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ASEAN Security Community Plan of Action

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.

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