CONCEPT PAPER ON THE TRANSITION OF THE ADMM-PLUS EXPERTS’ WORKING GROUP CO-CHAIRMANSHP

Introduction

1. The Paper on ‘ADMM-Plus: Modalities and Procedures’ (hereinafter referred as the Main Paper) adopted at the Fourth ADMM in Hanoi, Vietnam on 11 May 2010 sets out the modalities and procedures for operationalizing the ADMM-Plus. The ‘Attachment Paper to the Paper ADMM-Plus: Modalities and Procedures’ (hereinafter referred as the Attachment Paper) adopted during the ADMM Retreat in Hanoi on 11 October 2010 outlines additional modalities, and supplements new procedures to the Main Paper concerning the ASEAN Defence Senior Officials’ Meeting-Plus (ADSOM-Plus) and ADMM-Plus Experts’ Working Group (EWG) for implementing further the ADMM-Plus.

2. Further to that, the Concept Paper on ‘ADMM-Plus: Establishing an Experts’ Working Group’ adopted by the ADSOM-Plus, and welcomed by the ASEAN Defence Ministers at the Fifth ADMM in Jakarta, Indonesia on 19 May 2011 defines the key principles and modalities for the ADMM-Plus EWGs to operate under the auspices of the ADMM-Plus.

3. The ADMM-Plus: Establishing an Experts’ Working Group Concept Paper provides that on any ADMM-Plus Member Country may propose the establishment of additional EWGs. The ADMM-Plus shall authorize the establishment of EWGs as required. The ADMM-Plus shall, when necessary, authorize the ADSOM-Plus to establish the EWGs in the intervening years between ADMM-Plus meetings. New EWGs should address security issues of mutual concern affecting the region, and where cooperation in that area will benefit the region. The work plans of new EWGs shall be approved by the ADSOM-Plus.

4. Both the Attachment Paper and the ADMM-Plus: Establishing an Experts’ Working Group Concept Paper articulates broad principles and process with regards to the ADMM-Plus EWGs, as follows:

4.1 An EWG shall be co-chaired by an ASEAN Member State and a Plus Country, where co-chairs can be self-nominated or nominated by ASEAN and Plus countries, and approved by the ADSOM-Plus.

4.2 Co-chairs of the EWGs will be rotated, following their terms, and will be served on a consensus and voluntary basis.

4.3 Co-Chairs of the EWGs shall serve for minimum two years and maximum three years.

4.4 The EWG could be dissolved when the ADMM-Plus assesses that the task of that particular EWG is completed.
This Concept Paper therefore adheres and reaffirms the above principles and builds upon the principles and process of the transition of the ADMM-Plus EWG co-chairmanship. It shall be read in conjunction with the Attachment Paper and the ADMM-Plus: Establishing an Experts’ Working Group Concept Paper.

Objectives

The objectives of instituting the principles and process to guide the transition of the ADMM-Plus EWG co-chairmanship are as follows:

1. To facilitate a smooth transition of ADMM-Plus EWGs co-chairmanship to keep up the positive momentum of practical cooperation;

2. To promote consensus-based decision-making that is transparent to all ADMM-Plus Member States; and

3. To reinforce and emphasize the principle of ASEAN centrality in the ADMM-Plus.

Principles for Transition

The following principles shall guide the transition of the ADMM-Plus EWG co-chairmanship:

1. ASEAN centrality must be adhered in identifying and agreeing to the next set of co-chairs for the EWGs in the new cycle.

2. Each EWG should continue to be co-chaired by an ASEAN Member State and a Plus country.

3. Priority should be given to the ASEAN countries with the fewest previous co-chair record. This will be irrespective of the number of times the non-ASEAN partner has co-chaired previous EWGs.

4. Should there be competing bids for a particular EWG, consideration shall be given to the number of times the Plus country has co-chaired previous EWGs, whereby the country that has co-chaired fewer times will be given preference.

5. In the event that the above still could not determine the set of co-chairs for a particular EWG, the Chair will communicate with the competing countries for the particular EWG to resolve the issue through consultation.
Processes of EWG Co-Chairmanship Transition

8. Taking the maximum of three years of co-chairing, as the tenure of EWGs will expire during the ADSOM-Plus on the third year of the EWGs’ cycle (Year X), the establishment of new EWGs and the identification of the next set of co-chairs would have to commence the year before (Year X – 1).

9. Discussions therefore start at the ADSOM WG and ADSOM-Plus WG, where ADMM-Plus Member States may propose new EWGs and indicate their interest in taking up co-chairmanship of EWGs for the following cycle.

10. The ADSOM and ADSOM-Plus could then consider the proposals from the ADSOM WG and ADSOM-Plus WG, with a view that the new EWGs, if any, as well as next set of EWG co-chairs could be finalized and announced at the ADSOM-Plus.

11. In years where the ADMM-Plus is held, the next set of EWG co-chairs could also be announced at the Meeting. This will provide sufficient time for the next set of co-chairs to start preparing for their work plans for adoption by the ADSOM-Plus the following year, where the incumbent co-chairs would also hand over the EWG co-chairmanships to the new co-chairs.

12. In an unforeseen circumstance whereby no ASEAN and/or Plus country volunteer as Co-Chairs on an agreed timeline, the incumbent Co-Chairs are encouraged to continue with their chairmanship.

Conclusion

13. The Concept Paper on the Transition of the ADMM-Plus Experts’ Working Group Co-Chairmanship will serve as an effective guide for future transitions and provides the necessary procedures that will support any additions to the existing EWGs and their co-chairmanship. As such, it will contribute significantly towards the steady growth and development of the EWGs, while strengthening the platform for practical cooperation in the ADMM-Plus mechanism.