

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
14TH TRACK II NETWORK OF ASEAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY
INSTITUTIONS (NADI) ANNUAL MEETING

30 March - 01 April 2021
Via Video Teleconference
International Convention Centre, Brunei Darussalam

INTRODUCTION

1. The 14th Track II Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI) Annual Meeting was organised by the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (SHHBIDSS), Ministry of Defence, Brunei Darussalam. It was held virtually at the International Convention Centre, Brunei Darussalam on Tuesday, 30 March 2021 to Thursday, 01 April 2021.
2. The representatives from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam attended the meeting through virtual conference due to current COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The list of the participants is at **Appendix I**. The meeting was chaired by Ms Ampuan Yura Kasumawati binti Dato Paduka Haji Adnan, Acting Director of SHHBIDSS.

Welcoming Remarks by the Chair of NADI, Ms Ampuan Yura Kasumawati binti Dato Paduka Haji Adnan, Acting Director of SHHBIDSS, Ministry of Defence Brunei Darussalam

3. In welcoming all NADI HODs and delegations to the 14th NADI Annual Meeting, Ms Ampuan Yura Kasumawati highlighted that COVID-19 pandemic regrettably did not allow NADI members to meet in the conventional ASEAN way, nevertheless, it was still fortunate that the meeting was able to meet virtually, and adapt to the relatively new working environment considering a number of NADI activities were stalled last year.
4. She further highlighted that COVID-19 has delivered triple shock; the pandemic itself, the economic impact of containment measures as well as repercussion from the global recession and the spill over to geopolitical scenes. She also shared Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship theme, 'We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper', hopes to underscore ASEAN's collective pursuit in improving livelihood and well-being of its people by strengthening resiliency and to be future-ready in overcoming current and unforeseen challenges. In this regard, it is NADI's objective to be a valuable platform for Track II to discuss and talk freely, and provide constructive recommendations to the ADMM through ADSOM and ADSOM WG.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

5. The Meeting adopted the agenda and the programme, which are attached as **Appendix II** and **Appendix III** respectively.

REGIONAL SECURITY OUTLOOK

Brunei Darussalam

Presenter: Ms Nor Azriah binti DSS Haji Abdul Aziz, Research Officer, SHHBIDSS, Ministry of Defence, Brunei Darussalam

6. Ms Nor Azriah asserted that Southeast Asia's significance is evident given that it is in the epicentre of a geopolitical, economic and strategic standoff. Taking into account the regional conflicts that have characterised the region in the first half of the 20th century, ASEAN sees the global interest in the region as a welcomed development for most economic and strategic reasons. Set against the backdrop of uncertainties ranging from rivalry of major powers in the region to the existing non-traditional security threats especially with the emergence of COVID-19, ASEAN member states (AMS) have been facing numerous challenges in addressing these issues which have significantly affected its regional security and stability.
7. According to statistics, ASEAN accounts for 1.8 per cent of global COVID-19 deaths. While this may not be the premier benchmark, this has shown ASEAN's capacity and preparedness for regional cooperation when being forced to deal with a disaster as huge as the pandemic. In moving forward, she reiterated that ASEAN should continue to uphold the concept of multilateralism and regionalism. Furthermore, ASEAN needs to be diligent in balancing the interests coming from major players in the region so that no one country would have the absolute capacity to disrupt the ASEAN Centrality.

