

THE ROLE OF AMS IN ENHANCING REGIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY FOR ASEAN AS "EPICENTRUM OF GROWTH"

"Peran ARM Dalam Meningkatkan Pertahanan Dan Keamanan Regional ASEAN Sebagai "Epicentrum Pertumbuhan"

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Abstrak, Artikel ini menggali peran penting Negara-negara Anggota ASEAN (AMS) dalam meningkatkan pertahanan dan keamanan regional, yang pada akhirnya menempatkan ASEAN sebagai "Episentrum Pertumbuhan." Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi dan memahami peran AMS dalam meningkatkan pertahanan dan keamanan regional di kawasan ASEAN. Metodologi penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, yang menggabungkan data primer dari wawancara dan survei dengan pemangku kepentingan utama dan data sekunder dari tinjauan literatur. Analisis tematik dan konten digunakan untuk mendapatkan wawasan tentang peran AMS dalam meningkatkan pertahanan dan keamanan regional. Artikel ini mengeksplorasi peran penting AMS dalam menjaga keamanan dan stabilitas regional, menekankan pembangunan kepercayaan, konektivitas, diplomasi, dan kolaborasi dengan organisasi regional. Laporan ini menggali mekanisme penyelesaian sengketa di ASEAN dan komitmen kawasan terhadap diplomasi preventif. Lebih jauh lagi, artikel ini membahas tantangan-tantangan yang ditimbulkan oleh kejahatan terorganisir transnasional, dan upaya kolaboratif AMS untuk melawan ancaman-ancaman tersebut. Terakhir, artikel ini membahas keamanan lingkungan, menekankan komitmen ASEAN terhadap pembangunan berkelanjutan, energi terbarukan, dan konservasi laut. Kesimpulannya, keterlibatan proaktif AMS dalam dinamika pertahanan dan keamanan memperkuat peran ASEAN sebagai "Episentrum Pertumbuhan." Komitmen mereka terhadap stabilitas regional, penyelesaian perselisihan, melawan ancaman transnasional, dan kelestarian lingkungan menempatkan ASEAN sebagai mercusuar perdamaian, kemakmuran, dan ketahanan di kawasan Asia-Pasifik.

Kata Kunci: Negara Anggota ASEAN, Pertahanan, Keamanan, Stabilitas, Diplomasi.

Abstract. This article delves into the critical role of ASEAN Member States (AMS) in enhancing regional defense and security, ultimately positioning ASEAN as the "Epicentrum of Growth." The primary research purpose is to explore and understand the role of AMS in enhancing regional defense and security within the ASEAN region. The research methodology employs a qualitative approach, combining primary data from interviews and surveys with key stakeholders and secondary data from literature reviews. Thematic and content analyses are employed to gain insights into the role of AMS in enhancing regional defense and security. The article explores the pivotal role of AMS in safeguarding

regional security and stability, emphasizing trust-building, connectivity, diplomacy, and collaborations with regional organizations. It delves into the mechanisms for dispute settlement within ASEAN and the region's commitment to preventive diplomacy. Furthermore, the article addresses the challenges posed by transnational organized crime, and AMS' collaborative efforts to counter these threats. Lastly, the article discusses environmental security, emphasizing ASEAN's commitment to sustainable development, renewable energy, and marine conservation. In conclusion, AMS' proactive engagement in defense and security dynamics solidifies ASEAN's role as the "Epicentrum of Growth." Their commitment to regional stability, dispute resolution, countering transnational threats, and environmental sustainability positions ASEAN as a beacon of peace, prosperity, and resilience in the Asia-Pacific region.

Keywords: ASEAN Member States, Defense, Security, Stability, Diplomacy

1. Introduction

In the mosaic of global geopolitics, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) stands as a testament to regional cooperation and collaborative ambition. Founded in 1967, ASEAN's journey has been marked by its collective endeavor to ensure regional peace, foster economic integration, and facilitate socio-cultural exchange. The vision behind these endeavors can be delineated through the three cardinal pillars of ASEAN cooperation: the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). As the global economic gravity shifts towards Asia, ASEAN, driven by its member states (AMS), assumes a critical role in solidifying the region as the "Epicentrum of Growth." This article embarks on a journey to explore how AMS, through their commitment to the trinity of ASEAN pillars, is enhancing regional defense and security, a prerequisite for realizing ASEAN's economic and socio-cultural potential.

