

NON-PAPER
Multi-Year Strategic Exercise Planning Workshop
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, April 9-10, 2015
Malaysia, Australia and the United States

This paper sets out the key issues and principles identified at the Multi-year Strategic Exercise Workshop, co-chaired by Malaysia, Australia, and the United States in April 2015.

This paper was originally written to assist workshop participants to consider their positions prior to the workshop and to be prepared to engage actively. Following the workshop, this paper was updated to reflect some of the points raised in the substantive discussions.

The workshop shall not be the decision-making forum for the issues and needs identified, as such decisions shall be made by the concerned ASEAN bodies, namely the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) and the Joint Task Force on HADR. Any outcomes or recommendations from this workshop shall not be considered as decisions of the workshop participants or the countries/organisations that they represent.

Background

Disaster exercises in the region are not operating as efficiently and effectively as they could be within ASEAN and its related mechanisms, i.e. the ARF, EAS, ADMM-Plus. This results in duplication of effort, straining of resources, and a lack of unity of effort. Regional disaster exercises could be more effective if they were collectively and cumulatively directed to regional needs and contributed to the implementation of the main regional disaster relief framework in ASEAN, i.e. the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) as well as to the strengthening of the ASEAN Coordination Centre of Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Centre) as the main regional operational coordinating agency for HADR in the ASEAN region.

The need to harmonise efforts in disaster relief is already widely acknowledged. In 2013, ASEAN Leaders encouraged ‘a joint effort and more integrated coordination and synergy in HADR among the various ASEAN-related mechanisms, wherever possible, in particular the AMMDM, ADMM, ADMM-Plus, ARF, and EAS,¹ using AADMER as the main regional policy backbone and common platform for disaster management in the region. The need for efficient and complementary approaches to tackling regional security challenges has also been recognized in the ARF² and ADMM-Plus.³ In line with those calls, the proposal for this workshop was endorsed by ARF Ministers in Myanmar in August 2014.

¹ 2013 ASEAN Declaration on Enhancing Cooperation in Disaster Management

² Chairman’s Statement for the 21st ARF Ministerial: " Recognising the importance of coordination and coherence between various ASEAN-led regional security mechanisms, the Ministers underlined the importance of strengthening synergies among regional security mechanisms, including the ARF, the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), to effectively tackle the challenges facing the region."

The ACDM will finalise the second 5-year AADMER Work Programme at the end of 2015, and this provides an opportunity for the regional policy platform to include a harmonized approach to disaster relief exercise planning. The outcomes of this workshop will be conveyed by Malaysia as co-chair of the workshop to the ACDM as well as the Joint Task Force on HADR⁴ for their consideration.

Workshop Outcomes

1. Identified issues and gaps in regional HADR capacity

This session identified issues and gaps in regional capacity, derived from reviews of recent disaster responses and disaster activities conducted by affected countries and regional agencies. Participants commented on the significance and importance of the presented issues and gaps and discussed further issues in more depth. Based on the presentations and discussion, numerous priority issues and gaps were identified.

In the future, this list could contribute to the harmonization of disaster exercises by serving as a 'menu' of issues and gaps that future disaster exercises could address. Exercise co-chairs could draw on these issues when developing scenarios to help boost an exercise's contribution to regional disaster capacity. The workshop did not intend to resolve these issues and gaps, as these shall be addressed through the regional exercises or other means as identified by the relevant ASEAN bodies.

If this approach proves useful, the menu could be reviewed annually in order to add key issues and gaps arising from subsequent reviews of disaster exercises or responses and remove those that have been recently addressed. That review process could potentially be undertaken by the ACDM, with assistance from the AHA Centre.

Based on recent reviews, an initial list of issues and gaps could include:

- **Objectives:** Must be clearly defined and relevant; could include both political and technical aspects.
- **Stakeholders:** Must involve all relevant stakeholders and test **coordination** mechanisms between them.
- **Multinational Coordination Center (MNCC)** role and function with National Disaster Management Offices (NDMOs) and the AHA Centre.