Cambodia

Presenter: Lieutenant General Nem Sowathey, Deputy General-Director of General Department of Policy and Foreign Affairs, and Director of Sena Techo Unit, Ministry of National Defense, Kingdom of Cambodia

8. Lieutenant General Nem Sowathey highlighted some key regional security concerns, including the great powers strategic competition and the COVID-19 pandemic, which continue to be the primary concerns of all ASEAN Member States. The COVID-19 presents the gravest challenges to public health, the economy, and human security. It has placed the livelihood and well-being of the people under pressure and has also constrained the armed forces' ability to support the government's COVID-19 response mission. She highly appreciated the ASEAN's collective efforts in addressing the contemporary challenges of the COVID-19 through ongoing virtual meetings and conferences at all levels. Along this line, she suggested the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups (EWGs) on Military Medicine continue its practical cooperation by sharing information and medical expertise to contain the spread of the virus in the region. ADMM should consider forming an ASEAN military medicine group to conduct the medical or vaccine research and distribution programme collectively.
9. In addition, she also highlighted several other non-traditional security challenges, including climate change and natural disasters, transnational organised crime, cyber security, and terrorism, which have great potential to impact security and stability in the region. Climate

change has become one of the challenging threats to human security and development. This slow onset hazard is estimated to have devastating effects on every country's communities if it is not appropriately addressed. She emphasised that the fundamental approaches to address all above non-traditional security threats are only through the close cooperation and coordination between AMS and its dialogues partners. Lastly, she stressed the importance of ASEAN NADI institutions in continuing to work together to find ways and recommendations for the ADMM and ADMM-Plus frameworks to strengthen their cooperation to solve the current and emerging regional security issues.

Indonesia

Presenter: Brigadier General Jhonny Djamaris, S.IP, M.IP, Head of Centre of Strategic Studies of Tentara Nasional Indonesia (CSS TNI), Indonesia

10. Brigadier General Jhonny Djamaris highlighted that in the midst of efforts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, AMS are still facing regional security challenges, so ASEAN needs to strengthen cooperation to jointly face the situation. Regional security challenges are increasingly complex, stemming from competition from great power with interest in the Southeast Asia region as well as from non-traditional security threats. Regional security challenges are also increasingly widespread, not only limited to Southeast Asia, but covering the Indo-Pacific region. Insight on the Indo-Pacific from an ASEAN perspective lens is thus crucial, to support the ASEAN-led mechanism which is implemented in ADMM and ADMM-Plus.
11. Therefore, the recommended responses that ADMM and ADMM-Plus could immediately implement, namely:
 - To increase regional efforts through field training exercises in the field of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) and military medicine in order to support national efforts to overcome the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic;
 - To increase information exchange in the ASEAN Our Eyes mechanism in order to increase awareness of the threat of terrorism and radicalism; and
 - To include defence perspectives on ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (AOIP) in order to explore defence cooperation to deal with the situation in the Indo-Pacific region.

Indonesia

Presenter: Major General Dr Jonni Mahroza, S.I.P, M.A, M.Sc., CIQnR., CIQaR. Vice Rector for Academic and Student Affairs, Indonesia Defence University (IDU), Indonesia

12. Major General Dr Jonni Mahroza put forward that if the South China Sea conflict cannot be managed properly and the interests of the warring countries cannot be harmonised, it will have the opportunity to become an open war that will involve superpower countries that are hungry for energy sources. The most obvious impact for ASEAN is likely that the ASEAN region will become a battlefield in the arena of chemical, biological, radioactive, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons competition. The residue from CBRN weapons will have a direct impact on the lives of ASEAN residents for the long term.

13. He added that for ASEAN to make its centrality effective, AMS must maintain unity and neutrality. Unity and centrality cannot be taken for granted, but need more efforts, need to refresh the spirit of togetherness among AMS, for the sake of regional security. AMS needs to renew and restrengthen their commitment to the 1971 Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) declaration, as well as their commitment to the 1995 Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ) declaration. The strong commitment to these two declarations will be the keys to preventive measures to the future disastrous war in our region.

