



ONE ASEAN
ONE RESPONSE

DARE
TO
DREAM
CARE
TO
SHARE





**The AHA Centre
Knowledge Series Book #1**

Dare to Dream, Care to Share

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This book chronicles the events and stories that led to the establishment of the AHA Centre and its struggles within its initial period of operationalisation.

The AHA Centre Knowledge Series

Book #1

DARE TO DREAM, CARE TO SHARE

The Journey of Partnership and Progress of the AHA Centre

Steering Committee:

Adelina Kamal
Andrew Mardanugraha
Said Faisal

Writer:

Sally Tirtadihardja

Editor:

William Shea

Book Design:

Bentuk Warna Citra, PT (BWC)

Photos:

Collections of the AHA Centre,
ASEAN Secretariat, and the National
Disaster Management Organisations
of ASEAN Member States

Contributors:

Abdul Razak Abdul Raheem
Adelina Kamal
Adi Bishry
Andrew Mardanugraha
Arnel Capili
Arun Pinta
Chainarong Vasanasomsith
Dhannan Sunoto
Fenny Chandra
Janggam Adityawarma
Kadir Maideen Bin Mohamed
Lee Yam Ming
Mohd Ariff Bin Baharom
Nwet Yin Aye
Ow Yong Tuck Wah
Pengiran Dato’ Paduka Hj Rosli bin Pengiran Hj Chuchu
Prak Kim Hong
Prasong Vongkhamchanh
Rosario T. Cabrera
Said Faisal
Tabrani
Toshihiro Hatta
Van Phu Chinh
Willem Rampangilei
Zin Aung Swee

**DARE TO DREAM
CARE TO SHARE**

**THE JOURNEY OF PARTNERSHIP AND
PROGRESS OF THE AHA CENTRE**

MESSAGES
FROM 10
ASEAN
MEMBER
STATES



“The ACDM had witnessed the AHA Centre’s exponential growth. The AHA Centre also demonstrated its capability to strengthen its roles as the operational engine to the AADMER.”

*Pengiran Dato’ Paduka Hj Rosli bin
Pengiran Hj Chuchu*
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM



“Transforming from a very small centre to the amazing Centre that is recognised by the world has been an amazing task achieved by the AHA Centre. We would also like to express sincere appreciation to the AHA Centre to be interested in seeking the view of Cambodia.”

Prak Kim Hong
CAMBODIA



“I am happy with the establishment of the AHA Centre because I believe that this Centre has contributed a lot to humanity in ASEAN, especially now that we start talking about One ASEAN, One Response as well as being the global leader on disaster management.”

Willem Rampangilei
INDONESIA



“During the last 5 years, the AHA Centre has been playing a very important role in coordinating ASEAN Member States to act as one in case of emergencies. From now on, the AHA Centre needs to reform itself to lead One ASEAN, One Response. To do so, the AHA Centre will have to take initiatives to capitalise everything that each Member State has in order to combat bigger disasters. I hope that the AHA Centre will be the main actor in disaster management.”

Prasong Vongkhamchanh
LAO PDR



“Looking back, we have achieved quite a substantial success. We have to continue to dream big. We want to be the global leader on disaster management, and the potential is definitely there because ASEAN as a whole is very organised and has a lot going on.”

Mohd Ariff Bin Baharom
MALAYSIA



“Now that ASEAN is aiming to be involved at the global level, a strong institution like the AHA Centre becomes even more important.”

Nwet Yin Aye
MYANMAR



“We wish the AHA Centre all the best. More power. May we continue to respond to disasters as one. We continue to join you as One ASEAN One Response.”

Rosario T. Cabrera
THE PHILIPPINES



“The most memorable moment for me was the actual establishment of the AHA Centre itself. For everyone involved, the long years of hard work was finally paid off. Many years after, when the AHA Centre becomes able to coordinate resources and get support from partners to help people in need, it has been really fulfilling to see. We realise that having this coordinating centre helps a lot.”

Lee Yam Ming
SINGAPORE



“Thailand is proud to be part of the establishment of the AHA Centre during Thailand’s chairmanship of the ACDM. In the past 5 years, we have seen the AHA Centre grows from birth to be an active, young, handsome boy who now becomes the star of the show. I would like to see the AHA Centre positions itself as the world-class disaster management and coordinating centre in the world. We would like to see ASEAN flags showing our big heart in times of distress around the world.”

