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ASEAN Security Community Plan of Action

Vientiane, 29 November 2004

Introduction

Leaders at the Ninth ASEAN Summit in Bali adopted the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II), which stipulated the establishment of an ASEAN Community resting on three pillars: an ASEAN Security Community, an ASEAN Economic Community and an ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community.

These three pillars shall be developed and implemented in a parallel and balanced manner.

Recognising the strong interconnections among political, economic and social realities, the ASEAN Security Community acknowledges the principle of comprehensive security, and commits to address the broad political, economic, social and cultural aspects of building an ASEAN Community. It is also acknowledged that political and social stability, economic prosperity, narrowed development gap, poverty alleviation and reduction of social disparity would constitute strong foundation for a sustained ASC given its subscription to the principle of comprehensive security.

The realisation of an ASEAN Security Community would ensure that countries in the region live at peace with one another and with the world at large in a just, democratic and harmonious environment. The ASC would be based on shared norms and rules of good conduct in inter-state relations; effective conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms; and post-conflict peace building activities.

The ASC promotes an ASEAN-wide political and security cooperation in consonance with the ASEAN Vision 2020 rather than a defence pact, military alliance or a joint foreign policy. The ASC Plan of Action is mutually-reinforcing with bilateral cooperation between ASEAN Member Countries while recognising the sovereign rights of the Member Countries to pursue their individual foreign policies and defence arrangements. In addressing future security challenges, ASEAN Member Countries share the responsibility for strengthening peace, stability and security of the region free from foreign military interference in any form or manifestation.

The ASC shall contribute to the further promotion of peace and security in the wider Asia Pacific region. In this regard, the ASC is open and outward looking, engaging ASEAN's friends and Dialogue Partners to promote peace and stability in the region. The ASC will reflect ASEAN's determination to move forward the stages of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) at a pace comfortable to all. In this regard, the ASC will strengthen ASEAN's role as the driving force in the ARF.

Since its inception in 1967, ASEAN has developed confidence and maturity to address issues of common concern as one ASEAN family. The ASC process shall therefore be progressive. This process shall be guided by well-established principles of non-interference, consensus based decision-making, national and regional resilience, respect for the national sovereignty, the renunciation of the threat or the use of force, and peaceful settlement of differences and disputes which have served as the foundation of ASEAN cooperation. ASEAN shall strengthen existing initiatives, launch new ones and set appropriate implementation frameworks.

The ASC upholds the existing ASEAN political instruments such as the Declaration on ZOPFAN, the TAC and the SEANWFZ Treaty, which shall play a pivotal role in the area of confidence building measures, preventive diplomacy and the approaches to conflict resolution. It shall abide by the UN Charter and other principles of international law.

ASEAN shall explore innovative ways to implement the Plan of Action which comprises six components, but not limited to, as follows: political development, shaping and sharing of norms,

conflict prevention, conflict resolution, post-conflict peace building, and implementing mechanisms. A list of areas of activities, which is non-exhaustive, is provided to ensure a coordinated process of cooperation towards an ASEAN Security Community.

I. Political Development

One of the main objectives of the ASEAN Security Community as envisaged in the Bali Concord II is to bring ASEAN's political and security cooperation to a higher plane.

In working towards this objective, ASEAN Member Countries shall promote political development in support of ASEAN Leaders' shared vision and common values to achieve peace, stability, democracy and prosperity in the region. This is the highest political commitment that would serve as the basis for ASEAN political cooperation. In order to better respond to the new dynamics within the respective ASEAN Member Countries, ASEAN shall nurture such common socio-political values and principles. In this context, ASEAN Member Countries shall not condone unconstitutional and undemocratic changes of government or the use of their territory for any actions undermining peace, security and stability of other ASEAN Member Countries.

A conducive political environment will ensure continued peace, security and stability in the region, in which member countries shall rely exclusively on peaceful processes in settling intra-regional differences and disputes and consider their individual security as fundamentally linked together and bound by geographic location, common vision and objectives.

