

**Co-Chairs' Summary Report of the
ARF Desktop Exercise on Disaster Relief
Jakarta, 1-2 May 2008**

Introduction

1. Pursuant to the decision of the 14th Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held in Manila on 2 August 2007, the ARF Desktop Exercise on Disaster Relief was held at the Indonesian Naval Command and Staff College, Seskoal, in Jakarta on 1-2 May 2008. The Meeting was co-chaired by Indonesia and Australia. The exercise was preceded by an Initial Planning Conference which was held at Robertson Barracks in Darwin, Australia, on 4-7 September 2007.
2. Representatives from all ARF participating countries except Mongolia and Myanmar participated in the exercise. A number of national disaster relief/emergency management and government aid agencies as well as the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), and the International Committee of The Red Cross (ICRC) were present. The ARF and Disaster Management Units of the ASEAN Secretariat were also represented. The Programme of Activities and the List of Participants appear as ANNEX A and B.
3. In her welcome remarks, Ms Dienne Moehario, Inspector-General of the Department of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, noted ARF's efforts to encourage cooperation on disaster relief and supported further activities in this area. Ms Moehario suggested the exercise was an important milestone in the ARF, marking its commitment to move from confidence building activities to preventive diplomacy. Ms Moehario also expressed Indonesia's hope that the desktop exercise would lead to a practical joint exercise in the future and gratitude to the Australian government for co-chairing the desktop exercise.
4. Major General Michael Crane, Head of Military Strategic Commitments, Australian Department of Defence, thanked Indonesia for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to all ARF participants. He underlined events such as the Indian Ocean Tsunami which prompted the adoption of the ARF Statement on Disaster Relief and Emergency Response. The tsunami demonstrated the need for multilateral cooperation among various agencies in responding to significant natural disasters. MajGen Crane recalled the close cooperation between Indonesia and Australia in Banda Aceh. Such large scale disasters have demonstrated the need for regional strategic guidance on disaster relief prevention and emergency response measures, as well as the conduct of military to military and civil-military coordination. MajGen Crane also emphasized that the ARF SOP would continue to be a

living document, to be enhanced and updated following exercises and practical activities in the years to come.

5. Major General Syarfudin Tippe, Director-General for Defense Strategy Department of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia, acknowledged the close cooperation between Australia and Indonesia in preparing for the desktop exercise. He underlined that complex issues surround the provision of timely and effective disaster relief, including of the need for enhanced military-to-military and civil-military cooperation in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. MajGen Tippe explained that the exercise reflects the desire of the ARF to coordinate its efforts by sharing ARF member experiences and knowledge in responding to regional disasters. The results of exercise would be reported to the ARF Senior Officials' Meeting on 9 May 2008, with a further update provided to the 15th ARF on 24 July 2008 and the 8th ARF Inter-sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief to be held, in Aceh Indonesia, in December 2008.

Agenda Item 3: General Briefing on the ARF Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Standard Operating Procedures (HADR SOP)

6. Indonesia briefed the participants on the latest draft of the ARF HADR SOP. The ARF SOP aim to improve the speed and effectiveness of multinational, civil and military disaster response capabilities between the 27 ARF participants. The development of the SOP has drawn upon subject matter expertise from a wide range of agencies and incorporated feedback from the Initial Planning Conference in Darwin in September 2007. The ARF HADR SOP, dated 25 March, appear at ANNEX C.
7. The ARF SOP are intended to complement other internationally accepted guidelines, documents and procedures for disaster relief and humanitarian assistance including the ARF General Guidelines for Disaster Relief Cooperation, the UN Oslo Guidelines, the ASEAN Standard Operating Procedures for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief Emergency Response Operations (ASEAN SASOP), the International Disaster Response Laws, Rules and Regulations (IDRL), and the Multinational Planning Augmentation Team's (MPAT) MNF SOP, led by United States. The SOP acknowledge the primacy of sovereignty and are non-binding. The SOP encompass the involvement of key actors i.e. NGO, international aid agencies, the United Nations and ASEAN through ASEAN SASOP.
8. The briefing touched on the utilization of the AHA Center after the completion of the drafting of the ASEAN SASOP. Indonesia suggested that there should be close coordination between ASEAN and ARF in this respect. Separate ARF Standby Arrangements have been developed by Indonesia and the

United States and the draft Standby Arrangements are currently included as an annex to the ARF HADR SOP.

