Joint Press Release of the Inaugural ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting
Kuala Lumpur, 9 May 2006

1. The Ministers of Defence of the Member Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN held their inaugural meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 9 May 2006. The Meeting was chaired by the Hon. Dato’ Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Malaysia.

2. The Ministers exchanged views on the current regional and international security situation. The Ministers welcomed the prevailing peaceful and stable inter-state relations in Southeast Asia. While noting the generally stable situation in the region, the Ministers agreed that security challenges remained and that continued efforts should be undertaken to address them.

3. The Ministers agreed to contribute to the establishment of an ASEAN Security Community or ASC as declared by the ASEAN Heads of State and Government at the 9th ASEAN Summit held in Bali, Indonesia, on 7 October 2003 and mandated under the Vientiane Action Programme (VAP).

4. The Ministers reaffirmed the goal of the ASC “to bring ASEAN’s political and security cooperation to a higher plane to 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.”

5. The Ministers also reaffirmed the principles of the ASC, such as to abide by the Charter of the United Nations and other principles of international law and to uphold ASEAN’s principles.

6. The Ministers adopted the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting or ADMM concept paper and agreed that the ADMM should be an integral part of ASEAN, that it should add-value to and complement the overall ASEAN process, and that it should also be open, flexible and outward-looking in respect of actively engaging ASEAN’s friends and Dialogue Partners as well as ASEAN Regional Forum or ARF. The Ministers agreed that the specific objectives of the ADMM would be (a) to promote regional peace and stability through dialogue and cooperation in defence and security; (b) to give guidance to existing senior defence and military officials dialogue and cooperation in the field of defence and security within ASEAN and between ASEAN and dialogue partners; (c) to promote mutual trust and confidence through greater understanding of defence and security challenges as well as enhancement of transparency and openness; and (d) to contribute to the establishment of an ASEAN Security Community (ASC) as stipulated in the Bali Concord II and to promote the implementation of the Vientiane Action Programme on ASC.

7. The Ministers expressed support for the ARF as the leading cooperative security process towards promoting peace and stability among countries in the Asia-Pacific region. In this regard, the Ministers directed their civilian and military officials to continuously participate actively in the ARF Security Policy Conference, ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue, and other activities of the ARF.
8. The Ministers expressed support for the continuation of informal consultations amongst the ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Force, ASEAN Army Chiefs, ASEAN Navy Chiefs, ASEAN Air Force Chiefs, ASEAN Heads of Coast Guards, and ASEAN Heads of Military Intelligence units.

9. The Ministers agreed to establish an ASEAN Defence Senior Officials’ Meeting or ADSOM to support the activities of the ADMM.

10. The Ministers commended the ASEAN Working Group on Security Cooperation of the ASEAN Special Senior Officials’ Meeting or ASEAN Special SOM and the ASEAN Secretariat for laying the groundwork for the establishment of the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting.