

**Co-Chairs' Summary Report of the
ASEAN Regional Forum Cross-Sectoral Cooperation on
Bio-Preparedness and Disaster Response Workshop
Manila, Philippines, 26-28 August 2014**

Overview

1. The Ministers of the 20th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam on 2 July 2013 approved the project on ARF Cross-Sectoral Security Cooperation on Bio-Preparedness and Disaster Response as well as the Best Practices for Preparedness and Response to a Biological Event as a reference paper for ARF participants to develop their own national guidelines on biological event preparedness and response system. Pursuant to this, the ARF Cross-Sectoral Cooperation on Bio-Preparedness and Disaster Response Workshop was held in Manila, Philippines on 26-28 August 2014. The workshop was co-chaired by the Republic of the Philippines and the United States of America. This particular event was the culmination of several bio-preparedness and biosecurity exchanges resulting in the workshop participants proposing a national biological preparedness guidelines template for approval by the 22nd ARF and consideration by ARF participants in developing their own national bio-preparedness guidelines.

2. ARF participants from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, European Union (EU), Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, the United States of America (U.S.) and the ARF Unit attended the workshop. The World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), Hong Kong Police, and Manila-based European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Center of Excellence (EU CBRN COE) Regional Secretariat in Southeast Asia provided related presentations. The List of Participants appears as **ANNEX 1**.

3. Workshop materials - official invite with concept paper and pertinent enclosures appear as **ANNEX 2**.

Opening Remarks

4. Mr. Paul Uy, Director of Peace and Security, Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations, Department of Foreign Affairs, Philippines noted the workshop's timeliness, given potential disease outbreaks in the past decade and the threat posed by biological terrorism. He added that cross-border cooperation is crucial if such threats are to be addressed effectively. Mr. Uy indicated that cooperation under the ARF is a starting point for international cooperation on bio-preparedness and disaster response and cited the previous workshops co-chaired by the Philippines, U.S. and Australia. He added that both international security cooperation and cooperation among concerned agencies at the national level, including public health, security enforcement, and disaster management, is crucial in tackling biological threats. He looked forward to a finalized template for national bio-preparedness guidelines as the workshop's primary deliverable for consideration by ARF participants. Mr. Uy's remarks appear as **ANNEX 3**.

5. Deputy Chief of Mission Brian L. Goldbeck of the Embassy of the United States emphasized the significance and timeliness of the workshop and hoped that it would result in a regional program to tackle biological threats. He recalled the Best Practices for Preparedness and Response to a Biological Event adopted by the ARF Ministers in 2013 as a reference for ARF members to develop their own national guidelines on bio-preparedness. He noted that the current workshop aims to develop a template for such national guidelines, which will lay the foundations for programs on bio-preparedness in the region. Mr. Goldbeck noted the opportunities for sharing and documentation of lessons and networking that were available at the workshop, and hoped that this engagement would help develop partnerships in the region and advance whole-of-government cooperation. Mr. Goldbeck's remarks appear as **ANNEX 4**.

6. The workshop adopted the agenda, which appears as **ANNEX 5**.

Strategic Considerations for Bio-Preparedness and Disaster Response

7. The session was moderated by Dr. Irma Makalinao, Professor and Special Assistant to the Chancellor for External Linkages and Partners, University of the Philippines in Manila, and Dr. James R. Campbell, Professor, College of Security Studies, Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS), Honolulu, Hawaii.

8. Dr. Eric Tayag, Assistant Secretary and Head, National Epidemiological Center, Department of Health (DOH), Philippines stressed that the essence of preparedness is not when the threat is present. Efforts in the Philippines began with the establishment of the National Center for Disease Prevention and Control in 1987 and the development of a core of epidemiologists in the years since. To respond to emerging diseases, the Philippines built up its surveillance and laboratory capacity, as well as inter-agency cooperation, allowing epidemiologists to work with partners in animal health, among others. On planning, Assistant Secretary Tayag noted that plans should be flexible because those who developed them will not necessarily be the ones implementing them. In addition, he said that while different agencies should have their own preparedness plans, their information "silos" should disappear during crises and agencies should work together under effective leadership. Finally, he noted that leaders dealing with a biological threat need to decide how transparent they will be with all the information concerning the threat.

9. Dr. Noel Lee J. Miranda, Senior Consultant, One Health, Philippines, emphasized that as disasters become more severe, a whole-of-society approach becomes more relevant. On that note, he put forward the concept of "One Resilience", which essentially entails thinking and working as one to respond to disasters, including biological threats. He said that the "One Resilience" concept can serve as a rallying point for whole-of-society integrative risk management. In particular, Dr. Miranda said the silos of expertise must merge and leaders must support communities in coping with the threats and impacts of biological hazards. This would entail going beyond just health considerations in the event of a biological threat. Organizationally, Dr. Miranda recommended the adoption of an all-hazards approach for leadership at the top and at the sub-platform level, and to institutionalize rapid response teams and focal points. Dr. Miranda's presentation appears as **ANNEX 6**.

10. Dr. James R. Campbell, Professor, APCSS presented on Improvised Infectious Devices (IIDs) as a potential biological threat. He defined an IID as a person who weaponizes his/her body by willfully infecting him/herself with a highly communicable infectious disease, and then knowingly infects other people, with the intent of causing mass mortality, morbidity and panic. This can occur during the incubation phase of an illness, when an infected individual is asymptomatic, yet infectious to other people. Dr. Campbell said the potential for IIDs to cause harm is great, given population increases and greater mobility globally. He emphasized the nature of diseases as transnational thus, the need for transparency and multi-sectoral cooperation in responding to public health emergencies. Dr. Campbell's presentation appears as **ANNEX 7**.

11. During an exchange of views, participants highlighted the need for effective quarantining as a prerequisite of effective contact tracing, especially when diseases become global. Three lines of defense were also emphasized: in the country of origin, where individuals are given information to assess their own health status; at points of entry into another country, where screening can be done; and in the country entered, which should have hospitals and healthcare providers who can be contacted by individuals who display symptoms.

Sources for Bio-Preparedness and Disaster Response

12. Ms. Maria Eugenia Delos Angeles Rettori, Regional Coordinator of the Manila-based EU CBRN COE Regional Secretariat in Southeast Asia, briefed on the work of the EU CBRN COE initiative, which is a joint initiative of the European Commission and the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI). The initiative aims to create a framework for regional and international cooperation to enhance CBRN policies and capabilities. The EU CBRN COE operates in more than 40 countries through eight Regional Secretariats and is currently implementing 19 projects, seven of which concern bio-preparedness. The EU CBRN COE initiative also administers a needs assessment questionnaire (NAQ) to help participating countries assess current CBRN risk mitigation capacities, form national CBRN action plans, and implement new projects. Ms. Rettori's presentation appears as **ANNEX 8**.

13. Mr. Jean-Luc Tonglet, Head of Response Preparedness, UN OCHA-Philippines oriented the workshop on the role of UN OCHA, which is to serve as the focal point for UN agencies, other intergovernmental organizations, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), media and the private sector when there is a request to complement national efforts during calamities. The Emergency Relief Coordinator serves as the UN's global focal point during humanitarian crises. In UN Member States, the UN Resident Coordinator reports directly to the Emergency Relief Coordinator during such crises when there is a request for assistance from that country. The UN applies the Cluster Approach to coordinate each sector of assistance through designated focal points. Nationally, Country Teams composed of humanitarian organizations assemble under the UN Resident Coordinator during humanitarian situations. For pandemics in particular, Mr. Tonglet emphasized economic and social disruption as consequences to consider in addition to health needs. Mr. Tonglet's presentation appears as **ANNEX 9**.

