and trainings.

ASEAN Member States should continue enhancing peace and stability of the region in cooperative manner, encourage the states to sign the additional protocol of the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ), cooperate more in the areas of traditional security challenges and non-traditional security challenges that will impact regional peace and stability such as the risk of extremists and terrorists, disaster management and information security, drug trafficking, human and arms smuggling, transnational crimes, illegal migration, money laundering, sea piracy and maritime security, climate change and epidemics like Zika, Ebola and Coronavirus Diseases (COVID-19).

## THE PHILIPPINES

### I. SECURITY CONCERNS IN THE REGION AND NATIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY POLICIES

#### a. Security concerns common to the ASEAN Community

The ASEAN region continues to enjoy peace and stability as a result of the collective will of the people to cooperate and facilitate avenues for dialogue among governments and other concerned stakeholders on areas of mutual concern. However, ASEAN is not without traditional and non-traditional challenges that could disrupt overall peace, stability, and economic progress. Geopolitical tensions and deceleration of economic growth exacerbate problems in the region, all happening in the midst of a pandemic.

ASEAN is in the middle of a push and pull, as growing strategic divergences and differing visions of regional order intensify among major powers. The region has always been considered an arena of great power rivalry, the epicenter of competing influence.

Considering geopolitical realities, asserting ASEAN Centrality is crucial more than ever. Countries in the region have also found it necessary to pragmatically engage major powers, carefully threading between their competing economic assistance and balancing political-security trade-offs. At the same time, ASEAN Member States are diversifying and deepening their relations with other partners.

Southeast Asia is also increasingly linked to the broader security complex in the Indo-Pacific. Escalating tensions in maritime security, particularly from the territorial and maritime disputes in the South China Sea, continue to test the resolve of states. Securing freedom of navigation and sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) in the South China Sea has also made it a hotbed of concern not only among claimant states, but also for external partners.

The recent primacy of military over civilian authority in Myanmar, along with the loss of lives, is another alarming development in the region that warrants immediate solution.

There also seems to be another round of impasse in inter-Korean relations as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Republic of Korea (ROK) have not moved beyond the 2018 Inter-Korean Summits. Deterioration of mutual trust is fueled by several factors such as the presence of border hostilities and accidental military clashes in the Korean Peninsula, DPRK's continuous violation of inter-Korean agreements and

UN Security Council resolutions on developing nuclear capabilities, and the rising number and sophistication of cyberattacks by DPRK agents.

Given the gamut of concerns confronting Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific, states need to deepen cooperation and collaboration in order to move towards a lasting solution. As then Acting Undersecretary for Bilateral Relations and ASEAN Affairs Ambassador Elizabeth Buensuceso stated in May 2021, “the best way to move forward against collective threats and challenges is to present a united front.”<sup>1</sup>

Equally critical, ASEAN is faced with many non-traditional challenges that are transboundary in nature, coming from non-conventional sources, and in need of more creative and collaborative responses. Foremost is terrorism and the spread of violent extremism that persist even as the world grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictive measures taken by the government to curb the spread of the virus has suppressed the activities of terrorists in public spaces. However, the use of online spaces to spread propaganda and disinformation, attract followers, and recruit new members, though not new, has increased. As more people stay at home, more people spend more time online, and terrorists have taken advantage of this situation to instill fear amid the pandemic and advance their extremist propaganda online.

Other non-traditional challenges include the rise in transnational crimes as the unwanted consequence of deeper economic integration, people-to-people linkages and mobility, and technological advancement. As ASEAN Member States become more interconnected and interdependent under one ASEAN Community, they are also increasingly exposed to different criminal activities such as trade of illicit drugs, small arms trade, human smuggling, trafficking in persons, piracy and armed robbery of ships at sea, and cybercrimes. These criminal activities create human insecurity and are a menace to communities. ASEAN should therefore be able to vigorously combat these newer forms of security threats.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly caused disruption worldwide. It has caused massive unemployment and economic recession, and has deepened socio-economic gaps and income disparity. Health systems, together with the lack of medical staff and resources, were put to the test with the rising number of COVID-19 cases. Nevertheless, ASEAN and its external partners are working closely together to fast-track the region’s recovery process, and an important step to this is prioritizing vaccination for the whole population.

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<sup>1</sup> Manila Bulletin. (29 May 2021) “PH seeks united front for regional peace, stability: Japan cited as a strong partner” [https://mb.com.ph/2021/05/29/ph-seeks-united-front-for-regional-peace-stability-japan-cited-a-strong-partner/?fbclid=IwAR0A2lrPN8Qcp-q8DW2dBxIersRcubAoB4AOUQKawNbUwvoR7xv\\_p7bkTOc](https://mb.com.ph/2021/05/29/ph-seeks-united-front-for-regional-peace-stability-japan-cited-a-strong-partner/?fbclid=IwAR0A2lrPN8Qcp-q8DW2dBxIersRcubAoB4AOUQKawNbUwvoR7xv_p7bkTOc)

Another common concern is environmental degradation. While Southeast Asia is among the world's richest regions in terms of biodiversity, mineral deposits, and other natural resources, it faces environmental risks caused by deforestation, pollution, unsustainable agricultural and fishing practices, and rapid loss of biodiversity. The health of the natural environment is critical to sustainable economic development and food security in ASEAN, and it is imperative for ASEAN Member States to work together to protect the environment and conserve its resources.

The list of common non-traditional security threats in Southeast Asia demonstrates the connection between security and development. Poverty, economic inequality, pandemics, food shortages, and environmental degradation, among others, can also create security threats to states, but these are ultimately linked to economic and human development. Therefore, attaining the promises of the ASEAN Community and bringing economic development for all peoples of the region, is one way by which ASEAN can effectively address the above-mentioned security concerns. Post-pandemic progress on both security and economic fronts is attainable with unity and resiliency.

## **b. Individual National Defense Policies**

Philippine defense and foreign policies are anchored on the 1987 Constitution which states that the country is a democracy that renounces war as an instrument of foreign policy, and embraces generally accepted principles of international law. The Philippines is also pursuing an independent foreign policy that advances national interests, and seeks amity and cooperation with all nations – both traditional allies and new partners.

The vision of the Philippines for a secure and prosperous nation is anchored on two (2) key documents: (1) 2017-2022 National Security Policy (NSP); and (2) the 2018-2022 National Security Strategy (NSS). The NSP establishes the Philippines' national security goals and strategic directions with particular focus on the political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, environmental, informational, diplomatic and military aspects, which are vital for nation-building. The NSS, on the other hand, articulates in operational terms the policies set forth in the NSP through (1) the combined, balanced, and effective use of the instruments of state power, and (2) wealth creation and resource generation. In 2019, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) released a new National Military Strategy (NMS) which articulates how the AFP would conduct its missions in pursuit of its mandate and in support of the NSS and NDS.

The development of a minimum credible deterrence remains the main goal of the AFP, with the ongoing implementation of Horizon Two of the Revised Armed Forces of the

Philippines Modernization Program (RAFPMP). The Horizon Two, which will run until 2022, has a requirement of PHP 300 billion or USD 5.6 billion in 2018 prices.

The Philippines continues to diversify security relations and cultivate partnerships with members of the international community. These defense collaboration and security engagements provide the AFP a wider perspective and exposure to new technologies and systems, and most importantly, facilitate the sharing of new knowledge and skills, thereby strengthening interoperability and combat readiness

For the fiscal year 2021, the approved defense budget of the Philippines is PHP 205.8 billion (USD 4.244 billion), which is a 7.13 percent increase from PHP 192.1 billion (USD 3.776 billion) in the previous year. The defense budget also makes up 4.57 percent of the total government budget of PHP 4.506 trillion for 2021.

### **c. National contributions to promoting regional security**

- *Terrorism*

Aside from extremist ideologies, socio-economic conditions such as youth unemployment, poverty, militarization, and corruption cultivate extremism in the communities. Weak local institutions coupled with stagnant economic development make it difficult to weed out radicalization. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these conditions as many lost their jobs and were forced to delay their education. These disruptions could affect mental health and foment anti-government attitudes that make people, especially the youth, more vulnerable to extremist narratives.

At the domestic level, terrorist attacks in the Philippines have continued unabated amid the COVID-19 pandemic. On 24 August 2020, twin bombs were set off in Jolo, Sulu, killing 14 and injuring 80, to which Abu Sayyaf claimed responsibility. The Philippines remains among the top countries affected by terrorism. Nevertheless, the Philippines' ranking has improved in the 2020 Global Terrorism Index at 10<sup>th</sup> place, one step lower than the previous year's ranking.

In the Philippines, terrorism continues to emanate from the local terrorist groups (LTGs), including the IS-affiliated groups such as the Abu Sayyaf and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, and from foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), who continue to collaborate with the LTGs in carrying out terror attacks. Abu Sayyaf remains the most active among the IS-affiliated groups despite suffering from relentless government security operations.

The Philippines has recognized the need to implement inclusive counterterrorism initiatives, which focus not only on the application of military force to combat terrorist

activities, but also on the elimination of the socio-economic conditions that allow radicalization and violent extremism to thrive in communities.

The government has adopted the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (NAP-PCVE), with the Department of the Interior and Local Government leading its implementation. The plan involves addressing the root causes of extremism in spaces where they are likely to breed, including certain communities, learning institutions, jails, and social media. It has also recognized the role of education in preventing radicalization by designating local government units (LGUs) in conducting PCVE training and workshops at the grassroots. These initiatives include working with religious leaders (e.g., *imams* and *Muftis*) to help deradicalize youths who are often vulnerable to recruitment.

The AFP also helps various government agencies and LGUs to facilitate the operationalization of the NAP-PCVE. It deployed Community Support Program Teams in the countryside to assess the people's needs, facilitate development, and improve governance in the area by organizing communities and linking them to appropriate government units and agencies. Promptly addressing bad governance and lack of basic services means that terrorists would have lesser issues to exploit to bolster their propaganda and recruitment narratives.

The government also fast-tracked the enactment of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) of 2020, which repealed the Human Security Act of 2007. With sufficient safeguards against abuse in place, it strengthens terrorism-related law enforcement capacities and criminal justice procedures to preserve national security. The ATA also provides the legal framework to prosecute FTFs, as the bombings in the country in recent years illustrate their role in instigating terror attacks. The Marawi siege has taught the government that an effective legal framework is needed to address the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism in the Philippines.

To complement its national initiatives and policies, the Philippines pursues a broad range of bilateral and multilateral partnerships. The Department of National Defense and the AFP have been collaborating with partners for mutual development of critical counter-terrorism capabilities through joint trainings and exercises and subject matter expert (SME) exchanges. Among the initiatives include the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA) with Malaysia and Indonesia, intelligence exchanges (INTELEX) and Analyst-to-Analyst Exchanges (ATAX), ASEAN-365 Information Sharing Platform, "Our Eyes" Initiative, and the Regional Counter-terrorism Information Facility (CTIF) in Singapore.

The Philippines has also actively participated in regional and global meetings which include the Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines Trilateral Security Conference, the 5<sup>th</sup> Philippine-Australia Strategic Dialogue, and the 8<sup>th</sup> Regional Meeting of Heads Intelligence and Security Services in South-East Asia. High-level visits include the scoping visit for the Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism in Asia (STRIVE Asia) Project on 22 January 2020, the UN Countering Terrorist Travel (UNCTT) Programme Technical Assessment Visit from 27 February to 2 March 2020, and the Joint High-Level Visit of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) from 2 to 3 March 2020. At the heart of these meetings and visits is the commitment to strengthen the Philippine government's counter-terrorism capacity to respond to national security threats.

The Philippines also co-organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> ARF Workshop on Aviation Security and Information Sharing with Australia and the United States in February 2021, which discussed best practices in preventing and addressing foreign terrorist travel, as well as other security issues being faced by the aviation sector.

The persistence of terrorist threats necessitates stronger cooperation and collaboration among states and other stakeholders. Apart from sharing best practices and expertise in deradicalization, national governments must also continue to strengthen and standardize security laws and border controls, increase intelligence-sharing, develop rehabilitation practices, and improve the capacities of communities. Most importantly, it is imperative to strengthen social and economic institutions to address the underlying conditions of terrorism and violent extremism, such as economic inequality, social injustice, and marginalization.

- *Transnational crimes*

The Philippines is determined to provide a proactive solution to the proliferation of illicit drugs by upholding the rule of law, observing due process, and complying with its commitments under international human rights conventions. The Philippine Anti-Illegal Drug Strategy (PADS) serves as the government's blueprint for suppressing drug supply and decreasing drug demand in the country. It harmonizes anti-illegal drug initiatives and encourages collaboration among national government agencies. Anchored on the National Security Policy and the 2017-2022 Philippine Development Plan, PADS is governed by three (3) principles: (1) evidence-based and culturally appropriate; (2) comprehensive and balanced approach; and (3) inter-sectoral and participatory.

The Philippine government adopts a comprehensive, whole-of-nation approach in addressing the drug problem through prevention, education and public awareness, treatment and rehabilitation, law enforcement, and dispensation of justice. Through the

Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB), the government has implemented various seminars and programs to raise awareness on drug prevention and promote a drug-free society. It has partnered with LGUs, faith-based groups, and civil society groups in attaining drug-free communities by institutionalizing programs, seminars, and workshops for the youth, families, health practitioners, and law enforcers. These initiatives cater to government employees, educators, youth, families, health practitioners, and law enforcers.

