

**Co-Chairs' Summary Report of  
the Eighth ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief  
Banda Aceh, Indonesia, 5-6 December 2008**

**Introduction**

1. Pursuant to the decision of the 15<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held in Singapore on 24 July 2008, the 8<sup>th</sup> ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ISM DR) was held in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, on 5-6 December 2008. The Meeting was organized by the European Union and Indonesia, and co-chaired by H.E. Mr. Philippe Zeller, French Ambassador to Indonesia and Mr. Tomasz Kozlowski, Principal Advisor of the External Relations Directorate-General of the European Commission both representing the European Union, and H.E. Mr. Primo A. Joelianto, Director-General for Asia-Pacific and African Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia.

2. The Meeting was attended by delegates from Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, China, the European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the United States of America (US) and Vietnam. Bangladesh, Cambodia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russian Federation and Timor Leste were absent. Representatives of the ASEAN Secretariat, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA), the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UN/ISDR), the World Bank as well as the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission also participated in the Meeting. The List of Participants appears as **ANNEX 1**.

3. At the Opening Ceremony, the Governor of Province of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam welcomed the delegates to Aceh and expressed gratitude to the assistance and cooperation given by the ARF Participating Countries during the emergency and rehabilitation process after the tsunami disaster in December 2004. In his opening remarks, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia underlined: firstly, the importance of deliberation mandated by the 15<sup>th</sup> ARF Ministerial Meeting held in Singapore, last July 2008. Secondly, that the ISM on DR is expected to formulate the concept of cooperation in disaster management and to flesh out a Workplan on disaster relief. Last but not least, the fact that natural disaster are transboundary event with transboundary consequence, he emphasized that the response to face natural disaster should be planned and carried out in a collective and coordinated manner. The opening speech of the Vice Foreign Minister appears as **ANNEX 2**.

4. In his keynote address, the representative of the Agency for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias (BRR) made presentation on building confidence in managing disaster – lessons from the post disaster reconstruction of Aceh and Nias. He underlined the achievement made by BRR of the 93% conversion of the 5 billion USD pledged into projects and the 96% completion of the 220 key performance index. The keynote address appears as **ANNEX 3**.

#### **Agenda Item1: Opening Session**

5. Indonesian SOM Co-Chair, H.E. Mr. Primo A. Joelianto, in his opening remarks, stressed the importance of the 8<sup>th</sup> ARF ISM DR to learn important lessons especially from the experiences of China and Myanmar in dealing with devastating natural disasters, in order to enhance disaster relief preparedness and responses under the ARF. In addition, he emphasized the need for the ARF participants to deliberate better and concrete activities and proposals in the areas of capacity building and disaster management cooperation to address disaster relief issues more effectively in the future. The Opening Remarks of the Indonesian SOM Co-Chair appear as **ANNEX 4**.

6. H.E. Mr. Philippe Zeller, French Ambassador to Indonesia, spoke on behalf of the European Union. After recalling that the EU's strong engagement on DR was closely linked to its leading role in the struggle against climate change, he remarked that, in Europe, activities in disaster mitigation had started long ago, quoting the example of the construction over the centuries of a system of dykes and locks against recurrent disastrous floods in the Netherlands. The example showed that risk reduction was a long-haul exercise, and could only be successful by a combination of investment in the right technologies, rule of law and strengthening the awareness and responsible behavior of populations. In the much larger context of the ARF, the EU approached the issue of Disaster Relief with the same mindset. The Opening Remarks of the European Union co-chair appears as **ANNEX 5**.

7. The Meeting adopted the Agenda which appears as **ANNEX 6**.

#### **Agenda Item 2: Review of Activities since the last ISM**

8. The Meeting recalled the outcomes of the 15<sup>th</sup> ARF Ministerial Meeting in Singapore, namely: to continue work on developing the ARF Strategic Guidance for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, to draw up an ARF Disaster Relief Workplan, and to explore the possibility of an ARF military and civil defense assets template, to be used for disaster relief. The Meeting also reviewed activities related to disaster relief cooperation since the 7<sup>th</sup> ISM on DR in Helsinki in October 2007 on the basis of an information paper by the ASEAN Secretariat **ANNEX 7**.