Lao PDR

Presenter: Brigadier General Viengxay Somvichit, Director General of Military Science and History Department (MSHD), Ministry of National Defence, Lao PDR

14. Brigadier General Viengxay Somvichit highlighted that the regional and global situation has changed in a complex and unpredictable manner. Now, the region continues to face more complex traditional and non-traditional security challenges with increasing extent of severity. Given these issues and challenges, it has caused concerns in many countries and it is one of the reasons why many countries in the region increase their military budget to purchase modern weapons to increase their preparedness to deal with the security threats. In addition, the region will confront with the strategic transformation policies of major powers and the rivalry of the major powers to influence over the Asia-Pacific region. The conflict and the tensions between major countries have created problems and affected economy, politics and security in ASEAN and the world.
15. He also noted that the COVID-19 pandemic is spreading in the world now. The COVID-19 pandemic has killed millions of people and impacted the global economy. Many enterprises and factories have been shut down, especially service businesses such as tourism and hotels have been severely affected due to measures imposed by the government to lock down the countries to prevent the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. He also stressed that ASEAN should pay attention to the cooperation addressing traditional and non-traditional security challenges, including the impact of major powers' influence on ASEAN to make ASEAN stronger and more prosperous.

Malaysia

Presenter: Mr Noor Hisham bin Rosle, Acting Chief Executive of Malaysian Institute of Defence and Security (MiDAS), Ministry of Defence, Malaysia

16. Mr Noor Hisham shared that Malaysia views the COVID-19 pandemic and the great power rivalries as pressing issues for ASEAN. While countries in ASEAN are undergoing COVID-19 recovery period, military exercises and exchange of political statements by the great powers continue consistently. Such a situation does not contribute to a better prospect for ASEAN's peace and stability. Malaysia enhanced its border management through the newly established National Task Force (NTF) on border security. The task force is made up of several relevant agencies working together to prevent illegal migrants' movement across land and maritime border. In addition, cyber security issues are on the rise and the need to ensure that the cyber

space remains safe. The importance to be prepared for any possible natural disaster in this region is also a matter of concern.

17. He added, besides the concern of big power rivalries in the South China Sea, this region is also confronted with rapidly evolving security challenges such as cyber security, terrorism, transnational crimes, and natural disasters. Malaysia firmly believes a strong commitment to NADI engagements will help the ADMM processes and consequently contribute to ASEAN peace and stability.

Malaysia

Presenter: Professor Dato' Dr BA Hamzah, Director of Centre for Defence and International Security Studies, National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM), Malaysia

18. Professor Dato' Dr BA Hamzah stated that the security landscape in the region is fluid. It defies long-term prediction. Externally, the US-Sino rivalry has complicated the regional security dynamics. Washington's open decision to enlist support from major allies to push China back puts the Middle Kingdom on the defensive. The quest for regional influence will have a bearing on the regional security outlook. If the two were to lock horns militarily in our backyard, ASEAN will feel the heat.
19. Internally, driving the regional strategic outlook is domestic politics. Any form of political instability in the member states of ASEAN, for example, will have a big impact on the security environment. The economic fallouts from the COVID-19 pandemic, access to resources, and the unsettled boundaries in the region are among the forces that can be disruptive to regional peace.
20. Overall, barring a major military blow-up between the two rival powers in the region, the strategic outlook is a mix of uncertainty and business as usual. Whilst it takes two to tango, the onus is on China, ASEAN's neighbour, to ensure the region its activities in the South China Sea are not hostile. Embracing the ASEAN-led Code of Conduct will embolden ASEAN's confidence in China.

Myanmar

Presenter: Major General Myint Kyaw Tun, Vice Chief of the Armed Forces Training (Strategic Studies), Office of the Chief of the Armed Forces Training, Ministry of Defence, Republic of the Union of Myanmar

21. Major General Myint Kyaw Tun mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic is much more than a health crisis and suggested that ASEAN needs to identify the threats from the pandemic to the region, to conduct a risk assessment based on the identified threats, and to find proportionate measures, policies and procedures to mitigate the risks of the pandemic and to address the post-COVID situations. He also highlighted climate change is affecting every country on every continent, and disrupting national economies and affecting lives and it threatens people with food insecurity, water scarcity, flooding, infectious diseases, extreme

heat, economic losses and displacement. Global warming will have even more disastrous effects in the long term if urgent action is not taken now. He stressed that climate change is a threat ASEAN can no longer ignore and it is one of the most urgent and complex challenges.