Chainarong Vasanasomsith
THAILAND



“The AHA Centre has proven to be the backbone for assisting cooperation activities among Member States in responding to natural disasters. I believe the AHA Centre will even be stronger through our cooperation to build resilience of the ASEAN Community.”

Van Phu Chinh
VIET NAM

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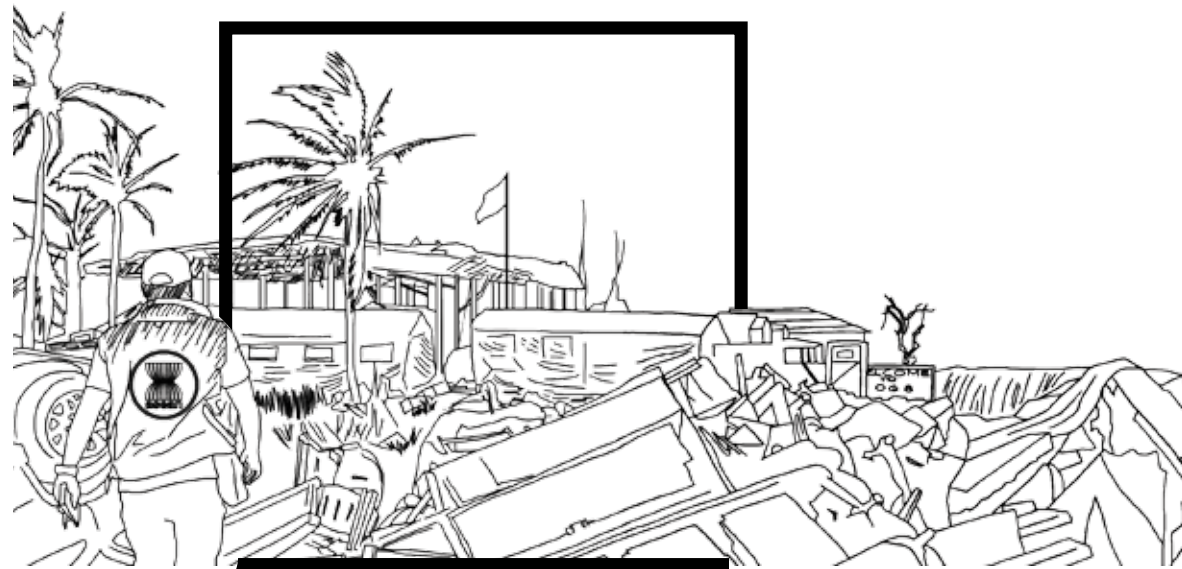
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Arriving on what was once the tarmac of Tacloban local airport, Mr. Arnel Capili, a member of the AHA Centre and ASEAN-ERAT team, was overwhelmed by the devastation that greeted him. As far as his eyes could see, there was nothing left standing. Buildings, electrical poles, trees, all flattened by the 250 kilometre-per-hour winds, compounded by wave after wave of a massive storm surge. Mr. Arnel was standing at Ground Zero of Super Typhoon Haiyan, only two days after it made landfall in the Philippines.

It was the bodies. Everywhere. Under the rubble, uncovered along the open roads. The vision of the dead was permanently imprinted in his mind. Those who survived wandered somewhat aimlessly, seeming to move like zombies in broad daylight. News of lootings and security breaches spread, with people scrambling to find food and fresh water in the wake of the storm. Mr. Arnel understood there would be casualties, but he could not have imagined to this extent. This was a vision that would stay with him for life, ingrained in the memories of himself and those around him.

Mr. Adi Bishry, the AHA Centre's Emergency Telecommunication Specialist, had arrived in Tacloban the day before the typhoon hit, working in a support role with the Philippines' national disaster management agency. While Mr. Adi would experience one of the most truly frightening moments of his life, the communications equipment he delivered would prove to be integral in supporting the response efforts of the Philippines Government. This allowed immediate connection between Tacloban and Manila, at a time when all other communication infrastructure had been wiped out.