9. Indonesia briefed on the results of the ARF Desktop Exercise on Disaster Relief in Jakarta, 1-2 May 2008. The objective of the exercise was to build interoperability among ARF participating countries in disaster relief cooperation as well as to practice the draft ARF Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief. Indonesia also underlined that it had been agreed that the recommendations of the exercise would be incorporated into the ARF SOP, while the name of the SOP would be described as Strategic Guidance. The Indonesian presentation of the Desktop Exercise appears as **ANNEX 8**.

10. The US briefed on the result of the ARF Seminar on Stabilization and Reconstruction Issues in Bangkok, 10-12 September 2008. The theme of the Seminar was the preparation of Civil-Military Response Capabilities. The United States underlined the importance of good coordination among implementing agencies and of legitimacy in stabilization and reconstruction operations.

11. Japan briefed on the result of the 13<sup>th</sup> Tokyo Defense Forum in Tokyo, 21-24 October 2008, especially on the session of efforts for international cooperation in disaster relief. The recommendations to promote national efforts were among others improvement of equipment, inter-agency cooperation mechanisms, and SOPs which facilitate effective civil-military cooperation. These would be supplemented by existing efforts through regional and international cooperation. The presentation by Japan appears as **ANNEX 9**.

12. Australia presented the Australia-Indonesia Disaster Reduction Facility, a part of the Joint Initiatives between Australia and Indonesia, which had been announced at the APEC Summit, Lima, Peru, on 22 November 2008. Australia highlighted that the Facility was part of the Australia-Indonesia Partnership, which also benefited regional partners, including ASEAN, national governments, the United Nations and NGOs. The Facility would be established in early 2009 and would deliver three work streams, namely Disaster Risk & Vulnerability, Research & Analysis, and Training & Outreach. The presentation by the Australian delegate appears as **ANNEX 10**.

13. Malaysia briefed on the result of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2-4 December 2008. The objectives of the Conference were to review the action taken by the national governments and other stakeholders for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework of Action and to ensure an effective follow-up to the decisions taken by Ministers, supported by ISDR Asia Partnership. The outcome was the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia 2008 which can be accessed from the Conference website. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 11**.

14. The US gave a presentation on the need for an ARF Military and Civil Defense Assets (MCDA) Status Template. The template would serve as a model

legal agreement that the ARF participating countries would agree to on a bilateral basis when MCDA is used in a disaster relief cooperation. The United States underlined that the pre-negotiated, widespread template would significantly speed up the negotiation period, provide quicker access, and allow for easier legal, interagency processes between the host nation and assisting nations. It was also stressed that the MCDA Template should be voluntary (non-binding), flexible, applicable only to temporary HA/DR operations and multilaterally negotiated, bilaterally activated. The issue would be discussed further at the Seminar on Laws and Regulations on Disaster Relief Cooperation. The presentation by the US delegate appears as **ANNEX 12**.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Recent Cases of Disaster Relief Operations in the region**

15. Myanmar briefed the Meeting on the experience gathered in handling the cyclone Nargis that struck Myanmar on 2-3 May 2008. The presentation focused on Myanmar's management of the disaster, particularly the management of the relief and rehabilitation process, as well as disaster preparedness. The briefing also covered the coordination of the relief supplies received from local and International donors. In this context, Myanmar emphasized the role of the Tripartite Core Group (TCG), comprising representatives from the government of Myanmar, ASEAN and the UN. Its main task is to coordinate and synergize the relief and rehabilitation activities of UN, INGO and the government of Myanmar. Myanmar concluded by highlighting the main elements in disaster relief cooperation, namely the exchange of experience and information sharing, enhancing individual and regional capacities, training and providing specific skills, as well as promoting greater awareness of the government agencies and the public. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 13**.

