

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OF  
TRACK II NETWORK OF ASEAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY INSTITUTIONS (NADI)  
16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING ON  
"STRENGTHENING DEFENCE AND SECURITY FOR ASEAN AS EPICENTRUM OF  
GROWTH"**

**HOTEL BOROBUDUR, JAKARTA, 13<sup>TH</sup>-16<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023**

**INDONESIA**

1. The Track II Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI) 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting on "**Strengthening Defence and Security for ASEAN as Epicentrum of Growth**" was organised by the Center for Strategic Studies, Research and Development *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (CSSRD TNI), at Hotel Borobudur, Jakarta, Indonesia, on the 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> March 2023.
2. Representatives from Brunei Darussalam, Kingdom of Cambodia, Republic of Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Republic of the Philippines, Republic of Singapore, Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam attended the meeting. The list of participants is attached in Annex I. Major General Agape Zacharia R. Dondokambey, S.E., M.Han., Chief of CSSRD TNI, chaired the meeting.

**Opening Remarks by Major General Agape Zacharia R. Dondokambey, S.E., M.Han., Chief of CSSRD-TNI; and Chairman of the NADI 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting.**

3. Major General Agape Zacharia R. Dondokambey, S.E., M.Han greeted all of Head of Delegations and welcomed all participants to the Track II Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI) 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting. He highlighted the Track II NADI 16th Annual Meeting took the theme that related to the spirit of growth from Indonesian ASEAN Chairmanship 2023 grand theme of "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth". The theme was formulated in the spirit of united efforts to strengthen Southeast Asia as the centre of global economic growth. There are two basic elements covered in this theme. First is "ASEAN Matters", namely on the relevance of ASEAN not only for its member states but also for the whole international community, where ASEAN Centrality is its foundation. The second is "Epicentrum of Growth, " which emphasises the capitalisation of ASEAN economic growth.
4. The Chairman invited all colleagues, to share their views and perspectives on this topic, that is to address defence and security challenges and the role of ASEAN Member States (AMS) in enhancing defence and security as an Epicentrum of Growth.

**Adoption of Agenda**

5. The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting adopted the agenda and the program, which are appended in Annex II and Annex III respectively.

**SESSION I: Keynote Speaker: Captain Dr. Sugeng Suryanto, S.AP., M.AP., Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Indonesia**

6. Captain Dr. Sugeng Suryanto delivered the strategic development of the ASEAN region. The selection of the ASEAN Chairman according to the ASEAN Charter is carried out alphabetically so that in 2023 Indonesia will become the Chair of ASEAN after previously Cambodia. Regarding defence, of course, it is heavily influenced by the strategic environmental conditions in the Southeast Asian region, including efforts to balance forces and various dynamics such as pandemics and disputes within the South China Sea.
7. Indonesia has assumed the ASEAN Chairmanship mandate with the theme ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth, so the Ministry of Defence initiated the leadership theme for ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) with the theme of Peace, Prosperity, and Security so that we hope ASEAN can be safe and prosperous. He highlighted the threats ASEAN currently face: traditional and non-traditional security challenges, and actual or potential difficulties concerning sovereignty, such as those related to radicalism, terrorism, cyber threats, biological weapons, human trafficking as well as Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. On the other hand, potential threats include an economic crisis and another pandemic. ADMM'S priority is to ensure the unity and centrality of ASEAN, making ASEAN as an anchor for regional and international regions so that it can realise the vision of the ASEAN Community.