1



Southeast Asia is a colourful region, full of diversity and paradox at every turn. Home to more than 600 million people, it is formed from hundreds of ethnicities who, despite their differences, have lived and interacted for centuries in relative tranquillity. Southeast Asia's population is distributed across geographically diverse and contrasting locations; some inhabit tiny islands in the middle of vast oceans, while others sit amongst lush tropical forests or at the tip of the highest mountains. The political landscape of the region is also unique with different government systems such as republics and kingdoms, and they adopt different religions. Yet, however diverse the people may be, there are certain commonalities shared within these cultures and traditions, completely unique to this part of the world.

Today, the Southeast Asia region is quickly becoming a force on the global political scale. Collectively, it forms the third largest economy in Asia, and the seventh in the entire world, with a GDP that has almost doubled in since 2007 ⁽¹⁾. On the 8 August 1967, five countries within the region came together and established the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN), with the aim and purpose to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development, to promote regional peace and stability, and to improve active collaboration and cooperation amongst themselves. This membership has since flourished to include a total of ten nations (Member States), namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The ASEAN Secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The uniqueness of the region is also reflected in its geographic location. It consists across more than four million square kilometres, made up of active volcanoes, tropical islands – big and small – surrounded by open seas, dense rainforests, mountains range and vast open plains. This diverse climate and geography, sitting upon the infamous 'Ring of Fire', has seen the region experience more than its share of major disasters over recent history, with a range of tsunamis, major floods, volcano eruptions, typhoons, cyclones and earthquakes taking their toll. For the ten-year period between 2004 and 2014, more than 350,000 people lost their lives in disasters across the ASEAN region alone. This number made up more than 50 percent of global disaster fatalities in the same period of time, and also caused a total economic loss of US\$91 billion ⁽²⁾.

Keeping in trend with the rest of the world, the ASEAN region has also experienced an increase of extremity in the force of disasters across recent times. The winds are intensifying, earthquakes shake the ground more violently, and coastal areas are increasingly vulnerable to the ocean's furious surges and tsunamis. The region

1) *A Blueprint for Growth - ASEAN Economic Community 2015: Progress and Key Achievements* Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat, November 2015
2) *ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management*; Jakarta; ASEAN Secretariat; 2015

has recently been the centre for massive disasters such as the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004 that claimed the lives of more than 230,000 people in at least six different countries, or the Super Typhoon Haiyan that hit the Philippines in 2013, becoming one of the strongest tropical cyclones on record.

Facing these increasingly inevitable and powerful events, ASEAN Member States quickly realised that their partnership must go beyond the political, social and cultural realms. This had to be considered across all dimensions. Natural disasters know no political boundaries. They strike at anytime and anywhere. In worst-case scenarios, they can make the affected country almost helpless to respond. The time had come for ASEAN Member States to improve regional synergy when managing disasters, forging a path to save lives and provide mutual support, even during the most difficult crisis.

The ASEAN regional cooperation in disaster management was established at the birth of the Declaration of ASEAN Concord 1 in 1976, and the subsequent Declaration on Mutual Assistance on Natural Disasters. As an implementation mechanism, an ASEAN Expert Working Group on Disaster Management was formed, which later, in 2003, transformed into the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM). The ACDM consists of the heads of national agencies or government bodies responsible for disaster management from each of the ASEAN Member States, known as the National Disaster Management Offices (NDMOs). During its first meeting in Brunei Darussalam in 2003, the ACDM agreed to focus towards the strengthening of cooperation to develop a concerted, coordinated and comprehensive regional approach to disaster management.

By early 2004, discussions among Member States regarding a cross-border "arrangement" on disaster management were already taking place, as at the same time the region was experiencing increasingly constant occurrences of medium-scale disasters. The actual form of this arrangement was not yet clear, nor was the justification for its inception, however a range of evidence was gathered, alongside examples of other bi-lateral, regional and international agreements already in existence. Hence, the ACDM felt the need to get the direction from the ministers in charge of disaster management on the form of the arrangement, and suggested that a ministerial meeting on disaster management should be convened to make the decision on the way forward.

