

**STRENGTHENING CONFIDENCE, SECURITY BUILDING
MEASURES (CSBMs) IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:
ASEAN IN THE POST COVID-19 ERA** ^{©Σ}

ARIESANI HERMAWANTO* AND MELATY ANGGRAINI †

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses Confidence Security Building Measures (CSBMs) in Southeast Asia as an important tool and mechanism to create stability and build mutual understanding between ASEAN member states and countries outside the region. Using relevant primary and secondary data such as official government documents, books and journals, the study shows that CSBM mechanisms in the Southeast Asia region encourage surrounding countries to strengthen shared responsibilities and goals sustainably. The dialogue through CSBM's mechanism emphasises cooperation and mutual understanding, which will further play an essential role in building a resilient and harmonious Southeast Asia. The study results show that the complexity of issues in the post-COVID-19 era requires strengthening CSBM through ASEAN with a focus on inclusivity and consensus building, constituting a mechanism of meaningful dialogue.

Keywords: CSBMs, ASEAN, Southeast Asia, Post-Covid-19, Cooperation

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MEMPERKUKUHKAN LANGKAH PEMBINAAN KESELAMATAN KEYAKINAN (CSBM) DI ASIA TENGGARA: ASEAN DALAM ERA PASCA COVID-19

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ABSTRAK

Kertas kerja ini membicarakan Langkah-Langkah Pembinaan Keyakinan Keselamatan (CSBMs) di rantau Asia Tenggara sebagai alat dan mekanisme penting dalam mencipta kestabilan dan membina pemahaman bersama antara negara-negara anggota ASEAN dan negara-negara di luar rantau ini. Dengan menggunakan data primer dan sekunder yang berkaitan seperti dokumen rasmi kerajaan, buku dan jurnal, kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa mekanisme CSBMs di rantau Asia Tenggara menggalakkan negara-negara berdekatan dalam rantau ini untuk mengukuhkan tanggungjawab dan matlamat bersama secara mampan. Dialog melalui mekanisme CSBMs menekankan kerjasama dan pemahaman bersama, yang boleh memainkan peranan penting dalam membina Asia Tenggara yang utuh dan harmoni pada masa depan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa kompleksiti isu-isu dalam era pasca-COVID-19 memerlukan pengukuhan CSBMs melalui ASEAN dengan tumpuan kepada inklusiviti dan pembinaan konsensus, yang akan membentuk mekanisme dialog yang penting.

Kata kunci: *Langkah-Langkah Pembinaan Keyakinan Keselamatan (CSBMs), ASEAN, Asia Tenggara, Pasca-Covid-19, Kerjasama*

Introduction

The global and regional security landscape, such as the Southeast Asia region, has significantly changed after the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2023. This pandemic has opened a new era in international dynamics, characterised by the emergence of unprecedented challenges and transformations in various fields. The COVID-19 pandemic presents significant challenges for society, especially for governments of Southeast Asian countries, including ASEAN regional organisations. COVID-19 is more than just a health or socio-economic crisis; it is also a governance crisis that tests the country's governance system (Mazzucato 2021: 3). Interconnectedness between nations as a form of the global response to the pandemic has highlighted vulnerabilities in critical issues in both traditional and non-traditional areas of security. The urgent need to address health security and vulnerabilities caused by the highly contagious virus has overshadowed matters related to traditional security concerns, such as military threats and war.

These changes make it essential to strengthen Confidence Security Building Measures (CSBMs). CSBM is an agreement between countries about exchanging information and joint activities aimed at reducing tensions through transparency and clarification of political and military activities, as well as avoiding misunderstandings that could lead to confrontation and escalation of conflicts (Griffiths et al. 2005). These CSBMs have several vital contributions in reducing uncertainty, misperception, and suspicion between countries through declarative actions, namely a commitment not to carry out attacks or the use of certain weapons, transparency such as information exchange and restrictive measures related to rules for conflict risk reduction.