**SESSION II: Addressing Defence and security challenges in supporting ASEAN as “Epicentrum of Growth”**

*Presentation by Mr Md Umair Akmal Hj Noor Ahsffian, Research Officer, Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (SHHBIDSS), Ministry of Defence, Brunei Darussalam.*

8. Mr Umair Akmal underscored the importance of ASEAN as the premier regional organisation for discussing strategic challenges. ASEAN upholds its success in dealing with the external regional environment through strategic policies, such as the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC). Further, ASEAN's relative stability is a result of the organisation's policies that includes mutual respect, non-interference, as well as renunciation threat and use of force. As such, maintaining ASEAN Centrality through ASEAN-led platforms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), East Asia Summit (EAS), and the ADMM continue to be important to promote cooperation, dialogue and enhance existing confidence building measures (CBMs).
9. Challenges do exist, however that may inhibit ASEAN as the Epicentrum of Growth. With diverse countries and overlapping regional organisations, differences can be expected. Developments in South China Sea and the Russia-Ukraine war demonstrates how individual stances can come into play. Therefore, AMS must continue to work together to promote peaceful conflict resolution and prevent any escalation of tensions that could disrupt strategic stability. Finally, ASEAN must ensure to remain as the central platform for regional cooperation and integration in Southeast Asia, and collectively navigate through complex security environments whilst promoting regional peace, stability and prosperity in Southeast Asia.

## **Kingdom of Cambodia**

*Presentation by Lieutenant General Nem Sowathey, Advisor to Samdech Pichey Sena Tea Banh, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of National Defence, Deputy Director-General of General Department of Policy and Foreign Affairs (GDPFA), Director of Sena Techo Unit.*

10. Lieutenant General Nem Sowathey highlighted that the ASEAN region is among the fastest growing regions of the world. While post COVID-19 pandemic recovery efforts are underway, there are a number of evolving strategic and economic pressures. The international security environment remains complex, volatile, and dangerous, and as geopolitical rivalries among major powers continues to be intense, regional security hotspots remain complex and unsettled. These challenges have posed severe impacts to regional peace, security and stability together with a host of non-traditional security threats including terrorism, violent extremism, cyber-crimes, pandemic, transnational crimes, climate change and natural catastrophes, posing key challenges and continue to have impact on safety, survivability and general well-being of ASEAN citizens. AMS need to further promote ASEAN Centrality and its leading role in ASEAN centric architecture as well as building mutual trust and understanding in order to prevent and address such security. AMS should strengthen its capabilities to deal with common challenges and address them through interoperability and strong collaboration in order to continue military cooperation and safeguard the region stability, continuing to build on the adopted concept papers at the ADMM and put them into action. AMS also need to address common key challenges and work closely with civil services and other national and international partners to find ways to address common security challenges, especially the challenges of non-traditional security.
  
11. She further mentioned that the Ministry of National Defence of Cambodia places firm emphasis on policy of safeguarding peace; ensuing international security and comprehensive national development with international cooperation. Cambodia's defence policy intends to promote a stable, secure, and rules-based order approach by setting national defence policy on safeguarding peace, protecting national interest, enhancing international cooperation and promoting the value of military history and Win Win Policy. Military history is a significant field of study and research and has put us to learn past conflicts and resolutions process; providing parallels, challenges existing paradigms and help identify major paradigm shifts to promote a sustainable peace within ASEAN. The understanding of military history is an important building block in laying the foundation of deeper appreciations among AMS militaries and is also a vital catalyst to promote profound cooperation.

## **Republic of Indonesia**

*Presentation by Air Commodore Hendro Arief H., S.Sos, M.Han, Deputy Chief of the Center for Strategic Studies, Research and Development of Tentara Nasional Indonesia (CSSRD TNI).*

12. Air Commodore Hendro Arief H., S.Sos, M.Han highlighted that by strengthening the ASEAN Political Security Community, ASEAN will be able to use its role in maintaining ASEAN Centrality and leveraging the ASEAN Way in dealing with and managing issues and disputes.
13. He recommended to encourage to spread and strengthen three focal points on ASEAN security communities and to bolster the respective role of regional cooperation in order to promote confidence among defence establishments by doing these kinds of tasks such as the task of prevention, protection and assurance.

