

**CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY REPORT  
ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM DISASTER RELIEF EXERCISES (ARF DiREx 2015)  
INITIAL PLANNING CONFERENCE AND SITE SURVEY  
ALOR SETAR, MALAYSIA, 9-11 SEPTEMBER 2014**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The ARF DiREx 2015 Initial Planning Conference and Site Survey was held in Alor Setar, Malaysia on 9-11 September 2014. The Conference was co-chaired by Datin Shariffah Norhana Syed Mustaffa, 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 Bangladesh, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka 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.**

**AGENDA ITEM 1: WELCOMING AND OPENING REMARKS**

3. Mr. Ogu Salim Omar, Deputy Secretary of the National Security Council of Malaysia, delivered his welcoming remarks. He emphasised the ARF DiREx as part of the series of exercises to enhance the effectiveness of regional disaster operations. He underscored the region's vulnerability to natural disasters and noted that in many cases, the sheer enormity of the disaster made it difficult for the affected country to manage the response on its own, thus warranting the need for international assistance. This in turn has propelled countries in the region to formulate practical cooperation in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR). He recalled the discussions on disaster relief in the ARF which began in 1997 and the increased momentum after the 2004 tsunami with the adoption of the ARF Statement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response in 2006 and the ARF Guidelines on Disaster Relief Cooperation in 2007. He stressed that ARF DiREx is currently the most inclusive multinational disaster relief exercise in the region with multiple actors and stakeholders taking part, including civilian agencies and military personnel. The ARF DiREx is a good opportunity to test ASEAN's disaster response mechanisms and procedures in preparing for actual disaster situations. He highlighted Malaysia's contributions to regional disaster preparedness through the hosting of the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot as well as ASEAN's disaster emergency stockpile in Subang and reaffirmed Malaysia's commitment to play a more prominent role in the international humanitarian community through, among others, hosting the

ARF DiREx 2015 together with China. His welcoming remarks appears as **ANNEX 2.**

4. Datin Shariffah Norhana Syed Mustaffa in her opening remarks expressed her condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims of the severe flooding which affected China, India and Pakistan. These incidents highlight the important work being done in disaster preparedness to reduce the impact of disasters on the people and to save lives. She recalled the lessons learned from the ARF DiREx 2013 which was co-hosted by Thailand and the Republic of Korea and reaffirmed that the ARF DiREx 2015 will build on these outcomes. She underscored that the ARF DiREx 2015 will continue to focus on testing civilian-military coordination with synergy and synchronised efforts towards supporting the effective implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) as the common platform for disaster management in the region. She emphasised that the ARF DiREx 2015 will enable participants to identify the gaps in the existing HADR agreements, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and guidelines and work towards improving them. She expressed hope that the Conference will be able to discuss the best recommendations and approaches for the ARF DiREx 2015. Her opening remarks is attached as **ANNEX 3.**
5. Mr. Zhang Lizhong in his opening remarks underscored the importance of strengthening regional cooperation and coordination in disaster preparedness and response in light of the multitude of natural disasters affecting countries in the region. 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 organisations and other stakeholders in the ARF DiREx 2015. His opening remarks appear as **ANNEX 4.**

## **AGENDA ITEM 2: BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT**

6. The Conference took note of the Provisional Agenda and Programme of Activities which appears as **ANNEX 5** and **ANNEX 6** respectively.

## **AGENDA ITEM 3**

### **3.1 Executive Planning Committee Briefing**

7. Mr. Norhisham Kamarudin, Principal Assistant Secretary, Disaster Management Division, National Security Council of Malaysia, briefed the Conference on the ARF DiREx 2015 Executive Planning Committee. He emphasised the value of the ARF DiREx as the most inclusive simulation exercise in the Asia Pacific region. He identified the lessons learned from the previous ARF DiREx, namely to further strengthen cooperation and enhance interoperability and civil-military coordination at

the strategic, tactical and operational level, to strengthen the functions of AHA Centre and other mechanisms in the region and for the exercise to be more realistic and effective. In this regard, he outlined the aims and objectives of the ARF DiREx 2015. The scenario for the ARF DiREx 2015 is a super typhoon with a maximum wind speed of 200 km/h affecting the northern part of Malaysia. The scope of the typhoon will necessitate international assistance. Several areas of the Exercise include collapsed structure, chemical leakage, flood, maritime search and rescue (SAR), and field medical assistance. He outlined the current command/organisational structure, the timeline and programme of the Exercise. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 7.**

### **3.2 Planning and Logistical Support Division Briefing**

8. Mr. Shahril Nizam Abdul Malek from the ASEAN-Malaysia National Secretariat briefed the Conference on the logistical and administrative aspects of the ARF DiREx 2015. He highlighted that registrations for the Exercise will be done online through [www.arfdirex2015.my](http://www.arfdirex2015.my) and requested participants to inform the ARF DiREx 2015 Secretariat on the number of personnel and/or equipment including aircrafts and vessels which will take part in the exercise by 1 October 2014. The presentation is attached as **ANNEX 8.**