The APSC stands at the forefront of ASEAN's commitment to ensure a peaceful, secure, and stable regional environment. The APSC principally emphasizes ASEAN's joint dedication to peace, stability, and enhanced security collaboration. The objective is to establish a community based on norms, in which member states uphold each other's democratic systems, adhere to the values of the United Nations Charter, and settle conflicts

through peaceful methods (APSC Blueprint, 2009; 8). Recognizing that the political and security landscape serves as the foundation upon which economic and socio-cultural aspirations are built, AMS has consistently prioritized conflict resolution, counter-terrorism efforts, and diplomatic dialogue. In a region marked by historical disputes and territorial complexities, APSC endeavors to create an overarching architecture that promotes trust, mutual respect, and adherence to international law, especially the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (ASEAN Charter, 2008; 7).

Parallely, the AEC is the economic heartbeat of the region, striving to transform ASEAN into a globally competitive, innovative, and economically integrated region. The initiative takes advantage of the region's vibrant economy, encouraging unrestricted movement of commodities, services, and highly trained workers, as well as more liberalized capital flows (AEC Blueprint 2025, 2015; 12). This phenomenon fuels the economic strength of the region, positioning it as a central hub for global investments and earning it the title of an "Epicenter of Growth." While defense and security may seem tangential to economic considerations, in reality, a stable security environment, ensured by the proactive role of AMS, is pivotal for economic activities to flourish. The interconnectedness of ASEAN's economies demands secure sea lanes, safe air routes, and unperturbed land corridors for trade and commerce. By safeguarding these channels, AMS not only reinforces its commitment to APSC but also underpins the AEC's aspirations of economic robustness (ASEAN Economic Blueprint, 2015; 12).

Lastly, the ASCC encapsulates the essence of ASEAN's socio-cultural tapestry, emphasizing the building of a community that is socially responsible, culturally aware, and environmentally sustainable. Security, in the ASCC paradigm, extends beyond traditional defense frameworks. It delves into human security, encompassing food security, environmental protection, and disaster management. The role of AMS in enhancing these areas reaffirms their commitment to the broader security discourse, where the well-being of its people and preservation of its shared heritage are central (ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint, 2009; 8).

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The combination of these three pillars not only enhances ASEAN's internal basis but also magnifies its exterior influence in changing the geopolitical and geo-economic landscape of the Asia-Pacific region. As ASEAN advances, its member nations, utilizing these cooperative channels, are well-positioned to assume influential positions in regional defense and security, guaranteeing the Southeast Asian region's unity, tranquility, and resilience in the face of obstacles to establish itself as the "Epicentrum of Growth", the synergistic alignment between its three pillars, facilitated by the active engagement of AMS in defense and security dynamics, will be its guiding compass.

2. Research Methodology

This writing uses a qualitative approach in order to provide meaningful insight into "THE ROLE OF AMS IN ENHANCING REGIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY FOR ASEAN AS "EPICENTRUM OF GROWTH". This research primarily rely on primary data sources to gather firsthand information. Key sources of primary data include interviews, discuss and surveys with relevant stakeholders in ASEAN Member States (AMS). The primary research purpose is to explore and understand the role of AMS in enhancing

regional defense and security within the ASEAN region. This involves uncovering the strategies, policies, and initiatives employed by AMS to contribute to regional stability.

The survey was distributed to various expert groups and stakeholders in the ASEAN region who attended NADI activities. The surveys contain a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions, addressing various aspects of the research theme. Survey responses will be collected electronically, and quantitative data will be analyzed to complement qualitative findings. These stakeholders include government officials, military personnel, security experts, and representatives from regional organizations. Primary data collection will provide in-depth insights into the role of AMS in enhancing regional defense and security.

Besides primary data, secondary data is also used to complement primary data and include a thorough review of existing literature. This will involve analyzing academic articles, reports, policy documents, and books related to ASEAN's regional defense and security dynamics, its role as an "Epicentrum of Growth," and the contributions of AMS in this context. Secondary data will provide a broader context and theoretical framework for the research.