### **Lao People's Democratic Republic**

*Presentation by Brigadier General Viengxay Somvichit, Director General of Military Science and History Department (MSHD), Ministry of National Defence.*

14. Brigadier General Viengxay Somvichit highlighted that it is important for ASEAN to be self-resilience as this will determine the mutual benefits of the regional integration with the world. He furthered that it cannot be denied that creating ASEAN as the epicentrum of growth is significant and will bring a number of potentials as well as benefits to ASEAN, yet there are a number of challenges that ASEAN is facing and will face in the future, especially traditional and non-traditional security challenges that affect national and regional defence and security as well as ensuring the mutual benefits of the practical cooperation between ASEAN, the Plus countries and other external partners or non-plus countries.
15. Given the challenges, in order for ASEAN to be the "Epicentrum of Growth", it is more important than ever that ADMM should: first, strengthen the internal resilience with robust policies and a progressive vision, the identity of ASEAN and the ASEAN Centrality, assisting each other, create opportunities to increase trust, confidence and understanding between and among AMS; second, further the practical cooperation with the plus countries to deal with current and future challenges, including traditional and non-traditional security challenges; and third, encourage the efforts of the ADMM in promoting regional peace and stability through dialogue and existing cooperation mechanisms as this will ensure the neutral roles of every negotiating table.

### **Malaysia**

*Presentation by Major General Dato' Hj Yacob Hj Samiran, Chief Executive, Malaysia Institute of Defence and Security (MiDAS).*

16. The ongoing superpowers' competition in the South China Sea, the pandemic and the ongoing of our regional affairs show how important to have well-maintained security in this region in order to ensure economic growth and peaceful socio-cultural ties. ASEAN got it right with the introduction of the ASEAN Community in 2015. Nonetheless, there are challenges in implementing all three pillars. While diplomacy is the first method to ensure peace and prosperity, AMS should keep up with their military assets to effectively participate in ADMM and ADMM Plus projects. Therefore, more focus and efforts need to be done in ASEAN Defence Industry Cooperation (ADIC) to benefit the economy and security of the region.

17. MiDAS has raised the three defence and security challenges for ASEAN. First are the ongoing threats in the region. Second is the different level of military capability especially in term of equipment in this region and lastly the need to bolster this region's defence industries.

### **Republic of the Union of Myanmar**

*Presentation by Major General Aung Myo Thant, Deputy Chief of Armed Forces Training, Office of the Chief of Armed Forces Training (OCAFT).*

18. MG Aung Myo Thant highlighted that ASEAN is currently positioned as the fifth-largest economy in the world and the third-largest economy in Asia, with a combined GDP valued at 3.3 trillion dollars in the year 2021. The region has become an attractive destination for foreign investment due to its large market size, growing middle class, and favourable business environment. Moreover, over the past decade, ASEAN has achieved an average annual growth rate of 3.98 percent, surpassing the global economic growth average of 2.6 percent. Furthermore, the projected economic growth for the ASEAN region in 2022 is estimated at 5.1 percent, which is expected to be higher than the world's economic growth of 3.2 percent. It is noteworthy that the economic growth of the ASEAN region has consistently outpaced the world's average growth in recent years. In spite of the International Monetary Fund's forecast of a reduction in global economic growth to 2.7 percent in the year 2023, the economic growth in the Southeast Asian region continues to surpass the average global growth rate.
19. He stated that defence and security systems play a critical role in promoting economic growth by creating a stable business environment, safeguarding property rights, enhancing trade, advancing infrastructure, promoting innovation and technology, and generating employment opportunities. In this regard, ASEAN faces a range of defence and security challenges that are shaped by diverse factors such as geopolitics, economics, and social issues. Some of the significant challenges include territorial disputes, terrorism, transnational crimes, cybersecurity, and non-traditional security challenges. He emphasised the significance of defence and security cooperation in ASEAN to foster regional stability, address common challenges, and attain political and economic objectives. Furthermore, he highlighted the necessity of upholding ASEAN Centrality and avoiding the influence of major powers to promote regional stability, security, and economic growth. By maintaining ASEAN Centrality, member states are encouraged to engage in cooperative efforts on various issues, such as economic development, security, and social welfare, leading to the establishment of more sustainable and resilient economic and social systems that benefit all member states.

