

**CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY REPORT OF THE
ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM DISASTER RELIEF EXERCISE (ARF DiREx) 2013
CHA-AM, THAILAND, 7-11 MAY 2013**

INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to the decision of the 19th Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held in Phnom Penh on 12 July 2012, the ARF Disaster Relief Exercise (ARF DiREx) was held in Cha-am, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand, on 7-11 May 2013. The ARF DiREx was co-chaired by Thailand and Republic of Korea. The ARF DiREx was opened on 7 May 2013 by H. E. Plodprasop Suraswadi, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, and H.E. Kim Bong-hyun, Deputy Minister for Multilateral and Global Affairs of the Republic of Korea.

2. Representatives from 24 ARF participants took part in the ARF DiREx 2013: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam, Australia, Canada, China, the European Union (ECHO, EEAS, Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the United Kingdom), India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Pakistan, Timor-Leste, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka. The representatives of the ASEAN Secretariat, the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre), United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat, the World Food Programme (WFP), and MERCY Malaysia were also present. A total of 1,671 participants attended the ARF DiREx. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex 1**.

ARF DiREx ACTIVITIES

3. Three main activities were conducted during the ARF DiREx, namely Table Top Exercise (TTX), Field Training Exercise (FTX), and After Action Review (AAR). The TTX was held at the Dusit Thani Hua Hin Hotel while the FTX was conducted in Rama VI Camp, Naresuan Camp, Jalaprathan Cement Public Company Limited, and Cha-am Beach. The AAR was conducted at both the TTX and FTX venues.

ARF PARTICIPANTS' CONTRIBUTIONS

4. Personnel: Twenty-four ARF participants and eight regional/international organisations, namely, Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, China, the European Union (represented by ECHO, EEAS and Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom), India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, the United States of America, Viet Nam, ASEAN Secretariat, AHA Centre, UNOCHA, WHO, IFRC, WFP, MERCY Malaysia, and Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat contributed personnel in the Exercise.

5. Assets: A number of physical assets were deployed to participate in the ARF DiREx, including ships and boats from Thailand, the Republic of Korea, and the United States, helicopters from Thailand, and transport aircrafts from Thailand, Japan, Malaysia, ROK, and Singapore. Austria, Belgium, China, Japan, Indonesia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, ROK, Singapore, Thailand, the United States, UNOCHA, IFRC, and WHO contributed other types of assets such as medical, communications, canine, and Search and Rescue (SAR) equipment for the field training exercises.

OPENING CEREMONY

6. H.E. Plodprasop Suraswadi, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, delivered his welcoming remarks during the opening ceremony of the ARF DiREx. He recalled the lessons learned in the management of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and the 2011 flood in Thailand. He expressed hope that participants of the ARF DiREx 2013 in Cha-am would use the opportunity to learn, share knowledge, and exchange experiences in disaster relief.

7. In his opening remarks, H.E. Kim Bong-hyun, Deputy Minister for Multilateral and Global Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic Korea emphasised the growing significance of the ARF as a venue for concrete cooperation in disaster relief since the first exercise in 2009 and expressed hope that further exercises will continue to build ARF participants' capacity in civilian-military (civ-mil) coordination and cooperation at both national and international levels. He expressed hope that the momentum generated through the ARF DiREx 2013 would continue in the years to come and strengthen the ARF's role as an action-oriented body with greater responsibility for collective humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in the region.

TABLE TOP EXERCISE (TTX)

8. The TTX was organized in three moves. Move 1 dealt with Domestic Initial Response and Incident Notification. Move 2 covered International and Initial Response and Relief Operation. Move 3 addressed Early Recovery and Demobilisation. The Table Top Exercise (TTX) activity was preceded by an Experts' Session. The complete report of TTX appears as **Annex 2.**

FIELD TRAINING EXERCISE (FTX)

9. FTX scenarios of the ARF DiREx 2013 consisted of building collapse, chemical leakage, rock slide, maritime SAR operations, and air SAR operations. Medical assistance exercises were held in conjunction with the scenarios, and an evacuation camp also was set up for training purposes. The FTX was held on 8-9 May 2013 in the Rama VI Camp, Naresuan Camp, Jalapraphan Cement Public Company Limited, and Cha-am Beach. The complete report of the FTX appears as **Annex 3.**

AFTER ACTION REVIEW (AAR)

10. As an evaluation of the Exercise, which serves as a basis for future follow up actions, an After Action Review (AAR) debriefing was convened on 10 May 2013. The complete AAR report is attached as **Annex 4.**

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ARF COOPERATION

11. The unique aspect of ARF DiREx and the civil-military cooperation processes which have been continuously improved since the initial ARF VDR 2009 was thoroughly maintained through the 2013 exercise. Due to the maturity of the ARF DiREx, future exercises should explore in detail realistic scenarios that comprise role-playing and unexpected events. These elements will enhance the realism of the exercise and increase the level of complexity to further develop skills and knowledge of disaster management in the region.

12. Closer alignment between FTX and TTX with possible chronological scenarios that require FTX and TTX to address certain issues concurrently within the overall exercise would enhance future exercises.

13. ARF DiREx 2013 highlighted the importance of Consular demands that possibly occur during the crisis and disaster response. Further consideration of consular elements together with consideration of humanitarian assistance and enhanced civil-military capability issues in the next exercise should be one of key parts.

14. In line with this, regional guidelines for providing assistance to the foreign nationals during the crisis should be established, incorporating information sharing and identifying the roles and responsibilities of foreign missions, consideration of privacy issues for victims, and cooperation to maximize the utility of available resources.

15. On-site pre-exercise briefing on the existing and relevant SOPs/guidelines and/or the distribution of associated manuals could serve better FTX outcomes. This will enable participants able to be better informed about their respective roles, leading to more coordinated action among the teams taking part in each exercise. Furthermore, participants would also benefit from the presence of a translator designated to each specific site to facilitate communication among those taking part in the exercises.

16. To maximize participation in future ARF DiREx, improved coordination of the timing of existing exercise programs in different fora in the region by aligning exercise programs would be extremely beneficial.

17. In order to maximise planning and preparation, the next co-hosts for the ARF DiREx should be identified at the earliest possible time. The next DiREx should be constructed from the outcomes and based on priority focus areas of this report.

CLOSING CEREMONY

18. H.E. Police Lieutenant General Chatt Kuldiloke, Deputy Minister of Interior, Kingdom of Thailand and H.E. Mr. Jeon Jae-man, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Thailand, the co-hosts of ARF DiREx 2013, presided over the Closing Ceremony of the ARF DiREx 2013. In his remarks, the Deputy Minister of Interior of Thailand stated that the four days of the exercise have become another chapter in the history of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Participants have developed skills and abilities to respond swiftly and mitigate the loss of lives and properties in face of unpredictable natural disasters. In his closing remarks, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea emphasised that the ARF DiREx 2013 has made a fruitful contribution to the capacity of civil-military coordination in responding to disasters. He underscored that the ARF DiREx

will continue to serve as the most effective mechanism for the promotion of civil-military coordination in the field of disaster relief.

19. ARF participants thanked the Co-Chairs for the effective chairmanship and conduct of the ARF DiREx 2013 and expressed gratitude to the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand as well as the Province of Phetchaburi for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements.

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