CONCEPT PAPER

**International Conference on
"Cybersecurity: Implications on Peace and Security in the ASEAN Region"
10-11 May 2019, Shangri-La Hotel, Bangkok**

BACKGROUND

Threats to Cybersecurity is increasingly sophisticated, transboundary and multi-dimentional. Cyberspace and Cybersecurity are now playing an increasingly important role in international peace and security, including in the ASEAN region. Cyberspace can be used to either strengthen or undermine peace and security of individual countries or of the overall region. For instance, at the regional and international levels, the Internet and social media are now widely used by extremist groups to recruit new followers across borders or even to signal attacks. At the national level, extensive studies revealed how the Internet and social media propaganda are being used to influence, distort or disrupt politics, as well as the peace and conflict management processes, in many countries, including those in the ASEAN region.

At the same time, due to advancement in technology, critical infrastructure and digital economies of countries, as well as the livelihood of their citizens, have become increasingly vulnerable to various forms of cyber threats, some of which are suspected to be state sponsored.

ASEAN Leaders see the need for ASEAN Member States to prepare themselves for the future and work closely with one another in working towards a common policy on cybersecurity.

At the 32nd ASEAN Summit in April 2018, the ASEAN Leaders issued their first-ever statement on **Cybersecurity Cooperation**. In the Statement, the ASEAN Leaders reaffirmed the need to build closer cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member States on cybersecurity policy development and capacity building initiatives, including through the ASEAN Cyber Capacity Programme, the ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity (AMCC) and the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre, towards the promotion of voluntary and non-binding cyber norms, as well as the development of a peaceful, secure and resilient rules-based cyberspace that will contribute to continued economic progress, enhanced regional connectivity within and improved living standards across ASEAN.

The ASEAN Leaders also recognised the need for all ASEAN Member States to implement **practical confidence-building measures** and adopt a set of common, voluntary

and non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, so as to enhance trust and confidence in the use of cyberspace to its full potential to bring about greater regional economic prosperity and integration.

The ASEAN Leaders further recognized the value of enhanced dialogue and cooperation on cybersecurity issues with Dialogue Partners and other External Parties, and in other ASEAN-led platforms, including the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting, together with the eight Dialogue Partners (ADMM-Plus).

The ASEAN Leaders also recognized the need for all ASEAN Member States to implement **practical confidence-building measures** and **adopt a set of common, voluntary and non-binding norms of responsible State behavior in cyberspace**, in **order to enhance trust and confidence in the use of cyberspace** to its full potential to bring about greater regional economic prosperity and integration.

The ASEAN Leaders tasked relevant Ministers from all ASEAN Member States to closely consider and **submit recommendations on feasible options of coordinating cybersecurity policy, diplomacy, cooperation, technical and capacity building efforts among various platforms of the three pillars of ASEAN**, **so that ASEAN's efforts are focused, effective, and coordinated holistically** on this important cross-cutting issue.

They further tasked relevant Ministers from all ASEAN Member States to make progress on discussions by ASEAN ICT and Cybersecurity Ministers at the AMCC, the ASEAN Telecommunications and Information Technology Ministers' Meeting (TELMIN), as well as other relevant sectoral bodies such as the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), **to identify a concrete list of voluntary, practical norms of State behaviour in cyberspace that ASEAN can work towards adopting and implementing**, and to facilitate cross-border cooperation in addressing critical infrastructure vulnerabilities, as well as to encourage capacity-building and cooperative measures to **address the criminal or terrorist use of cyberspace, taking reference from the voluntary norms recommended in the 2015 Report of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (UNGGE).**

PROPOSAL

Thailand attaches great importance to advancing cooperation within ASEAN and with external partners to address **non-traditional security challenges**. Most recently, on Cybersecurity, the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** and the **Ministry of Digital Economy and Society** of Thailand, together with the government of Australia, co-hosted the ASEAN-Australia Cybersecurity Workshop entitled **"Strengthening Legal Implementation in Tackling Cybersecurity Challenges in the Region"** in Bangkok, on 13 February 2018, in order to promote the monitoring and tackling of cyber threats and enhancing coordination between cybersecurity-related agencies.