³ Chairman's Statement for the 2nd ADMM-Plus: "REAFFIRMING the direction of the 2011 ASEAN Summit held in Phnom Penh on 18 November 2012 to promote synergy between regional mechanisms, including that of the ADMM Plus and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)"

⁴ The Joint Task Force on HADR was established in 2014 following the issuance of the 2013 ASEAN Declaration on Enhancing Cooperation in Disaster Management. The Joint Task Force on HADR is chaired by the ACDM Chair, and is composed of Chairs/Vice Chairs of SOM, ADSOM, SOMHD and SOMSWD. The main purpose of the Joint Task Force, as tasked by the ASEAN Leaders through the 2013 Declaration, is to promote synergy among various ASEAN bodies (i.e. AMMDM/ACDM, ARF, EAS, ADMM and ADMM Plus) on HADR efforts.

- **Information Sharing:** Regional architecture and good information management practices, to include the role of media/technology.
- **Standard Operating Procedures** for civil-military, civilian-military, and military-military cooperation.
- **Terminology:** establishing a baseline reference to define and explain concepts including tabletop exercises, field training exercises, command post exercises and staff exercises.

Additional areas for consideration:

1. How should issues and gaps be prioritized?
2. What system for sharing lessons learned from exercises across the ASEAN-related mechanisms so that these mechanisms maintain awareness of each other's activities?
3. How can national and regional capacity gaps be separated? Is there space for regional exercises to include national capacity-building components? Should this be considered by co-chairs?
4. What latitude should exercise chairs have in choosing capabilities to focus on during their exercises?
5. Should an annual review process be adopted? How could it be conducted and who would be responsible?

2. *Principles for Efficient and Effective Conduct of Exercises.*

As indicated above, disaster exercises in the region are not operating as efficiently and effectively as they could be. Based upon their previous experiences in past exercises, participants shared ideas of why they have not been operating efficiently and effectively, and how this situation could be improved.

The second desired outcome of the workshop is a list of principles from which the ACDM could develop a calendar for HADR exercises. These principles should reflect the key points about content, harmonizing, timing, scheduling governance and planning of disaster exercises.

To start discussion, possible principles could include:

Exercise content

- All ASEAN-related HADR exercises should use AADMER as the main regional policy backbone and common platform for disaster management in the region and should use the AHA Centre as the main regional operational coordinating body for HADR in the region.
- All exercises shall include testing regional emergency response procedures as part of their objectives.
- All exercises should explicitly incorporate components to address identified priority regional gaps.
- Exercises should build on the momentum of previous exercises, by incorporating lessons learned and addressing gaps in capability based upon exercise After Action Reviews (AARs). Where appropriate, exercises could seek to build on successes by increasing complexity in areas of previous strong performance.

- All exercises will always include AADMER's mechanisms and the AHA Centre, as well as components that address key regional, international and NGO roles and interface. Disaster response in ASEAN is typically inclusive and key bodies such as UNOCHA, WFP and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement should be regularly involved. Appropriate consideration should be given to interagency issues.
- Staff and Table Top Exercises (STAFFEX, TTX) scenarios will always include the AADMER's mechanisms and AHA Centre.
- Exercises should reflect a clearer division of labour between the ASEAN-related mechanisms:
 - ARF and ARDEX exercises will focus on civilian-led civ-mil scenarios;
 - ADMM+ will focus primarily on military-to-military scenarios;
 - ARDEX and EAS HADR exercises could address internal civil-defense capacity building priorities.

Constraints on exercise timing

- The calendar should aim to have one civ-mil and one mil-mil exercise per year.
- The ARF DiREx and ADMM-Plus HADR field exercises should not take place in the same 12-month period, as this is too resource-intensive.

Exercise governance and planning

- To ensure continuity within and amongst the major ASEAN exercises, the ASEAN-related mechanisms should consider protocols for designation of co-chairs five years in advance.
- Where field training exercises and table top exercises are not integrated, consideration should be given to holding them separately.
- Consideration should be given to changing exercise frequency or included components (TTX, FTX, CPX). One suggestion, for example, would be to change the frequency of all major exercises to once every three years.

Timing and Future Calendar

In developing a future planning calendar, the ACDM and the Joint Task Force, with assistance from the AHA Centre, could develop a rolling 'current year plus 5' outlook, under which a 6-year disaster exercise calendar could be reviewed and updated annually by these same organizational bodies.

Other considerations include:

1. Are there any exercises that could be streamlined in a particular year? Are there any opportunities to merge exercises?
2. How will the regional exercise calendar interact with and impact on bilateral exercises?