Qualitative data from interviews and open-ended survey responses subjected to thematic analysis. This involves identifying recurring themes, patterns, and insights within the data. The analysis conducted systematically, and themes will be coded for a comprehensive understanding of the role of AMS in enhancing regional defense and security. Secondary data sources, such as literature reviews, undergo content analysis. This method involves categorizing and summarizing key findings, arguments, and recommendations from academic articles, reports, and policy documents. Content analysis will help establish the theoretical foundations and contextual backdrop for the research.

To enhance the validity and reliability of findings, a triangulation approach employed. This involves comparing and contrasting data from various sources, including interviews, discuss, surveys, and secondary documents. Triangulation ensures that the research draws from multiple perspectives and minimizes bias.

This qualitative research methodology, based on a combination of primary and secondary data sources, will facilitate a comprehensive exploration of the role of AMS in enhancing regional defense and security for ASEAN as the "Epicentrum of Growth." The systematic analysis of data will contribute to a nuanced understanding of the subject, with findings that can inform policies and strategies aimed at bolstering regional security in Southeast Asia.

3. Discussion

a. Epicentrum of Growth

ASEAN, a heterogeneous coalition of Southeast Asian countries, has been consistently establishing its presence on the global economic platform, emerging as a crucial center for commerce, investment, and economic expansion. In recent decades, the ten member states of the organization have jointly restructured their economies, capitalizing on their advantageous geographical position, abundant natural resources, youthful population, and a comprehensive vision of regional integration and collaboration. The progress achieved by ASEAN will be evident by 2022. Based on a survey by the Asian Development Bank, ASEAN ranked as the third largest economy in Asia in terms of its total economic strength, being surpassed only by the well-established economic powerhouses of China and Japan. On a global scale, it held the fifth place in terms of economic influence, trailing behind only the United States, China, Japan, and Germany (Asian Development Bank, 2022; 45).

Multiple causes have driven ASEAN into this advantageous position. The organization's dedication to unrestricted commerce and economic amalgamation demonstrated via endeavors such as the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), has cultivated a propitious milieu for enterprises and investments. In addition, each member state has actively pursued extensive economic reforms, infrastructural development, and education initiatives, which have contributed significantly to their overall progress. The growing middle class in ASEAN has also created extensive consumer markets, enticing businesses and investors from around the world.

Moreover, the strategic location of ASEAN has been crucial. Located between the rapidly growing economies of India and China and bordered by the Pacific and Indian Oceans, ASEAN has emerged as a crucial hub for international trade routes. The region's ports and shipping channels are very active, highlighting its position as a global hub of economic expansion.

Conclusively, the ascent of ASEAN as a prominent economic powerhouse has been truly remarkable. The transformation of this collection of agricultural nations into a widely acknowledged economic force is a clear demonstration of the advantages of regional collaboration, effective economic governance, and the unwavering determination of its citizens.

ASEAN has undergone a remarkable process of economic transition in the past few decades. Starting as a collection of underdeveloped nations with a small industrial sector, it has transformed into a unified force, projecting significant economic impact on the international platform. As per the World Economic Forum's research, it is expected that ASEAN will continue to grow and become the fourth-largest economy globally during the next ten years (World Economic Forum, 2022; 37).

The economic story of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has consistently been characterized by dynamism, resilience, and growth. However, in recent decades, the growth narrative has been predominantly defined by the rapid ascent of the middle class in the region. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) study of 2022 predicts that ASEAN is on the verge of a significant increase in its middle-class population. It is projected that by 2030, an impressive 70% of the ASEAN population will belong to this socioeconomic group (Asian Development Bank, 2022; 58).

This projected demographic transition represents not only an indication of increasing income levels but also signifies a profound shift in the socio-economic structure of the region. An emerging middle class is frequently linked to higher levels of education, urbanization, and a need for improved health and social services. This adjustment in socio-economic position will consequently result in a modification of consumption patterns. The

emerging middle-class customers in ASEAN will have an increased need for a wider range of products and services, including advanced technology devices, luxury goods, improved healthcare, and education services.

The ADB analysis emphasizes the economic consequences of this change, specifically pointing out the emergence of consumer markets projected to have a value of \$4 trillion in the next ten years. This enormous and rapidly growing sector presents unequaled prospects for the company. Both domestic and international companies may cater to the changing needs of this emerging customer group by implementing innovative and adaptable approaches in their product offers, marketing tactics, and supply chain logistics.