### **Republic of the Philippines**

*Presentation by Mr Vince Andre C Sabellon, Defence Research Officer I, National Defence College of the Philippines.*

20. Mr Vince Andre Sabellon underscored why ASEAN is an Epicentrum of Growth. Located in a strategic location, ASEAN indeed becomes a key player in the international arena, especially due to its economic opportunities. However, such an economic context is situated in a broader strategic milieu. The security

environment of the region is defined largely by the geopolitical competition among the great powers. In this context, being forced to choose sides is a decision that may not necessarily be in line with the national interests of many countries in the Indo-Pacific, including in Southeast Asia. Mr Sabellon further discussed the risks and opportunities that geopolitical competition brings, as well as the competing economic visions offered by the great powers. While competition per se is not necessarily an unwelcome development, the same must not drift into conflict. As was seen in Russia's invasion of Ukraine, armed conflict remains a possibility and that it will cost lives and livelihood. In this regard, Mr Sabellon discussed the potential flashpoints in the region, as well as pressing non-traditional security challenges. With this in mind, the need for ASEAN's affirmation of centrality in a rules-based regional architecture becomes increasingly significant to strengthen confidence and trust in the region.

21. To strengthen ASEAN Centrality, Mr Sabellon proposed the following recommendations: First, bridge the development gap between AMS; Second, enhance current platforms and initiatives; Third, adapt to the changing security environment. This reinforces ASEAN Centrality in bringing forward a peaceful, secure, and stable region and promotes a rules-based regional architecture that supports ASEAN as an Epicentrum of Growth.

### **SESSION III: "The Role of AMS in enhancing regional defence and security for ASEAN as Epicentrum of Growth."**

#### **Republic of Indonesia**

*Presentation by Captain Dr. Rudy Susanto, S.I.P, M.M., CIQaR., CIT, Secretary of Asymmetric Warfare Study Program, Faculty of Defence Strategy, Republic of Indonesia Defence University (RIDU).*

22. ASEAN is a region full of opportunities. In terms of global economic strength, based on analysis by the Asian Development Bank, ASEAN is ranked as the third-largest economy in Asia and the fifth-largest in the world after the United States, China, Japan, and Germany. According to the World Economic Forum, ASEAN will become the fourth-largest economy in the world in 10 years. By 2030, 70% of ASEAN's population will be in the middle class, providing enormous business opportunities and creating an estimated \$4 trillion in consumer markets in the next decade. Indonesia's chairmanship of ASEAN in 2023 has raised hopes that, under Jakarta's leadership, ASEAN will find progress in establishing regional stability amidst global turbulence. In order to establish ASEAN as an "Epicentrum of growth," regional defence and security need to be enhanced. Indonesia expresses its willingness to take a step forward on ASEAN's peace efforts in order to manage the crisis faced by AMS and emphasises the importance of human rights values in facing transnational challenges.
23. The role of Indonesia as an AMS in enhancing regional defence and security for ASEAN as the "Epicentrum of Growth" is through various actions to deal with challenges such as: (1) safeguarding regional security and stability; (2) dispute settlement of intra-ASEAN problems; (3) countering transnational organised crime: drugs, terrorism, and cyber threats; and (4) reinforcing environmental security. For the ASEAN countries, common security is one of the pathways to regional security. For the ASEAN countries, common security is one of the pathways to

regional security. Strengthen regional cooperation, develop military capabilities, promote non-traditional security cooperation between the military and police, and develop confidence-building measures. ASEAN must broaden and strengthen its formal dialogue partnerships and establish cross-regional dialogues and cooperation between their international secretariats to ensure regional security and stability. In resolving disputes and intra-ASEAN issues, ASEAN needs to manage them carefully with the help of existing and new mechanisms that need to be developed. ASEAN needs to adopt sustainable development practices and increase innovation in environmentally-friendly technologies.

