



**CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY REPORT
ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM WORKSHOP ON
DETECTION, RESPONSE, AND DETERRENCE OF CBR INCIDENTS**

Singapore, 26–27 June 2024

INTRODUCTION

1. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Workshop on Detection, Response and Deterrence of CBR Incidents, held from 26 to 27 June 2024 in Singapore, was co-chaired by Singapore and the European Union (EU). The event was co-organised by the Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological, and Radiological (CBR) Defence Experts (the 'ASEAN CBR Network') and the EU Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative (EU CBRN CoE). The List of Delegates appears in **ANNEX A**.

2. In her Opening Remarks, Ms Karen Ong, Deputy Director General of the ASEAN Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore, emphasised the need for enhanced regional and international cooperation in addressing complex and evolving threats posed by CBR incidents. That was one of the envisaged goals identified in the ARF Hanoi Plan of Action II (2020-2025). Mr Errol Levy, Charge d'Affaires a.i., EU Delegation to Singapore, echoed the same view in his speech, adding that the EU stands together with the ARF and its partners to promote stronger cooperation, and ensure the Southeast Asia Region and the rest of the world were safe and secure from CBR threats.

3. Key points from the Workshop Agenda, which appears in **Annex B**, are summarised below:

SESSION I: INTRODUCTION TO CBR THREATS AND EMERGING RISKS

4. Mr Rory Alexander Hamilton, EU CBRN CoE Regional Coordinator for Southeast Asia, United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), began with an introduction on dual-use CBRN materials, e.g., toxic industrial chemicals, biological agents, as well as radiological and nuclear materials, and how they can be released into the environment through natural occurrence, accidents (safety-related), and deliberate acts by criminals or terrorist groups (non-state actors).

5. He shared four case studies, capturing a range of CBRN events:
- Case Study 1 – COVID-19 pandemic, a zoonotic disease event which caused more than 775 million infections between 2020 and 2023, resulting in more than 7 million deaths and cascading global effects;
 - Case Study 2 – Fukushima nuclear accident, which resulted in the release of radioactive material into the environment due to a nuclear meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. The consequence of a 9.0 magnitude earthquake and resulting tsunami on 11 March 2011, this event was an example of ‘Natech’ disaster (Natural Hazards Triggering Technological Accidents);
 - Case Study 3 – Explosion of ammonium nitrate, a dual-use material used in fertilizers and explosives, at the Port of Beirut, Lebanon, on 4 August 2020, resulting in 218 deaths, 7,000 injuries, 15 billion USD in property damage, and the displacement of 300,000 individuals; and
 - Case Study 4 – Anthrax letter attacks in the United States from September to October 2001, resulting in five deaths, 17 others infected, and one billion USD in clean-up and decontamination.

6. He elaborated that CBRN crime and terrorism were driven by a combination of motives (financial gain, political or ideological beliefs, etc.) and capabilities (financial resources, technical know-how, etc.). He noted that emerging technologies such as synthetic biology could increase the possibilities for misuse of biotechnology by non-state actors. For example, the public availability of the complete genomic sequence of the variola virus, which was responsible for smallpox infection, has raised concerns about its possible illicit synthesis. It could also enable the *de novo* synthesis of other pathogens bypassing current biosecurity measures that aim to limit access to such hazardous materials. In addition, rapid advances in other emerging technologies, including Additive Manufacturing (AM) or 3D printing, artificial intelligence (AI), and robotics, could facilitate the development or production of CBRN weapons and their delivery systems. AI could also be exploited by non-state actors to develop and spread CBRN disinformation.

7. He concluded by emphasising that CBRN incidents or threats by non-state actors were low likelihood events with potentially high consequences and trans-national implications (high economic costs, social disruption, and psychological impact). No single agency, organisation, or country can address CBRN threats alone. CBRN risk mitigation requires multi-sectoral or inter-agency coordination, and warrants national, regional, and international cooperation.

8. Mr Hamilton followed his presentation by presenting a survey to workshop participants on the following questions:

8.1. In your opinion, non-state actors are most likely to pursue which type of terrorism? Please choose one of the options, namely, chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear terrorism, respectively.

- Forty-seven participants chose chemical, with fewer participants selecting bioterrorism (6), radiological terrorism (6) and nuclear terrorism (2). Accessibility of dual-use chemicals was deemed to be the most significant factor contributing to the likelihood of chemical events, whereas nuclear source material was deemed to be tightly controlled. On the other hand, the likelihood of a bioterrorism attack through food contamination was assessed to be highly feasible but unlikely to inflict mass casualties and fatalities.