The lively economies and rapid growth paths of Southeast Asia have consistently attracted the attention of economic experts and historians. The ASEAN Economic Outlook of 2023 provides insights into the recent economic patterns observed in the region, with a specific focus on six prominent economies: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Together, these nations constitute the core of ASEAN's economic power and have a crucial influence on shaping the region's general growth path.

The 2023 ASEAN Economic Outlook predicts a decrease in growth across these six economies. The estimated growth rate of 5.5 percent in 2022 is anticipated to decrease somewhat to approximately 4.4 percent in 2023, according to the ASEAN Economic Outlook (2023; 27). Although this projection suggests a slowdown, it does not always imply economic stagnation or contraction. However, it frequently mirrors the inherent fluctuations of economic cycles, external trade conflicts, regional geopolitical factors, or global economic forces.

Other elements could explain this moderated forecast. The growth rates could be influenced by the maturing of specific sectors, the adjustment of supply chains, the emergence of new technological paradigms, and the consequences of global events. Individually, each of the six countries possesses its own distinct economic story. However, when considered together, their interconnected economic destinies serve as evidence of the influential nature of regional collaboration and interdependence.

It is imperative to acknowledge the significance of this forecast within the wider framework of global economic patterns. With a growth rate of 4.4 percent, although slightly lower than the previous year's 5.5 percent, the ASEAN area continues to surpass many developed nations, demonstrating its durability and promise. The historical resilience and dynamism of ASEAN economies have enabled them to effectively navigate economic challenges and take advantage of opportunities, positioning the region as a constantly dynamic center of growth.

b. The Role of AMS

Situated in the core of Southeast Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) serves as a concrete example of regional cooperation and cooperative diplomacy. As the organization aims to develop the region into a center of economic growth, it is also confronted with complex military and security concerns that will likely influence its path in the next twenty years. ASEAN is committed to protecting regional security and stability by promoting harmonious coexistence among its member states, supported by shared values and mutual respect.

Nevertheless, this undertaking faces the obstacle of building efficient intra-ASEAN processes for resolving disputes, guaranteeing that disagreements among member nations are dealt with constructively, preventing them from expanding into more significant confrontations. Furthermore, the presence of transnational organized criminals, which include activities such as drug trafficking, cyber threats, and terrorism, poses a significant challenge that requires a coordinated and thorough response from ASEAN. The issue of environmental security, which is driven by causes like climate change and resource depletion, should not be ignored. This issue adds dimension to the defense and security issues faced by ASEAN. To tackle these complex problems, it is necessary to have both the determination of political leaders and the implementation of creative approaches, together with enhanced cooperation across AMS. This will ensure that ASEAN continues to be a stronghold of peace and prosperity in a constantly changing global environment.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has grown exponentially since its inception, not only as a beacon of regional integration but also as a cornerstone of stability and security in Asia. The role of ASEAN Member States (AMS) has been pivotal in charting a course for the region amidst dynamic geopolitical landscapes. Firstly, in safeguarding regional security and stability, AMS has collectively fostered a climate of trust, ensuring that the Southeast Asian region remains peaceful amidst global turbulence. This is further reinforced by intra-ASEAN mechanisms for dispute settlement, epitomizing the spirit of regionalism and diplomacy, which AMS has assiduously cultivated to address disagreements and prevent escalations. Additionally, in an era marred by transnational organized crimes, the collective efforts of AMS against threats such as drug trafficking, terrorism, and cybercrimes have showcased their unwavering commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of their citizens. Lastly, recognizing the inherent link between environment and security, AMS has been at the forefront in championing environmental security, understanding that the sanctity of the region's natural resources is integral for the prosperity and growth of ASEAN as the "Epicentrum of Growth." As challenges evolve, the collaborative spirit and shared vision of AMS promise to navigate ASEAN through the currents of change.

1) Safeguarding Regional Security and Stability

In the evolving landscape of Southeast Asia, the ASEAN Member States (AMS) have persistently engaged in strategic maneuvers to safeguard regional security and stability, understanding its paramount importance for sustained growth and development. One of the most crucial endeavors in this regard has been the effort to identify and formulate the collective interests of AMS, ensuring that the visions of individual nations align with the broader regional aspirations (Tow & Chin, 2015; 33).