## **Malaysia**

*Presentation by Lieutenant General Fadzil Mokhtar (Retired), National Defence University Malaysia (NDUM)*

24. The Southeast Asian region has transformed from a bloc of underdeveloped countries to become one of the world's most dynamic economic powerhouses. ASEAN's strong macroeconomic outlook and long-term growth could, however, be affected by the volatile security environment. Among others, the intensifying US-China rivalry, the longstanding maritime and territorial disputes, and the escalating non-traditional security threats in Southeast Asia could undermine the region's stability and prosperity. Additionally, AMS' diverging positions on several security issues could subvert efforts to enhance regional security which is imperative for the desired economic growth. It is therefore crucial for AMS to maintain a modicum of regional peace and stability.
25. Foremost, every AMS should be at peace with itself by strengthening human security at the national level, including promoting and protecting human rights, narrowing income disparity and inequalities, as well as strengthening governance. In this respect, the suitability of the principle of non-interference may have to be reconsidered as it cannot operate as a license for other states to be indifferent to domestic issues of a member state that destabilise the wider region. Additionally, AMS should collaborate in mitigating climate change by agreeing on reporting of emissions by their militaries, and jointly conducting scientific studies to determine the extent of the impact of climate change on military personnel's health and fitness as a precursor to other forms of future cooperation. Moreover, AMS must stay vigilant to the threat of terrorism and continue with regional cooperation to address this grave security concern. AMS must also resort to pacific settlement of their maritime and territorial disputes in accordance with ASEAN's founding principles. Above all, AMS must affirm "ASEAN Centrality" and remain united amid the intensifying US-China geopolitical contest apart from bolstering ties with each other both bilaterally and multilaterally.

## **Republic of the Philippines**

*Presented by COL HAROUN-AL-RASHID I JAJI PA (GSC), Chief, Office for Strategic Studies and Strategy Management (OSSSM), Armed Forces of the Philippines.*

26. COL JAJI discussed how Peacekeeping has become an integral tool in addressing conflicts globally. The evolution of peacekeeping since the end of the Cold War have gone from facing conflicts in an international scale towards a domestic one. Establishing an ASEAN Peacekeeping Force has been viewed as

an unnecessary concept due to the region's principle of sovereignty and non-interference which can be found under the ASEAN Charter. Peacekeeping has become one of the areas of coordination and has been a tool in addressing civil wars and armed conflicts in history. There are also challenges in peacekeeping such as difficulty in adapting to the political and economic situation, difficulty in understanding the local culture, and lack of local level knowledge by top bureaucracies. In ASEAN, three issues were identified that can be addressed with the presence of a peacekeeping force in the region. These are border disputes, illegal migration, and ethnic crises.

27. The Philippines, through President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., signified that the country needs to play a leadership role in maintaining peace in the region since it is also the country's interest. This is crucial as the country is linked with several regional and local issues such as the South China Sea dispute and the peace process in Mindanao, among others. Peacekeeping is also crucial in the country as there are several Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) near crisis zones. While the country has been a regular contributor to the United Nations peacekeeping operations, there are still gaps in the AFP Peacekeeping Operations Center such as: lack of detailed architectural and engineering designs leading to delay in proposals for constructions, lack of credible instructors to teach a language course, lack of amenities in their language laboratory, and lack of funding in deployment for peacekeeping operations. With the changing nature of threats in the region, member states began to realise the importance of establishing a peacekeeping capacity. However, there are challenges in the peacekeeping operation in ASEAN such as different perception of conflicts by the member states, trust issues among each member states, the question of who will lead the peacekeeping force, and the lack of joint ASEAN-wide training since most of the training in the region is bilaterally held.
28. The following are the recommendations of the OSSSM Philippines: (1) The AMS to consider the possibility of establishing an ASEAN Peacekeeping Force (2) AMS to intensify and strengthen mechanisms to further improve regional security; and (3) The AMS to develop initiatives that will strengthen peace, security, and prosperity in the region.