The government advocates for the reduction of drug-affectation through the implementation of the Barangay Drug Clearing Program (BDCP) that integrates supply, demand and harm reduction strategies toward forming drug-resistant and self-policing communities. The BDCP consists of three phases of implementation, with the end goal of rehabilitating and reintegrating drug users and offenders to the society and clearing communities from illegal drugs. As of 28 February 2021, 21,252 out of 42,045 communities nationwide have been cleared of illicit substances.

In terms of treatment and rehabilitation, the Philippines has institutionalized Community-Based Drug Rehabilitation Programs (CBDRP) in recognition of the important role of communities in creating favorable conditions of treatment and rehabilitation for People Who Use Drugs (PWUDs). The government has provided funding to cities and provinces throughout the country to establish, maintain, and operate CBDRP facilities for mild and moderate PWUDs who would surrender voluntarily for appropriate interventions under *Oplan Sagip*. Through the reformation activities of 209 *Balay Silangan* reformation centers, the government has reintegrated 2,738 drug offenders into the society.

Regionally, the Philippines supports ASEAN mechanisms, such as the ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN), which give emphasis to policy formulation and program development through data collection, sharing of best practices, and establishing accountability among ASEAN Member States. Likewise, the Philippines continues to support the implementation and realization of the goals identified in the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016-2025. In the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters, the Philippines serves as Chair of the Treatment and Rehabilitation Working Group, where it benchmarked its policies and best practices on institutionalizing treatment and rehabilitation initiatives with ASEAN Member States.

On the issue of human trafficking, the Philippines retained its Tier 1 status in the 2020 US State Department Report on Trafficking in Persons for fully complying with the standards for the elimination of human trafficking.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> United States Department of State. 2020 Trafficking in Persons Reports. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-trafficking-in-persons-report/> (accessed on 03 March 2021)

The Philippine-sponsored resolution “Trafficking in Women and Girls” in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 19 November 2020. The resolution highlights the importance of preventing trafficking, eliminating the demand for it, prosecuting the perpetrators, and protecting and reintegrating victims. Built upon a resolution that the Philippines has been facilitating since 1995, the 2020 resolution recognizes the impact of the pandemic on human trafficking, especially as it increases the vulnerability of women and girls.

On 12 February 2020, the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 11299 otherwise known as “An Act Establishing the Office for the Social Welfare Attaché” was signed. The law highlights the provision of psychosocial services to distressed overseas Filipinos, including victims of trafficking, particularly in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, South Korea, Qatar, Malaysia, and Hong Kong.

At the regional level, the adoption and entry into force of the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP), which was spearheaded by the Philippines, marked a major achievement that demonstrated a region-wide commitment to combat trafficking in persons. It provides specific action plans within ASEAN Member States’ domestic laws and policies, as well as relevant international obligations, to effectively address concerns such as prevention of trafficking in persons (TIP), protection of victims, law enforcement and prosecution, and regional and international cooperation and coordination.

Article 24 of the ACTIP holds the Senior Officials’ Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) responsible for promoting, monitoring, reviewing, and reporting periodically to the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime on the effective implementation of the Convention. The Philippines recognizes the urgent need to establish mechanisms institutionalizing the reporting, monitoring, and evaluation of the implementation of the ACTIP, as indicated in Article 24. Such a system would be an essential tool for gauging the effectiveness of the ACTIP.

As Chair of the 20<sup>th</sup> ASEAN SOMTC, the Philippines continues to set a high standard in the fight against transnational crimes and acts as Voluntary Lead Shepherd on Trafficking in Persons.

Overall, the Philippines’ experience in combating transnational crimes demonstrates the need for an integrated approach among government agencies, and the active support by other sectors and stakeholders, complemented by strong collaboration with international partners.

- *Maritime Security*

As an archipelagic state, the Philippines places high priority on maritime security. It is fully committed to resolving its territorial and maritime disputes peacefully, combating crimes at sea, guaranteeing the freedom and safety of navigation, and ensuring the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and in cooperation with regional partners and the international community. The country also takes seriously issues such as piracy and armed robbery at sea; maritime kidnapping and terrorism; trafficking in and smuggling of weapons, drugs, and persons; illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing; poaching; intentional marine environmental destruction; climate change; and disregard for safety of life at sea and navigation, including engaging in maneuvers that increase the risk of collisions at sea.

As a littoral state in the South China Sea, the Philippines affirms the importance of peaceful management and resolution of disputes through dialogue, cooperation, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 (UNCLOS). In this regard, the Philippines further reaffirms the importance of maintaining peace, stability, security, and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea, and the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities, avoid actions that may further complicate the situation, and pursue the peaceful resolution of disputes, without the threat or use of force.

The Philippines is committed to underscoring the urgency of concluding an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) that is consistent with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, in order to reduce tensions and minimize the risk of incidents. The Philippines recognizes that actions that coerce, intimidate, provoke, escalate tensions, undermine mutual trust and confidence, and violate state sovereignty and sovereign rights guaranteed by international law, particularly the 1982 UNCLOS, impede the progress and momentum of the COC negotiations and threaten its success.

As Country Coordinator for ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations for 2018–2021, the Philippines is committed to continue working closely with ASEAN Member States and China in the substantive COC negotiations. The Philippines welcomes the completion of the first reading of the Single Draft COC Negotiating Text (SDNT) and the commencement of the second reading in 2019. The Philippines is actively spearheading the step-by-step resumption of the COC negotiations in 2020, which had been delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Several virtual meetings have been conducted in 2020 to 2021 to discuss non-policy issues. The Special ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers’

Meeting held on 07 June 2021 in Chongqing, the first ever physical meeting of ASEAN with a dialogue partner since the onset of the pandemic, agreed to resume substantive textual negotiations on the SDNT through virtual meetings, with the understanding that physical meetings would remain the primary modality of negotiations.

The Philippines also encourages all parties in the South China Sea to continue exploring practical maritime cooperative initiatives as early harvest measures in accordance with Paragraph 6 of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC). The Philippines is pleased with the implementation of the 2016 Joint Statement on the Application of the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) in the South China Sea and the 2016 Guidelines for Hotline Communications among Senior Officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of ASEAN Member States and China in Response to Maritime Emergencies in the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. The Philippines hopes that substantive regional cooperation will be enhanced in line with the 2017 Declaration for a Decade of Coastal and Marine Environmental Protection in the South China Sea (2017–2027), which affirmed the commitment of ASEAN Member States and China to preserve and sustainably manage coastal and marine ecosystems in the South China Sea.

Alongside multilateral approaches, the Philippines also makes use of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism on the South China Sea (BCM) with China, which was established in 2017.

Beyond the South China Sea disputes, the Philippines is fully committed to peacefully resolve its maritime disputes with other neighbors. In 2019, the Philippines completed the ratification of its maritime boundary agreement with Indonesia over their overlapping exclusive economic zones (EEZs) in the Sulawesi Sea and the Philippine Sea. The treaty entered into force on 01 August 2019 after an exchange of the instruments of ratification. The Philippines considers the maritime boundary delimitation agreement with Indonesia to be a valuable example of peaceful and rules-based dispute settlement in accordance with the 1982 UNCLOS.

In the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas, the Philippines is pleased with the state of its cooperation with Indonesia and Malaysia under the 2016 Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement, which establishes a framework for coordinated maritime and air patrols among the three countries. Since the launching of patrols in 2017, there has been a significant reduction in abductions of shipping crews in the tri-border area. The Philippines is confident that continued trilateral cooperation will eventually help the littoral states effectively combat piracy, armed robbery at sea, and other crimes at sea in the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas.

The Philippines supports ASEAN-led maritime security fora such as the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ARF ISM on MS), the ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF), the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM), and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus). The Philippines lauds maritime security initiatives that have emerged from these ASEAN-led fora, including the Inaugural ADMM-Plus Maritime Security Field Training Exercise (FTX), the launching of the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI), and the adoption of the Guidelines for Air Military Encounters (GAME) and the Guidelines for Maritime Interaction.

The Philippines also supports ASEAN-led multilateral maritime exercises, such as the ASEAN Multilateral Naval Exercise (AMNEX), first held in 2017 with a second iteration scheduled in 2023 to be hosted by the Philippines; The Philippines recognizes the value of these various fora and initiatives in fostering dialogue, enhancing mutual understanding, and building confidence on maritime issues at different levels. The Philippines also supports efforts to boost coordination and synergy among these ASEAN-led fora.

Recognizing the role played by coast guards and law enforcement agencies in addressing specific maritime concerns, and noting how incidents at sea can take place between or involving civilian vessels, the Philippines is also advocating for greater coordination and cooperation among these bodies in the region and beyond. In 2018, the Philippines hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Experts' Group Meeting on the Establishment of an ASEAN Coast Guards Forum (ACGF). The Philippines hopes for further discussions to explore the feasibility of establishing an ACGF. The Philippines also welcomes parallel efforts at the ARF, guided by the 2016 ASEAN Regional Forum Ministerial Statement on Enhancing Cooperation among Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies.

On the issue of marine environment protection and sustainability, the Philippines supports the work of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) which is headquartered in Los Baños, Laguna. ACB's facilitation of collaboration among ASEAN Member States on biodiversity conservation, such as through the ASEAN Heritage Parks Program, is commendable and should be continuously prioritized by ASEAN. The Philippines also recognizes the roles of the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI), the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) in enhancing regional cooperation on sustainable marine economic development and marine environmental protection.

- *Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)*

The Philippines remains committed to the ASEAN Declaration on “One ASEAN, One Response” signed in Laos in 2016 on responding to natural and man-made disasters within and outside the region. It supports the work of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), to which it has also become a beneficiary of assistance. It also actively contributes to the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) as a framework for initiatives and programs on disaster management. The Philippines chaired the 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM) and the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the AADMER in which AADMER Work Program 2021-2025 was adopted in November 2020.<sup>3</sup>

At the ADMM, the Philippines actively participates in the development and adoption of Chapter 6 of Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP) on facilitation and utilization of military assets and capacities for HADR. The country also supports the work of the newly established ASEAN Center of Military Medicine (ACMM), and also calls for enhanced military cooperation and interface with civil society organizations, especially in disaster management.

The Philippines is also one of the two countries where the ASEAN Satellite Warehouses were established. This measure seeks to improve mobilization and delivery of relief items across the region.<sup>4</sup>

On the domestic level, the Philippines has legislated the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, otherwise known as Republic Act 10121, a law that acts as the framework of the government in mitigating risks, enhancing disaster response, and improving societies’ disaster resilience. This serves as the guiding document on the development of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP) 2011-2028 which aims to build safer, adaptive, and disaster resilient Filipino communities toward sustainable development. The NDRRMP covers four (4) thematic areas such as (1) Disaster Prevention and Mitigation; (2) Disaster Preparedness; (3) Disaster Response; and (4) Disaster Rehabilitation and Recovery. It also integrates gender-responsive and rights-based policies and balances between science-based approaches and indigenous knowledge. It aligns the Philippines’ commitment to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> ASEAN adopts New Disaster Management Framework for 2021-2025, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/asean-adopts-new-disaster-management-framework-2021-2025>

<sup>4</sup> Chairman's Statement of the 26th ARF, Bangkok, August 2, 2019, <https://asean.org/chairmans-statement-26th-asean-regional-forum/>

<sup>5</sup> National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP) 2011-2028, [https://ndrrmc.gov.ph/attachments/article/41/NDRRM\\_Plan\\_2011-2028.pdf](https://ndrrmc.gov.ph/attachments/article/41/NDRRM_Plan_2011-2028.pdf)

As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, The Philippines activated an Interagency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID). This inter-agency task force acts as the main advisory body to the President of the Philippines on the matters relating to pandemic response and recovery in the country. The IATF-EID created the *Interagency Contingency Plan for Emerging Infectious Diseases and COVID-19*, which provides the government the necessary tools and the proper courses of action in dealing with infectious disease breakouts.<sup>6</sup>

- *Non-proliferation*

The Philippines is a strong advocate for nuclear governance by actively supporting international agreements on non-proliferation, and calling for the full implementation of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty. It is committed to preserve Southeast Asia as a region free from nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and the SEANWFZ Treaty.

The Philippines deposited with the United Nations the instrument of ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on 18 February 2021, following the Philippine Senate's unanimous concurrence of the treaty's ratification on 1 February 2021. This milestone, according to President Rodrigo Duterte, "reinforces the Philippines' resolve together with the international community in pursuing a world free from nuclear weapons." It also builds on the country's "principled commitment to work towards the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction for peace, security, and the survival of all humanity."

The Philippines supports the signing of the Agreement for Practical Arrangements between ASEAN and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), signed in Vienna, Austria on 16 September 2019. This arrangement serves as a framework for cooperation in the areas of nuclear science, technology and applications, nuclear safety, security and safeguards, for a period of five years.