Southeast Asia is a region that is politically and security dynamic and socially and culturally plural. Within this region, some countries have different essential characteristics in terms of area, political regime, historical background, economic development, religious affiliation, and ethnic composition of their citizens. The Southeast Asia region, which currently consists of 11 countries belonging to the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN), exhibits exceptional political, cultural, and economic diversity. This ASEAN identity emerges from five primary sources: nationalism, religion, cultural norms and ways of interaction, modernist national orientation and development approach, and regionalism (Acharya 2017: 27). The COVID-19 pandemic has an impact on political dynamics and international relations in the Southeast Asia region. Southeast Asian countries need to strengthen and maintain political stability and security.

Confidence Security Building Measures (CSBMs)

The Confidence Security Building Measures (CSBMs) were widely discussed in various publications, especially in the 1980s during the Cold War, with the confrontation between the Western Bloc and the Eastern Bloc and the aftermath. CSBM became an essential subject of discussion and research (Dewitt, 1984), (Vicks, 1988), (Pilat, 1988), (Krepon, 1993), (Ahmar, 1993), (Peters, 1997), (Baird, 1997). In subsequent developments, measures to enhance security and stability and other arms control instruments are increasingly varied and evolving with new challenges in the international world, both globally and regionally. CSBMs have definitions ranging from narrow ones pertaining exclusively to military action to broader interpretations encompassing almost everything to build trust. The broad definition of CSBMs are formal and informal actions,

whether unilateral, bilateral or multilateral, aimed at overcoming, preventing, or resolving uncertainties between states, including military and political elements. These measures have contributed to the reduction of insecurity (Cossa 1995).

There are five stages in the development of CSBMs related to building trust efforts. Lachowski (2002) shows the five stages: the first phase is the pre-historic phase of confidence building. This was the post-World War II period in which the major powers sought to instil confidence in their mutual relations, especially in the face of deepening the East-West bloc confrontation. At the height of the Cold War in the mid-1950s, there was a detente of tensions between the two superpowers of America and the Western Bloc and the Soviet Union and its Eastern Bloc; included; this was the Soviet Union's suggestion to exchange observers at strategic points in NATO and Warsaw Pact territory. The first period of detente ended definitively with the Cuban and Berlin crises of the early 1960s.

The second phase includes the generation of the initial confidence-building measures (CBMs). The second phase marked the existence of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe from 1973 to 1975. Its principal objectives were political arrangements (Declarations on the principles guiding relations between States parties) and humanitarian agreements (human rights, human contact between people, and the free flow of ideas and information). CBMs began to address critical security issues in relations between the two blocs, NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Helsinki's CBMs are so simple that their application area does not cover the entire European region. CBMs handle military forces exclusively, and notification of manoeuvres is voluntary; advance notification of significant troop movements and observation actions are also voluntary, and observations are conducted bilaterally and without specified parameters.

The third phase began with the Stockholm Conference of 1984-1986, with the emergence of a more advanced generation of CBMs known as trust and security building measures (CSBMs). At the Stockholm Conference, countries agreed to adopt CSBMs that meet four criteria: actions that will (a) be politically binding, (b) be significant militarily, (c) be verifiable where possible, and (d) widespread measures. The parameters of CSBM were expanded in the Vienna Document of 1990 relating to the exchange of information, especially the military budget, the establishment of conflict prevention centres as one element of risk reduction mechanisms, the existence of communication networks to convey CSBM information, and allowing each participating country to conduct inspections on the territory of other participating countries. The Treaty also contains innovative procedures for questioning military activities carried out by a State Party that fall outside of expected behaviour ("unusual military activity" and "dangerous incidents").

The fourth phase was the collapse of the East-West bloc system, and the breakup of the Soviet Union also marked a change in approach to the security process, including CSBM, namely building new security relations based on a cooperative and common approach to security. Regional measures are already being considered, and countries are further enhancing and supplementing existing CSBMs and developing new ones. These include expanding application areas and participants, the importance of notification and observation, restrictions on large-scale military exercises and more robust verification measures.

The fifth phase of the new chapter in CSBM's history is adopting a new chapter that equips CSBM with voluntary and legally binding political policies and actions

tailored to regional needs, such as assisting in developing, negotiating and implementing regional measures. The chapter on regional CSBM covers a range of actions for regions and border regions and serves as a "source of inspiration and reference" for participating countries.