22. The Asia-Pacific (Indo-Pacific) is now the epicentre of great power competition. The United States (US) is looking to expand their engagement with new and emerging partners throughout South and Southeast Asia. For instance, the US upgraded defence relationship with India to a Major Defence Partnership. There is a likelihood that strategic situation in the region will become more complicated and potentially affect ASEAN's stance as a zone of neutrality. Meanwhile, the reemergence of the Quad is raising questions not only about China but also the ASEAN. He suggested assessing the impact of power competition in the region and the reemergence of the Quad whether they will affect the future role and centrality of ASEAN.

Philippines

Presenter: Brigadier General Edgardo C Palma PA, Chief, Office for Strategic Studies and Strategy Management (OSSSM), Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippines

23. Brigadier General Edgardo C Palma PA asserted that ASEAN Centrality has become a vital framework in promoting multilateral security cooperation in the region. The concept further amplified ASEAN's convening power to set an agenda that will foster multilateralism and greater security cooperation. For the past years, the centrality of ASEAN and within ASEAN has achieved considerable success in managing and accomplishing various regional security cooperation and diplomatic engagement particularly with major powers. Various forums and summits have become venues for ASEAN to pursue its objectives on common interests concerning political and security issues while creating initiatives towards peace, security and stability in the region. Moreover, the centrality within ASEAN was witnessed through collective responses to numerous emergency crises such as Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, Central Sulawesi Earthquake and Tsunami in 2018 and during the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease in 2020.
24. However, given the global impacts of COVID-19, it did not only raise the issues faced by AMS on health and economic systems, but also intensified great power competition from a geopolitical standpoint. The heightened rivalry between major powers continues to challenge the ASEAN's position politically and economically. As such, the risk of maintaining neutrality and centrality of the association while securing individual national interests amid a pandemic or during post pandemic is a challenge. Further, exhaustion of resources to address the current health crises could compromise cooperation on non-traditional threats such as counter-terrorism, cyber security, piracy, and natural disasters. It is evident that the ASEAN must continue to enhance its cooperation to secure the interests of the region amidst the pandemic and the strategic rivalry between major powers. Moreover, it is important to strengthen the funding of ASEAN to induce support for greater security cooperation. Strengthening the inclusivity of ASEAN and multilateralism is also a principal tool to recover from strategic shocks brought by the pandemic at present and in the future. With all these said, ASEAN should maintain its centrality to protect the collective interests of member states from both traditional and non-traditional threats.

**INFORMAL SESSION WITH ADSOM WG CHAIRMAN / BRUNEI DARUSSALAM
ADSOM WG LEADER**

25. The meeting welcomed the informal dialogue with Mr Haji Adi Ihram bin DP Haji Mahmud, Deputy Permanent Secretary (Policy and Strategy), Ministry of Defence. Mr Haji Adi in his remarks outlined the ADMM's achievements since its inception in 2006 by highlighting the growing number of ADMM initiatives proposed and adopted each year. As ADMM will celebrate its 15th anniversary this year, it serves to be an even more important platform in enabling regional countries to deepen mutual engagements in defence especially amidst ongoing security challenges and the outbreak of COVID-19.
26. As Chair of ADMM this year under the theme of "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper", Brunei Darussalam seeks to build on the ADMM's positive momentum with ASEAN through mutual trust with states and dialogue partners. He highlighted key outcomes on recent ADSOM WG meetings where ASEAN states have tabled their respective concept and discussion papers differing in nature but has positively contributed to sustainable cooperation in maintaining the relevance of the ADMM platform.
27. Towards the end of his remarks, Mr Haji Adi Ihram highlighted the challenges ADMM is currently facing. Increasing competition amongst major power relations especially between US and China, influence of external powers over ASEAN countries, and the issue of South China Sea are one of few examples of challenges that would require cooperation between AMS, and this further highlights the importance of cross-pillar cooperation through ADMM and ADMM-Plus to reinforce ASEAN values and principles in areas such as, but not limited to HADR, military medicine, and to support wider ASEAN initiatives such as working towards the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and the 'Strategy and Holistic Initiative to Link ASEAN Responses to Emergencies and Disasters' (ASEAN SHIELD).
28. NADI members shared the view that ASEAN is facing internal and external challenges, and highlighted the importance of realising the ASEAN Community 2025 Vision, through implementing its plans of action and adhering to the principles in the ASEAN Charter. In this regard, ASEAN must find a balance in dealing with major power relations and maintain ASEAN centrality through the AOIP.
29. In addition, there were some views which recognised that while ASEAN is making progress through the channels of ADMM and ADMM-Plus, albeit at times at a slow pace, there is still room for improvements to ensure the relevance of ADMM and ADMM-Plus.