Agenda Item 4: General Briefing on Scenario and Mechanism of the ARF Desktop Exercise on Disaster Relief (DEDR)

9. Australia presented the scenario for the desktop exercise and outlined the overarching purpose of the exercise. The primary objectives of the exercise were to improve civil and military coordination in disaster relief and to promote understanding and cooperation among ARF participants in situations in which a coordinated multinational response would be required. The scenario for the exercise is at ANNEX D.
10. The scenario for the exercise was based on a series of natural disasters facing a South East Asian archipelago and while fictitious, focused on real life challenges associated with planning for regional emergency response. The exercise participants were asked to provide input and make decisions at four critical points in the disaster relief cycle, the point of initial crisis, the request for assistance, during stabilisation and at the transition to recovery and reconstruction. Throughout the exercise participants addressed the interests of five main stakeholders namely, host (affected) nations, supporting (assisting) nations, the United Nations, international NGO and international organizations.
11. Participants at the exercise acted as either a host nation or supporting nation within the ARF and were invited to keep discussion focused on the strategic/operational level (planning and management) rather than the tactical level. The participants were grouped into syndicates and later gathered in plenary sessions where the outcomes of discussion were presented.

Decision Point 1: Host Nation Identifies HADR Capability Gaps in its Capacity to Deal with the Crisis

12. The scenario for the exercise describes a fictitious nation (The Union of Arefo) affected by a series of natural disasters. At the first decision point participants were asked to consider immediate capability requirements following a request for assistance by the host nation government to other international parties. Issues considered by participants were the mechanisms for needs assessment, coordination of response, information collection and dissemination. Participants examined both the supporting and host nations' requirements.
13. The discussion underscored the need for a common platform for sharing of information in time of disaster. Some participants suggested a closer

collaboration between the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) and the ARF. However, participants agreed that the initial assessment of the disaster situation should be done at the local level e.g. by local community, locally based NGO and local disaster management organizations.

14. Participants identified the need for the SOP to better articulate potential avenues for the dissemination of information among ARF members, including reference to the UN Relief Web, AHA Centre and national disaster relief and emergency management websites. It was also agreed that the SOP should describe the flow of information during the initial assessment in greater detail and provide a précis of the key information requirement. Participants also sought to clarify the concept of the ARF Virtual Task Force on Disaster Relief. The outcomes of decision point 1 are at ANNEX E.

Decision Point 2: HADR Assistance is Requested from Sources/Organizations/Nations External to the Host Nation

15. The scenario for the second decision point outlined the situation in the Union of Arefo 10 days after the disaster had struck, the request for assistance by the Host Nation had been delivered and supporting nations and organisations had begun offering assistance. Participants considered methods for enhancing the management and coordination of offers for support from assisting nations, as well as the management of ongoing assessments of needs and dissemination of accurate and timely information by the affected nations.
16. Participants viewed the host nation as the primary authority responsible for seeking and coordinating assistance. It was noted however that there would be cases where the host nation was overwhelmed by the situation and might not request assistance - it was acknowledged however that official protocol between Governments should always be observed prior to the deployment of assistance. Pre-agreement about customs entry and identifying national points of contact were identified as beneficial in providing rapid support. On the issue of how the host nation should coordinate offers for support, participants agreed this would be best delivered by a single body such as a national crisis coordinating centre.
17. Some participants discussed the possibility of establishing an ARF coordinating center to collate best practices and lessons learned and facilitate information sharing among ARF members.
18. Participants agreed that the ARF SOP needed to provide guidance in alignment with internationally recognized standards and guidelines such as those provided by the UN and international humanitarian agencies including

the SPHERE standard, the OSLO Guidelines, the IDRL, and Code of Conduct for humanitarian workers, and INSARAG Guidelines.

19. A further recommendation was the consideration of including a generic Status of Forces Agreement (such as annex 1 to the Oslo Guidelines) to facilitate the deployment of foreign military assistance to affected nations. It was agreed that the host nation should determine what method it will employ to allocate tasks and responsibilities to supporting nation militaries. The outcomes of decision point 2 are at ANNEX F.