The CSBMs are actively conducted in regions with high-security dialogue, such as Southeast Asia. The regional implementation of CSBM measures needs to consider each region's peculiarities, which have its own political, social, economic and military characteristics. Baviera (2017) pointed out that Southeast Asian countries, through the ASEAN regional organisation, are gradually building mutual understanding based on shared interests, common principles and norms, as well as mechanisms that help prevent conflicts among their members to produce a regional security architecture. The building of mutual understanding is evident through the presence of The Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality or ZOPFAN (1971), the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia or TAC (1976), and the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone Treaty or SEANWFZ (1995). This mutual understanding based on the peculiarities of the Southeast Asia region is significant to be taken into account in strengthening trust between countries and based on the belief that countries are ready to do so and believe that the benefits of peaceful relations outweigh the effects of confrontation and conflict. Here is a starting point for an ongoing trust-building process. On June 23, 2019, in Bangkok, leaders of ASEAN member countries, namely Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam, issued a Vision Statement on Partnership for Sustainability; one point contains the following (ASEAN Leaders' Vision Statement 2018) :

"Recalling the Bangkok Declaration of 1967 in which ASEAN declared to promote regional cooperation in the spirit of equality and partnership and to secure for its peoples and posterity the blessings of peace, freedom and prosperity, and ASEAN's pledge to its peoples in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 to realise a rules-based, people-oriented, and people-centred ASEAN of One Vision, One Identity, One Community."

In the Bangkok Declaration of 1967, ASEAN expressed its determination to advance regional cooperation in the spirit of equality and partnership to guarantee peace, freedom and prosperity for people and future generations. This declaration marks an essential step in shaping the identity and direction of ASEAN as a regional bloc. Furthermore, in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, ASEAN promised its people that it would build a rules-based, people-centred ASEAN. This vision represents the determination to create ASEAN with one vision, identity, and community. Therefore, ASEAN commits to maintaining integrity and unity while continuously promoting all ASEAN member states' security, freedom, and welfare.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused governments in Southeast Asia and ASEAN regional organisations to reconstruct and adjust their security strategies based on the needs and importance of healthcare infrastructure, pandemic preparedness, and collaboration between countries in the region in combating emerging global health threats. The pandemic threatens to undermine meaningful progress in development in recent decades. Therefore, government responses must lead to goals to build long-term resilience as the capacity and ability to protect people and planet earth, sustain achievement across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensure equity, promote transparency, accountability, participation, and collaboration; increase solidarity; and placing community voice, rights and agency as a top priority (Mazzucato 2021: 3).

On the other hand, strengthening CSBMs is urgent because the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the massive adoption of digital technology. As a negative consequence, it can potentially create new cyber threats. This further requires an urgent response to strengthen cybersecurity to maintain community resilience in Southeast Asia. In the economic field, the pandemic has impacted increasing concerns about food security and the economy, thus further expanding the solving of the most basic human security issues. Southeast Asia's post-COVID-19 global and regional security landscape reflects a more holistic and interconnected approach. This approach incorporates health, technology, and economic factors as integral components of the broader security discourse.

The CSBMs Strengthening in Southeast Asia Post COVID-19

The principles of CSBMs have been implemented conceptually among Southeast Asian countries. Regional CSBM mechanisms carefully consider the diversity of political systems, cultural backgrounds, and levels of economic development due to the plurality among 11 countries in Southeast Asia, which include Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Cambodia, Brunei, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Timor Leste. Several vital characteristics marked the Southeast Asia region, such as the history of conflicts between countries and internal conflicts of each country, territorial and border disputes, and complexity in complicated geopolitics. It is worth noting that CSBMs in the region need measures that also consider these specific challenges. The existence of different economic levels in Southeast Asian countries adds complexity to implementing CSBMs. In addition, the military capabilities of Southeast Asian countries also show considerable variation in terms of capabilities and doctrine. Therefore, a practical CSBM framework must be flexible to accommodate each country's military characteristics while fostering cooperation and mutual understanding. The social and cultural factors also play a role in influencing perceptions of security and shaping the country's willingness to engage in confidence-building efforts. The success of CSBMs in Southeast Asia depends on an understanding of the multifaceted dynamics in the region and a commitment to design measures that address existing challenges and take advantage of the opportunities presented by the diverse political, social, economic, and military characteristics inherent in the region.