16. China briefed on the emergency relief efforts in dealing with the earthquake which occurred in Sichuan Province in May 2008. The presentation focused mainly on the losses and the victims of the earthquake, on post disaster evacuation and on relief by mobilizing military deployment. China explained that the reconstruction efforts also involved social participation, volunteers and donations from across the country. In post disaster management, distribution of relief was put into place to aid the victims, including international assistance, which showed a highly commendable spirit of humanitarianism. In addition, China also underlined the management of relief Funds and goods donation. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 14**.

#### **Agenda Item 5: Linking relief, recovery and reconstruction**

17. The European Union presented the EU's Crisis Response and Prevention Framework Management. The presentation focused on the management of crises outside the EU itself. The EU explained the place of crisis management in the context of its development cooperation programmes and of the EU's crisis

response instruments. It highlighted the role of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) to respond to 'crises' in third countries, and underlined particularly the driving principles, objectives and priorities in the management of a crisis, namely: the relief of human suffering, restoring livelihoods, the re-establishment of stable conditions, building national and international capacities to respond to crises, enhancing the phasing of the response to a crisis (relief/recovery/reconstruction cycle) and last but not least mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction into development cooperation. The presentation also mentioned why Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Early Recovery (ER) are priorities in the EU approach considering that disasters are becoming more frequent and undermine the development of cooperation. EU crisis response tools include the Humanitarian Aid Instrument (ECHO), Civil Protection (MSs, MIC), Science and Technology (JRC), Macro-financial assistance, Stability Instrument (IfS) and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The presentation appears as **ANNEX 15**.

18. The Head of the Provincial Disaster Coordination Board of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD), Indonesia, delivered presentation on the response arrangements, preparedness and disaster risk reduction: setting up the Strategy National Action Plan. The briefing focused specifically on the implementation of National Law Number 24, 2007 on Disaster Mitigation; the local government's commitment on disaster relief; immediate response and community preparedness; and Disaster Risk Reduction by the Aceh Government. Indonesia reaffirmed the functions of the Provincial Disaster Coordination Board of the NAD, which is mainly to direct, command and control funding and the management of disaster mitigation activities and of Internal Displaced Persons' (IDP's) management. On the effort for disaster risk reduction, the Provincial Government of NAD has actively participated in the development of the Tsunami Early Warning Systems (TEWS), the construction of the crisis center, the sirene refuge building plan, the Community Building and route for evacuation, the Tsunami drill and sign boards as well as the incorporation of disaster education into the school system. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 16**.

#### **Agenda Item 6: ASEAN Cooperation on Disaster Relief**

19. The representative of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, on behalf of the delegation from Thailand, presented the result of the 2008 ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise (ARDEX-08), Pattaya, 26-29 August 2008, which was the fourth in a series of annual disaster simulation exercise that ASEAN conducts annually to enhance the capabilities of Member States in joint emergency operations. The simulation exercise served to provide further guidance and lessons for the operationalisation of the ASEAN Standby Arrangement and Standard Operating Procedures (SASOP) under the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER). The presentation appears as **ANNEX 17**.

20. Indonesia briefed the Meeting on the development of the Interim AHA Centre (ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management), and further elaborated on the development of ASEAN cooperation on disaster management, especially the AADMER, as the legal basis for the operationalisation of the Centre and other mechanisms under AADMER including SASOP, Standby Arrangement, and ARDEX. The ad interim AHA Centre had been operational since October 2007 and participated in the ARDEX-07 from then on. Yet, as AADMER has not entered into force, the Interim AHA Centre would become operational beyond December 2008. The Indonesian presentation appears as **ANNEX 18**. Delegates discussed the need to further clarify the relationship between the ARF and ASEAN disaster relief initiatives.

### **Agenda Item 7: Cooperation at global level**

21. The representative of the United Nations Office Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UN-OCHA) presented the UN disaster relief operations and stand-by arrangements. The presentation recalled that the task of OCHA is to strengthen the UN response to complex emergencies and natural disasters. OCHA's Core Functions are advocacy of humanitarian issues, coordination of humanitarian emergency response and policy development. Physical stand-by arrangements managed by UN-OCHA consist of UN Disaster Assessment and Cooperation (UNDAC), the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP), and Virtual On Site Operations Coordination Centre (V-OSOCC). OCHA also supported the development of ASEAN SASOP and ARF HADR Strategic Guidelines. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 19**.