II. Shaping and Sharing of Norms

Shaping and sharing of norms aim at achieving a standard of common adherence to norms of good conduct among members of the ASEAN Community; consolidating and strengthening ASEAN's solidarity, cohesiveness and harmony (the "we feeling"); and contributing to the building of a democratic, tolerant, participatory and transparent community in Southeast Asia.

These norms setting activities shall adhere to the following fundamental principles:

1. Non-alignment;
2. Fostering of peace-oriented attitudes of ASEAN Member Countries;
3. Conflict resolution through non-violent means;
4. Renunciation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and avoidance of arms race in Southeast Asia; and
5. Renunciation of the threat or the use of force.

ASEAN Member Countries shall therefore engage in such activities as strengthening the ASEAN Declaration of 1967, the ZOPFAN, the TAC and the SEANWFZ regimes, developing regional legal frameworks, and establishing a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

III. Conflict Prevention

Based on the principles contained in the TAC, which is the key code of conduct governing relations between states and diplomatic instrument for the promotion of peace, security and stability in the region, the objectives of conflict prevention shall be:

1. To strengthen confidence and trust within the Community;
2. To mitigate tensions and prevent disputes from arising between or among member countries as well as between member countries and non-ASEAN countries; and
3. To prevent the escalation of existing disputes.

ASEAN Member Countries shall enhance security cooperation by strengthening confidence building measures; carrying out preventive diplomacy; resolving outstanding regional issues; as well as enhancing cooperation on non-traditional security issues.

IV. Conflict Resolution

It is essential that any disputes and conflicts involving ASEAN Member Countries be resolved in a peaceful way and in the spirit of promoting peace, security and stability in the region. While continuing to use national, bilateral and international mechanisms, ASEAN Member Countries shall endeavour to use the existing regional dispute settlement mechanisms and processes in the political and security areas and work towards innovative modalities including arrangements to maintain regional peace and security so as to better serve theirs as well as collective interests of all members for peace and security.

V. Post-conflict Peace Building

Post-conflict peace building seeks to create the conditions necessary for a sustainable peace in conflict-torn areas and to prevent the resurgence of conflict. It is a process involving broad-based inter-agency cooperation and coordination across a wide range of issues. ASEAN activities related to post-conflict peace building shall include the establishment of appropriate mechanisms and mobilisation of resources. As an ASEAN family, members should assist each other in post-conflict peace building efforts, such as humanitarian relief assistance, reconstruction and rehabilitation.

VI. Implementing Mechanisms

To ensure the effective implementation of this Plan of Action, the following measures will be undertaken:

1. The AMM shall take necessary follow-up measures to implement this Plan of Action including consultation and coordination with other relevant ASEAN ministerial bodies; to set up ad-hoc groups as appropriate; and to report annually the progress of implementation to the ASEAN Summit; as well as to introduce new measures and activities to strengthen the ASEAN Security Community as appropriate;
2. The AMM shall undertake overall review of progress of this Plan of Action. The AMM

shall inscribe permanently an agenda item entitled “Implementation of the ASC Plan of Action” in the agenda of its meetings; and

3. The Secretary-General of ASEAN shall assist the ASEAN Chair in monitoring and reviewing the progress of implementation of this Plan of Action.

VII. Areas of Activities

To realise the ASEAN Security Community by 2020, ASEAN shall endeavour to work towards the implementation of the areas of activities in the following **Annex**. It is acknowledged that some of these activities are already ongoing and at various stages of implementation. Additional activities could also be implemented in the future. ASEAN will make every effort to promptly carry out activities which gain consensus support.

