

DRAFT
Concept Paper

Consular Contingency Workshop

This paper outlines a proposal by Australia for an ARF workshop on consular contingency planning.

Background

The Asia-Pacific region is prone to natural disasters (volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, flooding) and man-made disasters (transport accidents, radiological and engineering failures). Given the high numbers of tourists, long term residents and people studying, there will always be a high probability that nationals from ARF members will be among the victims in a regional consular crisis.

The workshop would aim at building ARF Members' understanding of key elements and benefits of consular contingency planning and strengthening consular crisis coordination linkages. Participants will be able to compare their experiences and practices, as well as have the opportunity to build links with other consular crises officials from the region and identify where they may be able to work together.

The general objective of the workshop would be consistent with the ARF Hanoi Plan of Action which states that "[the] ARF aims to harmonize regional cooperation in Disaster Relief/Management and strengthen the interoperability of civilian and military relief operations." The workshop would also contribute to the efforts and measures of the ARF Work Plan on Disaster Relief.

Workshop Format

The workshop could be divided into sessions with expert speakers and participants invited to focus on the following issues:

- **Principles of Consular Contingency Planning**
- **Approaches to Crisis Management**
- **Enhanced Regional Crisis Cooperation**
- **Training and Deploying Staff**
- **Communicating with Travellers in a Crisis**

ARF partners could contribute to the seminar through conveying their experiences and providing examples of good practice and challenges. Expert speakers could also be invited to give presentations on specific areas of interest (eg. cyclones, seismic activity, tsunamis). In addition to the plenary sessions, consideration could be given to conducting a half-day desktop exercise.

Participation

Participants in the workshop would be Director level officials and specialists from agencies in ARF members that handle consular contingencies, including foreign affairs, interior, defence, immigration and disaster response authorities. It may also be appropriate to invite specialists from relevant international organisations as speakers.

Outcome

The outcome and recommendations of the workshop would be reported to the 2014 ARF ministerial meeting.

Location and dates

It is proposed the workshop be two days in duration and held sometime in the 2013/2014 ARF cycle. The meeting would be held in English. Australia is open to the possibility of hosting the workshop in the region.

Administrative arrangements

International travel, accommodations and other related-costs necessary for participation will be borne by the participants.

Co-chairing

Australia is seeking an ASEAN co-chair for this activity and will be approaching possible partners to determine their interest but would welcome expressions of interest.

Comments

Please direct comments or questions on this proposal to:

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