8.2. In your opinion, what emerging technology poses the most significant risk? This was an open-ended question.

- Synthetic biology, 3D printing, drones, and social media were the most frequently cited emerging technologies assessed to pose the most significant risk.

SESSION II: INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENTS AND CONVENTIONS

9. The session comprised a panel discussion session moderated by Mr Francesco Marelli, Head of CBRN Risk Mitigation and Security Governance Unit, UNICRI, and he was joined by Ms Rana Baydoun, Acting EU CBRN CoE Regional Coordinator for the Middle East, UNICRI, Mr Dawsar Drissi, Programme Adviser, Office of the Director of the International Cooperation and Assistance, Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and Mr Esmel Gislere Oscar Meless, Political Affairs Officer, Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit (BWC-ISU), United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA).

10. 1540 Regional Coordinator for Asia and the Pacific, UNODA. Ms Amanda Cowl provided a pre-recorded video presentation on United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004). Her presentation highlighted that the Resolution comprises 12 operative paragraphs (OPs), which complement other multilateral treaties, such as the BWC and Chemical Weapon Convention (CWC), to prevent the proliferation of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. She focused on three OPs within the resolution concerned with non-state actors and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferation, namely: (i) political commitment by States to refrain from providing support to non-state actors acquiring WMD; (ii) States to adopt and enforce legislation prohibiting activities on WMD proliferation; and (iii) States to impose domestic controls on proliferation and delivery. Ms Cowl further elaborated domestic controls should include security and accountability, physical protection, and border control (such as export and transshipment) of CBR materials.

11. CWC, BWC, and the Convention on Nuclear Security (CNS). Mr Drissi, Mr Meless, and Ms Baydoun shared perspectives on the three conventions. In terms of assistance and/or training that could be rendered to Member States, Mr Drissi shared

that the OPCW, the implementing organisation for the CWC, provides technical assistance in the form of training and capacity-building programmes to Member States. Mr Meless added that while there was no implementing organisation for the BWC, under Article 10, an Assistance and Cooperation Database was curated and made available to BWC States Parties via a secure web-based platform. The platform allows States Parties to request assistance or offer help voluntarily. The CNS was implemented by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and like the OPCW, the IAEA provides both technical assistance and training to States Parties. Ms Baydoun added that the International Target Values (ITV) Network was another avenue to seek assistance.

12. Mentimeter, an interactive presentation tool, was used to solicit feedback from the workshop participants for Session II. A total of seven questions were posted, of which three were addressed by the panel.

13. The first question was a query on collaboration between the BWC, UNODA, and the UN Secretary-General's Mechanism (UNSGM) during an incident. Mr Meless shared that as there was no implementing organisation for the BWC, the UNSGM was currently the only international mechanism that can be used to investigate the alleged use of biological weapons. The UNSGM was under the custodianship of UNODA, which in turn maintains rosters of biological experts and laboratories that could be activated to support missions when required.

14. The second question queried on cooperation with INTERPOL, especially in the case of a CBRN terrorist event which involved both misuse of hazardous materials and criminal intent. The panel clarified that an official cooperation framework does not exist now and acknowledged the need to collaborate. Mr Marelli added that UNICRI has published EU-funded guidebooks on the prosecution of CBRN crimes, which could be a useful guide during such an investigation.

15. The third question was on whether the reporting of CBRN incidents was mandatory. To this end, there was no confirmation whether incident reporting was mandatory.

16. The last question addressed to the panel was on the feasibility to expand the BWC-ISU structure to mimic that of the OPCW. In response to the query, Mr Meless shared that the Convention was led by States Parties, and there was a working group looking into strengthening the Convention. He added that work was currently in progress, and targeted to be completed by the end of 2025.

17. Prior to closing the session, Mr Marelli invited the panel to share their thoughts on emerging challenges for their respective areas. For chemical threats, Mr Drissi shared his concerns about the regulation of dual-use chemicals, including the development of new chemical agents with toxic properties that might fall outside

current regulatory controls, new delivery systems, as well as cyber-attacks that could cause the release of hazardous chemicals from chemical plants or storage facilities. Similarly, Mr Meless added that advancements in science and technology had made it more challenging to discriminate a man-made biological event from a naturally occurring one. Finally, Ms Baydoun emphasised the need to bridge gaps between technology, humans, and finance, so as to permit smooth implementation of legal frameworks in the CBR domain.