The Philippines also supports ASEAN-led mechanisms that strengthen nuclear security such as the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM), ASEAN Nuclear Energy Cooperation Sub-Sector Network (NEC-SSN), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and East Asia Summit (EAS). Under the ARF, the Philippines has hosted several workshops and table-top exercises on issues such as biological threat reduction; bio-risk management; disease detection and surveillance; preparedness and response to a biological event; countering illicit trafficking of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) materials; and raising awareness on CBRN risk management.

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<sup>6</sup> COVID-19 Humanitarian Response Plan Philippines, *Philippines: COVID-19 Response Plan (May 11, 2020 Revision)*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/philippines-covid-19-humanitarian-response-plan-may-11-2020-revision>

Most recently, the Philippines co-chaired the ARF Workshop on Nuclear Risk Reduction with Australia on 18-19 November 2020, where participants shared their views on nuclear risk reduction and its increasing importance in relation to nuclear disarmament and reducing the risk of conflict.

At the national level, the Philippines implements a unified and whole-of-government approach to counter the threat of weapons of mass destruction under the CBRN National Action Plan. The country's diplomatic, security, health, science, and technology sectors closely coordinate to improve standards, processes, and regulations for threat reduction, risk management, preparedness, and response.

As a member of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Philippines contributed USD 15,000 for the construction of the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre) on 9 April 2021. The Centre will enhance OPCW's capability to assist and provide critical support and training for Member States in tackling new and emerging chemical weapons threats.

- *Defence cooperation*

The Philippines is actively pursuing cooperation with traditional allies and new partners in addressing different security concerns. The longstanding alliance between the Philippines and the United States has evolved to broad areas of cooperation in capacity-building, maritime law enforcement, HADR, and counter-terrorism, among many others.

But while the alliance with the United States will remain a cornerstone of Philippine defense posture, the country continues to engage other regional partners toward practical cooperation in different issue-areas. The thrust of President Duterte to have an independent foreign policy has created new impetus for the Philippines to explore and deepen partnerships with different countries. Philippine defense and military officials have engaged in bilateral engagements with counterparts from Japan, Australia, India, Russia, Singapore, among other countries, to deepen cooperation in areas such as HADR, maritime security, and counter-terrorism.

The Philippines and China have enjoyed reinvigorated ties in terms of economic and functional cooperation in key areas such as bilateral trade, investments promotion, and development assistance. In August 2019, with the official visit of President Duterte to China, both countries renewed their commitment to further enhance their comprehensive strategic partnership. The visit resulted in six (6) cooperation agreements in the areas of education, science and technology, finance and customs. The Philippines and Russia are also exploring ways to advance defense cooperation in terms of collaboration on counter-

terrorism, as well as combatting cybersecurity and drug trafficking. There is also discussion on the possible procurement of military equipment.

At the ADMM, the Philippines has co-chaired an ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Cyber Security with New Zealand. A Table-Top Exercise was held on 1-2 August 2019 in Manila. The Philippine Navy also participated in the ADMM-Plus Maritime Security Field Training Exercise (ADMM-Plus MARSEC FTX) from 29 April to 13 May 2019. Apart from these engagements, the Philippines supports enhancing linkages between ADMM and the Network of ASEAN Defense and Security Institutions (NADI).

- *Peacekeeping Operations*

The Philippines has actively engaged in the United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Operations since 1963 and continues to ensure that its pledges under the UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS) are met. The Philippines' participation in these missions not only highlights its commitment to promote global and regional peace, security, and stability, but also its efforts to improve its armed forces and police through sharing best practices with counterparts.

On 25 September 2018, the Philippines endorsed the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations at the High-Level Event on Action for Peacekeeping (A4P). The A4P commits to advance political solutions to conflict and enhance the political impact of peacekeeping; strengthen the protection provided by peacekeeping operations; improve the safety and security of peacekeepers; support effective performance and accountability by all peacekeeping components; strengthen the peacebuilding impact of peacekeeping; improve peacekeeping partnerships; and strengthen the conduct of peacekeeping operations and personnel.<sup>7</sup>

During the 2019 UN Peacekeeping Defense Ministerial Meeting, the Philippines committed 90 military observers and peacekeeping staff, one force headquarters support unit, and one aeromedical evacuation team to the UN PCRS.<sup>8</sup> The government is currently enhancing its capabilities to support future deployments and has allowed the deployment of its military and police regardless of security threat level in any areas.<sup>9</sup>

While the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has impaired the implementation of peacekeeping forces, the Philippines stresses the need for adequate funding to facilitate

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<sup>7</sup> Philippines Endorses Declaration on Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping. <https://dfa.gov.ph/dfa-news/news-from-our-foreign-service-postupdate/18097-ph-endorses-declaration-on-shared-commitments-on-un-peacekeeping> (accessed 02 June 2021)

<sup>8</sup> Philippine Defense Secretary Lorenza announces Philippine Pledge at the 2019 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Meeting in New York City. <https://www.un.int/philippines/activities/philippine-defense-secretary-lorenza-announces-philippine-pledge-2019-un-peacekeeping> (accessed 02 June 2021)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

humanitarian access and mitigate the impact of mobility restrictions, especially of vulnerable groups in conflict situations.<sup>10</sup>

As of 31 March 2021, the Philippines is the 7<sup>th</sup> largest UN peacekeeping contributor among ASEAN countries.<sup>11</sup> Philippine peacekeepers compose of 10 Experts on Mission who are deployed in three (3) missions: six (6) in the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), two (2) in the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), and two (2) in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).<sup>12</sup>

The Philippines supports UN efforts at gender mainstreaming and reaffirms its commitment to increase the participation of women in peace operations.<sup>13</sup> The deployment of female peacekeepers fulfills the government's commitment under the Republic Act 9710, otherwise known as the Magna Carta of Women, which seeks to empower women and ensure their active and meaningful participation in areas of peacekeeping, peacemaking, peacebuilding, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.

The Philippines has adopted stringent criteria in the selection of its peacekeeping candidates. Philippine peacekeepers abide by the highest standards of conduct and behavior when they are deployed to missions. The government regards that success in peacekeeping operations should be measured by how well peacekeepers have protected civilians, especially children, and prevented their sexual abuse.

The Philippines also supports and promotes practical cooperation on regional defense and security issues by implementing the Work Programme of the ADMM and the Three-Year Work Plans of the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups particularly in peacekeeping. The Philippines also actively contributes to the work of the ASEAN Peacekeeping Centres Network (APCN) as a platform for collaboration and exchange of experiences and best practices among peacekeeping centers of ASEAN Member States.

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<sup>10</sup> Philippines Underscores Role of UN Peacekeeping Missions Amid COVID-19. <https://dfa.gov.ph/dfa-news/news-from-our-foreign-service-postsupdate/28936-philippines-underscores-role-of-un-peacekeeping-missions-amid-covid-19> (accessed 02 June 2021)

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping Troop and Police Contributors as of 31 March 2021. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors> (accessed 02 June 2021)

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Philippines Reaffirms Commitment to Increase Deployment of Women Peacekeepers. <https://dfa.gov.ph/dfa-news/news-from-our-foreign-service-postsupdate/26016-ph-reaffirms-commitment-to-increase-deployment-of-women-peacekeepers> (accessed 02 June 2021)

## II. FUTURE TRENDS ON REGIONAL SECURITY

Since ASEAN's formation in 1967, many flashpoints and geopolitical concerns have remained unresolved and have shaped the developments in the region. Along with the emergence of new challenges, they have tested ASEAN's unity and resiliency to sustain overall peace, stability, and prosperity.

ASEAN is a testament to how regionalism in a region as diverse as Southeast Asia can flourish in its own way and at its own pace. Through the distinct "ASEAN Way" of consultation, dialogue, and consensus-building, Southeast Asian countries that have different political systems, levels of economic development, and cultural traditions, are able to come together and work toward the common good. When an ASEAN Member State is faced with an internal struggle, the ASEAN Way has been proven to be a balanced approach in addressing issues and concerns.

This has allowed ASEAN to manage and contribute lasting solutions to internal disputes without the need to interfere in the domestic affairs of a country. The current developments in Myanmar, with the takeover of government by the military, is one example by which ASEAN is trying its best to balance the interests of all concerned stakeholders, domestically, and internationally.

ASEAN is not only commendable for its efforts to preserve unity among Member States, but also for its critical role in engaging middle and major powers. External partners have regarded ASEAN as a regional convener for both political-security and economic matters, where states are able to come together to discuss and explore ways of cooperation on areas of mutual concerns. ASEAN engages every relevant stakeholder in the region, and asserts what has become known as "ASEAN Centrality" in different mechanisms that it has developed over the years. Hence, even with the emergence of various visions of regional order such as the Indo-Pacific Outlook, external partners have strongly recognized and respected ASEAN Centrality, which puts ASEAN in the center of shaping the regional security architecture.

ASEAN should not only engage, but also continuously encourage major powers and other relevant stakeholders to uphold the principles of peaceful settlement of disputes, non-threat and non-use of force, and effective cooperation—which are all in the UN Charter and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC)—as the basis of conduct of relations in Southeast Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region. ASEAN should utilize the partnerships and forums that it has established as a way to promote and strengthen these principles toward the common good. Strengthening rules and principles

amid changing security dynamics can therefore be ASEAN's key contribution to regional and international security.

Apart from regional power dynamics which will continue to confront the future of the region, Southeast Asia will also continue to grapple with an array of traditional and non-traditional concerns. The longstanding territorial disputes in the South China Sea and the nuclear weapons and missile provocations in the Korean Peninsula remain unresolved. Other issues such as terrorism, cyber and other transnational crimes, food insecurity, climate change, and disasters have evolved, making it necessary for governments and law enforcement agencies to continually adapt to the changes and growing complexities of these issues. Moreover, given the transboundary and interlinked nature of these threats, what is needed is a collaborative and synergistic approach to strengthening both national and collective resilience as a means to attain security. ASEAN should assist every Member State through capacity-building programs, exchanges of best practices, and technological transfers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly tested the region's collective resilience. The pandemic has resulted in unprecedented disruption in national and global activities. It has caused economic downturns, massive unemployment, and exacerbated income disparity with the implementation of lockdowns, restrictions in mobility, and closing of many industries. Recognizing that countries in the region have different capacities and economic development in addressing the issue, efforts are ongoing to strengthen ASEAN's collaborative capacities to provide assistance to ASEAN Member States.

The establishment of a COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund and the agreement to strengthen future forms of cross-border cooperation in relation to the impacts of the pandemic are evidence of ASEAN's collective engagement. ASEAN is determined to create and implement policies that will contribute to the fast recovery of the region. Indeed, to capacitate and strengthen each other is a way to attain not only one's own security but also that of the entire region.

ASEAN must not only provide material prosperity to its people, but must also prioritize political and governance conditions to remain relevant. From being a state-driven organization where programs and policies are created and implemented through a top-down approach, ASEAN should more actively engage other stakeholders, local governments, business sector, civil society, and different marginalized groups. This is because threats such as trade in illicit drugs, trafficking in persons, disasters, and pandemics, pose more threat to human lives and communities. ASEAN should therefore ensure that its programs and initiatives benefit all of the peoples of the region, and at the same time, empower them to take part in the community-building process and contribute

to the attainment of regional resilience, prosperity, and security even in the midst of uncertainties.

### I. SECURITY CONCERNS IN THE REGION AND NATIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY POLICIES

#### a. Security concerns common to the ASEAN Community

Amid an already complex global backdrop, the COVID-19 pandemic has complicated the security challenges that ASEAN had been navigating in the last few years. Major power competition and geopolitical tension continue to fuel potential flashpoints in the region, such as in the South and East China Seas and Korean Peninsula. ASEAN is now also facing political instability within our region. At the same time, the pandemic offers no respite from existing non-traditional threats, including terrorism, transnational crime, and cybersecurity. These threats continue unabated, at a time when countries' resources are diverted to arrest the effects of the pandemic. No single country can tackle these challenges on its own. ASEAN's robust network of partners and ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ASEAN Plus Three (APT), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), are more important than before to strengthen confidence, trust, and practical cooperation among the key stakeholders of our region.

#### b. Individual National Defence Policies

Singapore's defence policy is built on the twin pillars of deterrence and diplomacy. Singapore believes in the need for a strong defence to ensure that we enjoy peace and security. A strong defence also provides us with the political space and freedom to act in the best interests of our people. This is why Singapore has invested steadily and prudently in defence over the years to build up a professional and capable Singapore Armed Forces (SAF). To overcome our small size and lack of resources, Singapore makes use of technology as a force multiplier to augment our well-educated conscript force and to train our soldiers to fight effectively. The SAF has also played an important role in assisting in domestic contingencies, such as supporting Singapore's COVID-19 response efforts by supplementing civilian frontline services. Singapore's defence expenditure in FY2019 stood at 2.8 per cent of our Gross Domestic Product.

#### *UN Register on Conventional Arms (UNROCA)*

To demonstrate support for transparency and confidence-building, Singapore has been submitting annual reports since 1993 to the UNROCA on international arms transfers made in the preceding year for the seven weapon categories defined by the UN.

Singapore also participated as a member of the UNROCA Group of Governmental Experts in 2019.

### *Military Expenditure*

Singapore takes a prudent and stable approach to defence spending. This steady and long-term approach to defence spending is a critical enabler in allowing the SAF to develop its capabilities in a systematic and disciplined fashion, and to obtain the best value for our defence investments.