22. The representative of the World Bank presented the Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction (GFDRR) which was launched in September 2006 to mainstream disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in country development strategies. The GFDRR is delivered through five business lines, three of which are tracks that have integrated a package of support: i) Global and regional partnership; ii) Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and iii) Accelerated recovery programme through Standby Recovery Financing Facility (SRFF). The presentation appears as **ANNEX 20**.

23. The representative of the United Nations/International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction presented the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015. The overarching goal of the HFA is to substantially reduce disaster losses by 2015, in terms of the number of lives lost, as well as the social, economic and environmental assets lost at the community and national level. It has three strategic goals which aim to:

- (1) Integrate disaster reduction into sustainable development;

- (2) Strengthen institutions and mechanisms to build resilience at national and community level; and
- (3) Incorporate risk reduction into emergency management and recovery.

The presentation appears as **ANNEX 21**.

24. The representative of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission presented the Early Warning Systems State of Play. The presentation stressed the importance of timely early warning, which must be efficient and reliable when needed, to provide effective response. He concluded that such early warning systems both at ocean-wide or national level need to improve and maintain efficiency to reduce delays and false alarms. International cooperation between neighbouring nations was also important. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 22**.

25. The Meeting noted the result of the study on women in times of disaster presented by Indonesia. The study recommended the integration of gender into all phases of disaster management at all level, building awareness on gender as well as making available data by gender and age to enable developing gender sensitive indicators. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 23**.

#### **Agenda Item 8: ARF Cooperation in Disaster Management - Draft ARF Strategic Guidance for HADR**

26. Australia briefed the Meeting on the progress of the development of the ARF Strategic Guidance for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief. Australia highlighted that the purpose of the Strategic Guidance, in its view, would be to provide a doctrine for offering and deploying military and civilian assets to other countries in response to a natural disaster. Australia proposed the establishment of a Working Group to develop an ongoing programme of capacity building exercise to test elements of the Guidance and form a future work plan, develop the virtual task force models and focus on multi-agency response. Australia emphasized the need to validate the Guidance and to set up web-based tools for ARF participants to closely follow the progress of the development of the Guidance. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 24**.

27. Australia proposed that ASEAN Secretariat could identify the afore-mentioned working party to address the issue of validation and further the work on the Guidance. In this regard, according to Australia, the ASEAN Secretariat could identify funds for the ARF Unit to hire the consultant to do the day-to-day work of managing the progress of the Strategic Guidance, to get a roadmap of existing exercises and events around the region suitable for ARF to validate the Guidance e.g. ARDEX. The Meeting agreed to Indonesia's suggestion that the next step would be for the ARF to prepare a specific project proposal to further the work on the Strategic Guidance.

28. The US stated that in addition to the need to validate the Guidance, the main issue was to work further on the document before it could be tested at the strategic level through exercises.

29. Indonesia touched on the issue whether all ARF participants have agreed on the text of the Guidance. In case there are still suggestions to revise the text, Indonesia and Australia should lead the process to get the consensus of ARF participants on the text until a certain date, before moving to the validation process. In response, Australia suggested to set a deadline and invited ARF participants who still wish to comment on the document to send their comments prior to the next Inter-Sessional Group Meeting.

### **Agenda Item 9: Future Direction of ARF ISM DR - Outlook on Future Work**

#### **a) Work Plan on Disaster Relief**

30. Ms. Jane Rovins, the consultant for the ARF Unit preparing the draft ARF Work Plan on Disaster Relief, briefed the Meeting on the progress of the Work Plan mandated by the Ministers in the 15<sup>th</sup> ARF Ministerial Meeting in July 2008.

31. During the discussion, the Meeting noted several inputs and comments from ARF participating countries on the draft based on suggestions from Australia and the US. On the core areas, Australia suggested that ARF should focus on core areas 2 and 3. Core area 3 could incorporate draft ARF Strategic Guidance. The need to continue work on the feasibility of an assets template as tasked by the Ministers was also mentioned. This could fall under core area 3.