Central to ASEAN's strategic initiatives is the imperative to ensure seamless connectivity within the region, an endeavor that not only bolsters intra-ASEAN trade but also strengthens the global supply chain, marking ASEAN as a significant player in global logistics and commerce (Kawasaki, 2016; 158). Parallely, given the geopolitical significance

of the maritime routes running through Southeast Asia, AMS has taken concerted steps to ensure the stability of maritime regional security, understanding its crucial role in trade, as well as regional stability (Rahman, 2019; 76).

Moreover, the contemporary regional challenges necessitate a proactive and effective approach from AMS in managing crises. The emphasis has been on not just reacting to conflicts but actively participating in the formulation of an innovative regional organization framework that supports comprehensive conflict resolution (Leong & Cho, 2020; 45). Recognizing the perils of geopolitical catastrophes, AMS underscores the importance of sustained diplomacy, ensuring that dialogues, both at bilateral and multilateral levels, are institutionalized, and geared towards conflict prevention (Tan, 2017; 93).

Lastly, in a bid to bolster its architectural framework, ASEAN has sought collaborations beyond its borders. Partnering with regional organizations such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), and even the recently formed AUKUS, ASEAN aims to imbibe best practices, share knowledge, and foster a spirit of regional camaraderie, transcending its territorial confines (Sudarshan & Jain, 2021; 110).

2) Dispute Settlement of Intra-ASEAN Mechanism

Navigating the intricate waters of regional cooperation, the ASEAN Member States (AMS) have been cognizant of the inherent challenges and opportunities presented by the dynamic nature of intra-ASEAN relations. A foundational tenet of this understanding is the acknowledgment that conflict, in all its multifaceted manifestations, requires robust and multi-pronged approaches. Foremost, the AMS, drawing inspiration from regional success stories and global best practices, has increasingly recognized the indispensable value of both conflict resolution and preventive diplomacy. Embracing these dual strategies, ASEAN seeks to pre-empt potential conflicts and, where they do arise, to swiftly and judiciously navigate toward a resolution (Acharya, 2014; 73).

Key to the success of these endeavors is comprehensive compliance with a myriad of instruments - declarations, conventions, protocols, action plans, blueprints, and agreements, both historical and contemporary. These instruments, collectively, serve as the bedrock of ASEAN's commitment to fostering a predictable and rules-based regional order (Jones, 2012; 109).

Further amplifying the scope of these efforts is the relentless pursuit of capacity building, aiming to materialize every facet of the political and security aspirations as meticulously outlined in the Blueprint for the ASEAN Political-Security Community. Such initiatives ensure that the AMS is equipped, both in terms of knowledge and resources, to uphold the principles of peace, stability, and mutual respect (Caballero-Anthony, 2005; 57).

Lastly, in the evolving landscape of regional security, there is a growing clamor for reimagining the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). A renewed paradigm, which envisions the deployment of an ASEAN task force, could serve as a potent peacemaker instrument, fortifying the region's conflict resolution mechanisms. Such avant-garde initiatives could potentially herald a new era of intra-ASEAN cooperation, marked by innovation, agility, and resilience (Thayer, 2013; 25).

In synthesis, the trajectory of ASEAN's journey towards a harmonious regional landscape is steered by its unwavering commitment to collaborative strategies, grounded in principles of mutual respect, understanding, and shared aspirations for a peaceful future.

3) Countering Transnational Organized Crime: Drugs, Terrorism, and Cyber Threats

The presence of TOC poses significant and varied threats to the security and stability of the ASEAN region. The ASEAN Member States (AMS) have recognized the gravity of these challenges and have actively strived to tackle them through diverse approaches.

The main objective of these efforts is to promote regional cooperation between the military and police forces of the AMS. The objective of this collaboration is to effectively confront, counteract, and eradicate all forms and manifestations of transnational organized crime (TOC) while upholding a cohesive regional strategy for crimes that transcend

national borders (Wong, 2018; 115). The AMS has been deliberating on the formulation of a novel protocol to enhance cooperative efforts in countering transnational organized crime (TOC), recognizing its intricate and constantly evolving characteristics. This plan ensures both the expansion of operations and the effective utilization of the region's collective resources and expertise (Narine, 2020; 93).