REVIEW OF ADMM COOPERATION AND ACHIEVEMENTS TOWARDS APSC**Brunei Darussalam**

Presenter: Ms Muizzah binti Haji Harun, Research Officer, SHHBIDSS, Ministry of Defence, Brunei Darussalam

30. Ms Muizzah shared the view that the upcoming 15th ADMM anniversary as an important juncture for the region and a timely assessment of its progress and achievements. Established

to address growing security challenges, the ADMM has made great strides in enhancing security cooperation since its inception. Throughout its establishment, the ADMM has developed several major undertakings, including 16 diverse initiatives, 7 EWGs as well as the extension of collaboration initiatives to 8 Plus Countries through the ADMM-Plus. In meeting the objectives laid out by the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint, the ADMM has been pivotal towards actively maintaining an ASEAN that is prosperous, inclusive and open through promoting transparent and regionally coordinated security exchanges.

31. However, challenges still remain for the ADMM in enforcing its policies and strategies in securing peace and stability in the region. Firstly, the dynamic nature of the geopolitical and strategic landscape continues to pose a challenge for the region's security and stability. This includes major power rivalry between the US and China as well as the active involvement of middle powers, such as India and Australia. Furthermore, ever-evolving non-traditional security threats, including cyber security as well as climate change continue to be pressing issues affecting ASEAN security. The COVID-19 pandemic has also brought about unprecedented implications across the world, including in the defence and security cooperation. Moreover, the presentation identifies inner institutional workings as possible obstacles for greater regional coordination, namely the proliferation of initiatives under the ADMM as well as discrepancies between wider regional objectives when compared to national interests.
32. In moving forward, the ADMM should continue to encourage approaches which deepens cooperation within ADMM that is able to adapt to evolving security environments. Moreover, the ADMM and ADMM-Plus should also continue to strengthen its commitment to ASEAN's fundamental norms and principles to ensure that the ADMM and other ASEAN-led frameworks continue to operate under the discretion of ASEAN and uphold ASEAN centrality and values. In conclusion, against a shifting security landscape, the ADMM remains an important platform in the region's security architecture. Furthermore, AMS must ensure that the ADMM remains committed towards an ASEAN-driven ADMM and sustain its momentum of defence diplomacy in the region and beyond.

Philippines

Presenter: Brigadier General Dr Archimedes H Viaje AFP (Ret.), PhD, MNSA, CESE, President, National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP), Philippines

33. Brigadier General Viaje provided an overview of the ADMM and its progress since its first meeting in 2006. He also discussed the ADMM-Plus and ASEAN efforts in pursuit of the goal of "omni-enmeshment" of the major powers, such as the US, China, Russia and Japan, via sustained exchanges and relationships with all of these states. ADMM and ADMM-Plus have established several EWGs which tackle various non-traditional security issues. It was noted that a key strength of current ASEAN defence diplomacy is its established frameworks and mechanisms for facilitating dialogue and cooperation, such as the ADMM, ADMM-Plus and its EWGs.
34. Several challenges to the primacy of ASEAN defence diplomacy have emerged, such as the refocusing towards traditional security issues and the emergence of increasingly important issues such as grey zone operations and the aggressive use of coast guard; the increase of