SESSION III: REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION PROGRAMMES

18. This was a panel session that provided opportunities for expert panellists to share and showcase regional and international cooperation programmes. The panel was moderated by Mr. Adil Radoini, Acting Head of CBRN Programme, UNICRI, and he was joined by Mr. Daniel P. Caporaso, Chief, Regional Cooperative Engagement Office – Indo-Pacific, Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), US Embassy Singapore, Dr. Loke Weng Keong, Director, CTRN Programme, DSO National Laboratories / Head of Secretariat, ASEAN CBR Network, Dr. Chong Chee Kheong, Senior Advisor, ASEAN Mitigation of Biological Threats (MBT) Programme, Mr. Phonesavanh Lathdavong, Director, Radiation and Nuclear Safety Office, Department of Science, Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR / current Chair of the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM), and Mr. Balazs Maar, Programme Manager, Global and Transregional Threats and Challenges, Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), European Commission (EC).

19. DTRA. Mr Caporaso shared that DTRA programmes were very wide ranging. He spoke about regional programmes conducted by DTRA, which included standard operating procedures (SOPs) development, laboratory design, conducting training and inspections. Most of these programmes were based on bilateral agreements, although multi-lateral programmes were not uncommon. One of his observations was that inter-ministerial collaboration could sometimes be more challenging than international collaboration, and this was observed in many countries. The aim of DTRA programmes was to establish a baseline standard and awareness among all countries to eliminate the weakest link at the regional and global level.

20. MBT Programme. Dr Chong, senior advisor to the MBT Programme spoke on the formation of the Programme, with Canada taking the lead to form a network of health experts, with buy-in from the Health Ministries of ASEAN countries. He also highlighted how the MBT Programme provided an interface between security and public health communities, with an emphasis on preparedness. Dr Chong shared that the MBT Programme also conducted two meetings annually, with activities mainly focused on biosecurity, as well as preparedness and response.

21. ASEAN CBR Network. Dr Loke shared with workshop participants that the Network was formed from a common commitment by all ASEAN Defence Ministers to enhance the safety and security of the region. The Network was formed in 2019 and has grown steadily despite challenges posed by COVID-19-induced travel restrictions. He highlighted that the Network provides a platform to hold workshops and annual meetings for ASEAN CBR defence experts to interact and build trust. In addition, the Network was developing a set of Recommended Operating Protocols (ROPs) for CBR Sampling and Analysis Reporting to support the region in coming up with a harmonised approach for handling CBR incidents in the region.

22. ASEANTOM. Dr Lathdavong, the current Chairperson of ASEANTOM, shared that the ASEANTOM Network consists of five technical working groups, namely, (i) Nuclear Safety and Security; (ii) Hazards; (iii) Emergency Response; (iv) Modelling; and (v) Communications. As an ASEAN mechanism, ASEANTOM provides a framework to facilitate cooperation among the nuclear regulatory bodies of ASEAN Member States (AMS) to promote nuclear safety, security, and safeguards in the region.

23. EC FPI. Mr Maar spoke about the principal EU initiatives and programmes for international cooperation on CBRN risk mitigation, and how they range from structural long-term partnerships and living networks such as the EU CBRN CoE, the EU P2P Export Control Programme, the promotion of responsible science at the “International Science and Technology Centre (ISTC)” and “Science and Technology Centre in Ukraine (STCU) to provide financial support to international organisations (such as OPCW, IAEA, BWC-ISU, and the UNSCR 1540 Committee)”. Recent key capacity-building activities in Southeast Asia included: (i) biosafety and biosecurity; (ii) chemical waste management; and (iii) CBRN medical first response. The EU also supported Round-Table Meetings at the regional level to identify and fund capacity-building projects, each typically lasting between three and five years. In addition, he added that the EU also provided methodologies and tools for needs as well as risk assessments.

24. To a participant’s query, representatives from the respective programmes shared the following successful collaboration efforts in the region:

- a. Mr Caporaso, representing US DTRA, highlighted their efforts to support the Philippines with maritime control to prevent possible illegal imports of goods which might include CBR material. Further, DTRA has worked with Malaysia in the development of laboratory safety and risk assessment tools for capacity building towards achieving verification laboratory designation by the OPCW.
- b. Dr Loke, representing the ASEAN CBR Network, highlighted the growing commitment among AMS to address CBR matters through a harmonised approach. Despite initially starting as a defence network, it has expanded

its interactions to involve cooperation with non-defence CBR experts from ASEAN where opportune as well.