Later that year, on the 7th December, during the 1st ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM), members of ACDM recommended to the Ministers of Member States the need for a regional

instrument on Disaster Management and Emergency Response, which was later named the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER). At the later stage during the negotiation meetings, an “Agreement” was considered as a more appropriate form than a “Declaration”, as it was believed that an agreement would be more binding and show stronger commitment of all parties involved.

The ministers then instructed the ACDM to begin the negotiation process and allowed a maximum of one-year period to negotiate and finalise the instrument. Little did the ACDM delegates and other participants know, but less than three weeks after this historical meeting took place, one of the biggest natural disasters in mankind’s history was about to strike numerous countries including four countries in the ASEAN region, and shake the entire region to its core.



Indian Ocean Tsunami
December 2004

WAVE OF FORCE TOWARDS REGIONAL COOPERATION

Indian Ocean Tsunami

December 2004

In the early hours of the 26 December 2004, whilst many parts of the world were still celebrating Christmas, giant walls of Indian Ocean water violently struck at least six countries across Asia. This tsunami, caused by a huge earthquake in the Indian Ocean, wreaked havoc across four ASEAN Member States, namely Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Myanmar. The tsunami waves reached up to 30 metres high, taking the lives of more than 230,000 people, and completely devastating the countries' coastal regions. On that one night, and across many more that followed, the world witnessed the results of one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history.

The sheer size of the humanitarian disaster caused by the giant tsunami compelled ASEAN to act. Within several days on 6 January 2005, Indonesia hosted the Special ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on Aftermath of Earthquake and Tsunami in Jakarta. The meeting was an important decision by ASEAN to show leadership within the region that, although hugely shaken, would still stand tall. The Indian Ocean Tsunami increased the realisation within ASEAN regarding the importance of developing a regional mechanism to collectively address and strengthen response to such large-scale disasters and overall emergency management.

As a result of this Special ASEAN Leaders' Meeting, the Leaders produced a document named the "Declaration on Action to Strengthen Emergency Relief, Rehabilitation,

Reconstruction and Prevention of the Aftermath of Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster of 26 December 2004", in which the ASEAN nations firmly agreed to establish a regional instrument on disaster management and emergency response. The Indian Ocean Tsunami provided a momentum to expedite the finalisation of the instrument. Even from the depths of disaster and despair, the tsunami was the catalyst that planted the seed for the birth of the AHA Centre, as the Leaders also supported the decision to establish an ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Centre, as provided in the ASEAN Security Community Plan of Action.

The leadership role taken by ASEAN during the Indian Ocean Tsunami was a valuable turning point for all Member States. It showed the importance of asserting leadership within the affected country when managing a disaster, which has since become one of the most important principles of the AHA Centre when disaster strikes. Leadership from the affected country is imperative during response, while the region supports and strengthens such leadership to save lives and mitigate damage.

2



While busily responding to and supporting recovery after the Indian Ocean Tsunami, ASEAN Member States pushed to find a way to finalise and implement the regional instrument on disaster management. It had become clearer than ever that tangible actions must be taken for ASEAN to improve its disaster management practices. With disasters such as this ready to strike at any time, the need for ASEAN preparedness was imperative. It was at this time that the ACDM formed a Negotiating Committee, consisting of ACDM members, as well as legal representatives from each Member State.

During its first meeting, the Negotiating Committee realised that an institution or a body was required to operationalise the regional instrument on disaster management. This institution was to be a permanent organisation that performs operational tasks on day-to-day basis, transforming decisions into actions, including quickly responding to disaster emergencies in the region. The ACDM was not considered as an appropriate institution, as it was designed to be a decision-making body related to policies, and only met twice a year. ASEAN Secretariat was also originally considered, however a difference in mandate made this an unviable option. The institution needed to be independent from the ASEAN Secretariat, as it would be required to act swiftly during disasters, would utilise different sets of expertise, and would be directed by different operational procedures. Finally, the concept of the “ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Centre” was considered as the recommended operational institution.