informal engagements with Plus countries and the development of unilateral agreements and engagements. Such challenges, if not properly addressed, could lead to an erosion of the central position of ASEAN defence diplomacy platforms in the regional security architecture. Moving forward, ASEAN needs to think strategically about its defence diplomacy and reassert control over its platforms and processes; strengthen further its defence diplomacy platforms such as ADMM and ADMM-Plus by enhancing implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its previously-agreed programs; and promoting the resilience of ASEAN defence diplomacy by expanding beyond non-traditional security issues and tackling emerging security concerns.

Singapore

Presenter: Ms Lee YingHui, Associate Research Fellow, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore

35. In her presentation, Ms Lee YingHui highlighted that the ADMM and ADMM-Plus have made significant contributions to regional defence cooperation. The focus on practical cooperation has helped build trust both among AMS and between AMS and Plus countries. The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the importance of preparedness in dealing with emerging threats and challenges. Rising great power rivalry in the region also underscores the importance of maintaining ASEAN centrality within the regional security architecture.
36. Ms Lee put forward the following recommendations to address the challenges faced by ADMM and ADMM-Plus: (i) ADMM and ADMM-Plus should continue focusing on practical cooperation through the EWGs; (ii) Greater information-sharing and coordination so as to foster greater defence cooperation; (iii) ADMM should present a cohesive position when negotiating with Plus countries; (iv) ADMM should remain aware of emerging threats and challenges. One area with potential for increase cooperation is chemical, biological and radiological (CBR) threats.

Thailand

Presenter: Group Captain Choosak Kasatewit, Director, Regional Studies Division, Strategic Studies Center (SSC), National Defence Studies Institute (NDSI), Thailand

37. Group Captain Choosak Kasatewit noted that the ADMM and ADMM-Plus are important components of the regional security architecture which allow the ADMM to enhance cooperation within ASEAN, and to work with the Plus countries to build capacity to meet the non-traditional and transnational security challenges. Challenges faced by ADMM and ADMM-Plus are: (i) the change in regional geostrategic landscape underlined by the rise of China and its role and influence in the regional and global order, the US-China strategic competition, and of the Indo-Pacific and unilateral security arrangements by and among the US and other major powers in response to China's rise; (ii) ASEAN centrality, the real challenge for the ADMM in relation to the ADMM-Plus is how to ensure that the ADMM, being the core of the ADMM-Plus, can maintain and promote ASEAN centrality in the situation of major power competition and their attempts to increase influence in regional cooperation and (iii) security challenges in the region, such as South China Sea, Mekong river, and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

38. In order to deal with the challenges, ASEAN should consider: (i) ASEAN Centrality must be protected and preserved in the ADMM-Plus process to ensure AMS remain the driving force in engaging with external partners; (ii) the admission of non-Plus countries to observe the EWGs' activities should be approved by the ADMM instead of ADSOM-Plus in order to eliminate the Plus countries veto power and (iii) concerning health security, AMS should find cooperation with potential dialogue partners in procuring necessary medical equipment especially diagnostic tools, medical cooperation, sharing of experience and best practices and support stipulating the regional economy. In addition, ADMM and ADMM-Plus should expand capabilities and cooperation of ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine (ACMM) and expand AMS cooperation in handling and response of the COVID-19.