ANNEX

for ASEAN Security Community Plan of Action

ACTIVITIES

I. Political Development

1. Promotion of a just, democratic and harmonious environment :
 - a. Strengthening democratic institutions and popular participation;
 - b. Promoting understanding and appreciation of political system, culture and history of ASEAN Member Countries;
 - c. Strengthening the rule of law and judiciary systems, legal infrastructure and capacity building;
 - d. Promoting free flow of information among and within ASEAN Member

Countries;

- e. Enhancing good governance in public and private sectors;
 - f. Strengthening effective and efficient civil services; and
 - g. Preventing and combating corruption.
2. Promotion of human rights and obligations:
 - a. Establishing a network among existing human rights mechanisms;
 - b. Protecting vulnerable groups including women, children, people with disabilities, and migrant workers; and
 - c. Promoting education and public awareness on human rights.
 3. Promotion of people-to-people contacts:
 - a. Encouraging the role of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation (AIPO) in political and security cooperation;
 - b. Promoting public participation and the contribution of the ASEAN People's Assembly (APA) to the ASEAN community building;
 - c. Strengthening the role of the ASEAN Foundation;
 - d. Encouraging the contribution of ASEAN-ISIS to political development;
 - e. Strengthening the role of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ABAC); and
 - f. Supporting the activities of the ASEAN University Network.

II. Shaping and Sharing of Norms

1. Strengthening the TAC regime:
 - a. Accession to the TAC by non-ASEAN countries; and
 - b. Periodic assessment of the implementation of the TAC and exploration of ways and means for its effective implementation.
2. Working towards development of an ASEAN Charter which will *inter alia* reaffirm ASEAN's goals and principles in inter-state relations, in particular the collective

responsibilities of all ASEAN Member Countries in ensuring non-aggression and respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity; the promotion and protection of human rights; the maintenance of political stability, regional peace and economic progress; and the establishment of effective and efficient institutional framework for ASEAN.

3. Resolving all outstanding issues to ensure early signing of the Nuclear Weapon States to the Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty.
4. ASEAN Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) Agreement:
 - a. Compilation of existing bilateral MLA Agreements among ASEAN Member Countries and between ASEAN and other countries;
 - b. Identification of issues relating to the establishment of an ASEAN MLA Agreement; and
 - c. Conclusion of ASEAN MLA Agreement.
5. ASEAN Extradition Treaty as envisaged by the 1976 Declaration of ASEAN Concord:
 - a. Identification of ASEAN political decisions to establish Extradition Treaty and bilateral Extradition Treaties between ASEAN Member Countries; and
 - b. Establishment of a working group on ASEAN Extradition Treaty under the purview of ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting (ASLOM).
6. Ensuring the implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) through, *inter alia*:
 - a. Establishing an ASEAN–China Working Group on the Implementation of the DOC;
 - b. Establishing a review mechanism on the implementation of the DOC; and
 - c. Working towards the adoption of the Code of Conduct in South China Sea (COC).

7. ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism:

- a. Identification and analysis or assessment of documents and relevant instruments related to counter terrorism;
- b. Working towards accession to and ratification of the relevant UN conventions on counter terrorism; and
- c. Preparation, negotiation and conclusion of an ASEAN convention on counter terrorism.

III. Conflict Prevention

1. Strengthening Confidence Building Measures:

- a. Organising and conducting regional military exchanges among high-ranking officials, military academies, and staff colleges of ASEAN Member Countries, apart from increasing bilateral visits and exchanges;
- b. Periodic publication of strategic assessments on the security environment, defence policies, and other security issues, such as Defence White Papers and equivalent documents;
- c. Working towards convening of an annual ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM);
- d. Promoting exchange of observers at military exercises;
- e. Establishment of an ASEAN Arms Register to be administered by the ASEAN Secretariat, in line with a similar activity being conducted in the ARF;
- f. Utilising military and civilian personnel in disaster relief operation;
- g. Promotion of civil-military relations; and
- h. Exploring joint development and sharing of resources.