The two greatest challenges faced by the Negotiating Committee were the name for the operational institution, as well as the Member States’ funding contributions. In relations to the name, one suggestion that emerged at that time was for the name to be the “ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Centre”, as indicated in the ASEAN Security Community Plan of Action; However, much discussion was done on the word “humanitarian assistance” since some argued that the term could indicate that the centre would manage disasters created by conflicts as well. Furthermore, in order to emphasise the coordinating role of the centre in facilitating assistance among Member States, the Negotiating Committee agreed to add on the word “Coordinating” within the name, and the words “disaster management” to ensure the centre only focus on disaster management. Combining all of the words, one of complete names proposed for the centre was the “ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance”. At the end, the Member States finally reached a consensus that the name was to be the “ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management” or, in short, the AHA Centre.

Funding contributions formed another important consensus reached by the Member States, contributions that would be used to implement AADMER, including the operationalisation of the AHA Centre. In the beginning, the discussion was split between those who wanted the ASEAN Disaster Management and Emergency Relief Fund (ADMER Fund) to be annual, equal and mandatory among all Member States, and those who wanted it to be voluntary. In the end, the Member States agreed that they would contribute annually, and that the contributed amount would be chosen voluntarily.

Many sleepless night and tough negotiations had finally paid off. These crucial negotiation points were drafted into a truly comprehensive document, which became one of the first documents of its kind in the world. It clearly represented ASEAN solidarity and leadership on disaster management, and was appropriately named the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response or AADMER. Overall, the entire negotiation process played out across four months, much faster than anticipated when the initial one-year timeframe was provided in December 2004 mostly because of the haunting feeling that a major disaster such as the Indian Ocean Tsunami would hit ASEAN region again at any time soon.

The development of AADMER was a notable achievement for ASEAN, as it was not a process solely based on untested concepts or others’ experiences. A large portion of its development was built upon personal experience, directly felt by ASEAN Member States when managing and responding to disasters, particularly through the Indian Ocean Tsunami response. These experiences were well-backed by numerous studies and examples from home and abroad. This ensured that AADMER was truly “ASEAN”, and would become the basis of a progressive framework to develop regional cooperation in disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery.

Within AADMER, the AHA Centre was specifically mentioned. It stated that the AHA Centre shall be established for the purpose of facilitating cooperation and coordination among Member States, as well as with relevant United Nations and international organisations in disaster management. Importantly, the word “coordination” in the name of the AHA Centre, pertains that it was not established to respond directly to disasters on its own or to replace the role of the affected country. Rather, one of its major roles is to provide support for the government of the affected country, including to coordinate incoming support from other Member States and other parties. It is imperative that all actions undertaken by the AHA Centre are done so to promote regional collaboration that add values to all Member States. With these advancements, finally the ASEAN mechanism for regional disasters was being born.

3



Discussions and negotiations within and between governments can be a lengthy and complex affair, and the process of ratifying AADMER was definitely subject to this phenomenon. Whilst governments undertook their own internal processes to ratify AADMER, the ACDM promoted the proper and speedy processing of the essential aspects within the agreement, including everything pertained to the setup of the AHA Centre. Disaster was bound to strike indiscriminately, and ASEAN aimed to be in a better overall position to respond to any impending disaster as a united front.

While AADMER mentioned the need to establish the AHA Centre, it did not specify where it should be located. The Government of Indonesia, during the 39th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting (AMM) in July 2006, offered to host the AHA Centre. This offer then was endorsed by the Member States in 40th AMM in July 2007, a year later. Today, this decision that the AHA Centre would be located in Jakarta, the same city where the ASEAN Secretariat is located, gives several advantages. For example, coordination with Secretary General of ASEAN as the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator (SG-AHAC) becomes easier and the AHA Centre can efficiently coordinate with ambassadors of ASEAN.

One of the first steps was an initial study conducted by the ASEAN Secretariat on the establishment of the AHA Centre. This study led to two regional workshops to develop the concept of operations and other necessary requirements needed by the AHA Centre to start its interim activities. In October 2007, the Interim AHA Centre was already set up and located in BAKORNAS-PB (Indonesian National Disaster Management Coordinating Board) building in Jakarta, Indonesia. The term “interim” would allow the AHA Centre to begin undertaking the basic functions of monitoring disasters, and gathering and sharing information while the ratification process continued. The Interim AHA Centre was then established and managed by Indonesia. The Government of Indonesia appointed Mr. Tabrani as the Executive Director of Interim AHA Centre and provided necessary resources, including three staff, office and its basic equipment.