Vietnam

Presenter: Senior Colonel Pham Ngoc Thanh, Director for Department of International Studies, Institute for Defence Strategy (IDS), Ministry of National Defence, Vietnam

39. Senior Colonel Pham Ngoc Thanh highlighted that after 14 years of establishment, ADMM has vigorously developed and become one of the pillars of the Asia-Pacific security structure. It has proved itself as an effective and important platform for defence and security dialogue and cooperation in dealing with common security issues in the region. In the coming time, the unpredictable change of political and security environment in the region and the world poses risks for regional peace and stability as well as challenges to the role of ADMM and ADMM-Plus in the regional security architecture including: (i) the competition between major powers, especially China-US rivalry; (ii) the limitation of ASEAN internal capacity and strength; (iii) the lack of tight cohesion and coordination among regional security cooperation mechanisms and (iv) the complicated evolvement of security issues in the region, especially non-traditional issues, beyond the responsive capability of a single country.
40. In order to reinforce ADMM's role in the evolving regional architecture, there are some suggestions as follows: (i) consolidating ASEAN centrality in ADMM and ADMM-Plus; affirming that ADMM-Plus is a part of ADMM decided by ADMM; (ii) strengthening the linkage of cooperation initiatives within ADMM, ADMM-Plus and ADMM with other ASEAN-centric security mechanisms in order to support and complement each other enhancing cooperation effectiveness; (iii) enhancing the independence and self-reliance of ASEAN in relations with external partners, especially major powers, based on the respect to the interests of each country and the whole region and (iv) re-assessing the effectiveness of initiatives and cooperation activities after implementation of each ADMM 3-year working programmes and ADMM-Plus EWGs cycle. Ones which are not effective or unnecessary should be concluded.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

41. NADI delegates exchanged views on the external and internal sources that shape the regional strategic outlook and also looked into the ADMM cooperation in its achievements towards the APSC:

COVID-19 Pandemic

- a) Acknowledged the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 pandemic to the people's livelihood, whereby AMS have been greatly affected and place the society in a compelling mode to adapt to new norms. The issues emanating from the health security crisis brought to a realisation that regional resilience and solidarity is key to prepare the community in addressing the post-COVID world and any eventualities related to emerging challenges in the future.

Major Power Relations

- b) Highlighted the intense rivalry between the US and China in the political, economic, security and military aspects, including the competition in the South China Sea. Such major power competition would put AMS having to choose sides and potentially disrupt the ASEAN centrality.
- c) Noted the developments in the Quad and the role of middle powers.
- d) Noted the adoption of AOIP as the acknowledgement of the changing geopolitical shift that could guide ASEAN's defence and security cooperation in the future.

Non-Traditional Security Threats

- e) Recognised the increasingly complex reality of non-traditional security threats with the advent of technological developments, including cyber threats and cybercrimes as well as the impact of climate change and other environmental issues.
- f) Noted the continuing need to address ever-evolving non-traditional security threats coming from the maritime domain, natural and man-made disasters, counter-terrorism and violent extremism, cyber security as well as transnational crimes.
- g) Remain aware of emerging threats and issues, while maintaining cooperation against non-traditional security challenges and explore initiatives in dealing with traditional security threats, including grey zone operations.

Importance of Multilateralism (ADMM and ASEAN Centrality)

- h) Viewed that conventional diplomacy, i.e. in-person multilateral engagements, in ASEAN including the ADMM remains important.
- i) Stressed the importance to enhance ASEAN cohesiveness and resilience amidst the dynamic nature of geopolitical and strategic landscapes that continue to pose challenges to the ADMM.

Therefore, the ADMM remains to be the main platform for defence and security engagements; as well as facilitator for dialogue and cooperation.

- j) Supported the view that ADMM needs to maintain control over its platforms and engagements, and not let Plus countries dictate ADMM's decision-making process, including admission of non-Plus countries.
- k) Noted the development of minilateral agreements/engagements and their implications for ADMM as the premier defence platform in the regional security architecture.

RECOMMENDATIONS

42. NADI agreed the following recommendations for consideration of the ADMM:

Enhancing ASEAN Centrality

- a) Continue to strengthen resilience in their defence diplomacy by asserting control over its platforms and processes.
- b) Uphold unity and neutrality among AMS in particular to renew strong commitment to 1971 ZOPFAN and 1995 SEANWFZ declarations.
- c) Reaffirm a cohesive and united position on key issues to ASEAN, especially when negotiating with Plus countries.

