

**CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY REPORT
THE FOURTH ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM DISASTER RELIEF EXERCISES
(ARF DiREx 2015)
KEDAH AND PERLIS, MALAYSIA
24-28 MAY 2015**

INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to the decision of the 21st Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held in Nay Pyi Taw on 10 August 2014, the fourth ARF Disaster Relief Exercises (DiREx) was held in Kedah and Perlis, Malaysia from 24-28 May 2015. The ARF DiREx 2015 was co-chaired by Malaysia and the People's Republic of China. The ARF DiREx 2015 was officiated by the Honourable Tan Sri Dato' Hj. Muhyiddin Hj. Mohd Yassin, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia. The Honourable Dato' Hamzah Zainudin, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, and H.E. Wang Yong, State Councilor of the People's Republic of China also gave their remarks representing Malaysia and the People's Republic of China as the Co-Chairs of ARF DiREx 2015.
2. Representatives from 18 ARF Participants took part in the ARF DiREx 2015: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, Canada, the People's Republic of China, European Union, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, United States of America, Mongolia and Timor-Leste. Representatives of the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC), the ASEAN Coordination Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Malaysian Red Crescent Society (MRCS), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Mercy Malaysia, the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) and Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat also took part in the Exercise. A total of 3105 delegates, secretariats, media staff and support personnel attended the ARF DiREx 2015. The List of Participants appears as **ANNEX 1**.

ARF DiREx 2015 ACTIVITIES

3. Three main activities were conducted during the ARF DiREx 2015, namely Table Top Exercise (TTX), Field Training Exercise (FTX), and After Action Review (AAR). The FTX was conducted in several venues, namely, Timah Tasoh Dam and Timah Tasoh Lake Resort areas, Chuping Sugar Refinery factory, in Perlis, and Northern Waters of Penang. The TTX was held at Grand Alora Hotel, Kedah. The AAR was conducted at both the TTX and FTX venues.

ARF PARTICIPANTS' CONTRIBUTIONS

4. Personnel: 18 ARF Participants and 8 regional/international organisations, namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, Canada, the People's Republic of China, European Union, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, United States of America, Timor-Leste, ASEC, AHA Centre, UNOCHA, ICRC, MRCS, IFRC, Mercy Malaysia and WFP contributed personnel in the Exercise.
5. Assets: A number of physical assets were deployed in the ARF DiREx 2015, including aeroplanes from Thailand and China, vessels and boats from India, China and Malaysia, helicopters from India, Thailand and China, and large vehicles and surveillance drones from Thailand, China and Malaysia. China also contributed tents and medical equipment.

OPENING CEREMONY

6. The Honourable Tan Sri Dato' Hj. Muhyiddin Hj. Mohd. Yassin, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia in his remarks emphasised the need to strengthen cooperation in disaster management area and improving the existing procedures and guidelines to better prepare the region in facing disasters. Exercises such ARF DiREx 2015 would ensure a continuous cooperation towards building an emergency preparedness and response capacity to address disasters especially amongst the ARF Participants. He also expressed condolences to the Government and the people of Nepal affected by the recent earthquake.
7. H.E. Wang Yong, State Councilor of the People's Republic of China in his remarks reiterated China's commitment in advocating for common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security within the Asia Pacific region. He further explained that ARF DiREx 2015 was the first time for China in co-organizing a large-scale disaster relief exercise internationally, and China were ready to take it as an opportunity to strengthen communication and coordination in disaster relief with other parties, and provide more public security products to the region.
8. The Honourable Dato' Hamzah Zainudin, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia in his remarks noted the importance of 2015 to Malaysia as the Chairman of ASEAN as well as the Chairman of ARF. He hoped that the Exercise would serve a platform to assess ARF members' capacity in response to disasters as well as addressing strategic issues related to existing national and regional procedures for large-scale disaster management.

TABLE TOP EXERCISE (TTX)

9. The TTX was organised in three (3) moves. Move 1 dealt with incident and early response notification. Move 2 covered regional and international response operation and assistance. Move 3 addressed the demobilisation and recoveries. The TTX was preceded by the "Academic and Experts' Briefing" session followed by the "Round-Table Discussion" session. The complete report of TTX appears as **ANNEX 2**.

FIELD TRAINING EXERCISE (FTX)

10. The FTX scenarios consisted of road traffic accident, chemical leakage, landslide and collapsed structures, flood mass evacuation, evacuation centre, emergency medical and trauma services and maritime search and rescue operation. The FTX was held on 26 and 27 May 2015. The complete report of FTX appears as **ANNEX 3**.

AFTER ACTION REVIEW (AAR)

11. The After Action Review (AAR) is the evaluation component of the Exercise. It is used to assess the capacity and effectiveness of ARF members in responding to disasters. The complete AAR report appears as **ANNEX 4**.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ARF COOPERATION

12. The ARF DiREx should continue to build on progress made by previously held ARF DiREx. The Exercise should continue to focus on testing civilian-military coordination in disaster relief, creating synergy, and synchronising efforts toward supporting the effective implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) as the common platform for disaster management of the Southeast Asia region.

13. In line with ASEAN Leader's decision regarding ASEAN centrality, the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) plays a critical role as a symbol of ASEAN unity in coordinating ASEAN's collective response towards realising the 'One ASEAN, One Response – ASEAN Responding To Disasters As One In The Region And Outside The Region'. In this regard, it is proposed that future co-chairs of ARF DiREx collaborate closely with AHA Centre during the planning process as well as the actual exercises in order to reflect the integral role of AHA Centre and other ASEAN components namely the ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ERAT) and the Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP).

CLOSING CEREMONY

14. The Honourable Dato' Seri Shahidan Kassim, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Malaysia, H.E. Dou Yupei, Vice Minister of Civil Affairs, People's Republic of China, and H.E. Datuk Mohamed Thajudeen Abdul Wahab, Secretary of the National Security Council, Malaysia, attended the closing ceremony.

15. In his closing remarks, the Honourable Dato' Seri Shahidan Kassim reiterated the need to respond to disasters with efficiency and to test the existing engagements and procedures in order to better equipped nations in responding to disasters. He believed that the Exercise was the right step towards realising the "One ASEAN, One Response 2020 and Beyond: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One" and in line with the 2013 ASEAN Declaration on Enhancing Cooperation in Disaster Management.
16. In his closing remarks, H.E. Dou Yupei thanked the Co-Chairs for the effective chairmanship and conduct of the ARF DiREx 2015 and expressed gratitude to the Government of Malaysia for the warmth hospitality and excellent arrangements. He stressed that further strengthening of regional cooperation on disaster reduction and relief and managing disasters should be a priority in the region.
17. In his remarks, H.E. Datuk Mohamed Thajudeen Abdul Wahab commended the participants of ARF DiREx 2015 and briefed the overall conduct of the Exercise.

COMMENTS

18. The ARF DiREx 2015 which was convened from 24-28 May 2015 had successfully addressed the key challenges in testing the region's preparedness and resilience towards disasters as well as managed to showcase an excellent coordination efforts between civil and military personnel.
19. It was also noted that the ARF DiREx 2015 was the first occasion where the ASEAN armband was worn by the ASEAN participants in the Exercise to indicate the togetherness of ASEAN in support of the realization of the "One ASEAN, One Response" vision by 2020 as well as supporting the 2013 ASEAN Declaration on Enhancing Cooperation in Disaster Management.