14. Mr. Peter Roderick Morgan, Assistant Commissioner, Service Quality, Hong Kong Police shared several best practices observed during the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak in Hong Kong in 2003. Among these, he underlined the need to have legal provisions on such procedures as screening, quarantine and mass evacuation. He also saw the value of a multi-agency approach in dealing with the outbreak. Other measures that proved useful were: border control; designated medical centers; home confinement; school closures; a cleaning program; and public communication. Mr. Morgan noted that a prolonged biological event like the SARS outbreak tests the sustainability of response and affects the whole community. Mr. Morgan added that the outbreak emphasized the importance of the following: improved preparedness and monitoring; heightened awareness; cleanliness and animal control; rapid response; an international liaison; Information Technology (IT) & equipment support for contact tracing. Mr. Morgan's presentation appears as **ANNEX 10**.

15. Dr. Rohit Arvind Chitale, Director, Division of Integrated Surveillance, Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center, U.S. briefed the workshop on the concept of bio-surveillance, which for the U.S. entails information gathering, integrating, interpreting and communicating on all-hazards threats or disease activity. He stressed the need for bio-surveillance to take place closer in time to prevention rather than detection of biological threats. In terms of data involved, Dr. Chitale mentioned epidemic crowd sourcing, and social media in particular, as an important source of information. He also enumerated several networks through which bio-surveillance may be conducted, including the U.S. Department of Defense Global Emerging Infectious Diseases, global networks of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, the international NGO Connecting Organizations for Regional Disease Surveillance, and the Global Public Health Intelligence Network. Dr. Chitale also provided an overview of the Global Health Security Agenda, a multilateral initiative to accelerate IHR implementation to strengthen biological disaster response capabilities. Dr. Chitale's presentation is located in **ANNEX 11**.

16. Dr. Peter Emanuel, Division Chief, Bio-Sciences, Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, U.S. Army provided an overview of the Joint United States Forces Korea Portal and Integrated Threat Recognition, a four-year program to strengthen bio-surveillance capabilities in the Korean Peninsula. The program has four domains. The Biological Identification Capability Sets Leg aims to introduce affordable but accurate laboratories near sources of samples. The Assessment of Environmental Detectors Leg assesses detection technology with the aim of identifying better, cheaper detectors that can be operated in the field. The Early Warning Leg involves fusing together camera and sensor systems to share information with each other. Lastly, the Bio-surveillance Portal Leg introduces an unclassified web-based environment to facilitate collaboration, communication and information sharing. Dr. Emanuel also briefed the workshop on the Global Bio-surveillance Technology Initiative, which has provided selected laboratories in the world with harmonized sets of equipment, with the goal of building a global laboratory network. Dr. Emanuel's presentation appears as **ANNEX 12**.

17. Dr. Chin Kei Lee, Team Leader, Emerging Disease Surveillance and Response, WHO presented source documents from WHO that can be drawn from when crafting regional bio-preparedness plans. Foremost among them is the Asia Pacific Strategy

for Emerging Diseases (APSED), which emerged as a regional strategy to combat emerging infectious diseases, given their high incidence in the Asia Pacific. Adopted in 2005, the APSED was amended in 2010 to add focus areas, including public health emergency preparedness, regional preparedness, monitoring and evaluation. The APSED is itself in implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR), a global instrument for protecting global public health security. The IHR has two elements: shared risk management among States Parties; and country responsibility to strengthen national surveillance and response systems. The IHR Procedures concerning public health emergencies of international concern (PHEIC), meanwhile, help members states decide if there is a need to report a biological event to international community via WHO IHR contact points. Dr. Lee's presentation appears as **ANNEX 13**.

Table Top Exercise

18. The workshop conducted a Table Top Exercise (TTX) where participants, in four breakout groups, took on the role of a regional bio-preparedness task force. The task force was to recommend courses of action to national governments to deal with the global spread of an unknown SARS-like virus. They were additionally given five "injects" to the original scenario to simulate the evolving nature of the outbreak, requiring them to plan for: (1) increasing strain on public health systems; (2) medical countermeasures; (3) restriction of movement; (4) strategic communications and social media considerations; and (5) governance and risk of societal breakdown. The co-chairs provided a draft template for national guidelines on bio-preparedness to use as a guide during the exercise. The scenario appears as **ANNEX 14** and the draft national guideline template appears as **ANNEX 15**.