Geopolitically, Southeast Asia is a strategic region where countries need to strengthen their weapons independently and not under the control of significant powers. This area is located at the junction of China and India and is a major shipping route connecting the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The Southeast Asia region is also constantly exposed to influences from outside the region (Acharya 2017: 27). In the early post-Cold War decades, Southeast Asia was faced with the strategically important consideration of maintaining US involvement in regional security affairs, and the other hand wary of the potential of American neo-imperialist tendencies under the pretext of preserving the stability and dynamics of regional security. Southeast Asia's regional security strategy in the broader Asia-Pacific region is characterised by anti-hegemony (Goh, 2014). Southeast Asia countries are seeking new justifications for the continued involvement of the United States by aligning their priorities with those of the United States in the global world or actively supporting the global strategic priorities of the United States. Within the region are several international challenges and problems facing the global community; a transition of significant state power affects the region's dynamics.

In subsequent developments, China emerged as a new power challenging US hegemony in Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific. China is challenging the hegemony of the United States in Southeast Asia by bringing countries closer economically through

the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and calling on governments to support China's political establishment. China's increasing influence and declining United States diplomacy under President Donald Trump (2016-2020) in Southeast Asia have become essential points at the end of decades of US dominance and influence in Southeast Asia and have been replaced by China (Dunst 2020). In such a situation, through the CSBM mechanism, Southeast Asia countries that are members of ASEAN seek to achieve a balance that ensures their security needs are met without compromising their neutrality, autonomy and independence. This neutrality is impartiality based on the autonomy of each country's foreign policy. This concept has developed over time with changes in its meaning due to geopolitical circumstances. Since the early 2000s, the emphasis has shifted to impartiality due to increasing multipolarity in the Asia-Pacific region (Emmers 2018: 349). It can, therefore, be said that Southeast Asia plays a vital role in shaping the global landscape.

The urgency of strengthening CSBMs in the Southeast Asia region is also driven by several critical security issues that still exist: both traditional security, such as border disputes including maritime, and non-traditional security stemming from non-military problems such as international terrorism and organised crime, separatism and piracy, irregular migration, environmental issues, energy shortages, economic crises, and health problems due to epidemics such as HIV / AIDS and SARS (Ruland 2004: 2). The latest issue is the Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020-2022. The health, economic and political impacts of COVID-19 are significant across Southeast Asia. As in many other parts of the world, the pandemic has caused real suffering, with a disproportionate effect on the most vulnerable, and raised concerns about governance in dealing with pandemic issues. This exacerbates existing risks and raises new challenges, including peace, security, and human rights (United Nations 2020:2).

The reinvigoration of CSBMs in Southeast Asia is inseparable from new security issues that are closely interrelated and, therefore, have the potential to exacerbate risks and hinder solutions. The existence of complex new security issues makes the region a complicated arena, but in other parts, critical to strategic cooperation and diplomatic engagement, reflecting broader regional interdependence, which demonstrates the need for collaborative efforts to address challenges from a globalised world and in regional challenges. There is optimism about the prospects and future of Southeast Asia through intensified efforts across the region to build stronger and more resilient societies and countries (Asian Development Bank 2022:vi).

A comprehensive and inclusive regional security dialogue determines the success of CSBM mechanisms in Southeast Asia. This is inseparable from the history of tension and the level of political alignment with the different major world powers in the region. The mechanism of creating a transparent communication platform is crucial. An open security dialogue can facilitate identifying common interests, building mutual trust, and developing shared norms on which CSBMs are based. This shows that the effectiveness of CSBMs is closely related to the active participation and commitment of all relevant stakeholders in the Southeast Asia region. Countries in the area must be willing to engage in deep and meaningful discussions, share information, and collaboratively develop mechanisms that promote transparency and reduce the risk of misunderstanding. Transparency is an integral part of confidence building, and the level of openness in conveying information and strategic negotiation tools signifies actors' trust in negotiations. This is because establishing measures to increase transparency is a policy choice of countries (Robinson 2010: 11).

