

CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY REPORT
ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM DISASTER RELIEF EXERCISES (ARF DiREx 2015)
FINAL PLANNING CONFERENCE AND SITE SURVEY
ALOR SETAR, MALAYSIA, 3-5 FEBRUARY 2015

INTRODUCTION

1. The ARF DiREx 2015 Final Planning Conference and Site Survey was held in Alor Setar, Malaysia on 3-5 February 2015. The Conference was co-chaired by Datin Shariffah Norhana Syed Mustafa, Deputy Director-General, ASEAN-Malaysia National Secretariat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia and Mr. Zhang Lizhong, Counsellor, Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China.

2. Representatives from all ARF participants except Cambodia, Bangladesh, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Russia, Sri Lanka and Timor Leste attended the Conference. Representatives of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mercy Corps Malaysia, Malaysian Red Crescent Society (MRCS) and the ASEAN Secretariat were also present. The List of Participants appears as **ANNEX 1**.

OPENING CEREMONY

3. Datuk Thajudeen Abdul Wahab, Secretary, National Security Council of Malaysia delivered his welcoming remarks. He highlighted that Malaysia was currently in the midst of the monsoon season and with it comes the annual flooding. This year it is caused by more than 1,000 millimetres of rainfall for the period of 11-25 December 2014. Whereas in a normal month for the monsoon season, the average rainfall is between 500 to 600 millimetres for the East Coast. The extremely heavy and prolonged rain also coincided with the moon being at perigee which brings about higher than normal tides which blocks the flood waters from draining to the sea. Government agencies encountered major obstacles and problems which slowed down rescue and relief operations. Access to some areas and evacuation centres were cut off and due to the strong current and bad weather, rescue personnel could not reach the victims by any means of transportation. Once the flood water has receded the Government has given priority to recovery and reconstruction efforts in the affected areas.

4. Datuk Thajudeen also highlighted that many countries including China had graciously offered their assistance in light of this devastating flood. Malaysia welcomes the offer of support and helping hand in order to accelerate the recovery process and restore conditions back to normal. Disasters have and will always be a part of life so long as hazards and risks exist. Being a dynamic force, no matter how prepared we are there will always be a bigger and more devastating disaster that would test the capability and resources of the country to manage it and that nothing can ever go as planned. Such is the nature of disasters that no one event is the same and there will always be room for improvement in our Standard Operating Procedures and guidelines based on the lessons learned in facing obstacles and challenges during the

said disasters. Science experts have also indicated that with the onslaught of climate change, worldwide disasters are anticipated to increase not only in frequency, but also in magnitude.

5. Datuk Thajudeen mentioned that the decision to co-host the ARF DiREx 2015 could not have come at a better time whereby the country have to start looking into large scale disaster response and recovery that may require international assistance. This event serves as a means for governments, military and civilian elements of participating countries to improve their capacity in responding to disasters. Through this exercise as well, participating states will verify and improve relevant international and regional HADR instruments.

6. Datin Shariffah Norhana Syed Mustafa, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia in her opening remarks expressed her appreciation for all feedbacks and recommendations received since the last Planning Conference meeting in September 2014. She mentions that Malaysia's recent monsoon floods is a rather peculiar reminder of the challenges that we have outlined for ARF DiREx 2015. Due to this rescheduling of ARF DiREx 2015 from February 2015 to May 2015 is a 'blessing in disguise' as it allows all the agencies involved to direct their efforts to overcome the challenges in responding to the flood area. The flood had really tested Malaysia's National Security Council (NSC) Directive No. 20 as well as the capabilities of Malaysian agencies to respond to the . While we have overcome the situation, there are still many rooms for improvement. It is in this vein that we intend to work towards the improvement in our Standard Operating Procedures and guidelines based on the lessons learned in facing obstacles and challenges during the said recent flood. And what better platform can we have other than the ARF DiREx 2015 with the involvement of multinational countries involving multiple agencies to test the complexity of the international humanitarian architecture. She expressed hope that the Conference will be able to further discuss the best recommendations and approaches for the ARF DiREx 2015.

7. Mr. Zhang Lizhong, Counsellor of Department of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, in his opening remarks welcomed all participants to the Final Planning Conference of the ARF DiREx 2015. He stressed that disaster relief exercises constitute an important part of cooperation and collaboration to deal with non-traditional security challenges in the region. He expressed gratitude to Malaysia as co-chair and co-host of the ARF DiREx 2015 and reaffirmed China's commitment to the successful conduct of the ARF DiREx 2015. He also looked forward to the active participation and contribution of ARF participants as well as international organizations and other stakeholders in the ARF DiREx 2015

BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT

8. The Conference took note of the Provisional Agenda and Programme of Activities which appears as **ANNEX 2** and **ANNEX 3** respectively.

PRESENTATION ON THE OVERARCHING SCENARIO FOR ARF DIREX 2015

9. Lt. Col. Nordin Mohd Yusuf from the Joint Forces HQ of the Malaysian Armed Forces briefed the Conference on the overall scenario of the ARF DiREx 2015 which

is a super typhoon affecting Perlis and Kedah state in northern peninsular Malaysia. The devastating effect of the super typhoon has overwhelmed the national response capacity and international humanitarian assistance has been requested by Malaysia. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 4**.

PRESENTATION ON THE ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTRE (EOC)

10. Mr. Khairil Hilmi Mokhtar from the National Security Council briefed the conference on the roles and functions of the emergency operation center. He highlighted that the EOC is the nerve center for the ARF DiREx 2015 Field Training Exercises (FTX) that serves as the strategic coordinating body between the Host Country, Co-organizer, participating countries and international organizations. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 5**.