Strengthening Future ADMM Cooperation

- d) Ensure ADMM focuses on practical cooperation and enhance the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of agreed programmes.
- e) Foster greater information sharing and coordination by optimising the existing mechanism such as, among others, ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure, ASEAN Our Eyes, Guidelines for Air Military Encounters and Protocols of Maritime Interaction.
- f) Continue to enhance cooperation towards effective post-pandemic recovery efforts, especially through military medicine and HADR including to tap into the expertise of dialogue partners.
- g) The ADMM and ADMM-Plus need to develop creative and proactive forms of cooperation and deepen cross-pillar coordination through a holistic approach.
- h) Consider future defence cooperation with implications to the military, including grey zone operations, tackling environmental degradation, climate change, CBRN issues and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

OTHER MATTERS

Strengthening Cooperation within NADI

43. The meeting noted Brunei Darussalam’s proposal for a collaboration between NADI members on a joint working paper titled as “Emerging Technologies and its Impacts to Defence and Security”. This aspiration is part of set initiatives by Brunei Darussalam to strengthen cooperation within NADI, in reference to the agreed statement of the 2013’s inaugural NADI retreat in Brunei Darussalam where NADI hopes to contribute further on regional defence and security architecture, including issues related to emerging security challenges.
44. The theme is seen as timely and particularly relevant in the context of defence and security sector, as well as in the region, especially with the increasing use of digital technologies, adoption of 5G and AI, and mass surveillance technology. The joint working paper aims to discuss the opportunities and challenges of emerging technologies that could impact the defence and security sector. The outcome of this joint collaboration would be submitted to the Track I level or other relevant defence sectoral meetings, highlighting the lessons and way forward for the defence sector to take advantage of emerging technologies and address its associated future challenges.
45. The meeting agreed and supported Brunei Darussalam’s proposal to collaborate on a joint working paper ahead of the upcoming workshop to be held in September 2021. Further discussion amongst NADI members will be done through offline communication.

Future NADI Activities

46. The meeting noted in accordance to the TOR of NADI to have five activities including annual meeting and retreat at least 2 to 3 months. Given the postponement of activities last year, the meeting welcomed and agreed to the following activities:

Date	Activities	Country	Via
9 - 11 June 2021	NADI Workshop: <i>Strengthening Defence Cooperation in ASEAN Health Security</i>	Thailand	VTC
September 2021	NADI Workshop: <i>Emerging Technologies and its Impacts to Defence and Security</i>	Brunei Darussalam	VTC
October 2021	NADI Workshop: <i>Value and Role of Military History in Enhancing and Maintaining Peace, Security and Practical Cooperation in the Region</i>	Cambodia	VTC
02 - 04 November 2021	NADI Workshop:	Indonesia	VTC

	<i>Strengthening ASEAN Defence and Security Cooperation in Anticipating the Development of Artificial Intelligence</i>		
22 - 26 November 2021	NADI Workshop: <i>ASEAN Centrality in Era of Great Power Competition</i>	Philippines	VTC
TBC 2022	NADI Workshop: TBC	Brunei Darussalam	VTC

Concluding Remarks by the Chair of NADI, Ms Ampuan Yura Kasumawati binti Dato Paduka Haji Adnan, Acting Director of SHHBIDSS, Ministry of Defence Brunei Darussalam

47. In her concluding remarks, Ms Ampuan Yura Kasumawati binti DP Hj Adnan expressed her appreciation towards NADI members for their participation in ensuring the meeting's success. Throughout the course of the NADI meeting, NADI members shared common views on the regional security outlook and on the progress of ADMM. The meeting also recognised the challenges that is currently facing the region and put forward a number of recommendations. She highlighted the significance of NADI in contributing directly to leaders in Track I, specifically the ADMM through its contribution in defence and security discourse. In this regard, she looks forward to the upcoming planned NADI activities for the year.