Decision Point 3: Immediate Crisis Has Been Stabilized

20. The scenario for decision point 3 was based on the situation in the Union of Arefo ten weeks after the disaster hit the country, when the immediate crisis had been stabilized. The issues discussed included triggers for the withdrawal of assisting militaries and planning for sustained civil support to the host nation during the recovery and reconstruction phases. Participants also discussed preventative measures to address the potential for further disasters. It was agreed that the host nations' crisis coordinating centre and other supporting coordination centres should play a key role in developing planning and preventative measures.
21. Participants discussed how the host and supporting nations should prepare and plan for a satisfactory transition to civil support of the host nation during recovery and reconstruction. Participants raised the need for the host nation to develop a long term stabilization plan in coordination with development agencies.
22. It was noted that the host nation should coordinate the transition with support from other key stakeholders and that militaries would commence planning for their withdrawal before they deploy. It was agreed that coordination and collaboration between key stakeholders was essential and that successful transition required detailed planning. In that light, it was agreed that the SOP include a guide of generic indicators which could be used to assist determination of transition triggers. The outcomes of decision point 3 are at ANNEX G.

Decision Point 4: Transition Plan from Recover to Reconstruction Enacted

23. Decision point 4 came a year after the disaster, when the situation was returning to normalcy. Key issues discussed included responsibility for capturing lessons learned, responsibility for ongoing clean up and waste management and whether assisting nations should remain involved in future disaster prevention and preparedness programs within the affected nation.

24. It was recognized that waste management and clean up should be the host and supporting nation's responsibility. If an assisting nation provided a support capability that had generated significant amount of waste then the supporting nation should be responsible for the removal and disposal of the waste. The need to observe environmental and quarantine laws regarding waste management was acknowledged.
25. Participants agreed that the process of 'gifting' equipment/vehicles and other articles should be discouraged as this would transfer the environmental responsibilities of disposal to the local community. The outcomes of decision point 4 are at ANNEX H.

Outcomes and Recommendations

26. The meeting acknowledged Indonesia and Australia's initiative in conducting the ARF desktop exercise on disaster relief as concrete step in supporting the ARF's transition process from confidence building measures to preventative diplomacy.
27. Participants welcomed the further development of the ARF HADR SOP and supported continued discussion on the outcomes of the desktop exercise at the ARF Senior Officials' Meeting, the 15th ARF, and the 8th ARF Inter-sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief. It was agreed recommendations from the desktop exercise would be incorporated in the SOP and circulated to ARF members before the ARF Ministerial Meeting, to be held in Singapore in July 2008.
28. Participants agreed the current draft of the ARF SOP may better be described as "ARF Strategic Guidance for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief", as the document provides high level strategic and operational guidelines for multinational cooperation in disaster relief rather than tactical standard operating procedures.
29. It was proposed the ARF establish a technical working group to maintain the ongoing development of the SOP and that members of the ARF Shepherds' Group on disaster relief and other willing states may be invited to assume the role of this working group in the first instance. The technical working group could also invite participation from relevant international agencies such as UN OCHA and the IFRC.
30. Participants recognized the need for the ARF SOP and the ASEAN SASOP to be complementary and for the terminology used in the ARF SOP to be consistent with international recognized guidelines such as those developed by the United Nations and the IFRC.

31. Participants agreed the SOP would benefit from the inclusion of annex 1 to the Oslo Guidelines, a standing Status of Forces Agreement, to facilitate the deployment of foreign military assistance to affected nations.
32. Participants expressed appreciation for the lessons learned at the desktop exercise and called for further practical activities addressing disaster relief in the ARF. Participants looked forward to the proposed voluntary demonstration of response to be hosted by the Philippines and the United States, subject to the resolution of certain domestic issues relative to the conduct of said demonstration. In that regard, Indonesia expressed interest in co-hosting a future live activity on disaster relief and welcomed expressions of interest in co-sponsorship from ARF members.
33. Participants welcomed the 8th Inter-sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief to be hosted by Indonesia and the European Union in Banda Aceh in December 2008.