The key activities of the Interim AHA Centre at that time were primarily focused to disaster monitoring and analysis, with information disseminated to Member States and other relevant parties. Moreover, the Interim AHA Centre developed database on earmarked assets and capacities, which may be available for the regional standby arrangements for disaster relief and emergency response. The Interim AHA Centre also participated in regional events, such as ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise (ARDEX). In

2007, the Interim AHA Centre participated in communications exercise to test connectivity with Member States operations centres. Meanwhile, in 2008, the Interim AHA Centre participated again in ARDEX in Pattaya, Thailand, with bigger role in field simulation. As a newly formed regional team, this exercise proved to be a key motivation to improve and to assert stronger leadership in many similar regional events that were to follow. The Interim AHA Centre provided many valuable lessons that led to the AHA Centre’s development in the years to come.



Cyclone Nargis
Myanmar, May 2008

Cyclone Nargis that hit Myanmar on 2-3 May 2008 gained attention of the world since end of April when it started to develop around the Bay of Bengal. It made landfall in Myanmar' Yangon and Ayeyarwady Divisions and brought massive destruction of infrastructure, property and livelihoods. Took as many as 140,000 precious lives, Cyclone Nargis struck 37 townships, covering a total area of 23,500 square kilometres, making it the eighth deadliest cyclone recorded in global history. This formed the worst natural disaster in the history of Myanmar with the total cost of damage estimated at US\$ 4.1 billion.

ASEAN's response to Cyclone Nargis was in line with the spirit and purpose of AADMER, although at the time of Nargis, the agreement had not yet entered into force. ASEAN rose to the humanitarian challenge by activating the Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP), which provided situation updates, around-the-clock monitoring and recommendations for action, including the eventual first deployment of the ASEAN Emergency Rapid Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT).

This first deployment of the ASEAN-ERAT provided recommendation for the establishment of the ASEAN-led coordinating mechanism, whereby ASEAN supported the Government of Myanmar to coordinate international humanitarian assistance with the back-up of the United Nations and the international humanitarian community. The then Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, was appointed as the Chair of the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force which set priorities in relations to the ASEAN-led initiative and provided policy directives to the Yangon-based Tripartite Core Group (TCG). TCG consisted of the Government of Myanmar as the Chair, ASEAN and United Nations to perform the overall operational coordination.

Cyclone Nargis provided an opportunity for ASEAN to test its collective response to a major disaster within the region, and marked the first time that AADMER was activated and tested in a real-life disaster situation. Within hours of the Cyclone striking, the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, performing the functions of the AHA Centre, had sprung into action, alerting all relevant ASEAN focal points to prepare to mobilise emergency assistance to Myanmar. ASEAN Secretariat then tasked Ms. Adelina Kamal to set up a coordinating office in Yangon, Myanmar in order to closely work with the government

and international humanitarian community. As the humanitarian operations continued on to the recovery stage, the Secretary-General of ASEAN appointed Dr. William Sabandar as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, to be based in Yangon.

This response was historical for the region because it was the first time ever that ASEAN played a coordinating role in a massive scale disaster. The then UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Sir John Holmes, stated that “Nargis showed us a new model of humanitarian partnership, adding the special position and capabilities of the ASEAN to those of the United Nations in working effectively with the government.”

Alongside this, ASEAN's leading role in coordinating the post-Nargis response and recovery effort in Myanmar provided valuable inputs, lessons learned, as well as tools and mechanisms to be further adapted and utilised in the ongoing implementation of AADMER and the establishment of the AHA Centre. ASEAN experience in post-Nargis response and recovery led to the decision by ASEAN Leaders in 2009 that the Secretary-General would also serve as the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator (SG-AHAC) during major natural disaster or pandemic.

4



Much of the Interim AHA Centre's background work was put on hold during the response to Cyclone Nargis, with all resources channelled into the support of Myanmar. However, as the response itself wound down, a key milestone in the development process was achieved; namely the ratification of AADMER by all Member States, which took place in December 2009. Four years after the signing of AADMER, the ratification was a major achievement, a relief for all involved, and the next key stepping stone in the establishment of the AHA Centre.

