

## **“Our Eyes” Initiative Concept Paper**

### **I. Introduction.**

After more than 50 years, Southeast Asia has become a stable region. However, the global situation has brought about new challenges, which have evolved into the dynamic and multidimensional threats that are increasingly complex such as terrorism/radicalism, armed rebellion, hijacking, and other non-traditional threats. Recently, these threats have moved from a domestic scale to the regional and global scale, which requires collective action and response through collaboration and shared capabilities among countries, particularly strategic information exchange to support operations in the field.

ASEAN Leaders are committed to prevent and combat terrorism. Its significant efforts to address terrorism and radicalism can be traced back to the ASEAN Declaration on Transnational Crime in 1997. However, the escalation of terrorist activities in Southeast Asia urges member states in the region to fight against terrorism and radicalism through cooperation at various levels. Some have had extensive experiences in dealing with such challenges. Cooperative efforts in this regard should consider joint practical counter-terrorism measures in line with the ASEAN instruments relating to counter terrorism, particularly the 2007 ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism. In this respect, the ASEAN Defence Ministers issued a Joint Statement on Countering Terrorism in ASEAN on 6 February 2018 in Singapore, pledging to step up counter-terrorism collaboration among ASEAN defence establishments in various areas including joint training, information-sharing, and sharing of best practices.

Existing sub-regional cooperation such as Malacca Strait Patrol, Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement and maritime security cooperation in the Gulf of Thailand requires accurate, timely and updated intelligence support. Confronted with such a problem, Indonesia initiated the Strategic Information Exchange namely “Our Eyes Initiative” which involves six countries; Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Singapore. It was launched in Bali on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and the six Ministers’ of Defence signed the Joint Statement on Our Eyes Initiative at the sidelines of ADMM Retreat on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018 in Singapore.

This initiative serves to foster cooperation in the field of non-traditional security threats, including terrorism, radicalism, and violent extremism. It would foster greater regional cooperation and provide means to address some of the challenges related to the above-mentioned objectives. Therefore, the “Our Eyes” platform is highly important to supporting

tactical level cooperation.

## **II. Purpose and Objective.**

### **a. Purpose.**

- 1) Considering the widespread impact of terrorism/radicalism and other non-traditional security threats which impacts ASEAN, “Our Eyes” strategic information exchanges is open to all ASEAN Member States.
- 2) Given the increasing sophistication, organisation, and weaponry of modern terrorists, militaries now play a greater counter-terrorism role given their superior firepower and niche capabilities in domains such as chemical, biological, radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) defence. It is thus important for defence establishments to have timely and dedicated info-sharing on key terrorism developments, to enable them to respond swiftly during terrorist incidents.
- 3) This concept paper is developed to provide the work program activities for the “Our Eyes” initiative in the field of non-traditional security threats, including terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism.

### **b. Objective.**

The main objective of this initiative is to create a platform for strategic information exchange through the following mechanism:

- 1) To enhance strategic information-sharing among defence establishment in the region, and enable sharing of counter terrorism, radicalism, violent extremism data by means of capitalizing existing secured platforms, namely ASEAN Direct Communication Infrastructure (ADI), ASEAN 365 Platform.
- 2) To share expertise and resources (including technology and experiences).
- 3) To establish joint working group to coordinate and discuss the implementation of “Our Eyes” initiative.

## **III. Participation**

- a. Guided by the spirit of ASEAN Charter, the “Our Eyes” Initiative involves all ASEAN Member States.
- b. Dialogue partner countries with the relevant expertise may be

invited to observe and participate to the “Our Eyes” Initiative. The criteria for observer and / or participants should be discussed further in the Joint Working Group.

**IV. Scope of Cooperation:**

- a. Exchanging and updating strategic information on terrorism incidents and any potential threats.
- b. Providing analysis of trends in the region and elsewhere.
- c. Exchanging expertise
- d. Scheduling meeting for information sharing.
- e. Coordinate the activities to the related ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, including the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC).

**V. Report and Review.**

The relevant outcomes of the cooperation will be reported to the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting (ADMM), via the ASEAN Defence Senior Officials’ Meeting (ADSOM) and the ASEAN Defence Senior Officials’ Meeting Working Group (ADSOM WG).

**VI. Conclusion.**

This concept paper will be implemented soon after it is adopted by the ADMM.