### **c. National contributions to promoting regional security**

As a small country, Singapore's security and prosperity are highly dependent on regional peace and stability. Through extensive bilateral and multilateral cooperation, Singapore seeks to maintain strong and friendly ties with defence establishments and armed forces regionally and globally. Singapore also believes that regional security and stability are best served by a robust, open, and inclusive security architecture that encourages countries to engage constructively in dialogue and practical cooperation. As such, Singapore actively participates in various 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.

Singapore has contributed through the ADMM to ASEAN's efforts against the pandemic. At the ADMM Retreat in February 2020, Singapore co-sponsored the Joint Statement on Defence Cooperation against Disease Outbreaks. The Joint Statement demonstrated the grouping's commitment to assist in public health and social cohesion, and promote defence cooperation, such as through the ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine and with external partners to share information and best practices. Singapore also hosted the first ASEAN virtual workshop on managing infectious disease outbreaks in June 2020 to promote scientific collaboration for pandemics.

2020 marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ADMM-Plus. Singapore is highly encouraged by the good progress achieved in the seven ADMM-Plus Experts Working Groups (EWG) in the areas of maritime security (MS), humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), peacekeeping operations (PKO), counter-terrorism (CT), military medicine (MM), humanitarian mine action (HMA), and cyber security (CS). Singapore co-chaired the EWG-MS with the Republic of Korea (ROK) from 2017 to 2020. We sustained the momentum of practical military-to-military cooperation and promoted maritime security norms based on respect for international law. At the 12<sup>th</sup> EWG-MS Meeting in Singapore in November 2017, the ADMM-Plus Navies agreed to collectively adopt the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES). CUES was practiced during the EWG-MS Field

Training Exercise, which was successfully conducted in May 2019 involving 19 ships, 10 aircrafts and approximately 700 personnel. Singapore remains committed to supporting the work of the ADMM-Plus EWGs.

Under the ARF, Singapore also co-chaired the 23<sup>rd</sup> ARF Heads of Defence Universities/Colleges/Institutions Meeting (HDUCIM) with Pakistan in 2019. These engagements provide a platform for the ARF defence colleges to network and share best practices.

The SLD is held annually in Singapore and 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. While the SLD was not held in 2020 due to the pandemic, the ninth SLD Sherpa Meeting was held from 18 to 19 January 2021 in a hybrid format. The SLD Sherpa Meeting supplements the SLD process by providing an inter-sessional platform for senior officials to engage in frank discussions on security issues. The ninth SLD Sherpa Meeting was attended by approximately 60 in-person and 150 virtual participants from 26 countries and the EU. Singapore's Senior Minister of State for Defence Mr. Zaqy Mohamad delivered the keynote address.

*(i) Counter-Terrorism*

The threat of terrorism remains a key concern for the region even as governments battle the COVID-19 pandemic. Continued vigilance and cooperation by all countries are needed to deal with the complex and long-term challenges posed by terrorism and its underlying ideologies.

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). Recognising the importance of preventing violent extremism conducive to terrorism, ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism 2018-2025 in 2018. The ARF adopted the Statement on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism in 2019 and the Statement on the Treatment of Children Recruited by or Associated with Terrorist Groups in 2020. Singapore welcomes these significant achievements, which affirm the region's commitment to the global strategy on counter-terrorism.

Singapore is committed to strengthening the regional counter-terrorism security architecture. In November 2018, the ADMM noted Singapore's 3R Concept (Resilience, Response, Recovery), which aims to foster greater regional counter-terrorism

cooperation. Singapore also hosted the 2018 Southeast Asia Counter-Terrorism Symposium: Building a Collective Approach in October 2018. The symposium brought together cross-sectoral perspectives on how we can strengthen the region's collective efforts against terrorism. In addition, Singapore supports the ASEAN "Our Eyes" (AOE) initiative that was adopted by the 12th ADMM in 2018 and its Standard Operating Procedures that was adopted by the 14<sup>th</sup> ADMM in 2020. The AOE enhances strategic information exchange on counter-terrorism among ASEAN defence establishments. At the military level, we support the ASEAN 365 Information Sharing Platform, an online portal for ASEAN military intelligence agencies to share information on counter-terrorism.

In 2019, Singapore seconded an officer to kick-start the work of the INTERPOL Regional Counter-Terrorism Node for Asia and South Pacific (RCTN ASP) located in the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation (IGCI), Singapore. Singapore's seconded officer heads the RCTN ASP, covers as Head of RCTN Americas and oversees the counter-terrorism representation of 74 member countries. The RCTN works with police units in the Asia-Pacific region to encourage the transfer of intelligence concerning terrorist activities, and allows access to 18 INTERPOL databases that provide information on foreign terrorist fighters, the social media platforms that terrorists use, and their travel patterns and mode of transport, among others. Singapore has been actively engaging INTERPOL to shape the RCTN and its mission in four (4) main areas: (i) intelligence; (ii) border management and operations; (iii) capacity building; and (iv) incident response. Singapore's seconded officer was appointed the mission leader of the INTERPOL Incident Response Team to support the Sri Lankan authorities in their investigations into the May 2019 Easter Sunday Bombings.

*(ii) Non-Proliferation, Counter-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament*

Singapore is active in combating the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). We ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1976 and concluded a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1977. Singapore also ratified the IAEA Additional Protocol (AP) and adopted the modified Small Quantities Protocol in March 2008. Singapore supports the universalisation of both the CSA and the AP and works closely with the IAEA on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Singapore serves regularly on the IAEA's Board of Governors (BOG). Our most recent two-year term ended in September 2018, during which Singapore hosted several training fellowships and conducted regional workshops on topics such as emergency preparedness and response, nuclear regulatory law, and food safety. Singapore is also party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and supports efforts to promote 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 strongly supports counter-proliferation initiatives such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), and recognises the importance of preventing rogue groups, such as terrorist organisations, from acquiring WMD. Singapore has actively participated in the PSI since its establishment in 2003. Singapore is the only country in Southeast Asia to be in the PSI Operational Experts Group (OEG), and has hosted PSI exercises and meetings. Singapore has participated in PSI activities, such as the virtual OEG Meeting chaired by Italy in November 2020. Singapore will host the upcoming PSI Exercise Deep Sabre in October 2021. This will be the fourth time we are hosting a PSI exercise.

Singapore fully supports the efforts of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to further develop capabilities and readiness against the threat of chemical weapons. We participated in the 25<sup>th</sup> Conference on States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in November 2020. Pursuant to Article X, Singapore has been conducting the Emergency Response to Chemical Incidents training course on a biennial basis since 2009. The sixth instalment of the course was conducted in December 2019, which benefitted 24 participants from 10 of the OPCW Member States in Asia. The course has been a platform for the sharing of experiences on the management of hazards. In addition, Singapore values the opportunity to contribute to the work of the Scientific Advisory Board of the OPCW as a participant of the Temporary Working Group on Investigative Science and Technology, and to contribute an expert to serve on the Technical Requirement Team of the OPCW ChemTech Centre since February 2020. Since 2012, Singapore has also been submitting returns on the Biological Weapons Convention's (BWC) confidence-building measures (CBMs) annually.

Singapore signed the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the first legally binding international instrument that regulates the international transfer of conventional arms, on 5 December 2014. This reaffirms Singapore's commitment to the elimination of the threat posed by the illicit arms trade and to international disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives that promote global peace and security.

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 regularly organises the annual Joint Industry Outreach Seminar on Strategic Trade Management with the US Department of State's Export Control and Related Border Security Program (EXBS), the US Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS), and Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). The most recent seminar was held in September 2020. The Seminar keeps the industry abreast of the latest developments in export controls and best practices for improved compliance. Since 2011, Singapore has participated in the Annual Asian Export Control Seminars (AECS) held in Tokyo, which addresses domestic industry outreach and international collaboration. Singapore also participates regularly in the Asian Senior-level Talks on Non-Proliferation (ASTOP) in Tokyo, including the most recent meeting in December 2020.

Singapore supports the EU's Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Centre of Excellence (CBRN CoE) initiative in Southeast Asia. Our agencies and experts have been involved in numerous CBRN CoE projects and activities. Singapore has contributed regional bio-risk experts to develop training materials and conduct workshops on laboratory design, engineering, and operations in several regional countries under Project 46. Singapore's Public Utilities Board (PUB) also participated in Project 61, which addresses the sound management of chemicals and their associated wastes.

### *(iii) Transnational Crime*

Singapore contributes to strengthening regional efforts to combat transnational crime.

For instance, under the aegis of the ASEAN Ministerial and Senior Officials' Meetings on Transnational Crime (AMMTC & SOMTC), Singapore is the ASEAN Voluntary Lead Shepherd for international economic crime (IEC). Singapore conducted an annual ASEAN Workshop on International Economic Crime to equip relevant investigators with competencies required for the investigation of commercial crime. This workshop reviews the latest trends, threats, and challenges facing law enforcement agencies in the area of commercial crime and provides updates on the latest developments in white-collar crime. The last workshop organised in 2019 covered common concerns such as international fraud, payment systems fraud and money laundering.

Additionally, the Singapore Police Force Commercial Affairs Department (SPF/CAD) runs and funds the International Economic Crime Course (IECC) seminar. Foreign participants

from Malaysia, Hong Kong and Australia attended previous runs of the seminar. We intend to expand participation to more countries in future sessions.

Singapore takes a serious view of and supports regional and international efforts to combat trafficking-in-persons (TIP) crimes. An inter-agency taskforce, jointly led by Singapore's Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Manpower, was formed in 2010 to coordinate whole-of-government strategies to fight TIP. The Taskforce works closely with the law enforcement agencies and embassies of countries that victims may originate from, which allows for quick and thorough investigations, as well as information-sharing and upstream enforcement against human traffickers. Singapore also cooperates with other ASEAN Member States (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 came into force on 8 March 2017. Singapore also worked closely with other AMS on the development of the ASEAN Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons (APA) and the Bohol Trafficking in Persons Work Plan, which were endorsed in 2015 and 2016 respectively. The APA and Work Plan complement the ACTIP by outlining specific actions and policies to address the challenge of combatting TIP. Beyond ASEAN, Singapore works with partners such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Group of Friends United Against Human Trafficking (GOF) to explore more effective ways to combat TIP. Singapore is also a party to the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (UN TIP Protocol).

*(iv) Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)*

Disasters can affect any country without warning. As a good neighbour and friend, Singapore undertakes HADR missions when the need arises. In 2018, Singapore deployed seven (7) ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ERAT) members in support of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) for three ASEAN-ERAT missions. We assisted the national disaster management agencies of the affected AMS in carrying out needs assessments. We also responded to AMS' requests by deploying: (i) two ERAT members to provide technical assistance to mitigate the Landfill Fire in Yangon; (ii) our Operation Lionheart Contingent to participate in search and rescue, disaster relief, and victim recovery efforts in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Son Tinh in Lao PDR; and (iii) two Republic of Singapore Air Force aircraft to deliver humanitarian aid and assist in the evacuation of earthquake victims after the Central Sulawesi Earthquake.

In addition to overseas operations, Singapore seeks to build regional capacity for HADR. Singapore launched the Changi Regional HADR Coordination Centre (RHCC) in September 2014 to provide a platform for military-to-military coordination in HADR, and to support the military of a disaster-affected State. The RHCC's focus on military coordination complements existing disaster response institutions such as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the AHA Centre. Singapore is appreciative of like-minded countries that have supported and partnered with the RHCC. The RHCC has also signed two (2) Memoranda of Understanding with the US Center of Excellence for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM) and the US Pacific Disaster Center (PDC), which facilitate bilateral cooperation and operational linkages.

In April 2019, the RHCC/SAF partnered the Bangladesh Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, the Bangladesh Armed Forces Division, and the US CFE-DM to co-organise a multinational HADR Table-Top Exercise, Exercise Coordinated Response (COORES) 2019. COORES built military linkages, enhanced mutual understanding and interoperability, and strengthened military cooperation in disaster relief. COORES involved 25 militaries from across the Asia-Pacific region and Europe and 19 international organisations, governmental agencies, and non-government organisations.

Since 2015, Singapore has been hosting the annual Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management to chart long-term strategies for the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) and sharpen ASEAN's policy direction, strategic engagements, and thought leadership in disaster management. In addition, Singapore organised the ASEAN Senior Executive Programme in Disaster Management, targeted at nurturing the planning and crisis management capacities of the senior leadership cadre within each AMS' National Disaster Management Organisation. Singapore is the Lead Shepherd for the development of the AHA Centre's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) capabilities, with funding support from the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF).

#### *(v) Maritime Security*

As a maritime nation, Singapore has a strong interest in keeping the international sea lines of communication (SLOC) open, safe, and secure. Singapore takes a serious view of any threats to the freedom and safety of navigation. To this end, Singapore works with like-minded countries to uphold 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 SLOC 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 (3) principles which have gained broad consensus amongst regional stakeholders: (i) primary responsibility for the security of regional waterways lies with the littoral States; (ii) the international community, including major user States and bodies, like the IMO, have an important role to play; and (iii) new cooperative measures should be developed in line with the 1982 UNCLOS and other international conventions.

These principles have translated into cooperative efforts at a regional level. The Malacca Straits Patrol (MSP) is 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 5<sup>th</sup> MSP Exercise was held in Singapore in January 2019, where members reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring the MSP's operational effectiveness and tested their processes and linkages for information-sharing and coordination. The 14<sup>th</sup> MSP Joint Coordinating Committee was conducted from 15 to 16 January 2020, where members discussed possible measures to strengthen information-sharing and operational coordination to deter and disrupt sea robberies within their respective territorial waters in the SOMS.

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.

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) was established in 2009 and hosted by the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN). The IFC seeks to advance inter-

agency and international cooperation in maritime information-sharing through its linkages to operations centres and network of ILOs. Through partnerships and the pooling of various information-sharing and analytical systems in one location, the IFC provides a platform for multinational information sharing and collaboration with regional and extra-regional partners by cuing operational responses to a wide range of maritime security issues, including piracy, hijacking, search and rescue, weapons proliferation, human/arms trafficking, and smuggling. As of September 2019, the IFC has established operational linkages with international maritime centres, operational centres and agencies across 41 countries and 20 ILOs have been accredited to the IFC from 19 different countries.<sup>14</sup> The IFC also supports broader efforts to build regional capacity for maritime awareness such as the ASEAN Information Sharing Portal, and conducts the Maritime Information-Sharing Exercise (MARSIX).

Singapore is a founding Contracting Party to the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), the first intergovernmental initiative to promote and enhance cooperation against piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia. At present, 20 States are Contracting Parties to the ReCAAP.<sup>15</sup> The ReCAAP's expanding membership and network of partner organisations over the years are testament to the increasing importance of strengthening regional and international cooperation against piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia.

Singapore has been hosting the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) since its inception in 2006. Over the years, the ReCAAP ISC has established itself as a go-to authority on trends and analyses of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia and continues to play an instrumental role in disseminating timely and accurate information for governments and industry members alike. The ReCAAP ISC has collaborated with partner organisations and the industry to produce useful practice guides for the maritime community, such as a report on Guidance on Abduction of Crew in the Sulu-Celebes Sea in July 2019. The ReCAAP ISC has also supported numerous capacity building efforts to improve the capability of regional governments to combat piracy and armed robbery against ships in the region.

The ReCAAP is held up as a successful model of regional cooperation in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships by the IMO and has inspired other similar initiatives, such as the Djibouti Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden (GoA). In March 2021, the ReCAAP ISC commemorated its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by organising a

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<sup>14</sup> The 19 countries are namely Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, China, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines, the ROK, Thailand, the UK, the US, and Vietnam.

<sup>15</sup> The 20 countries are namely Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Denmark, India, Japan, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, the ROK, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the UK, the US, and Vietnam.

Symposium to reaffirm Contracting Parties' commitment to regional cooperation against piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia, and to map out the future steps to enhance the ReCAAP ISC's relevance and standing as a Centre of Excellence for Information Sharing.

Beyond regional cooperation, Singapore also shares the international community's deep concern over threats to key SLOC in other parts of the world. To this end, Singapore has been contributing to the multinational counter-piracy efforts under the ambit of Combined Task Force (CTF) 151 since 2009. The SAF has deployed five Task Groups to the GoA. At the request of the Combined Maritime Forces, Singapore took command of the CTF 151 in 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016, and 2018.

*(vi) ICTs Security*

Cyber threats are a transboundary and cross-cutting challenge to all AMS. At the same time, the cybersphere is also a key enabler of economic progress, job creation and better living standards as AMS enter a digital future.

Recognising the importance of cybersecurity, during Singapore's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2018, we led ASEAN's effort to issue the ASEAN Leaders' Statement on Cybersecurity Coordination, which reaffirmed 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). Singapore convened the 5<sup>th</sup> SICW and AMCC in October 2020, which discussed cross-cutting cybersecurity issues among ICT Ministers and Cybersecurity Ministers and Senior Officials from all AMS. At the 5<sup>th</sup> AMCC in 2020, participants reiterated their commitment to develop a long-term regional cybersecurity action plan to chart the implementation roadmap for the norms of State behaviour in cyberspace at a comfortable pace to all AMS. Participants also agreed on the urgent need to protect national and cross-border Critical Information Infrastructure (CII).

As set out in the 2018 ASEAN Leaders' Statement, Singapore worked closely with ASEAN to draft the initial proposal for better cybersecurity policy coordination in ASEAN. The proposal for an ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee (ASEAN Cyber-CC) comprising representatives from relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies overseeing cybersecurity issues was considered at ADGMIN in 2019. Its objective is to strengthen cross-sectoral coordination on cybersecurity while preserving the exclusive work domains of the sectoral bodies. The inaugural meeting of the ASEAN Cyber-CC was held on 5 November 2020.

At the ADGMIN 2021, the ASEAN Digital Ministers welcomed Singapore's proposal for the establishment of an ASEAN Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) information exchange mechanism to facilitate incident response and exchanges amongst all AMS CERTs, and coordinate CERT capacity-building programmes in the region through the ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence (ASCCE).

In our capacity as the ASEAN Voluntary Lead Shepherd on Cybercrime, Singapore has been working closely with other AMS and key stakeholders, such as INTERPOL, to identify priority areas of common interest to harmonise ASEAN's competencies in combating cybercrime. Singapore will continue to organise training programmes and meetings for AMS where relevant to encourage information sharing and build a close network of cyber experts within the region.

Alongside Malaysia and Japan, Singapore currently co-chairs the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ARF ISM on ICTs Security), with a focus on the adoption of CBMs to facilitate communication, information-sharing as well as the exchange of know-how and best practices. In so doing, we can reduce the risk of cyber conflict, and build inter-country trust and confidence in cyberspace.

Singapore launched the ASCCE in October 2019 as an extension of the ASEAN Cyber Capacity Programme (ACCP) to move capacity building efforts forward in a coordinated manner. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, regional cyber capacity building efforts under the ASCCE have been adapted for digital platforms. Through the online programmes, the ASCCE continues to maintain the momentum of cyber capacity building and bring ASEAN participants together for capacity building. The ASCCE's multi-disciplinary training facility is currently operational and will be officially opened in 2021. The ACCP and ASCCE have together trained more than 600 ASEAN officials to date.

In terms of regional cooperation, Singapore and INTERPOL have implemented the ASEAN Cyber Capacity Development Project (ACCDP) and ASEAN Joint Operations Against Cybercrime (AJOC), which are managed by the ASEAN Cybercrime Operations Desk within the IGCI. The ASEAN Desk was set up in 2018 at the proposal of Singapore, and is currently headed by a seconded SPF senior officer.

Singapore has also been convening an annual ASEAN CERT Incident Drill (ACID) for the last 15 years to strengthen the cybersecurity preparedness of AMS, reinforce regional coordination drills, and enhance regional cooperation.

Singapore has been an active participant in key international platforms facilitating discussions on cyber norms, capacity building, and CBMs. Singapore is deeply committed to continuing discussions on international cyber rules and norms at multilateral fora, such as the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts (UNGGE) and Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) processes at the UN First Committee. Singapore welcomes the successful conclusion of the OEWG and is committed to supporting the ongoing UNGGE process, as well as the new cyber OEWG 2021-2025 which is chaired by Singapore.

During the Second Substantive Session of the OEWG in February 2020, Egypt proposed a Programme of Action (PoA) as a future regular institutional dialogue mechanism for cyber discussions. Singapore has co-sponsored the PoA proposal. Singapore is of the view that the PoA proposal could unify the two parallel processes of the OEWG and UNGGE, and be a “stepping-stone” towards an open and inclusive multilateral order.

## **II. FUTURE TRENDS ON REGIONAL SECURITY**

ASEAN continues to face an increasingly complex geopolitical situation. In particular, Sino-US tensions in multiple arenas, including trade, defence and technology, will likely persist for the foreseeable future. As major powers jostle for influence, the risks of miscalculation and conflict have increased in potential flashpoints including the East China Sea, South China Sea and Korean Peninsula. As regional militaries acquire advanced equipment and capabilities, the scale and impact of any potential conflict will be devastating for the region.

COVID-19 has exacerbated the already weakening rules-based multilateral order. This includes protectionist measures that inhibit the movement of goods, services, and people. This is troubling at a time when connectivity and trade is critical, especially for the movement of essential goods like food, medicine, and personal protective equipment necessary for all countries to combat the pandemic.

Cybersecurity is evolving to be of particular importance to ASEAN and the world. While the COVID-19 crisis has accelerated digitalisation in our countries, it has also demonstrated the vulnerabilities in our digital ecosystem to cyber attacks. Cybersecurity is a key enabler of digitalisation. Hence, we should strengthen our cooperation towards a rules-based multilateral order in cyberspace that is open, secure, stable, accessible, interoperable, and peaceful. This is so that our people can conduct their businesses and social activities online securely.

In light of these trends in regional security, the preservation of a rules-based multilateral order is foundational to ASEAN’s existence and prosperity. Multilateral cooperation is

particularly important to tackle the challenges posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic. We also need to ensure that ASEAN remains relevant, effective, and at the core of the regional architecture to tackle the traditional and non-traditional threats facing the region. ASEAN should ensure that major powers remain constructively engaged in the region and that the evolving regional order will take shape in line with ASEAN's interests. This requires ASEAN Member States to unite on issues of common interest such as those identified in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, and to keep ahead of the curve on unexpected and evolving issues in the region. Against a dynamic geopolitical backdrop and an unprecedented pandemic, ASEAN must adapt quickly and remain future ready to maintain its role and relevance as a regional fulcrum for peace and stability.

### **I. SECURITY CONCERNS IN THE REGION AND NATIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY POLICIES**

#### **a. Security concerns common to the ASEAN Community**

ASEAN is witnessing an increase of both traditional and non-traditional challenges. Since 2020, ASEAN has faced uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This unprecedented challenge has severely threatened human security, particularly public health security, and brought about far-reaching socio-economic impacts. Moreover, other challenges, in particular transnational crime, terrorism, cyber security, maritime security, natural disaster have also been on the rise, both in terms of intensity and sophistication. This has forced ASEAN to re-strategise its cooperation within the region and beyond.

From a security perspective, COVID-19 has accelerated the pre-existing tensions between major powers on the geopolitical landscape. In fact, strategic competition of major powers has gone beyond trade, technology, cyberspace and climate change to include global public health issues, from securing medical supply chains to vaccine diplomacy. ASEAN's collective efforts in addressing COVID-19 demonstrate the power of multilateralism as a solution for regional and global challenges.

Asia Pacific's strategic landscape has become more volatile as a result of more intense competition between major powers in the region. Geopolitical uncertainties and confrontations could potentially affect regional peace, security and prosperity in the region, especially recovery efforts from COVID-19 and long-term sustainable growth.

The regional security situation remains unstable. The growing tensions in the South China Sea undermined the positive momentum gained in 2019, including the completion of the first reading of the Single Draft Negotiating Text (SDNT) of the Code of Conduct (COC). Strategic trust should be nurtured through practical confidence-building measures and continued dialogue. The ongoing step-by-step resumption of COC negotiations is welcomed. The recent resumption of the text-based negotiations on the less contentious parts of the SDNT via virtual format is an important step forward. Meanwhile, all parties concerned should exercise self-restraint to create an environment conducive to the peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. It is pertinent to pursue full and effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and properly implement measures, thus ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea.

The situation in Myanmar has put ASEAN in a unique position to contribute constructively in helping to bring about cessation of violence, peaceful resolution and the return to normalcy for the interest of the people of Myanmar. The ASEAN Leaders' Meeting in Jakarta on 24 April 2021 is a testament to the important role of ASEAN on this issue. The Five-Point Consensus will form a basis for ASEAN's constructive engagement with Myanmar—a member of the ASEAN family. The most important thing now is to ensure that the outcome will be implemented in a timely manner. We also need to ensure that the process will be as inclusive as possible to reflect the diverse voices of the Myanmar society and take into account the complexity of Myanmar's historical and social aspects. In the midst of uncertainties, ASEAN Centrality remains the key factor for Member States in conducting inter-state relations. ASEAN must respond to regional challenges collectively, while upholding key principles of the ASEAN Charter. To do so, ASEAN must utilise the ASEAN-centred regional architecture comprising, among others, the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), the ASEAN Plus Three and the ASEAN Plus One. These mechanisms have provided ASEAN with strong convening powers and a platform to establish rules and norms for a regional order. However, the long-term goal is to realise a Strategic New Equilibrium that will be conducive to peace, security and prosperity for all in the Asia-Pacific region, from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. With this aspiration, the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific represents an "ASEAN's Vista" on the evolving regional geo-strategic landscape anchored on existing norms and principles, including those enshrined in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), and on engagement with partners. The Outlook is not a response to other initiatives. Rather, it aims to promote win-win cooperation in areas that are constructive and mutually beneficial, namely, maritime cooperation, connectivity, sustainable development, as well as economic cooperation and other possible areas of cooperation. It is based on the principles of inclusiveness and the 3Ms: Mutual Trust, Mutual Respect, and Mutual Benefit. This will ultimately contribute to attaining "**sustainable security**" within the ASEAN region and beyond.