- c. Dr Chong, representing the MBT Programme, pointed out the successful set up of the ASEAN Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) at the health division level and training of AMS to execute coordinated response to public health emergencies.
- d. Mr Maar, representing the EU, shared about the successful development of training toolkits for countering CBRN disinformation to guard against disinformation campaigns. In addition, the EU had also supported many cooperative workshops on CBRN forensics, and assisted Cambodia with their SEA Games preparation in the event of a CBRN emergency.
- e. Dr Lathdavong said that ASEANTOM had assisted AMS in setting up environmental monitoring stations. Information regarding radiological safety and monitoring, including lost source material, was shared between AMS as well. The joint hydrological monitoring programme was another initiative currently underway.

25. On the key lessons learnt, the respective agencies shared the following:

- a. Mr Caporaso, representing US DTRA, pointed out the reluctance to share information deemed security sensitive as a hindrance to foster closer cooperation.
- b. Dr Loke, representing the ASEAN CBR Network, shared that CBR issues were challenging due to their rarity and complex technical nature, which render such incidents susceptible to disinformation. This was where the Network could offer support by providing clear, accurate and timely information through sample identification and expert analysis to debunk disinformation.
- c. Dr Chong, representing the MBT Programme, highlighted the importance of multi-sectorial cooperation and the roles diverse stakeholders can play. Public fears and disinformation were cited as key challenges during the management of CBR emergencies.
- d. Dr Lathdavong, representing ASEANTOM, highlighted human resource challenges and the difficulty experienced in convincing some countries to comply with international CBR conventions.
- e. Mr Maar, representing the EU, emphasised the transboundary nature of threats and the need for joint logistical and technical responses. Additionally, the EU also shared that funding support to sustain existing programmes and future initiatives could be a challenge when there were no or few reported CBRN incidents. In effect, the absence of incidents

can potentially be interpreted as an absence of threats, rather than the consequence of successful capacity-building efforts that had supported prevention.

SESSION IV: CBR BREAKOUT GROUPS (WORLD CAFÉ FORMAT)

26. In this session, a total of four questions were posted for discussion.

27. Question 1 sought feedback from workshop participants on the challenges faced in combatting CBR disinformation, and proposed remedies. The appended table summarises participants' responses:

S/N	Challenges	Proposed Remedies
1	Disinformation was disseminated swiftly and can become widespread before responses from official sources.	Participants felt there was a need to establish an incident command system, with defined roles and responsibilities, in advance of CBR events.
2	Lack of legal instruments to regulate disinformation.	Participants felt there was a need to criminalise acts of disinformation and clarification through mainstream media from the government was necessary.
3	Difficulty to discern the source and credibility of information received.	Participants felt there was a need to train and educate the public to verify information sources.
4	New digital platforms (e.g., TikTok) or different social media applications could be misused to proliferate disinformation.	To counteract this, participants felt there was a need to implement tools to monitor the social media space.
5	Disinformation from governmental or non-governmental organisations (NGOs).	Participants expressed the need to implement "pre-bunking" (as opposed to de-bunking), which includes educating people from an early age regarding disinformation, which could be incorporated into school curricula. Participants also noted that there was a fine line between online freedom of speech and what was legally allowed. Some added that establishing an impartial commission was needed to address disinformation.
6	Lack of trust in traditional media (e.g., TV, radio)	Participants expressed the need for governments to utilise social media and social influencers in view of their current close engagement with the public to combat CBR disinformation.

28. In addition, participants deliberated and concluded that decision makers, communication experts, intelligence personnel, CBR technical personnel (including

medical experts), as well as members of civil society and local communities, should be trained to discern disinformation. Specific trainings could be conducted within each specialised domain, and trained personnel should be allowed to take part in joint exercises, where they were expected to “red team” against one another. Young people were identified as particularly susceptible to disinformation, and it was recommended that future awareness campaigns target persons of that age group as well.

