“Sustainable Security”

CHAIRMAN’S STATEMENT OF THE SIXTH ASEAN DEFENCE MINISTERS’ MEETING PLUS (6TH ADMM-PLUS)

BANGKOK, 18 NOVEMBER 2019

1. The Sixth ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) was held on 18 November 2019 at the Avani Plus Riverside Hotel, Bangkok, the Kingdom of Thailand. The Meeting was chaired by General Prawit Wongsuwon, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand.

2. The Meeting was attended by the ten ASEAN Member States and eight ASEAN Dialogue Partners, namely Australia, the People’s Republic of China, the Republic of India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. The Secretary-General of ASEAN also attended the Meeting.

3. The Meeting was briefed on the recent developments in ASEAN by the Secretary-General of ASEAN including key outcomes from the 34th and 35th ASEAN Summits. Among these key outcomes are the adoption of the “ASEAN Leaders’ Vision Statement on Partnership for Sustainability” which aims to realise a people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community that leaves no one behind and looks to the future, as well as the “ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific” which underscores the impetus to cultivate strategic trust and continuously promote ASEAN Centrality in the regional architecture and beyond.

4. The Meeting also noted from the briefing that security challenges facing the region are increasingly becoming transboundary in character. In this regard, the ADMM-Plus’ continued contribution in addressing cross-pillar/cross-sectoral issues, particularly in the areas of maritime security, cyber security, counter-terrorism peacekeeping as well as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, was commended. The Meeting also observed how ASEAN addresses some of the most pressing regional issues, including the South China Sea, the Korean Peninsula and the Rakhine State. In addition, the Meeting was updated on ASEAN’s external economic relations, particularly following the conclusion of the Third Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Summit.
5. The Meeting was briefed on the progress and outcomes of the ADSOM-Plus by the Chair of ADSOM-Plus, General Natt Intracharoen, Permanent Secretary for Defence, the Kingdom of Thailand. These include the ADSOM-Plus' endorsement to retain all seven ADMM-Plus Experts’ Working Groups (EWGs) and approval of the new Co-Chairs of the ADMM-Plus EWGs for the 2020 - 2023 cycle. The list of pairings is as follows: Indonesia and India for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief; Thailand and the United States for Maritime Security; Brunei Darussalam and Australia for Military Medicine; Myanmar and Russia for Counter-Terrorism; Viet Nam and Japan for Peacekeeping Operations; Cambodia and China for Humanitarian Mine Action; and Malaysia and the Republic of Korea for Cyber Security. The ADSOM-Plus also took note of the preparation of the Ministry of National Defence of Viet Nam for its ASEAN Chairmanship in 2020, during which the ADMM-Plus will also commemorate its 10th anniversary.

Exchange of Views on Regional and International Security Environment

6. The Meeting exchanged views on regional and international security environment as well as some of the common security challenges, including the situation in the Korean Peninsula and recent developments in the South China Sea.

7. On the Korean Peninsula, the Meeting discussed the situation and underscored the importance of continued peaceful dialogue among all concerned parties to realise lasting peace and stability in a denuclearised Korean Peninsula and reiterated commitment to the full implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

8. On the South China Sea, the Meeting welcomed the substantive negotiations towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea within a mutually-agreed timeline between ASEAN and China. The Meeting also noted that the first reading of the Single Draft Negotiating Text has been completed and the commencement of the second reading process will begin in due course. The Meeting also reaffirmed the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities and avoid actions that may further complicate the situation, and pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

9. The Meeting took note of possible implications of the situation in the Rakhine State to regional stability. In this regard, the Meeting supported a more visible and enhanced role of ASEAN to support Myanmar in providing humanitarian assistance, facilitating the repatriation process and promoting sustainable development.

10. The Meeting also discussed non-traditional security challenges, including those of terrorism and violent extremism, cyber threats, pandemics and natural disasters. The Meeting recognised that these security challenges are increasingly becoming transboundary in character and therefore required close military-to-military interactions and cooperation amongst ASEAN Member States as well as
with its Dialogue Partners, especially through the ADMM-Plus EWGs, to effectively address these regional security threats.

11. The Meeting underscored the importance of ASEAN’s Centrality in the regional security architecture and reaffirmed its shared commitment to maintaining and promoting peace, security and stability in the region.

Adoption of Joint Statement by the ADMM-Plus Defence Ministers on Advancing Partnership for Sustainable Security

12. The Meeting adopted the Joint Statement by the ADMM-Plus Defence Ministers on Advancing Partnership for Sustainable Security. The Joint Statement reflected the commitment of the ADMM-Plus Defence Ministers to the maintenance of regional peace, stability and security through promoting security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region that produces tangible benefits and outcomes, peaceful settlement of dispute and upholding international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS and maintaining and respecting freedom of navigation and overflight as well as advancing partnership in order to effectively respond to regional security threats in a sustainable manner, particularly through the ADMM-Plus EWGs and ASEAN-led mechanisms based on mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual benefits.

Updates on Initiatives under the ADMM and ADMM-Plus

13. The Meeting was updated on the approval of 13th ADMM to retain all seven ADMM-Plus EWGs for 2020 - 2023 cycle. In this connection, the Meeting welcomed the new set of Co-Chairs of ADMM-Plus EWGs for the 2020 - 2023 cycle.

14. In addition, the Meeting took note of the work in expanding the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI) in the ADMM Process to the Plus Countries and welcomed the launching of the ASEAN Military Medicine Handbook for Paramedics.

Handover Ceremony of ADMM Chairmanship from Thailand to Viet Nam

15. The Handover Ceremony of ADMM Chairmanship from Thailand to Viet Nam took place after the 6th ADMM-Plus. In the Handover Remarks, the Minister of National Defence of Viet Nam congratulated Thailand on the accomplishment of ADMM and the ADMM-Plus throughout the year. As the incoming Chair of ADMM, Viet Nam reaffirmed its commitment to further strengthening defence cooperation and encouraged all ASEAN Member States to unite and support Viet Nam during its ASEAN Chairmanship 2020, under the theme “Cohesive and Responsive”.

*******************