### **Republic of Singapore**

*Presentation by Mr Henrick Tsjeng, Associate Research Fellow (Regional Security Architecture Programme), Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), NTU.*

29. In his presentation, Mr Tsjeng highlighted how ASEAN's position as the centre of regional economic growth may be derailed by a major escalation of the US-China rivalry into full-blown conflict. He underscored that the Russia-Ukraine war is a dire warning to Southeast Asia that there is no place in the world that is immune to war, and the wider Indo-Pacific region faces multiple risks of conflict, including in the South China Sea, Taiwan Strait, Korean Peninsula, and the East China Sea. He emphasised that AMS have the following roles to play in averting conflict in the region: (i) promote more dialogue with the rival major powers, including making use of ASEAN's good offices to do so; (ii) strongly promote the ADMM-Plus as a venue where defence and security matters can be discussed, and differences of views recognised peacefully; (iii) maintain discussions on the South China Sea



disputes with all key stakeholders; and (iv) go beyond confidence building to conflict prevention.

30. Mr Tsjeng concluded that NADI and the ADMM have an important role to play to ensure conflict may be averted in the region, and made the following recommendations to that end:
- a. ASEAN should emphasise its role as a bridge between the two superpowers, China and the US, and their respective friends and partners. This includes always seeking dialogue with both the United States and China over their respective regional initiatives and actions. ASEAN, including the ADMM, must manage major power rivalry to ensure the ADMM-Plus does not become divided.
  - b. ASEAN should continue to promote multilateralism and inclusiveness, as well as the key principles of the UN Charter, the ASEAN Charter, and the TAC. It should also promote the better use of its institutions, particularly by major powers.
  - c. ASEAN should maintain discussions on the South China Sea disputes with all key stakeholders, including the major powers. However, ASEAN must always stand firm on its core values and initiatives. This will lend substance to and ensure ASEAN Centrality and unity when discussing the disputes with the major powers.
  - d. ADMM and ADMM-Plus should promote conflict prevention mechanisms in areas within Southeast Asia where major power conflict is likely to blow up, and also promote such mechanisms in areas beyond Southeast Asia, such as over the Taiwan Strait, Korean Peninsula or East China Sea, without prejudice to any sovereignty disputes.

### **Kingdom of Thailand**

*Presentation by Group Captain Choosak Kasatewit, Director, Regional Studies Division, Strategic Studies Center (SSC), National Defence Studies Institute (NDSI), Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters.*

31. Located between the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions, ASEAN is amid global dynamics and is the epicenter of economic growth in this decade bringing opportunities and challenges to ASEAN as follows: 1) Increasing regional connectivity. The situation in the post-COVID-19 pandemic will increase economic activities and result in the flow of goods and services across the region. The region also becomes more connected in both physical and non-physical manners because of the development of science and technology. 2) Different perceptions. The use of social media makes the world become smaller. The young generation widely uses this virtual world to interact and exchange perspectives freely, leading to the diversity in culture, thoughts, and beliefs including political perception between the conservative group and the liberal young generation. 3) Geopolitical and geostrategic shifts. These shifts present both challenges as well as opportunities. On the one hand, both geopolitical and geo-economics tensions make it harder for AMS to implement national policies independently. On the other hand, the economic growth of the region opens up possibilities for cooperation to alleviate poverty and elevate the living standards of people. 4) The impact of conflict in Ukraine. The conflict brings a new concept of modern warfare with the introduction of modern technology and

weapons, and mobilises resources from alliances, both state and non-state organisations, to use in the conflict.

