

Preliminary Information

Seminar on Laws and Regulations of International Disaster Relief Beijing, China

Proposal

Recognizing that many participants still face challenges in legal framework for international disaster relief cooperation, especially with military involvement, China proposes to hold a Seminar on Laws and Regulations of International Disaster Relief to facilitate knowledge exchange and consensus building in this aspect.

Background

Over the years, disaster relief cooperation within the framework of ARF has developed very fast, as evidenced by seven ISMs on Disaster Relief, and by the adoption of *the ARF Statement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response* as well as *the ARF General Guidelines on Disaster Relief Cooperation*. In April this year, Indonesia and Australia distributed the draft ARF Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and then co-sponsored a desktop exercise in early May to put the SOP into test. However, it must be noted that there are still some contradictions in the domestic laws of the ARF participants which might hinder the further development of international disaster relief cooperation in the region.

Objectives/Topics

The seminar will review the best practices of the international

disaster relief cooperation in recent years, take stock of the domestic laws of the ARF participants on disaster relief cooperation, and touch upon the present multilateral disaster relief rules such as *the Oslo Guidelines*. It is hoped that through the discussion, differences will be identified while the rules and regulations governing international disaster relief practices rationalized enabling the participants to better incorporate their domestic laws with the regional and international rules.

Time and Venue

The Seminar is expected to take place in Beijing in the first half of 2009.

Participants

Army and civilian officers dealing with disaster relief as well as diplomats from all ARF Participants will be invited. Each Participant can nominate up to 4 representatives to the Seminar.

Administrative Arrangements

International travel, accommodations and all other related cost necessary for participation will be borne by participants. China and other co-chairs which are yet to be determined, will only cover the administrative cost of the meeting.

Further details will be provided in a formal concept paper and be distributed in due course.