19. After the exercise, the participants were asked for comments on the template's usefulness in planning for the scenario. They found the template generally valuable, with the following as their main findings from the exercise:

- Preparedness plans, whether national or regional, should consider the possibility not only a natural occurring pandemic, but also a bio-terrorist attack.
- Cross-sectoral cooperation on bio-preparedness, especially civilian-military cooperation, would benefit from common definitions and standardized approaches to risk assessment, mitigation and treatment.
- Information sharing can be facilitated with policy at the regional level, which must ensure security of information.
- Although they were asked to simulate a regional task force, participants found value in creating such a task force in actuality, within the ASEAN framework and with the appropriate Terms of Reference.

The breakout groups' outputs appear as **ANNEXES 16-19**.

Conclusions and Steps Forward

20. Commodore Ian R. Middleton, J5 Regional Assistant, U.S. Pacific Command provided a summary from the executive level (heads of delegation and executive leaders) discussion held after the table top exercise. The dialogue focused on

identifying the plan of action and milestones following the workshop. There were four follow on actions items of this particular security exchange. These included:

a. Refine the draft national bio-preparedness guidelines template which incorporates all discussions from the workshop and outcomes from the TTX.

b. A report back to the ASEAN and ARF Ministers/Secretary on the progress of the related series of exchanges with the goal of having the ARF Foreign Ministers approve the template for bio-preparedness national guidelines in 2015.

c. Co-chairs (Philippines and U.S.) will propose to conduct a bio-preparedness Table Top Exercise in 2015 and additional follow-on activities as required under an appropriate ASEAN-centric framework to validate the proposed template for bio-preparedness national guidelines.

d. Co-Chairs will also present workshop related findings at the ARF Disaster Relief Exercise in Malaysia in February 2015. Furthermore, encourage multilateral interoperability within ASEAN on all consequence management related activities including bio-preparedness. This summary appears as **ANNEX 20**.

21. The proposed template for national guidelines on bio-preparedness that will be forwarded to the 22nd ARF Ministers for approval appears as **ANNEX 15**.

Closing Remarks

22. Major General Vincent A. Coglianesse, Commanding General, 1st Marine Logistics Group and representing Commanding General, Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, U.S., noted that the Workshop has allowed participants to become more educated on the regional challenges in bio-preparedness and response. He attributed quick response and assistance during crises in the region, most recently Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, to strong partnerships. On biological threats, Major General Coglianesse cautioned that the threat is very real, and that capabilities must be enhanced to address them. He noted that the Workshop was designed to focus on a whole-of-government approach, create a common understanding of interagency and international cooperation, including civil-military cooperation, and to reinforce their commitment to each other. Further, the table top exercise amplified the workshop's primary goals and objectives specifically - the development of national guideline template on bio-preparedness, and identify plan of action and milestones. Finally, he expressed hope that participants derive from the workshop key considerations in areas such as business continuity, strategic communications, risk assessment, and capabilities sharing. Major General Coglianesse's remarks appear as **ANNEX 21**.

23. Assistant Secretary Luis T. Cruz, Office of ASEAN Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs, noted that the co-chairs' vision for the Workshop and with the draft template was to spur a lively discussion on the prospects for regional cooperation in bio-preparedness. He stressed that the response to a biological event must involve everyone, not only the public health, security and law enforcement, and disaster preparedness planning sectors. He also observed that there was a wealth of information in bio-preparedness planning, and that the present challenge is to translate them into concerted action. He expressed hope that the ARF members would continue testing the draft guidelines and focus on institutional arrangements for cooperation on bio-preparedness and disaster response. Assistant Secretary Cruz's remarks appear as **ANNEX 22**.

24. Participants thanked the Republic of the Philippines and the United States of America for their effective co-chairmanship and expressed gratitude to the Government of the Philippines for the hospitality and arrangements in hosting the ASEAN Regional Forum Cross-Sectoral Cooperation on Bio-Preparedness and Disaster Response Workshop.