## **b. National Security and Defence Policy**

In relation to Thailand's national security and defense policy, the Ministry of Defense has published its policy statement in an effort to promote transparency and to enhance trust and confidence between Thailand and ASEAN Member States, as well as other partners within and beyond the region. The mission of the Ministry of Defence covers wide range of issues including, among others, enhancing defense cooperation with neighbouring countries, ASEAN Member States and international organisations, both at bilateral and multilateral levels, enhancing the integration of capabilities with every sector, maintaining

capability of the armed forces and national defense system, increasing armed forces capability in order to counter non-traditional threats and strengthen defense industry.

In addition, the Ministry of Defense attaches great importance to participation in cooperation frameworks which will provide opportunities for the armed forces of the region to engage in practical cooperation to promote mutual interest of participating countries and enhance capabilities for the future. Recent initiatives under the ADMM and the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups include the enhancement of defence establishments' role in supporting border management to collectively respond to transnational challenges, and strengthening maritime security cooperation to build trust and confidence as well as practical cooperation in the maritime domain of the region.

### **c. National contributions to promoting regional security**

#### **Joint Exercise**

Cobra Gold is one of the largest multinational exercises in the Asia-Pacific region which has been held annually in Thailand since 1982. It is known to be one of the largest theater security cooperation exercises in the Asia-Pacific which aims to strengthen military ties, and improve capabilities and interoperability of participating countries. The 40<sup>th</sup> iteration of the Cobra Gold theater exercises will take place in 2021, providing a light training for approximately 10,000 participants from 30 countries. Due to COVID-19, the Exercise is divided into two (2) phases: phase one (CG 21-1) for command and control exercises (C2X), Humanitarian Civic Assistance )HCA(, and Field Training Exercise )FTX(, held during 20 February-5 March 2021, and phase two (CG 21-2) for field exercise scheduled to be convened during 2-13 August 2021.

#### **Peacekeeping**

Thailand has been a steadfast troop-contributing country to UN peacekeeping missions since 1950. Over 27,000 Thai military and police personnel, men and women, have served in more than 20 peacekeeping and related missions of the UN. At present, Thailand contributes an engineering company of 272 personnel to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan )UNMISS(, as well as military and police officers to three UN peacekeeping missions, namely UNAMID in Darfur, UNMOGIP in India and Pakistan, and UNMISS in South Sudan. Thailand has also been consistently deploying female military and police officers to UN peacekeeping missions worldwide. In 2021, 12 female military and police officers are being deployed in three UN peacekeeping Missions, namely UNAMID in Darfur, UNMOGIP in India and Pakistan, and UNMISS in South Sudan.

As part of UNMISS, the Thai Horizontal Military Engineering Company )HMEC('s main responsibilities include road reconstruction and building infrastructure. Thai

peacekeepers also endeavour to promote development initiatives and the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) initiated by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej The Greatest to assist in achieving sustained peace which complements Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peaceful and inclusive societies, justice and accountable institutions. Previous missions in Timor Leste and Darfur were a case in point where SEP was successfully applied.

The Peace Operations Center (POC) of the Royal Thai Armed Forces (RTARF) has collaborated with other countries in exchanging trainers and instructors, and providing training courses, namely (i) UN Staff Officers Course (UNSOC); and (ii) Child Protection Course for both Thai and foreign officers. In 2021, POC planned to promote the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda by increasing participation of female peacekeepers in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Rotation THAI HMEC, implementing the UN Triangular Partnership Project 2022-2023, and enhancing cooperation on capacity building and joint training. In addition, the POC plans to establish a Centre of Excellence on peacekeeping in ASEAN aimed to deploy ASEAN Peacekeeping Force in UN peacekeeping operation.

As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for the term 2021-2022, Thailand has actively helped facilitate and bridge gaps among relevant UN agencies, support enhancing role of ECOSOC in promoting peace as well as contribute USD 100,000 to the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), reaffirming Thailand's commitment to sustaining peacebuilding efforts.

### **Counter-terrorism**

Despite the overall decline in terrorist attacks due to travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, terrorist groups are likely to reactivate their activities once the situation is improved. An increase in the use of social media and online platforms for disseminating violent extremist and racist content along with growing risks of potential lone-wolf terrorist attacks remains a critical concern.

Most terrorist incidents in Southeast Asia took place in limited areas where local terrorist groups have presence, in particular those associated with the Islamic State (IS). In 2020, IS has begun to carry out attacks, relying on a financial resource of an estimated over USD 100 million, parts of which are kept as reserve fund while others were invested in both legal and illegal businesses. Likewise, Al-Qaeda (AQ) has recently reemerged as a significant global terrorism threat by expanding branches and sympathisers, reconnecting with other terrorist groups in Southeast Asia, and staging more attacks. In this context, issues to be monitored and properly addressed include threats from IS-associated groups in the region, repatriation or relocation of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs), act of terrorism by lone actors, wolf packs, and radicalised women and youth, and spread of violent extremism via social media.

Thailand underscores the importance of a comprehensive and sustainable solution to terrorism. Such solution focuses on addressing the root causes of terrorism, encouraging international cooperation, and promoting interfaith dialogues and values of moderation and peaceful coexistence in multicultural societies. In this regard, Thailand strongly supports the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and enacted 5-year National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2017-2022) of which the concepts of prevention, response, and rehabilitation are core approaches, as well as ratified 12 out of 19 existing conventions and protocols related to counter terrorism under the UN framework.

The Counter-Terrorism and Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Financing Act B.E. 2559 (2016) remains Thailand's key legislative framework that sets out measures to prevent and suppress actions considered as a terrorist financing offence and allows UNSC lists of terrorism and WMD-related entities to be incorporated into the Thai law. Further, the draft Preventing and Countering Terrorism Act is being considered by the Parliament which once adopted, it will provide preemptive and defensive counterterrorism measures and designate officials, based on categories and levels, to receive requisite training before assuming duties. A national plan of action to prevent and counter violent extremism is being drafted.

At the regional level, outcome documents which lay groundwork for regional efforts to enhancing capacity in counter-terrorism in ASEAN include (i) Terms of Reference (TOR) of Our Eyes Initiative, aimed at promoting strategic information exchange on terrorism which was adopted at the 13<sup>th</sup> ADMM on 11 July 2019; (ii) ARF Statement on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism (VECT) and ARF Work Plan for Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime 2019-2021 adopted at the 26<sup>th</sup> ARF on 2 August 2019; and (iii) Work Plan to implement the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2018-2025 adopted at the 13<sup>th</sup> AMMTC on 27 November 2019.

### **Non-proliferation, Counter-proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament**

Thailand upholds the policy not to develop, acquire or proliferate any kind of WMD and their means of delivery, as well as fully observes commitments and obligations on non-proliferation of WMD.

On nuclear disarmament, as one of the first three countries to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on 20 September 2017, Thailand welcomes the entry into force of the TPNW on 22 January 2021, which marks a historic milestone and the triumph of multilateralism. Given that 86 states have signed the TPNW and 54 states are parties to the Treaty at the time of writing, it is crucial to promote further

ratification and accession to the TPNW, so as to achieve inclusiveness and universality of the Treaty. In this regard, Thailand looks forward to participating actively in the First Meeting of the State Parties to the Treaty to take place in Vienna in January 2022. At the same time, Thailand reaffirms the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone for nuclear non-proliferation and recognises the complementarity between the TPNW and the NPT, as both share the common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Notably, the TPNW is fully in line with the obligations on nuclear disarmament under the Article VI of the NPT, which requires States to pursue negotiation in good faith on general and complete disarmament.

With the Nuclear Energy for Peace Act enacted in February 2017, Thailand is pursuing ratification and accession to all relevant nuclear non-proliferation treaties and conventions. To date, Thailand has ratified or acceded to the Additional Protocol to the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Its 2005 Amendment, the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Most recently, Thailand has ratified the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) on 2 May 2019.

At the regional level, Thailand played a leading role in the establishment and the implementation of the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) or the Bangkok Treaty of 1995, and in initiating the cooperation of the ASEAN Network of regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM). Thailand is committed to supporting and advancing both initiatives, including with the Nuclear Weapon States on the signing of the SEANWFZ Protocol and with ASEAN Member States and friends on cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology, as its contribution to promote ASEAN non-proliferation efforts.

Thailand welcomes the UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament under the 'Securing Our Common Future' concept and its three outlined priorities on the control and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons, and remaining vigilant of new and emerging technologies and their effects on peace and security. In this connection, Thailand looks forward to tangible cooperation and meaningful engagement between all UN agencies, Member States, and other stakeholders in realising this Agenda. Thailand stands ready to facilitate the exchange of views and best practices on disarmament and non-proliferation issues and will continue to act as a bridge-builder between ASEAN and other regional and international groupings to bring about a safer and more secure world. For the year 2022-2024, Thailand is pleased to co-chair the ARF Intersessional-Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament.

## **Transnational Crime**

The Asia-Pacific region continues to encounter threats posed by transnational organised crime groups who exploit higher degree of interconnectedness amongst countries and regions as well as the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Cybercrime, in particular, has become more sophisticated and wide-spreading due to technological advancement and the growing need to rely on Internet as daily necessities and platforms for communications as well as financial transaction in the post COVID-19 era.

In this connection, key priorities have been given to an eradication of transnational crimes that could be used to support or facilitate terrorist activities, namely money laundering and supplying of illegal weapons and counterfeiting travel documents. The implementation of the Strategy to Prevent and Combat Transnational Organised Crimes (2015-2021) plays a central role in Thailand's efforts to combat transnational crimes, particularly in five identified priority areas, namely, terrorism, illicit trafficking of wildlife and timber, infringement of intellectual property rights, trafficking in persons and drug trafficking.

Thailand continues to engage with ASEAN Member States in the development of the Concept Paper entitled "ASEAN Border Management Cooperation Roadmap". Thailand has a firm belief that this document will help lay an important groundwork in advancing cooperation on border management as well as addressing transnational crime in ASEAN as reflected in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 with the ultimate goal being the establishment of an ASEAN-wide border management cooperation arrangement to ensure border security and facilitate trade in tandem. The Concept Paper will be submitted to the 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM) for further consideration in 2021.

As a major country of transit and destination for irregular migration, Thailand has been affected by mass influx of irregular migrants from within and outside the region. Although Thailand is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, Thailand has long been committed to humanitarian cause and will continue to work closely with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime )UNODC(, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees )UNHCR( and the International Organization for Migration )IOM(.

Illicit drug trafficking remains a grave challenge for ASEAN due to an increase in opium cultivation, heroin production and methamphetamine tablets and crystalline methamphetamine manufacturing in the Golden Triangle. Thailand is therefore fully committed to implementing the 4-year Mekong Drug Control Joint Operation Plan (2019-2022), in collaboration with Lao PDR, Myanmar, Cambodia, Viet Nam and China. The

Plan is a continuation of the Safe Mekong Operation launched in 2015, aimed to comprehensively address illicit drug production and distribution in the Golden Triangle area. Thailand also hosts Safe Mekong Coordination Center )SMCC( in Chiang Mai and together with Australia established the “Taskforce Storm” in 2016 to oversee joint operations in suppressing illicit drug trafficking, money laundering and transnational crimes. This Taskforce has succeeded in arresting several drug syndicate criminals and seizing their proceeds of crime. The mandate of this taskforce has been extended until 2021. As a lead shepherd for illicit drug trafficking, under the SOMTC, Thailand will continue to promote cooperation and activities in a concerted manner according to the ASEAN Cooperation Work Plan to Tackle Illicit Drug Production and Trafficking in the Golden Triangle (2017-2019), which has been extended until 2022 by the decision of the 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters.

Depending more on ICTs during working from home (WFH) period, it is imperative for ASEAN to enhance cyber capabilities and strengthen common understanding to reduce cyber risks. On this note, Thailand welcomes the establishment of the ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee )ASEAN-Cyber CC( and the adoption of its TOR, aimed to enhance regional cybersecurity cooperation across three pillars of ASEAN Community, as approved by the 19<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Telecommunications and Information Technology Ministers Meeting )TELMIN( in October 2019. By 2021, Thailand looks forward to finalising the ASEAN’s Plan of Action on the Implementation of Norms of Responsible States Behavior in Cyberspace to ensure effective and practical implementation of norms recommended in the 2015 UNGGE report, including in the areas of CERT cooperation, protection of CIIs and mutual assistance in cybersecurity.

The ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre )AJCCBC( has continued to serve as a training centre for authorities and information infrastructure operators in ASEAN on three issues: Cyber Defence Exercise with Recurrence (CYDER), digital forensics and malware analysis. As of February 2021, the AJCCBC has already organized 14 training courses, including four online courses since COVID-19 outbreak. Following approval of the budget for step 2-2, the Centre will continue 10 technical training sessions and one Cyber SEA Game during the period of April 2021 to November 2023.

### **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)**

The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response )AADMER( and its newly adopted Work Programme 2021-2025 form the basis for cooperation among ASEAN Member States to prepare and respond to disaster emergencies in concerted manner. The signing of the “ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response” in 2016 confirms that AADMER is the common platform for the Declaration. Thailand, as a Party to the AADMER and a member of the Governing Board of the ASEAN Coordinating

Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management )AHA Centre(, will continue to strengthen ASEAN's efforts in the area of disaster management and reaffirm its support to an active role of the ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team )ASEAN-ERAT( and other ASEAN tools to deal with HADR challenges. As Co-Chair of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) Working Group on Prevention and Mitigation, Thailand will strengthen the work of the Working Group to further enhance ASEAN's efforts in disaster prevention and mitigation.

