



Joint Statement by the ADMM-Plus Defence Ministers on Practical Confidence-Building Measures

We, the Defence Ministers of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Australia, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America gathered in Singapore on 20 October 2018 for the Fifth ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (hereinafter referred to as "ADMM-Plus").

We reaffirm the ADMM-Plus as a key component of a robust, effective, and open regional security architecture that promotes mutual trust and confidence among the defence establishments.

We commend the progress made by our defence forces in forging practical cooperation through the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups (EWGs), which has contributed to capacity building and strengthening interoperability in addressing security challenges. We acknowledge the good work of the EWGs in conducting table top and field training exercises, developing standard operating procedures to guide the implementation of new initiatives, as well as convening of workshops and conferences for the relevant subject matter experts to exchange expertise, best practices, and information. These are practical measures that will build confidence between our militaries and defence forces, as well as strengthen their capability in dealing with transboundary security challenges.

In this regard, we welcome the continuation of work in the relevant ADMM-Plus EWGs aimed at strengthening confidence-building measures, in particular in areas where cooperation between our defence forces can bring concrete practical results, in the areas of counter-terrorism, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime security, military medicine, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian mine action, and cyber security.

The rising growth, development, and prosperity of the countries in the Asia-Pacific region have led to an increase in maritime and air traffic in the region.

This situation heightens our interest to implement cooperation among ASEAN Member States (AMS) and partner countries to avoid the likelihood of simple encounters between defence and military assets of different nations spiraling into unintended incidents.

In this regard, we reaffirm the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety, and freedom of navigation and overflight as well as 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 peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including those principles reflected in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

We recognise that it is important for the ADMM-Plus to put in place practical confidence-building measures that are in the spirit of the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025, to ensure the safety and security of the sea and air lanes that are critical for our region's continued development and prosperity.

We thus reaffirm the ADMM-Plus' commitment to enhance operational safety, including subscribing to the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) and implementing the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 (COLREGS).

We welcome the practical confidence-building measures that are being undertaken by the ADMM, including the ASEAN Defence Interaction Programmes, ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI), ADMM Guidelines for Maritime Interaction, ADMM-Wide Education and Training Exchanges, among others, and recognise that such measures contribute to maintaining regional peace and stability.

We also welcome the ADMM's adoption of the Guidelines for Air Military Encounters, and its Operational Annexes on Observing Existing Aviation Conventions and Rules, Safe and Professional Communications, Standard Flight Procedures, and Encouraging Mutual Trust and Confidence in the Air, which complement existing civil aviation rules and standards such as the Convention on International Civil Aviation (the Chicago Convention) and its Annexes, as well as the International Code of Signals (ICS) without impacting any bilateral or multilateral arrangements. The ADMM-Plus expresses support in-principle for the initiative, and intends to explore the application of these guidelines by the ADMM-Plus in consultation with ADMM-Plus countries so as to ensure a safe, secure and peaceful operating environment in the aviation

domain. We recognise that the guidelines are not intended to prejudice the positions of the relevant States in disputes.

We intend to work closely with other ASEAN-led mechanisms and platforms such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) to strengthen our collective commitment to peaceful, rules-based cooperation in the maritime and air domains.

We remain resolutely committed to maintaining the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region by working closely together to address common security challenges for the collective benefit of our people.

.....