ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ADMM-PLUS EXPERTS’ WORKING GROUP ON HUMANITARIAN MINE ACTION

- CONCEPT PAPER -

Introduction

1. Although the wars and conflicts ceased long ago, their consequences continue to negatively affect security, human welfare and economic development in many Southeast Asian countries. Undetonated bombs, mines and other explosive ordnance (collectively referred to as Explosive Remnants of Wars (ERW)) constitute a severe problem in these nations. Over the last several decades, there have been tens of thousands of deaths, and hundreds of thousands have been injured or disabled by buried explosives in several ASEAN countries. Bomb and mine contamination has had negative impacts on use of natural resources, agriculture, forestry, and fishery, and impeded the development of the investment environment, the general economy, society and tourism in those countries.

2. With a clear understanding of the problem, ASEAN Member States, especially those that are highly contaminated with bombs and mines such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, have made great efforts to establish mine action centers and launch national programs for the disposal of ERW. These efforts have been strongly supported by the international community and ASEAN’s partners. However, because of the seriousness of contamination, together with ineffective cooperation, small-scale support and investments that are sometimes inappropriate to the actual situation in affected countries, it will take decades to deal with the problem.

3. Sharing the responsibilities for removing ERW is a humanitarian matter and a topic of mutual concern for our region and the international community. It thus should receive appropriate attention, and be incorporated into a suitable cooperative framework of the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus).

Purpose and Objective

4. **Purpose.** The establishment of the ADMM-Plus Experts’ Working Group (EWG) on Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) is aimed to promote practical and effective cooperation between the ASEAN Member States and Plus Countries in dealing with the remnants of war in the region.

5. **Objectives.** The ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA will have the following objectives:

   5.1 To enhance the awareness of threats, challenges and responsibilities of individual nations and the international community;

   5.2 To leverage capabilities of affected countries in dealing with ERW;
5.3 To encourage the ASEAN Member States, Plus Countries and the international community to make common efforts to help the affected countries;

5.4 To develop cooperative solutions and initiatives to effectively deal with mine contamination; and

5.5 To develop appropriate mechanisms for cooperation amongst the defence forces of the ADMM-Plus countries and for coordination of military and civilian groups in overcoming ERW consequence.

Scope of Cooperation

6. The scope of cooperation may includes:

6.1 Host meetings and conferences to share experiences and information, and to enhance mutual understanding on related issues.

6.2 Host conferences to study legal issues and to develop policies and framework for cooperation in accordance with international law as well as the rules of law in each of the affected countries based on respect for their independence, sovereignty and integrity.

6.3 Foster exchanges of experts and, of technical and human resource training.

6.4 Provide needed technologies, equipment and funds for demining.

6.5 Help victims disabled by ERW integrate into society.

Functions and Responsibilities

7. Functions. The ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA will have the following functions:

7.1 Implement the ADSOM-Plus and ADMM-Plus decisions, and provide policy recommendations.

7.2 Discuss and suggest specific solutions, scope and areas of cooperation that are suitable to normal practice and actual conditions of the region, and consistent with the existing cooperation frameworks in ASEAN.

8. Responsibilities. The ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA is responsible to:

8.1 Work out roadmap and plan of action, and follow the roadmap after its approval;

8.2 Provide thorough assessment of activities of the EWG, propose necessary adjustments and additions to higher leaders for approval;
8.3 Work closely with Mine Action Centers and Programs on ERW in contaminated countries to ensure that roadmap contents and procedures for consultation and policy recommendations fit actual conditions and rules of law of each country while taking full advantage of and continuing successful existing mechanisms; and

8.4 Host meetings and conferences, and prepare reports to higher leaders.

Assessment and Report

9. The ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA will follow the decisions and directions made by the ADSOM-Plus and ADMM-Plus.

10. Reports and proposals of the EWG will be submitted to higher leaders for approval in the following order: ADSOM-Plus WG, ADSOM-Plus and ADMM-Plus.

Conclusion

11. The ADMM-Plus EWG on HMA will be officially established and begin operation only after the 7th ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting (7th ADMM) in 2013. Establishment of the EWG will contribute to the practical cooperation of the ADMM-Plus in dealing with non-traditional security in the region.