Thailand supports regional efforts to enhance capacity in disaster response and disaster management in line with the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Disaster Health Management, adopted at the 31<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Summit in Manila. The Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) launched on 7 December 2012 is a key mechanism to allow for swift provision of relief items to ASEAN Member States facing post-disaster emergency situations. DELSA's establishment and operations have been supported by the Government of Japan, while the AHA Centre works closely with WFP - UNHRD on logistics technical aspects.

During the 34<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in June 2019, Thailand by the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation officially launched the ASEAN Satellite Warehouse in Chai Nat Province. The Warehouse serves as a stockpile during emergencies in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Viet Nam and Thailand. Recently, the Warehouse delivered 2,900 Personal Hygiene Kits to support COVID-19 response in Cambodia in 2020 as well as 500 family tents, 2,000 mosquito nets, and 1,500 personal hygiene kits to Thailand in 2021.

In addition, the ASEAN Center of Military Medicine )ACMM(, a subsidiary body under the ADMM with its headquarter in Thailand, has contributed to the region's humanitarian assistance and disaster relief frameworks as well as complemented the work of the AHA Centre in improving the region's response and coordination mechanism. During the COVID-19 outbreak, the ACMM has played an active role in monitoring and responding to the situation. Two table top exercises were conducted in May and August 2020 with focus on developing an action plan to enhance ASEAN Military Medical Services' readiness for emerging crises and COVID-19 Quarantine Camp Management.

### **Maritime Security and Cooperation**

The Asia-Pacific region continues to face maritime security challenges, including piracy, armed robbery against ships and various forms of transnational crime as well as issues related to marine environment and IUU fishing. An increase in the number of incidents in 2020 in comparison to 2019 reflects that piracy and armed robbery against ships remains a prevailing security concern. Such incidents are the result of active criminal activities in

several areas and vulnerability of important sea lines of communication, notably the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, which connect two (2) major waterways, namely, (i) the Indian Ocean: and (ii) the South China Sea. Tensions between regional powers also pose challenges to international trade and maritime connectivity.

Given the complex and wide-ranging nature of maritime security issues, Thailand enacted the Maritime National Interests Protection Act B.E. 2562 (2019) to promote better coordination and consolidate responses to deal with emerging threats. Under the Act, Thai Maritime Enforcement Coordinating Center has been upgraded to become Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Center (THAI-MECC) with augmented role and greater authority in managing maritime security-related affairs. The Center participated in the National Crisis Management Exercise 2020 (C-MEX 20) to articulate understanding amongst relevant agencies in preparation for interception of WMD, addressing water pollution, and tackling IUU fishing. Since October 2019, THAI-MECC has joined efforts on COVID-19 prevention and control in maritime transport, including through National Single Windows (NSW) for reporting formalities from ships arriving in and/or departing from ports.

Thailand has participated in regional efforts such as the Malacca Straits Coordinated Patrols since 2008, the air patrol “Eyes in the Sky” since 2009, as well as the secondment of rotating officers to the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP ISC). Moreover, Thailand has actively taken part in regional maritime security and cooperation fora such as the EAS, the ADMM-Plus which Thailand is currently co-chairing with the US the ADMM-Plus Experts’ Working Group on Maritime Security under the theme “Strengthening Maritime Security Cooperation for Sustainable Development of ASEAN Member States’ Economies”, the ARF, the ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) and the Expanded AMF (EAMF) with a view to paving the way towards substantive cooperation, particularly in the areas of capacity building, maritime domain awareness and maritime connectivity.

Thailand has embarked on a comprehensive reform of the fishery sector to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and labour exploits in fishery sector, resulting in the European Union’s lifting its ‘yellow card’ for Thailand in 2019. Building on such success, Thailand welcomed the establishment of the ASEAN Network for Combating IUU Fishing (AN-IUU) in 2020. The 1<sup>st</sup> AN-IUU meeting was held on 21-22 December 2020 in Bangkok via videoconference. As a follow-up, Thailand has developed the online interactive platform of the AN-IUU as a tool for information exchange on the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) system against IUU fishing activities in the ASEAN region. Thailand has also developed the AN-IUU Data Dictionary comprising the

necessary information related to the fishing vessel, incident and timeline that can be included in the interactive platform.

On the labour side, Thailand has undertaken a significant step as part of the effort to improve labour protection standards in the fisheries sector by ratifying the International Labour Organization (ILO) Work in Fishing Convention No. 188 (C188) on 30 January 2019, becoming the first country in Asia to ratify the Convention. The Convention has come into force since 30 January 2020. This underscores Thailand's strong commitment in the prevention and suppression of forced labour, ensuring that the working conditions in domestic fishing industry meet ILO standards.

Thailand has remained committed to promoting marine environmental protection, particularly on marine debris issue. Following the adoption of the ASEAN Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris (ASEAN RAP) at the Meeting of ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment on 1 March 2021, Thailand by the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources sought approval for the ASEAN RAP from the National Policy and Plan Committee on Marine and Coastal Resource Management on 5 April 2021. The ASEAN RAP will be further submitted for Cabinet's approval prior to seeking a referendum approval from ASEAN Ministers on Environment. By Q3/2021, Thailand will co-chair with the United States and China the "ARF Seminar on Marine Debris – Solid Waste Management and Scalable Solutions", aimed to raise awareness on components of developing, financing, and implementing solid waste management plans, and share best practices and case studies on scalable solutions to address regional marine debris challenges.

At the national level, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has developed a Roadmap "Plastic Waste Management 2018-2030" as a policy framework for the national plastic waste management. The Roadmap's main objective involves strengthening collaboration among all stakeholders in preventing and addressing plastic waste problem in an integrated manner to reduce and stop using certain types of plastic, such as plastic wrapping and water bottle lid within 2019 and plastic bag, Styrofoam container, plastic cup, and plastic straw within 2022. Several activities under marine debris management project have also been organised, such as "Everyday Say No to Plastic Bags" campaign in cooperation with private sector to end distribution of single-use plastic bags by department and convenience stores.

## I. SECURITY CONCERNS IN THE REGION AND NATIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY POLICIES

### a. Security concerns common to the ASEAN Community

Over the past two years, the security environment in Asia-Pacific has been characterised as being extremely complex with utmost uncertainty. The shaping of the regional security environment can be attributed, but not limited to, the following key factors: (i) *intensified strategic competition between major powers*, in particular between the US and China, which has been source of tensions and uncertainties in the region; and (ii) *the Covid-19 pandemic*, which has brought about profound socio-economic and significant geo-strategic implications on the region.

Against this backdrop, the ASEAN Community has been faced with emerging common security challenges, most notably as follow:

- *Health security* has become a top priority in the region as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to persist, taking on new strains and more contagious variants. While the development of vaccines has been encouraging in terms of being the initial step towards recovery, equitable distribution and access to vaccines are crucial and must be ensured. Leading vaccine producers are encouraged to continue their support, assistance and possible technological transfer towards the production, distribution and access to vaccines in ASEAN. For its part, ASEAN needs to sustain the progress in the fight against and the recovery from the devastating COVID-19 pandemic by further speeding up the implementation of its initiatives, including the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework, as well as prepare for public health emergencies in the future.

- *Maritime security* is a critical part of regional cooperation, comprising issues such as territorial disputes, transnational crimes at sea (such as piracy, trafficking in humans, illicit drugs smuggling, illegal arms dealing, etc.), marine environmental issues, Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. In the effort to address these challenges, it is imperative to maintain constructive dialogues on issues of common interest and concern in ASEAN as well as between ASEAN and its external partners. Maritime cooperation should also be further intensified, including in promoting maritime security, safety and freedom of navigation and overflight, addressing transnational crime at sea, creating conducive environment for peaceful settlement of disputes, ensuring marine sustainability, providing humanitarian assistance to persons and vessels in distress at sea, combating IUU fishing, promoting maritime connectivity and commerce,

strengthening marine scientific research, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.

- *The situation in the East Sea (South China Sea)* has seen worrying developments with the continued land reclamation, militarization and other unilateral actions which may further erode trust, increase tensions and undermine peace, stability, maritime security and safety as well as freedom of navigation and overflight in the region. Therefore, it is important to uphold international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, which sets out the comprehensive legal framework under which all activities in the seas and oceans must be carried out. All parties concerned need to adhere to the principles of settlement of disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the international law and the 1982 UNCLOS, exercise self-restraint, not to use or threat to use force and refrain from any actions that would complicate the situation. ASEAN and China need to continue their efforts to fully and effectively implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), and work towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct (COC) that is in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.

- *Climate change* continues to have concerning consequences on the region, as seen in the rising sea levels, more frequent and intense flooding and droughts, etc., and has triggered numerous lingering security challenges such as water security, food security, human security, etc. Such challenges, along with the mounting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic could pose potential long-term effects on the sustainable development in the region, particularly in the vulnerable sub-regions and remote areas. ASEAN and ASEAN-led mechanisms should serve as main regional platforms to address and manage these challenges, in efforts to secure a more sustainable and resilient future.

- *The complicated developments in Myanmar* have brought further international attention to the region. ASEAN has been doing its utmost to assist Myanmar to overcome this crisis. The successful convening of the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting held in-person in Jakarta in April 2021 and the five-point consensus reached at the Meeting demonstrates ASEAN's cohesiveness and centrality in the response to the evolving situation. While actively speeding up the implementation of the five-point consensus, ASEAN hopes that external partners will support ASEAN's role and efforts in this process in order to seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people of Myanmar.

## **b. Individual National Defense Policies**

Guided by the direction to maintain a peaceful and stable environment for socioeconomic development, Viet Nam consistently pursues a national defence policy of peace and self-

defence. Our defence policy embraces the principles of not joining any military alliances, not siding with one country against another, not giving any country permission to set up military bases or use its territory to carry out military activities against other countries and not using force or threatening to use force in international relations. Viet Nam resolutely and consistently settles all disputes and divergences through peaceful means on the basis of international law.

Viet Nam promotes defence cooperation with countries both inside and outside the region to improve its capabilities to protect the country and address common security challenges. Depending on the circumstances and specific conditions, Viet Nam will consider developing necessary and appropriate defence relations with other countries on the basis of respecting each other's independence, sovereignty, territorial unity and integrity as well as the fundamental principles of international law, cooperation for mutual benefits and common interests of the region and international community.

As a responsible member of the international community, Viet Nam is keen to fulfil its duties while actively cooperating with other nations to address emerging security issues, contributing to the preservation of peace and stability in the region and the world.

Viet Nam builds its military potential based on a unified strategy and is sufficient for national defence and construction. Combat competency and readiness of the armed forces, which are reflected in their organisation, structure, weaponry, logistical and technical support, military art, and science and technology, are maintained, improved, and developed to meet the requirements of the people's war for safeguarding the Homeland.

With regard to defence expenditure, Viet Nam allocates a necessary portion of the State budget for defence expenses in general and for maintaining weapons and equipment for armed forces in particular. Currently, the annual average defence expenditure accounts for approximately 2.0 percent of the GDP.

### **c. National contributions to promoting regional security**

#### **COVID-19**

Faced with the first year of the Covid-19 outbreak, Viet Nam, as Chair of ASEAN/ARF 2020, had to speedily adapt to the changing situation and play out its active guiding role within ASEAN and ASEAN-led mechanisms.

As ASEAN Chair 2020, Viet Nam had promptly taken the initiative to promote a coherent, multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder and whole-of-ASEAN Community approach in efforts to

ensure ASEAN's timely and effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This approach included not only political commitment at the highest level, displayed through the Chairman's Statement on ASEAN Collective Response to the Outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (14 February 2020), the ASEAN and ASEAN+3 Special Summits on Covid-19 as well as the Joint Statements of the 36<sup>th</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, but also a series of specific, synchronous and interdisciplinary efforts implemented throughout all three pillars with medical cooperation at the core. ASEAN's response to the pandemic also stressed the importance of coordination and cooperation with Partners and in joint efforts with the international community.

Major ASEAN Initiatives on COVID-19 response and recovery have been adopted and implemented include: (i) the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund; (ii) ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies; (iii) ASEAN Strategic Framework for Public Health Emergencies; (iv) ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (AC-PHEED); (v) ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework; (vi) ASEAN Travel Corridor Framework.

As the ARF Chair 2020, Viet Nam had taken the initiative to issue provisional measures to maintain ARF's operation and activities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Viet Nam had also timely proposed the ARF Ministerial Statement on Enhancing Cooperation to Prevent and Respond to Infectious Disease Outbreaks, which was co-sponsored by Australia and New Zealand and adopted by the 27<sup>th</sup> ARF in September 2020. As a basis for a collective and effective response against COVID-19, Viet Nam's proposal for the Statement underscored the important role of the ARF, building on its particular strengths as an inclusive platform for constructive dialogue and cooperation, confidence building and civil-military coordination and also complemented efforts by ASEAN, other ASEAN-led mechanisms and the international community.