29. Question 2 addressed challenges to sharing intelligence, alerts, and information relating to CBR incidents, and solicited participants’ feedback on resolving such challenges. The appended table summarises participants’ responses:

S/N	Challenges	Proposed Remedies
1	a. Lack of inter-agency communication; b. Different national legislation and regulations; and c. Lack of agreement among countries within regions.	Participants expressed the need to establish common platforms and infrastructure, as well as signing memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and agreements for information sharing, to overcome these identified gaps.
2	Lack of trust between States Parties.	Organising and attending activities to promote networking and foster working relationships between States Parties and their points-of-contact (POCs). Participants also pointed out challenges related to turnover, noting it was imperative that replacement POCs were integrated into existing networks.
3	Fear of misinformation / disinformation, resulting in hesitancy and delays to information sharing.	To bridge this gap, participants recognised the need to organise capacity-building activities to enhance knowledge on information verification. Additionally, SOPs should be in place to manage information flows between States Parties. Some participants were in favour of an international or regional organisation (e.g., INTERPOL / ASEANAPOL) serving as an intermediary to facilitate such information exchange.
4	Concerns about the disclosure of information sources and individual country’s intelligence collection methodology.	Instituting MOUs/agreements for information exchange might help to overcome this concern.

30. Question 3 addressed challenges and remedies to requesting regional/international assistance during CBR incidents. The appended table summarises participants’ responses:

S/N	Challenges	Proposed Remedies
1	Sharing of information was not timely due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Concerns of sharing sensitive information; b. Delays in assistance request due to local authorities trying to manage CBR incidents internally; c. Lack of legal agreement between countries; d. Unidentified country focal points to request assistance; e. Lack of information on how to send samples for testing; and f. Different cultures and languages. 	Participants expressed the need to sign MOUs and agreements, as well as designating focal points to share information and communicate requests when assistance is needed following a CBR incidents. In addition, participants also agreed on the proposal to organise voluntary regional drills and exercises to maintain relationships and readiness, as well as to establish guidelines for assistance requests to overcome the identified challenges.
2	Participants also highlighted the lack of the following resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lack of human resources or trained personnel, resulting in inadequate assessment of CBR incidents; b. Lack of logistical support and arrangements; and c. Lack of testing and threat detection infrastructure and equipment. 	Participants felt that every country should be prepared to respond to CBR incidents and should commit resources to build capability/capacity towards achieving this goal. Furthermore, some participants believed that conducting multilateral exercises would help to bridge the gap over the lack of logistical support and arrangements amongst AMS.
3	Participants highlighted the need to manage public perception when handling assistance requests.	To manage public perception, participants felt that there was a need to establish communication teams to convey timely updates to the public during CBR incidents, and to raise public awareness about CBR threats and hazards.
4	As CBR expertise might reside across multiple agencies and countries, the lack of inter-agency coordination and bureaucracy could result in delays in resource mobilisation.	To circumvent this challenge, participants felt that establishing a mechanism for the activation of a CBR response group, as well as enhancing communication between agencies and countries, were necessary.

31. Question 4 addressed the risks and opportunities related to advances in science and technology. Collectively, participants underlined the dual-use nature of advances in science and technology and extended the discussion further to include underlying issues pertaining to: (i) ethical; (ii) digital; and (iii) cybersecurity concerns. Described below were the science and technology areas that participants identified, along with the risks and opportunities:

S/N	Science and Technological Areas of Concern	Risk and opportunities
1	Biotechnology, synthetic biology, and open-source databases	These technologies could be utilised to genetically modify viruses for medical or therapeutic purposes. However, it could also be an enabler for the creation of new pathogens that were more pathogenic and were able to evade treatment and immune responses
2	AI and machine learning	Their predictive capabilities could be used (a) for efficient and high throughput screening of drugs; and therapeutics, and (b) to identify points of alteration or mutation and evade detection by the body's immune system. Alternatively, AI and machine learning could be used to design new chemicals or toxins with enhanced toxicity.
3	3D printing	This has benefited the medical field in terms of tissue engineering, as well as understanding the biology of pathogens in a laboratory environment using 3D printed organoids. Advancements in 3D printing had also introduced new opportunities to print parts needed for improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and CBR delivery systems, especially components that were controlled and not easily available.
4	Drones and robotics	Unmanned vehicles can be used to enhance surveillance, perform sampling and remove contaminated materials without direct human intervention, keeping responders out of harm's way. Conversely, drones had already been used to deliver explosives and could be misused in the future to deliver CBR payloads.
5	Social media	This was an efficient channel to broadcast vital information to the mass population. Conversely, it can also be used for the dissemination of disinformation.
6	Nanotechnology	This technology can be used to enable targeted delivery of therapeutic drugs or misused to deliver CBR materials.
7	Quantum computing	With its high and fast computing power, it could be used to solve complex

		equations very quickly. Alternatively, it could be misused to crack codes, and illegally hack into secure systems to steal data.
8	Blockchain	This technology offers efficiency and transparency to monetary transactions. However, if a mixer or tumbler was applied, the source of funds would no longer be traceable. In such instances, funders financing terrorist groups to carry out CBR attacks would not be easily traced.