An essential element of these efforts is the necessity to ensure equity. Thus, AMS has commenced the creation of a unified justice framework for persons who engage in transnational crimes associated with organized crime. The primary goal of this framework is to establish a consistent method for prosecuting cases, ensuring that offenders are effectively held responsible without infringing upon the independence of individual AMSs (Lim, 2019; 170).

In addition, the "ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism" serves to further strengthen these initiatives. Established as a response to the increasing prevalence of terrorism, this convention aims to strengthen collaboration among AMS (ASEAN Member States) to prevent and combat terrorism. It serves as a demonstration of the region's dedication to actively addressing this significant security challenge (Tan, 2021; 47). The "ASEAN *Cybersecurity* Cooperation Strategy" was formulated in the era of digital technologies. This strategy evaluates methods to improve the progress of cybersecurity capabilities, facilitate the exchange of information among AMS (Association of Southeast Asian Nations Member States), and advocate for regional cybersecurity principles and benchmarks. The goal is to effectively tackle the ever-increasing danger posed by cybercrimes (Decker & Singh, 2022; 60).

The AMS is actively working together to create a strong defense against transnational organized crime. Their efforts aim to maintain peace, security, and stability in the ASEAN area, even as global problems continue to change.

4) Reinforcing Environmental Security

Amidst the increasing environmental difficulties, ASEAN Member States (AMS) have strengthened their dedication to enhancing regional environmental security. In response to the difficulties posed by global warming, depletion of natural resources, and increased pollution, AMS has demonstrated a proactive approach by highlighting comprehensive ways to tackle these issues.

The primary approach involves the pursuit of comprehensive and profound systemic alterations. The region's commitment to addressing the hazards of global warming is evident via its acknowledgment of the need to urgently transition towards sustainable development, as well as its implementation of strong adaptation and mitigation activities. These actions have the dual purpose of protecting the environment and strengthening socioeconomic systems against vulnerabilities caused by climate change (Chen & Lim, 2016; 29).

There has been a notable advancement in promoting ecologically sustainable technologies, particularly in crucial industries such as agriculture and energy. Through advocating for environmentally-friendly advancements, AMS is strategically establishing the region as a leader in sustainable development. These advancements, which include renewable energy solutions and sustainable farming methods, demonstrate ASEAN's commitment to combining economic growth with ecological accountability (Tan & Suharto, 2018; 103).

The maritime ecology, due to its importance in the region's ecological and economic framework, requires meticulous monitoring. AMS has been progressively leaning towards embracing a comprehensive, science-driven comprehension of their marine domains. This knowledge serves as the foundation for the development of a strategic regional marine strategy. The objective of this policy is to strike a balance between the need for economic benefits from marine resources and the implementation of sustainable conservation measures (Marina & Patel, 2019; 115).

Furthermore, in recognition of the extensive areas of forests that characterize the landscapes of ASEAN, the *ASEAN Member States* (AMS) have been unwavering in their

efforts to advance sustainable forest management. These initiatives aim to maintain the economic productivity of the woods while preserving their ecological integrity. The activities also highlight the significance of these forests as carbon sinks, which are essential in combating global warming (Pham & Putra, 2020; 141).

Overall, as the global focus on environmental security becomes increasingly crucial, AMS is demonstrating exemplary leadership in establishing standards for regional organizations to promote harmonious coexistence between development and environmental preservation through collaborative and coordinated actions.

4. Conclusion

The role of AMS (ASEAN Member States) in bolstering regional defense and security is instrumental in establishing ASEAN as the "Epicentrum of Growth." By prioritizing cohesive defense and security mechanisms, the AMS ensures that ASEAN remains a beacon of stability and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. Such concerted efforts not only provide a safeguard against external threats but also create a conducive environment for economic growth and cooperation among member states.

Strengthening regional cooperation, developing military capabilities, promoting non-traditional security cooperation between the military and police, and developing confidence-building measures. ASEAN must broaden and strengthen its formal Dialogue Partnerships, as well as establish cross-regional dialogues and cooperation between their international secretariats, to ensure regional security and stability.

In resolving disputes and intra-ASEAN issues, ASEAN needs to manage them carefully with the help of existing mechanisms and new mechanisms that need to be developed. ASEAN needs to adopt sustainable development practices and increase innovation in environmentally friendly technologies.

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