2. Strengthening Preventive Measures:

- a. Publishing an ASEAN Members Annual Security Outlook;
- b. Voluntary briefing by ASEAN Member Countries on national security issues; and

- c. Developing an ASEAN early warning system based on existing mechanisms to prevent occurrence/escalation of conflicts.
3. Strengthening the ARF process in support of the ASEAN Security Community:
 - a. ARF Unit within the ASEAN Secretariat;
 - b. Enhanced role of the ARF Chair;
 - c. Strengthening ASEAN's role in addressing the four overlapping issues of CBMs and Preventive Diplomacy (Enhanced role of the ARF Chair, Annual Security Outlook, Register of Experts/Eminent Persons, Voluntary Briefing on Regional Issues); and
 - d. Moving the ARF to the preventive diplomacy stage and beyond (implementation of the Concept Paper on Preventive Diplomacy, establishment of an Intersessional Support Group on Preventive Diplomacy).
 4. Enhancing cooperation on non-traditional security issues:
 - a. Combating transnational crimes and other trans-boundary problems, including money laundering, illegal migration, smuggling and illegal trade of natural resources, trafficking in persons, drugs and precursors, as well as communicable diseases;
 - b. Promoting ASEAN maritime security cooperation;
 - c. Strengthening law enforcement cooperation; and
 - d. Promoting cooperation on environmental issues including haze, pollution and floods.
 5. Strengthening efforts in maintaining respect for territorial integrity, sovereignty and unity of member countries as stipulated in the Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in Accordance with the Charter of the United Nations:
 - a. Strengthening cooperation on the state's obligation not to intervene in the affairs of other neighbouring states, including refraining from the use of military,

political, economic or other form of coercion aimed against the political independence or territorial integrity of other neighbouring states;

- b. Enhancing cooperation among ASEAN Member Countries to prevent the organisation, instigation, assistance and participation in terrorist acts in other neighbouring ASEAN Member Countries;
- c. Preventing the use of territory of any ASEAN Member Country as base for any activities against security and stability of neighbouring ASEAN Member Countries; and
- d. Strengthening cooperation to address subversive and insurgency activities aimed at neighbouring ASEAN Member Countries.

6. Strengthening cooperation to address threats and challenges posed by separatism.

IV. Conflict Resolution

1. Strengthening Dispute Settlement Mechanisms:

- a. The use of existing modes of pacific settlement of disputes such as negotiations and consultations, good offices, conciliation and mediation by all ASEAN Member Countries, or use of the High Council of the TAC as a preferred option; and
- b. If the High Council so requires, it may establish on an *ad hoc* basis an Experts Advisory Committee (EAC) or an Eminent Persons Group (EPG), which may extend assistance to the High Council to provide advice or counsel on the settlement of disputes upon request, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the High Council of TAC.

2. Developing regional cooperation for maintenance of peace and stability:

- a. Promoting technical cooperation with the UN and relevant regional organisations in order to benefit from their expertise and experiences;
- b. Establishing/assigning national focal points for regional cooperation for

maintenance of peace and stability;

- c. Utilisation of national peace keeping centres which currently exist, or are being planned, in some ASEAN Member Countries to establish regional arrangement for the maintenance of peace and stability; and
- d. Establishing a network among existing ASEAN Member Countries' peace keeping centres to conduct joint planning, training, and sharing of experiences, with a view to establishing an ASEAN arrangement for the maintenance of peace and stability.

3. Developing Supporting Initiatives:

- a. Promoting exchange and cooperation among ASEAN centres of excellence on peace, and conflict management and resolution studies; and
- b. Considering the establishment of an ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation.

V. Post-conflict Peace Building

1. Strengthening ASEAN humanitarian assistance:

- a. Providing safe havens in conflict areas;
- b. Ensuring the delivery of basic services or assistance to victims of conflict;
- c. Orderly repatriation of refugees/displaced persons and resettlement of internally displaced persons;
- d. Ensuring safety of humanitarian relief assistance workers;
- e. Promoting the role of humanitarian relief assistance organisations;
- f. Considering the establishment of an ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Centre; and
- g. Intensifying cooperation with the United Nations and other organisations/donor countries.

2. Developing cooperation in post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation in

affected areas by:

- a. Undertaking human resources development and capacity building;
 - b. Assisting in institutional building and promoting popular participation;
 - c. Reducing inter-communal tensions through educational exchanges and curriculum reform; and
 - d. Increasing cooperation in reconciliation and promotion of a culture of peace.
3. Establishing a mechanism to mobilise necessary resources to facilitate post-conflict peace building (e.g. a Stability Fund), including through cooperation with donor countries and international institutions.

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