Southeast Asian states need a flexible approach to implementing CSBMs to accommodate evolving regional dynamics. The political, social, economic, and military landscape can change over time, and CSBMs must adapt to these changes to remain relevant and practical. Continuous assessment and refinement of CSBM measures ensure that they address emerging challenges and seize new opportunities for cooperation.

CSBM in Southeast Asia, which has a high level of security dialogue, requires a flexible and adaptive approach. It does this by recognising and respecting the unique political, social, economic, and military characteristics of each country in the region. A well-conceived and inclusive regional security dialogue serves as a foundation for the success of CSBM, further fostering understanding and cooperation between nations. A commitment to flexibility and continuous improvement ensures that CSBMs remain responsive to evolving dynamics in the region and continue contributing to increased stability and security in Southeast Asia.

Strengthening the implementation of CSBMs in Southeast Asia will help overcome the challenges faced by countries in the area. First, by opening up more open communication channels, countries can more easily discuss their differences and understand each country's intentions and policies. This will help avoid misunderstandings and wrong decision-making that often lead to disputes. Second, sharing information about each country's policies and intentions is also essential to better understand each country's goals and actions. This helps reduce suspicions between countries and creates a more transparent environment. Third, through CSBMs, countries can work together to reduce uncertainty due to unstable political and economic situations. By keeping each other informed about military activities, defence plans, and other strategic moves, countries can feel more secure and anticipate each other's actions.

CSBMs through the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

In the post-COVID-19 era, strengthening Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs) in Southeast Asia is essential to promote stability and cooperation within the internal framework and with external parties. Effective dialogue mechanisms play a crucial role in achieving this goal. One example of such dialogue is the ASEAN Regional Forum, an inclusive platform for constructive dialogue and consultation in which member states participate in discussions on security issues, including those related to the South China Sea. The ASEAN Regional Forum consists of twenty-seven participating countries, namely countries that are members of ASEAN, such as Brunei, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste and Vietnam. Partner countries outside the region, namely Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the European Union, India, Japan, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Sri Lanka and the United States (The ASEAN Secretariat 2022: 46). The ASEAN Regional Forum, with its mandate of preventive diplomacy, has sought to develop confidence-building measures for all member states (Raemdonck 2021: 20). The ASEAN Regional Forum contributes to confidence-building efforts and preventive diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific region. With ASEAN as the driving force, consensus-based decision-making characterises the ASEAN Regional Forum and progress that is comfortable for all parties. As a regional mechanism, the ASEAN Regional Forum develops through three stages: (1) promotion of confidence-building actions (CBMs/CSBMs), (2) development of preventive diplomacy mechanism measures, and (3) development of long-term conflict resolution mechanisms. In its development, the promotion of CBMs/CSBMs has made steady progress, while the development of preventive diplomacy is still in its early stages (The ASEAN Secretariat 2022: 46).

When the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, increasing cooperation carried the CSBMs mechanism through the ASEAN Regional Forum to prevent and respond to the spread of infectious disease outbreaks. Through ARF, they took action based on a Declaration made jointly by foreign ministers from ASEAN Regional Forum

participating countries in Ha Noi, Viet Nam on September 12, 2020. The declaration acknowledges the severe and multifaceted impacts of infectious disease outbreaks on people and economies, particularly on the security of populations and vulnerable communities. It also conveyed the importance of enhancing regional and international solidarity, cooperation and governance at all levels to enhance collective preparedness and response capacity and prevent and minimise future outbreaks. The declaration emphasises that the most effective approach to stem the threat of infectious diseases is strengthening prevention, preparedness and community engagement.

Furthermore, the leaders praised joint efforts and increased cooperation within ASEAN and between ASEAN and its partners in combating the COVID-19 pandemic. This cooperation takes place in a coherent and responsive ASEAN, which prioritises unity and decisive collective action to stop the spread of this disease. Next is to reaffirm the commitment to develop concrete and practical regional responses in line with the objectives set out in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Vision Statement and ARF Hanoi II Action Plan (2020-2025), which demonstrate commitment to addressing common challenges (ARF Statement 2020).