### **Maritime Security**

Over 2020, Viet Nam has made many outstanding steps in contribution to the maintenance and promotion of peace, stability and security in the East Sea (South China Sea); building and consolidating strategic trust among countries; actively supporting the promotion of a rules-based maritime order and the settlement of disputes through peaceful means on the basis of international law, especially the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); coordinating with other countries on the full and effective implementation of the DOC, actively participating in and substantively contributing to the process of developing the COC to work towards the early conclusion of a substantive, effective COC in line with international law, including 1982 UNCLOS.

Viet Nam continues to attach great importance to regional cooperation to ensure maritime security through many ASEAN-led frameworks such as the EAS, ARF, ADMM, ADMM+, AMF and EAMF. In December 2020, Viet Nam hosted the 10<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF-10), the 8<sup>th</sup> Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF-8) and a Workshop commemorating the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the AMF. Through these events, participants discussed emerging issues related to maritime cooperation as well and explored measures to strengthen coordination among states.

Within the framework of the ARF, Viet Nam promoted maritime cooperation efforts by co-chairing the 3<sup>rd</sup> ARF Workshop on Enhancing Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation with Australia and the EU in March 2021 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> ARF Workshop on Implementing UNCLOS and other international instruments to address emerging maritime issues with Australia, Canada, the EU and India in May 2021.

Within the framework of ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security, Viet Nam regularly engages in multilateral cooperation including information sharing as well as through participation in forums such as the Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meetings, the Global Coast Guard Summit (Working Level Meetings), the Southeast Asia Maritime Law Enforcement Initiative Commanders' Forum (formerly known as the Gulf of Thailand Initiative (GoTI) on Maritime Law Enforcement Commanders' Forum), conferences and capacity building activities under the Regional Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP); capacity building and experience sharing activities among Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies in the framework of the Global Maritime Crime Program (GMCP) of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), etc.

Bilaterally, Viet Nam has been closely coordinated with maritime law enforcement forces of regional countries to conduct a number of practical cooperation activities, such as delegations exchange, fishery coordinated patrols, information sharing, joint training courses for capacity building, etc.

### **ICTs Security**

Viet Nam attaches great importance to maintaining cybersecurity, especially given that in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the digital economy has been given an increasingly prominent role and criminal activities have become more rampant. Thus, in recent years, Viet Nam has enacted a number of policies to ensure cybersecurity domestically as well as engaged with external partners to promote cooperation in this respect. Since the adoption of the Law on Cybersecurity in 2018, a series of measures have been introduced to guarantee and protect the legitimate rights and interests of individuals and entities as well as combat against malicious acts in the cyberspace,

including those targeted at misinformation acts related to the COVID-19 situation. Viet Nam also engages with external partners to ensure that its laws and policies are in conformity with international standards, including those related to data protection.

Viet Nam is actively participating in various forums for the purpose of establishing international norms in cyberspace, including those organised under the United Nations auspices. Through coordinated efforts, Viet Nam aims to enhance coordination and mutual assistance, establish modalities and arrangements for cooperation among relevant agencies and promote the sharing of information, intelligence and expertise, as well as technical assistance and capacity building among countries.

At the regional level, Viet Nam has actively participated in various cybersecurity-related activities under ASEAN-led mechanisms. Within the framework of the ARF, Viet Nam co-chaired the first ARF Workshop on Countering the Use of ICTs for Criminal Purposes with Russia and China. On 2 November 2020, the Ministry of Defence of Viet Nam, as Chair of ADMM and ADMM+ organised a virtual conference on “Cyber warfare and International Humanitarian Law: Regional Implications in the Context of COVID-19”. On 28 December 2020, the Ministry of Public Security organised a conference on “Enhancing cooperation and coordination in cybersecurity and cybercrime prevention among ASEAN+3 countries.

### **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)**

Viet Nam continues to promote regional cooperation in HADR through various regional mechanisms. In a series of Special Summits between ASEAN Member States and ASEAN’s external partners held in April 2020, Viet Nam called for bolstering national and regional epidemic preparedness and response, including the establishment of a network of experts on public health emergencies and strengthening the capacity of existing mechanisms, namely the ASEAN Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Network, the ASEAN Risk Assessment and Risk Communication Centre, the ASEAN BioDiaspora Virtual Center (ABVC) and the ASEAN Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), to enhance ASEAN’s joint response to emergency needs. Apart from the exchanges at regional fora, Viet Nam carried out a lot of practical measures to step up regional cooperation in HADR, providing ASEAN countries and ASEAN external partners with ventilators, test kits, face masks and other medical supplies needed for tackling the pandemic.

With regard to HADR cooperation activities, Viet Nam actively participates in multilateral cooperation mechanisms including ASEAN Militaries Ready Group on HADR (AMRG on HADR), ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ISM-DR) and ADMM-Plus Experts’ Working Group on HADR. In addition, Viet Nam attaches great importance

to the coordination between the existing regional mechanisms, particularly the ARF ISM-DR and the ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR.

Viet Nam actively cooperates with regional countries to conduct and participate in disaster management training courses to improve management, coordination and response capabilities; establish mechanisms for coordinating and exchanging natural disaster warning and forecasting information, as well as enhance disaster response support among ARF Participants; strengthen the transfer of search and rescue facilities and equipment among ARF Participants; and continue to participate HADR exercises at different levels, training courses and other activities on disaster management and HADR.

### **Counter-terrorism**

Viet Nam actively participates in UN international treaties on counter-terrorism and is a member of the ASEAN Convention on Counter-terrorism. Viet Nam has established and maintains a hotline to exchange information with partners on terrorist individuals and organisations as well as to coordinate on handling terrorist incidents. In efforts to effectively counter money-laundering and terrorist financing, Viet Nam has actively implemented the 2012 Law on Anti-Money Laundering and actively fulfilled its obligations as an official member of the Asia-Pacific Group on Anti-money laundering.

Viet Nam remains committed to contribute and advance international and regional efforts in counter-terrorism. In July 2020 during the UN Virtual Counter-terrorism week, Viet Nam, in the capacity of ASEAN Chair, attended the Session on “Member States’ Counter-Terrorism Priorities in the Post-Covid-19 Environment”. Viet Nam’s Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Dang Dinh Quy shared ASEAN’s initiatives and practical cooperation in this area through the implementation of the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism and the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2018-2025). In August 2020 at the UNSC open debate on “Addressing the issues of linkages between terrorism and organised crime” chaired by Indonesia, Viet Nam’s representative underscored the need to intensify regional and international cooperation in combating terrorism and organised crime, particularly terrorist financing and recruitment.

Regionally, Viet Nam participates in a proactive manner in mechanisms such as the ARF Intersessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM-CTTC) as well as the ADMM-Plus Experts’ Working Group on Counter-Terrorism. As the Chair of ASEAN in 2020, Viet Nam hosted the ASEAN Defence Senior Officials Meeting (ADSOM) which adopted the Standard Operation Process (SOP) of “ASEAN Our Eyes” initiatives proposed by Indonesia as well as the Work Plans of the 4<sup>th</sup> cycle of 7 ADMM-Plus Experts’ Working Groups (2021-2023) and the 3-year Work Plan of ADMM in 2020-2022.

## **Transnational Crime**

Viet Nam has actively participated in regional and international cooperation frameworks in the field of transnational crime prevention and control and has achieved many positive results.

As the ASEAN Chair, Viet Nam successfully hosted the 14<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) in November 2020 under the theme “Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN against Transnational Crime”. In his opening speech at this meeting, Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc reaffirmed Viet Nam’s commitment to efficiently cooperating with ASEAN Member States in combating transnational crime as a significant part of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, stressing importance of the AMMTC as a key regional mechanism in tackling transboundary issues and ensuring regional peace, stability and security.

As the Chair of the 14<sup>th</sup> AMMTC, Viet Nam led discussions on the regional context and measures to implement the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime for the 2016-2025 and encouraged the promotion of confidence building measures and in-depth information exchanges between the law enforcement agencies of ASEAN Member States. The Joint Statement of the 14<sup>th</sup> AMMTC called on ASEAN to strengthen cooperation, in particular, the sharing of information and expertise in combating transnational crime in order to ensure security and safety for ASEAN citizens and prevent social uncertainties posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the framework of the AMMTC, Viet Nam put forth a number of initiatives, including the Establishment of a Direct Communication Link (DCL) to enable timely exchange of transnational crime information and cases and establish operational procedures to handle relevant incidents in emergency situations. Viet Nam also proposed to list combatting antiques smuggling as a priority area of cooperation under the AMMTC and SOMTC.

At the ASEAN Senior Officials’ Meeting on Transnational Crime 2020 (SOMTC 20) hosted by the Philippines, Viet Nam suggested a number of concrete recommendations to strengthen regional cooperation in tackling transnational crime, including that: (i) law enforcement agencies of ASEAN Member States should continue to maintain and boost cooperation, promote the exchange of information and experience, strengthen investigation coordination, and enhance the capacity of law enforcement officers; (ii) ASEAN Member States should finalise legal documents to create a framework for cooperation in preventing and combatting crime within ASEAN as well as between ASEAN and its dialogue partners; and (iii) there should be a specific roadmap to implement the agreements of the SOMTC and AMMTC.

In the field of combatting drugs and narcotics, Viet Nam successfully hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the AIPA Advisory Council on Dangerous Drugs in June 2020 in virtual format under the theme “Turning Words into Actions towards a Drug-Free ASEAN Community”, with the objective to promote strategic, long-term cooperation as well as collective efforts to achieve an ASEAN Community that is free of drugs. At the Meeting, Viet Nam stressed the importance of adapting strategies to the changing conditions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as emphasised the need to expand the scale and coverage of drug addiction treatment programs, including community rehabilitation programs to assist former drug users in reintegrating into society and leading a drug-free lifestyle. Viet Nam had suggested the implementation of evidence-based prevention policies to reduce demand and supply of illicit drugs and minimise the adverse public health and social consequences of drugs abuse.

In order to effectively address transnational crime, Viet Nam stresses the need for law enforcement agencies of ASEAN Member States to continue to maintain and further strengthen cooperation, promote information exchange, experience sharing on transnational crime prevention and control; strengthen cooperation on joint investigation, capacity building for law enforcement officers, researching and finalising related legal documents, create a framework for cooperation in preventing and combatting transnational crimes including through cooperation on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters between ASEAN Member States and partners.

### **Non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control, disarmament**

Viet Nam maintains a consistent stance on the non-proliferation, control and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction. Guided by the policy of proactively supporting and contributing to the common efforts of the international community for peace, security, and disarmament, Viet Nam remains committed to fulfilling its obligations of a member state of international conventions, agreements, protocol on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), other international conventions on disarmament and relevant UNSC Resolutions. Viet Nam also actively contributes to the joint efforts of ASEAN Member States through the obligations under the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone (SEANFWZ) to work towards building a peaceful, free and nuclear-free Southeast Asia. At present, Viet Nam is actively considering and making the necessary preparations for further participating in international conventions and treaties on national defence and security as well as welcomes initiatives to prevent the development, production, storage and use of WMD.

Domestically, Viet Nam has adopted a number of key documents, which act as the legal basis for taking action at the national and local levels in the efforts against the proliferation

of WMD, funding for proliferation and other illegal acts on WMD. These include Decision No.104/QD-TTg dated 22 January 2019, issued by the Prime Minister of Viet Nam, approving the National Action Plan for Prevention, Detection and Preparation of Responding to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risks and Incidents in the period of 2019 – 2025 and Decree No. 81/2019/ND-CP dated 11 November 2019 of the Government of Viet Nam on Preventing and Countering Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Through a wide range of multilateral mechanisms, as ASEAN Chair 2020 and Non-Permanent Member of the UN Security Council 2020-2021, Viet Nam actively promoted the agenda of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament.

In July 2020, Viet Nam submitted the National Report containing information on the measures taken towards the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1540 (2004), which reaffirmed Viet Nam's adherence to legally binding instruments and membership of organisations in this regard.

On 2 October 2020, at the High-level Meeting of the 75<sup>th</sup> session of UNGA, Viet Nam's Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs Pham Binh Minh, in his capacity of ASEAN Chairman, reiterated ASEAN's commitment to maintain Southeast Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and collaborate efficiently with all parties in the implementation of the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ). Viet Nam also emphasised the need to respect the right of states to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

On 23 November 2020, at the Meeting of the 1540 Committee, the Deputy Chief of Viet Nam's Permanent Mission to the UN emphasised the need to strengthen international and regional cooperation in non-proliferation, particularly through information sharing and technological support for Member States in implementing UNSC Resolutions.

### **Peacekeeping Operations**

Viet Nam's active participation in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations shows its responsibility as a member of the international community to make practical contributions to the protection of peace and stability in the region and the world. Along with multiple national contributions since the inauguration of the Viet Nam Peacekeeping Center in 2014, Viet Nam officially deployed a Level 2 Field Hospital to a UN Peacekeeping Mission in Bentiu, South Sudan in October 2018, which marked an important development in Viet Nam's participation in Peacekeeping Operations. Out of the 63 officials and staff of this Hospital, 13 were female, accounting for more than 20%, which far exceeded the

requirements of the UN. Viet Nam's Level 2 Field Hospital was also assessed by the UN as having the best preparation and response to the Covid-19 pandemic in the UNMISS.