BRIEFING ON RECEIVING AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES INCLUDING ON IMPORTATION OF ASSETS

11. Superintendent Shahrin Ahmad from the National Security Council briefed the conference on the procedures for the Receiving and Departure Centre (RDC). He informed that the RDC is established to support the affected country in coordinating incoming international USAR teams and other humanitarian assistance. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 6**.

TTX DIVISION BRIEFING

12. Mr. Rodzi Md Saad presented an overview of the Table Top Exercise (TTX) component of the ARF DiREx 2015. The TTX will be conducted in a Working Group format and a set of questions will be prepared to simulate discussion and decision-making according to real-life roles and functions. The TTX will address the diverse strategic issues of multinational disaster relief operations involving ARF participants based on relevant regulations and coordination mechanisms as well as the practical, realistic issues and problems that may arise and hinder the effective management of Field Training Exercise (FTX) elements. The TTX is expected to, among others, strengthen HADR collaboration and coordination among ARF participants and improve understanding of civil-military coordination mechanisms and processes in HADR-related activities. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 7**.

FTX DIVISION BRIEFING

13. Col. Mohd Sakri Hussin from the Disaster Management Division of the National Security Council presented an overview of the Field Training Exercise (FTX) component of the ARF DiREx 2015. The objectives of the FTX include enhancing confidence and mutual understanding among ARF participants in the context of multinational disaster relief operations, conducting and applying life-saving methodologies in search and rescue (SAR), and improving civilian-led, military-supported disaster response operations and coordination at the operational and tactical levels. He outlined the operational framework of the FTX and elaborated on the scope of the FTX which will encompass, among others, maritime SAR, field

medical assistance, chemical decontamination and flood evacuation. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 8**.

WORKING GROUP CONSULTATIONS AND SITE SURVEY

14. Participants were divided into 2 teams to take part in a site survey on 4 February 2015 to the planned locations for the FTX. Team A surveyed the FTX Exercise locations at Timah Tasoh Lake Resort and the Chuping Sugar Refinery whilst Team B (15 pax only) surveyed the Maritime Search and Rescue location at the North of Penang waters.

PARALEL SESSIONS

15. Participants were divided into working groups (WG), namely TTX, FTX, After Action Review (AAR), and Planning and Logistical Support. The outcomes of the discussions were presented at the plenary session.

TTX Working Group

16. The TTX WG discussed in detail the views and opinions of all the experts, and to share their knowledge and experiences. The inputs from the experts are most welcomed on how the TTX should be executed, efficiently and credibly, during the ARF DiREx 2015. The TTX is basically to test how the national regional and international mechanisms (SOP) work together to support the affected country. The Chairman added that the regional and international support will complement the national mechanism.

17. The WG agreed that the briefing on national response (Move 1) to be done on the first day; Move 2 will discuss the three main mechanisms (International Coordination Framework, National Framework, and Foreign Citizen Assistance), and Move 3 for the transition/De-Mobilization;

18. The WG agreed on the five (5) topics to be presented for the Expert Session Programme during the ARF DiREx 2015.

19. The WG agreed on the roles of Malaysia and China as facilitators and controllers, ARF Member Countries and related organizations as players, and for each participating embassy to send one (1) officer to participate in the exercise.

20. The WG agreed on the Venue Layout and how the exercise to be conducted.

21. The reference document used during the TTX Working Group appears as **ANNEX 9** and the summary report appears as **ANNEX 10**. A Power Point Presentation on the Outcomes of the WG was presented during Plenary Session 7 and appears as **ANNEX 11**.

FTX Working Groups

22. The FTX WG were divided into 6 categories based on the exercises which are as follows: Collapsed Structure, Road Traffic Accident, Chemical Leakage, Mass

Evacuation, Evacuation Centre and Maritime SAR. The participants were presented with the proposed exercises and discussed and concluded on the overall scenarios and framework for the exercises.

23. During the WG, participants pledged numbers of participation from each ARF Countries and Assets to take part in the exercises during the ARF DiREx 2015. The WG also discussed on how best to conduct and apply life-saving methodologies in term of search and rescue during the exercises.

24. The reference document used during the FTX Working Group appears as **ANNEX 12**. A Power Point Presentation on the Outcomes of the WG was presented during Plenary Session 8 and appears as **ANNEX 13**.

AAR Working Group

25. The AAR WG discussed the goals and objectives, organizational structure, overview of AAR, roles of AAR members, recruitment of members, sources of data and information, documentation process, timeline of preparation and references used, and key contact person in AAR team.

26. The summary report appears as **ANNEX 14**. A briefing on AAR was given during the Plenary Session 6 and appears as **ANNEX 15**.

BRIEFING ON LOGISTICAL PREPARATION

27. Mr. Shahril Nizam Abdul Malek from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia presented the administrative arrangements for the ARF DiREx 2015, namely for registration, accommodations, opening ceremony, venues, media participation and management, medical arrangements, transportation and financing support. The Power Point presentation of the Planning and Logistical Support appears as **ANNEX 16**.

CLOSING REMARKS

28. The Conference thanked the Co-Chairs for the effective chairmanship and productive discussion and expressed gratitude to the Government of Malaysia for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements. The Co-Chairs commended the progress made thus far and look forward to a successful convening of the ARF DiREx 2015 in May 2015.