32. Such environments mentioned above thus bring increasingly intensive major powers competition in the region and complex cross-border security challenges in both physical and non-physical contexts, from both inside and outside the Southeast Asia region. Our region should bring together challenges and opportunities to strengthen regional cooperation as well as to drive the existing cooperation mechanisms to achieve concrete success in dealing with the challenges. Moreover, we should have the bargaining power to balance other powers and maintain ASEAN as the centre of growth through ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) guidelines. Recommendations are as follows: 1) AMS should promote cooperation to prevent future challenges and solve existing problems along the border in a practical manner, especially non-traditional threats which emerge because of increasing regional connectivity. In addition, we should cooperate closely on integrated border management to facilitate the flow of goods and people while security issues can also be monitored. 2) AMS should identify common strengths of the region, such as food security, biodiversity, or the strategic location of the Southeast Asia region, which can be applied as means of bargaining power towards external powers and other countries outside the region in both security and economic dimensions, for instance, having bargaining power in economic dimension to set price of ASEAN common products which can be called "One Price" and having bargaining power in political dimension which can be called "One opinion." 3) In driving ASEAN-led mechanisms based on the AOIP, it is essential that ASEAN should have consistent views in the same direction to reach a consensus in order to bring together the common strengths and unity of the region as bargaining power in relations to major powers and countries outside the region for the common benefit of AMS and the region. 4) ASEAN can also play a bridging role on the global stage by being a forum opening for dialogue or consultation among major powers in order to create a geopolitical balance between major powers to reduce conflict and foster understanding and cooperation which will eventually lead to peace, stability, and growth of the region and the world as a whole.

### **Socialist Republic of Vietnam**

*Presentation by Colonel Hoang Van Canh, Research Officer, Institute for Defence Strategy, Vietnamese Ministry of National Defence.*

33. Enhancing ASEAN Defence and Security should focus on following objectives: (i) Promoting confidence and trust within AMS and AMS with countries outside the region. AMS more than ever need to strengthen cooperation, prevent conflicts, confrontation and tension; transparently share information on defence policies, ensure commitments, respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of AMS; (ii) Ensuring international laws and regional agreements are respected and implemented; restraining conflicts and confrontations among major powers: All disputes that arise within AMS as well as between AMS with countries outside the region must be resolved by peaceful means, on the basis of international law and practices; (iii) Ensuring security, safety, freedom of navigation and aviation, trade and economic cooperation; (iv) Responding effectively to non-traditional security challenges, especially cybersecurity, information security, climate change and

environmental security as well as new security challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

34. Some suggested solutions for strengthening ASEAN Defence and Security include: (i) Giving priority to strengthening bilateral defence and security within AMS and between AMS with countries outside the region; (ii) Promoting AMS integration, linkage and recovery of intra-regional economic development after the Covid-19 pandemic, narrowing the development gap between AMS; (iii) Realising commitments, improving the effectiveness of existing cooperation mechanisms by practical and feasible initiatives and programs or action plans that are suitable to each member states' conditions; (iv) Improving cooperation efficiency and strengthening ASEAN's centrality role in regional cooperation mechanisms by strengthening intra-regional solidarity, actively sharing information, consulting and supporting each other in cooperation mechanisms with the participation of external countries; (v) Cooperation to improve defence and security capacity for AMS.

### **Exchange of Views**

35. Participants highlighted response to the challenges of climate change and its relation to the military which is important for further exploration given the high emissions also originate from the defence sector.
36. The meeting underscored the need for ASEAN and ADMM-Plus to encourage trust-building efforts among AMS, especially in conflict prevention efforts. ADMM-Plus and other platforms are expected to continue engaging partner countries through various dialogue efforts to maintain stable relationships in the region. ASEAN Centrality is not just a rhetorical term but also a conscious effort to maintain trust and understanding as well as foster mutual benefits between ASEAN and partner countries.
37. Participants also highlighted the potential for collective efforts by AMS in Peacekeeping Operations.
38. Defence and security systems play a crucial role in safeguarding peace and security thereby contributing to enhancing economic growth.