### **3.3 National Security Council Directive No. 20 Briefing**

9. Mr. Norhisham Kamarudin briefed the Conference on the National Security Council Directive No. 20 which is Malaysia's policy and mechanism for national disaster and relief management. He highlighted the origin of the Directive which was the result of lessons learned from the Highland Towers collapse incident in 1993. The Directive emphasised the need for Total Disaster Risk Management (TDRM) and in concert with international and regional frameworks and mechanisms such as the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and AADMER. He highlighted the roles of the National Security Council (NSC) as the national disaster management focal point. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 9.**

### **3.4 Overall Scenario Briefing**

10. 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 10.**

### **3.5 TTX Briefing**

11. Mr. Mohd Fadli Jamaludin, Assistant Secretary, National Operation Management Centre, National Security Council of Malaysia 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 11.**

### **3.6 FTX Briefing**

12. 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 12.**

### **3.7 Mass Evacuation Briefing**

13. Mr. Yi Peizhaung, Deputy Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China briefed the Conference on China's experiences in emergency evacuation and relief and resettlement during natural disasters. He elaborated on the resettlement mechanism which manages the temporary placement of the population affected by disasters and which is divided into centralised and decentralised resettlement systems. He also touched on the importance of addressing the needs of vulnerable groups including women, children, aging people, patients and disabled persons. In this regard, he informed the Conference that China will set up a centralised resettlement site with over 100 tents for the purpose of the Exercise. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 13.**

### **3.8 AAR Briefing**

14. Associate Professor Dr. Aini Mat Said, Head of Department, Faculty of Human Ecology of the University Putra Malaysia, briefed the Conference on the After Action Review (AAR) component of the ARF DiREx 2015. The objectives of the AAR are to assess the capacity of ARF participants in response to disasters and coordination between civil and military agencies, to evaluate the effectiveness the various

standard operating procedures (SOPs)/protocols/tools pertaining to multi-national disaster operations and to review the affected country's ability to respond to humanitarian assistance requirements caused by natural disasters. She outlined the organisational structure, expected composition, roles and timeline of the AAR Working Group. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 14**.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 4: WORKING GROUP CONSULTATIONS AND SITE SURVEY**

15. Participants were divided into four planning working groups, namely TTX, FTX, AAR, and Planning and Logistical Support. The outcomes of the discussions were presented at the plenary session.
16. The TTX Working Group discussed the modalities of the TTX, including the overall scenario, timeline, the main challenges to be addressed and the topics for the Expert Briefing Session. The Working Group noted that the theme of the TTX would be to test multi-national coordination mechanism and civil-military coordination. The TTX would also look into the ASEAN Secretary-General as the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator (SG-AHAC) mechanism and take the lessons learned from past incidents to plan for future contingencies. The Working Group noted the suggestion for the ACDM Chair to be invited to participate in the TTX and for the possibility for a joint operations centre between the AHA Centre and the Joint Operations Centre of ASEAN (JOCA) to accommodate the provision of disaster relief assistance to ARF participants. The Power Point presentation of the TTX Working Group appears as **ANNEX 15** and the summary report appears as **ANNEX 16**.
17. Participants took part in a site survey on 10 September 2014 to the planned locations for the TTX and FTX, namely the campus of Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Chuping Sugar Refinery and Timah Tasoh Lake Resort. The result of the site survey was reported through the FTX Working Group. The FTX Working Group discussed the different scenarios and the preliminary contribution list on the search and rescue (SAR), medical, communications, and evacuation scenarios. The Power Point presentation of the FTX Working Group appears as **ANNEX 17** and the summary report appears as **ANNEX 18**.
18. The AAR Working Group looked into the best practices, challenges and lessons learned of the ARF DiREx and other exercises, the requirements for diversity in skills and backgrounds for the members of the AAR team, and evaluation and assessment tools. The AAR Working Group requested that ARF participants nominate their nationals to participate in the AAR team by early November 2014. The Power Point presentation of the AAR Working Group appears as **ANNEX 19** and the summary report appears as **ANNEX 20**.
19. The Planning and Logistical Support Working Group 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 Working Group appears as **ANNEX 21** and the summary report appears as **ANNEX 22**.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 5: OTHER MATTERS**

20. The Co-Chairs informed participants that the Final Planning Conference (FPC) of the ARF DiREx 2015 will be held on 4-6 November 2014 in Alor Setar, Malaysia.
21. The Co-Chairs encouraged ARF participants to prepare their participation in the ARF DiREx 2015 and submit their preliminary contributions by 1 October 2014.

#### **CLOSING REMARKS**

22. 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 Closing Remarks is attached as **ANNEX 23** (Malaysia) and **ANNEX 24** (People's Republic of China) respectively.