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Opening Remarks by Chief of Defence Force Lieutenant-General Ng Chee Meng at the Joint Press Conference for the 15th FPDA Defence Chiefs' Conference

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Good morning, my friends from the media. Let me introduce the panel here with me. On my right is General Tan Sri Dato' Sri Zulkifeli Bin Mohd Zin from Malaysia. Next to him is General David Hurley from Australia. On my left are Lieutenant General Rhys Jones from New Zealand and General Sir Nicholas Houghton from the United Kingdom. On behalf of the FPDA Defence Chiefs, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all of you.

The Defence Chiefs and I conducted the 15th FPDA Defence Chiefs' Conference yesterday. Let me give you an overview of what we discussed during the conference. We can then take any questions you may have after that.

Strategic Importance and Relevance of the FPDA

The FPDA was formed 42 years ago, in 1971. And through the years, it has played an important role in enhancing regional security. In particular, the conduct of regular FPDA exercises and activities has helped to strengthen military cooperation and interoperability among the FPDA defence forces. They have also enhanced mutual understanding and cultivated friendships among the personnel of the FPDA defence forces.

In recent years, FPDA has evolved to remain relevant in the changing regional security environment through its efforts to build capacity in areas such as maritime security, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

Discussion during the FDCC

During the conference yesterday, my colleagues and I reaffirmed our countries' continued strong commitment to the FPDA. We exchanged views on the latest developments in the regional security environment, and also discussed ways to build upon the experience and knowledge gained from the previous exercises to achieve greater professionalism and integration in future FPDA exercises and activities.

To guide the professional development of FPDA exercises, we have issued the FPDA Exercise Concept Directive, or FECD in short, during the conference. The FECD guides the development of FPDA exercises and activities to strengthen interoperability and military cooperation between the armed forces of the five member-nations, in both conventional and non-conventional domains. We have a full calendar of FPDA activities this year. And just two weeks ago, if you recall, in Australia, we concluded the Command Post exercise SUMAN WARRIOR. Tomorrow, we will commence the Full-Troop exercise BERSAMA LIMA, which will involve personnel and assets from all five member-nations, comprising 72 aircraft, 12 naval vessels and 6 Ground-Based Air Defence Units.

Conclusion

Looking ahead, with the continued strong commitment and support of the FPDA member-nations, my colleagues and I are confident that the FPDA will remain an important component of our regional security architecture.

With that, I would like to invite any questions that you may have on the FDCC.

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