### **Recommendations**

39. AMS must ensure that ASEAN remains the central platform for regional cooperation and integration in Southeast Asia, and collectively navigate through complex security environments whilst promoting regional peace, stability and prosperity in Southeast Asia.
40. ADMM should enhance cooperation with the Plus countries to deal with current and future security challenges.
41. AMS should enhance their military capabilities to effectively participate in ADMM and ADMM Plus projects. Therefore, more effort needs to be done in ASEAN Defence Industry Cooperation (ADIC) to benefit the economy and security of the region. This should be done on a flexible, non-binding, and voluntary basis.

42. AMS should reinforce ASEAN Centrality in bringing forward a peaceful, secure, and stable region and promote a rules-based regional architecture that supports ASEAN as an epicentrum of growth.
43. AMS should work more closely to strengthen cooperation on addressing traditional and non-traditional security challenges, as well as intensify confidence-building measures between the relevant government agencies.
44. AMS need to resort to peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law and the principles enshrined in the ASEAN Charter. Above all, AMS must affirm “ASEAN Centrality” and remain united amid the intensifying competition among great powers. ASEAN should emphasise its role as a bridge between the two great powers, China and the US, and their respective friends and partners. This includes maintaining open dialogue with the great powers over their respective regional initiatives and actions. ASEAN, including the ADMM, must manage great power rivalry to ensure the ADMM-Plus does not become divided.
45. ASEAN should continue to promote multilateralism and inclusiveness, as well as the key principles of the UN Charter, the ASEAN Charter, and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. It should also promote the better use of its institutions, particularly by the great powers.
46. ASEAN should maintain discussions on the South China Sea disputes with all key stakeholders, including the great powers. However, ASEAN must always stand firm on its core values and initiatives. This will lend substance to and ensure ASEAN Centrality and unity when discussing the disputes with the great powers.
47. ADMM and ADMM-Plus should promote conflict prevention mechanisms in areas within Southeast Asia where great power conflict is likely to blow up, and also promote such mechanisms in areas beyond Southeast Asia, such as over the Taiwan Strait, Korean Peninsula or East China Sea, without prejudice to any sovereignty disputes.
48. AMS should capitalise on the common strengths of the region, such as food security, biodiversity, or the strategic location of the Southeast Asia region, which can be applied as means of leverage in dealing with external partners and other countries outside the region in both security and economic dimensions.

### **Other Matters**

49. Forthcoming NADI activities

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Via</b>
21-22 June 2023	NADI Workshop on “ASEAN Strategic Equilibrium with Major Powers amid Changing World Order”	SSC, Thailand	VTC
15-18 August 2023	NADI Workshop on Defence Industry	MiDAS, Malaysia	Physical

2-5 October 2023	NADI Workshop on “Enhancing ASEAN Self-Reliance and resilience in ADMM-Plus against the background of the World Geopolitical Change”	IDS, Viet Nam	Physical
2024	NADI 17 <sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting	MSHD, Lao PDR	Physical
2024	NADI Workshop (Topic: TBA)	GDPFA, Cambodia	Physical

### **Consideration of Track II NADI 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Chairman’s Report**

50. The meeting considered the draft Chairman’s Report of the NADI 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting on Strengthening Defence and Security for ASEAN as Epicentrum of Growth. After examining the Chairman’s Report carefully, the meeting endorsed the report.
51. The NADI 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Chairman will submit the Report to the ADSOM Chairman for consideration at the ADMM Track.

### **Closing Remarks by Major General Agape Zacharia R. Dondokambey, S.E., M.Han, Chief of CSSRD-TNI.**

In his closing remarks, Major General Agape Zacharia R. Dondokambey, S.E., M.Han expressed sincere appreciation to delegates and all NADI members for their dedication in participating this NADI 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting. All contributions will be useful in supporting the ADMM in strengthening defence and security for ASEAN as epicentrum of growth.

\*\*\*