For this year, the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society of Thailand** are proposing to hold an International Conference entitled **"Cybersecurity: Implications on Peace and Security in the ASEAN Region"** in Bangkok, on 10-11 May 2019. The Conference will be in line with the ASEAN Leaders' Statement on Cybersecurity Cooperation which tasks relevant Ministers from all ASEAN Member States to closely consider and **submit recommendations on feasible options of coordinating cybersecurity policy, diplomacy, cooperation, technical and capacity building efforts among various platforms of the three pillars of ASEAN**, while recognizing the value of enhanced dialogue and cooperation on cybersecurity issues with Dialogue Partners and other External Parties. More importantly, **the Conference will also be in line with the activities agreed in the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint which attaches importance to addressing issues of cybercrime and cybersecurity.**

OBJECTIVES

This Conference is designed to support and complement the on-going efforts of existing ASEAN frameworks, platforms, bodies and mechanisms on Cybersecurity.

The objectives of the proposed conference are:
1.   Promote better understanding about cybersecurity and its impact on peace, security and conflict management in ASEAN and the Asia-Pacific region.
2.   Provide global and regional perspectives on how international cooperation and collaboration on cybersecurity can be better managed for the benefit of all involved.
3.   Discuss global and regional perspectives on the emerging international legal and normative frameworks on cybersecurity, especially the 2001 Budapest Convention on Cyber Crime, the 2015 Report of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Development in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (UNGGE), and the proposed **"Digital Geneva Convention"** to protect cyberspace and how they can be applied to the ASEAN region
4.   Discuss how to build closer cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member States, and beyond, on cybersecurity policy development and capacity building initiatives. And, to learn from the experience of other regions in this endeavor.
5.   Discuss how to efficiently support existing ASEAN frameworks, bodies and mechanisms, such as the AMCC, TELMIN and AMMTC, in their efforts to coordinate and to make progress toward the creation and promotion of voluntary and non-binding cyber norms and rule-based cybersecurity environment for the ASEAN region and beyond.
6.   Discuss possible recommendations on the above, which relevant ASEAN bodies could consider adopting as part of their recommendations to relevant ASEAN Ministers and ASEAN leaders for consideration.

PARTICIPATION

The International Conference on **"Cybersecurity: Implications on Peace and Security in the ASEAN Region"** is expected to be attended by representatives from ASEAN governments, ASEAN dialogue partners and other interested countries. Representatives

from relevant ASEAN bodies, international organizations, businesses and non-government organizations, both within and outside the ASEAN region, are also expected to participate. Altogether, approximately 120 high-level participants are expected at this Conference. Some of the participants will be invited to form the core part of this Conference in the role of Moderators, Presenters and Commentators, in the various sessions of the Conference.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. It is expected that the Conference will result in increased awareness about the importance of cybersecurity in the context of regional peace and conflict management.

2. It is also hoped that the discussions during the Conference could help support the on-going activities by existing ASEAN frameworks, platforms, bodies, mechanisms and ASEAN Member States in their efforts toward creating and coordinating cybersecurity policy, diplomacy, cooperation, technical and capacity building among various platforms of the three pillars of ASEAN, especially in relation to regional peace and conflict management.

3. In addition, it is expected that the discussions at the Conference will be able to help provide support to the on-going activities of relevant ASEAN frameworks, platforms, bodies and mechanisms, towards **identifying a proposed concrete list of voluntary, practical norms of State behavior on cyberspace, especially in relation to regional peace and stability**, that ASEAN can consider working towards adopting and implementing.

4. It is also expected that the Conference will be able to help contribute to efforts of ASEAN to enhance its cooperation and collaboration with the international community in the area of cybersecurity and non-traditional security issues, especially in aspects which are directly relevant to regional and international peace and conflict management.

5. It is expected that the Conference would serve as a vehicle whereby ASEAN Member Countries could promote closer functional relations with Dialogue Partners, businesses, the Civil Society community and all interested parties, especially in the area of cybersecurity.

FUNDING

The **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** and the **Ministry of Digital Economy and Society of Thailand** will be responsible for the management and costs of the International Conference on **"Cybersecurity: Implications on Peace and Security in the ASEAN Region". Financial Contributions** and **material support** from interested parties are welcomed, although not a requirement for participating in the Conference. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society of Thailand will also be responsible for administrative costs, as well as the cost of the publication of the report of the outcome of the Conference.

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