The implementation of CSBMs in the ASEAN Regional Forum during the COVID-19 pandemic and afterwards was carried out through open and constructive dialogue. The ASEAN Regional Forum encourages transparency and understanding between countries, reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings and misjudgements that could trigger escalating tensions. The dialogues provided opportunities for discussion and fostered trust and cooperation. In the 27th ASEAN Regional Forum Declaration in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, in 2020, a critical CSBM framework was presented, including the following (ARF Statement 2020):

1. Work together to prevent and respond to epidemics and mitigate and eliminate adverse effects based on solidarity, unity, cooperation, and mutual assistance. This is supported by strengthening regional early warning systems against outbreaks that could become pandemics or epidemics and providing relevant information to ensure rapid response, such as actions taken by countries to combat infectious diseases and data exchange. Next is to promote expertise and best practices and facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge between scientists, clinicians, and policymakers in a free, transparent, systematic, consistent, and timely manner. This enables comprehensive prevention and preparedness strategies and rapid detection capabilities, enabling timely responses and practical actions. The collaborative effort aims to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks, including emerging zoonoses.
2. Strengthen coordination in the prevention, preparedness and control of large-scale infectious disease outbreaks by providing high-quality and safe healthcare capabilities such as field hospitals and isolated speciality clinical services. It further strengthened the capacity and preparedness to respond to health emergencies and mobile epidemic prevention units to support and enhance the national capacity to respond to outbreaks.
3. Facilitate coordination of border control measures that are appropriate and consistent with existing national laws and policies. This includes promptly updating national measures regarding border restrictions, sharing information on epidemic prevention and control, and enhancing cooperation by providing appropriate support and assistance in the repatriation or safe repatriation of nationals from ARF member states upon request. Next is collaboration in taking effective measures to prevent illegal

border crossings, including consideration of visa extensions and access to essential health services and maintaining border security and stability.

4. Encourage practical actions to minimise the negative impact of infectious disease outbreaks on the most vulnerable communities. This is strengthened by promoting cooperation in developing and implementing comprehensive, equitable and sustainable responses to infectious disease outbreaks, with the whole community's participation. Next is maintaining an environment conducive to cooperation and dialogue in combating contagious disease outbreaks, including maintaining and strengthening peace, security, stability and rule of law in the region and the world.
5. Address and mitigate the various impacts of infectious disease outbreaks, including the COVID-19 pandemic, improve people's welfare and safe living conditions, maintain socio-economic stability, and improve preparedness and capacity. Next is to respond to potential future outbreaks while developing a robust integrated approach.

These dialogues are a joint response to non-traditional security challenges exacerbated by the pandemic, such as public health cooperation and economic recovery. In the post-COVID-19 era, financial security is critical. Therefore, the dialogue platform must go beyond traditional security issues and include economic cooperation and recovery strategies.

CSBMs through ASEAN Plus Three (APT)

CSBM mechanisms are essential to strengthen trade and economic dialogue to facilitate post-pandemic recovery and address the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. Regional economic forums with CSBM mechanisms, such as ASEAN Plus Three (APT), a discussion forum for strategies to facilitate trade, encourage investment, and increase economic resilience, are demonstrated. Given the disruption to global supply chains during the pandemic, these dialogues can explore opportunities to diversify and expand trade, reducing vulnerability to external shocks.

The CSBM's mechanisms and initiatives on economic issues are carried out through the ASEAN Plus Three Dialogue, which involves ASEAN member countries as well as China, Japan, and South Korea. The challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic are related to supply chain management and what causes these challenges. Several policies are needed to deal with external shocks similar to COVID-19 that could hamper supply chain connectivity. Key relevant policies include (1) Restrictive measures that do not disrupt local supply chains wherever possible. (2) Conduct customs operations based on the application of infection control measures to the greatest extent possible (i.e., by allowing authorities to conduct operations remotely); (3) Special entry permits are required for foreign engineers and managers. (4) Temporary liberalisation of cross-border services by foreign companies. (ASEAN Plus Three Joint Study 2020: 4).

