

CSCAP Study Group on Preventive Diplomacy: Report of Key Findings

The 2nd meeting of the CSCAP SG on PD was held in Singapore on 21-22. January 2016. The aim of the meeting was to explore the applicability of PD generally and in on-going security hotspots in the region, namely the South China Sea, the East China Sea and the Korean Peninsula. After a day-and-a-half of intensive debate, on the basis of the examination of the above case studies, experts came to following key conclusions:

1. PD context has evolved dramatically since CSCAP's last proposed definition, both in terms of the changing international security environment, actors involved, and tools available. This changed reality will be elaborated on in more detail in a full Co-Chairs report of the SG.
2. While there is no shortage of PD tools available – in the UN or in the ARF context – the greatest obstacle to implement those successfully in the cases examined remains the lack of political will of the parties involved to engage in PD to settle their differences
3. A more active implementation of PD within the ARF could include:
 - A) The establishment of a roster of mediation experts/ units, which would allow interested parties to access information and necessary PD expertise on a voluntary basis
 - B) The establishment of an early warning system within the ARF, exploring synergies with existing and proposed organisations, such as the AIPR. A better division of roles/ tasks/ labour among ARF's various advisory bodies (EEP, CSCAP, AIPR) would be helpful.
 - C) The establishment of fact-finding missions
 - D) The establishment of election monitoring missions
4. PD capacity-building
 - A) Continued training for diplomats based on case studies material for role playing/ scenario simulation
 - B) On-line repository of key PD sources, case studies and references
 - C) Better use of social media > inclusiveness
5. More focus on transnational non-traditional security issues – especially related to environmental and resource degradation, realising their real potential to exacerbate existing interstate tensions in the region.
6. Need to overcome knowledge silos > better knowledge management/ information-sharing between relevant Track 1 and Track 2 bodies and with civil society generally

The Study Group's Co-chairs will circulate a full report of the deliberations stemming from the two meetings, as well as a Study exploring the various cases of PD in the ARF region at a later stage.