32. China supported the idea of the Work Plan, and stated that in order for the Work Plan to be procedurally workable, the leadership designation process should be held after the Ministerial Meeting.

33. On possible activities, the EU would propose a joint training with the WB and UN, concerning the use for technology on early warning systems for consideration in the future. The EU, however, would need further internal consultations before submitting the comments to the consultant.

34. Canada suggested that the definition of core areas 3 and 4 should be more specific to avoid duplication in their implementation.

35. Indonesia sought clarification on the Work Plan, especially concerning the timeline for real activities for the future. Before moving forward, Indonesia would like to see the experience of the Work Plan on CTTC to go along this line in other sectors. Indonesia also suggested for the ARF Unit to approach all ARF participants to initiate projects to be implemented under the Work Plan.

36. The US suggested that ARF could develop the ARF CTTC Work Plan at the same time as the ARF DR Work Plan. The US expected that DR would be an area that would move faster than the CTTC. The US reminded the participants that an ARF Work Plan should give ARF some added value amid the existing mechanisms. The US stated that core areas 2 and 3 could be the specific areas where this could be the case.

37. The ARF Unit Consultant pointed out that the key difference between the CTTC and Disaster Relief Work Plans was that for the disaster relief Work Plan, the concept paper would be submitted for the endorsement of the 16<sup>th</sup> ARF Ministerial Meeting while the core areas and projects could be continuously renewed and updated as needed by the ARF Officials. The issue of linking the various centers in the region could be included in the Work Plan. It was clarified that the core areas would be prioritized into a two-tiered implementation plan.

38. It was agreed that a revised draft would be circulated shortly and comments should be submitted to the ARF Unit by 31 January 2009.

39. The EU Co-Chair summed up the discussion. It emphasized that the Work Plan is not designed to cover all aspects of disaster management, nor all activities of the ARF ISM DR. The mandate from the Ministers was to support the capacity building and disaster preparedness. The EU Co-Chair suggested for the ARF to proceed seeking for the SOM and ARF Ministerial Meeting to endorse the objectives, modalities, core areas and timeline.

b) Planned Activities

40. The following countries expressed their responses on the ARF VDR to be held in Central Luzon in May 2009: Australia informed the Meeting that it was considering contributing military medical and construction teams and that it was further looking at a civilian contribution; New Zealand informed the Meeting its intention to contribute an aircraft to the exercise; Japan informed the Meeting that it was considering sending civil and military personnel and assets; Indonesia informed the Meeting that it would consider to send teams of repair of damaged structures or medical supplies.

41. Next ARF VDR Planning Events include the 19-23 January 2009 Initial Planning Conference (IPC) and the 26-28 January 2009 Initial Site Survey (ISS). Civil and military planners should attend the Planning Conferences. Participating Countries are requested to have a prioritized list of 2 to 3 potential capabilities, to be identified prior to the Initial Planning Conference (IPC).

42. The following countries briefed the Meeting of the forthcoming ARF activities:

- China: ARF Seminar on Laws and Regulations on Disaster Relief, Beijing, late March/Early April 2007

- The Philippines: ARF Voluntary Demonstration of Response, Central Luzon, 4-9 May 2009.

### **Agenda Item 10: Other Matters**

43. The Meeting welcomed the offer from the US and Thailand to co-chair the ISM on DR for the year 2009-2010. The Meeting noted that the next ISM on DR will be tentatively scheduled for 2009 in the US and co-chaired by the US and Thailand.

### **Closing Session**

44. Participants thanked Indonesia as the host for the excellent arrangements for the meeting. The Co-Chairs thanked all the participants for their support and valuable contributions to the Meeting.

45. The Vice Governor of Province of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam delivered closing remarks, expressed his appreciation of the results of the Meeting and wished that delegations would use the lesson learnt through their first-hand experience of the work in Banda Aceh by many cooperating actors to further improve the activities of the ARF in the field of disaster relief.

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