TABLE-TOP EXERCISE: EXPLORING GOOD PRACTICES DURING CBR SECURITY INCIDENTS

32. The table-top exercise was designed to enhance participants' knowledge on emergency response procedures during a hypothetical CBR security incident onboard a cruise ship. Participants were expected to consider critical capabilities needed to detect CBR materials and agents and mount an effective response, including coordination between multiple agencies and information-sharing between countries, as well as regional and international partners.

33. Injects 1 and 2 centred on identifying the agencies that should be involved in the response operation and the key considerations and minimum requirements to launch a safe and effective response. Most participants agreed that the military, law enforcement agencies (including the Police, Coast Guard and Civil Defence agencies), national RN regulatory bodies, and the Department/Ministry of Health should be activated for response operations. Military CBR Units should have the detection and response capabilities to (a) locate, seize, and shield the RN material; (b) set up hazard zoning and decontamination points; and (c) evacuate and decontaminate the affected passengers. Law enforcement agencies should be responsible for the arrest of the perpetrator/trafficker, setting up a security cordon to ensure that the perpetrator would not escape from the cruise ship. The regulatory body should contribute RN expertise, as well as detection equipment and reach-back laboratory analysis support. On the other hand, the Department/Ministry of Health would be responsible for the triage and treatment of casualties, if any. The minimum requirements to launch a safe and effective response should also include personal protective equipment (PPE), detection equipment, shielding containment, and decontamination means.

34. Inject 3 was on "Operational Response — Mobilising Response Team". Through this inject, participants noted the need to coordinate and work closely among different agencies to secure the area, perform sampling, conduct investigation, crowd control, coordinate media releases, and manage the medical arrangements and

requirements of affected individuals and the “worried-well”. In their groups, participants were tasked to brainstorm and strategise the demarcation of zones (hot, warm, and cold, respectively), appropriate PPE and sampling tools (for the collection of samples and evidence), and placement of decontamination checkpoints during a CBR incident. Following their deliberations, a representative at each table presented their table’s strategies.

35. Through Inject 4, which focused on the topic of “Requesting International Assistance”, participants learned that it was possible to request IAEA assistance during a radiological incident. Moreover, the IAEA could also financially support the packaging, transport and testing of samples from the requesting country/countries, if necessary. The only shortcoming identified by participants was the concern that the request for IAEA assistance could not be kept confidential, nor could it be sought under the guise of anonymity. Participants were also made aware of the existence of the ASEAN CBR Network’s web portal, which allowed AMS CBR Defence Experts to share information on CBR incidents.

36. Inject 5 focused on combating CBRN disinformation. Mr. Marelli presented on the strategic objectives of CBRN disinformation, notably: (a) to erode trust and credibility of authorities; (b) to cause fear and incite hatred; and (c) financial gain. He discussed how to identify manipulated source material and presented a three-step approach (the “truth sandwich” technique) to debunk disinformation. The technique begins with stating the fact, followed by a warning about the disinformation, indicating what was incorrect in the circulating disinformation, finally replacing the disinformation with the fact, thereby reinforcing the credible information contained in the legitimate source material. Participants were given five different variants of disinformation on the response operation and were tasked to craft counter statements to refute the disinformation.

37. After completion of the table-top exercise, participants shared the following key take-aways:

- a. Participants noted the importance of building strong networks and rapport with: (i) different local agencies within a country; (ii) other countries in a region; and (iii) international organisations. Physical meetings and exercises were deemed conducive to forging such relationships.
- b. Participants said that the exercise allowed them to start thinking about alternative scenarios for future exercises.
- c. Participants expressed interest in replicating and/or adapting the table-top exercise to the national level, as well translating the exercise to physical field exercises in the near future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

38. Participants expressed their appreciation to Singapore and the European Union for their effective co-chairmanship and excellent execution of the ARF Workshop.