In the post-COVID-19 pandemic era with the CSBMs mechanism, ASEAN Plus Three in 2022 issued an agreement on a cooperation plan for 2023-2027. The ASEAN Plus Three Work Plan 2023-2027 is a fundamental guideline to strengthen APT cooperation over the next five years to establish an East Asia Community with ASEAN as the driving force. Consistent with existing regional mechanisms, APT recognises ASEAN's centrality as a driving force for strengthening regional structure. Building on the success of previous APT work plans, this work plan will help ASEAN achieve the

goals of Community Vision 2025 and its successor documents. The work plan also aims to strengthen further the ASEAN Plus Three partnership in line with the principles of the ASEAN Charter, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), and the (AOIP) or ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan 2022).

About the CSBMs mechanism in the economic sector, the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan has several important work plans, including the following (ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan 2022):

1. Strengthening collaboration and cooperation among ASEAN Plus Three member countries in the areas of economic and financial resilience, trade facilitation, investment, digital trade, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), green recovery, sustainable economy, as well as sustainable, resilient and inclusive regional supply chains, connectivity, empowerment and digital inclusion, aiming to not only transform but also prepare the region for challenges and economic recovery goals after the pandemic.
2. Strengthen ASEAN's participation and role in the activities of the ASEAN-China Center, ASEAN-Japan Center, and Korea Center and projects, and promote a more active presence of these institutions in ASEAN member states. It aims to promote further trade and investment within the framework of APT cooperation.
3. Promote a multilateral trading system based on the WTO and open, fair, accessible, inclusive, transparent, predictable and non-discriminatory rules. Improve the free flow of goods, supply chain connectivity and service efficiency, and eliminate unnecessary barriers to trade and disruptions to global and regional supplies. Avoid unilateral and protectionist measures inconsistent with WTO rules and other applicable trade agreements.

In the post-COVID-19 pandemic era, the strengthening of CSBMs through the ASEAN Plus Three dialogue can be expanded to overcome economic challenges exacerbated by this pandemic. Discussions concerned improving regional supply chain resilience, accelerating economic recovery, and ensuring equitable access to vaccines and medical resources. In short, implementing confidence-building measures in Southeast Asia in the post-COVID-19 era requires a multifaceted approach to dialogue at its core. This includes engaging in transparent and inclusive discussions, bilateral consultations and people-to-people exchanges in regional forums. This will address security concerns, create a more resilient and cooperative Southeast Asia, and contribute to development. Joint efforts in these dialogues will lay the foundation for a stable and prosperous regional environment. On the other hand, establishing information-sharing and cooperation mechanisms in these areas can enhance the region's collective resilience.

Research Contributions

The research on CSBM mechanism through ARF and APT as dialogue platforms contributes to international relations, regional studies, and diplomacy disciplines. Through the CSBM framework, this study analyses the extent to which ARF and APT have been effective in facilitating dialogue between ASEAN members in addressing regional issues and conflicts, explore the conflicts in the ASEAN region and see how ARF and APT have been involved in addressing those conflicts; describe the extent to

which ARF and APT are successful in building a mutual understanding of security in the Southeast Asian region through a framework for understanding regional security threats and challenges. The research also describes the importance of CSBM through ARF and APT as future dialogue and liaison platforms, including strengthening their role in resolving conflicts and establishing security worldwide.

Conclusion

The South Asian states use CSBMs to address issues and create a sense of shared responsibility and purpose. Based on cooperation and understanding, the dialogue will play an essential role in building a resilient and harmonious Southeast Asia in the future. Given the complexity of issues in the post-COVID-19 era, a renewed focus on inclusivity and consensus-building must be at the forefront of regional dialogue. By combining the perspectives of all Member States, regardless of their size or geopolitical impact, the dialogue can foster shared responsibility and ownership in addressing everyday challenges. This approach strengthens the effectiveness of CSBMs and contributes to developing a more coherent and connected Southeast Asian community.

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