Soon after AADMER entered into force, the Government of Indonesia reaffirmed its readiness to expedite the process of hosting the AHA Centre in Jakarta, but realised the importance of having another separate agreement. This agreement would express particular arrangements, such as privileges and immunities, organisational structure, funding contributions from Member States, and the development of a supervisory mechanism through the Governing Board of the AHA Centre.

The Governing Board of the AHA Centre consists of members of the NDMOs, who are also members of ACDM. With this type of arrangement, the overall policy development and decisions, which are made by the ACDM, and activities of the AHA Centre, as the operational engine of AADMER, could be synergised. At the same time, having a Governing Board allows the AHA Centre to discuss issues and challenges, reporting work plan and progress, as well as receive decisions, guidance and directions specific only to the operations of the AHA Centre.

The urgency to establish the AHA Centre was reflected in Chairman's statements during 15th ASEAN Summit in October 2009, in which the ACDM was instructed to ensure the development of a fully operational AHA Centre. By then the ACDM recognised the need to form a special task force, whose main objective was to expedite the process of establishment of the AHA Centre. Knowing that the ACDM met only twice a year, it would be difficult for the ACDM to dedicate attention to the AHA Centre since they also had so many other issues to discuss. Therefore, setting up a task force with specific focus and ability to meet more often to speed up the establishment of the AHA Centre was the recommended option at that time. The ACDM Task Force aimed to develop and secure approvals for the drafts of the ASEAN Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre, the Host Country Agreement, the Concept of Operations, as well as other arrangements necessary for the full operationalisation AHA Centre. The ACDM Task Force was initially headed by Mr. Glenn J. Rabonza from the

Philippines, who was also the sitting Chair of the ACDM, with members from Singapore (Vice Chair of ACDM), Indonesia as host country, the Interim AHA Centre, and the ASEAN Secretariat.

While completion of these discussions and negotiations took over a year from the ratification of AADMER, all involved understood the sense of urgency, and worked strongly in a mutually supportive manner. There was an identifiable common theme that motivated all parties through the establishment period, that theme being the wish to witness ASEAN members providing the primary assistance and support before all others during times of disaster.

Previously, Member States had agreed that the ADMER Fund would be an annual but voluntary contribution. However, it was agreed that a specific fund was needed for the AHA Centre, and it would be annual and equal to ensure predictability of resources. One of most important issues related to the AHA Centre Fund was on the Member States' contributions amount. The initial amount proposed based on the study conducted by the ASEAN Secretariat was about USD100,000 per year per Member State for the AHA Centre to carry on its complete functions. The Member States, however, were in different opinions regarding the amount for the AHA Centre Fund. At the end, the Member States decided that the AHA Centre should start "lean and mean" first and gradually grow. Therefore, the annual equal contribution was agreed at USD30,000 per year per Member States for the first three years. Reaching this consensus was an accomplishment in itself since at that time apart from the ASEAN Secretariat, the AHA Centre was the only ASEAN centre known that was financed through annual and equal contribution from Member States. The key point was to show that without such strong funding commitments, the AHA Centre could well be closed or fail to achieve its purpose due to unavailability of funding.

Another important factor in the successful establishment of the AHA Centre was the strong commitment demonstrated by the Host Country by establishing a National Task Force in 2010. This task force was dedicated to expedite the establishment of the AHA Centre, particularly related to duties and responsibilities of Indonesia as the Host Country. The task force focused on several main components, such as the office establishment, legal issues related to the Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre, staffing, funding, programmes, and the launching of the AHA Centre. The National Task Force was formed as a parallel group to the ACDM

Task Force. It was headed by Mr. Willem Rampangilei, then the Deputy Coordinating Minister of Social Welfare, and Dr. William Sabandar, who was the former Special Envoy of the ASEAN Secretary-General during post-Nargis recovery, served as the Executive Secretary. It is also important to mention that the Steering Committee of this task force was chaired by a Coordinating Minister with members consisted of various ministers. The creation of this high-level National Task Force proved to be effective as it provided a forum for different agencies to resolve issues. Another momentum that accelerated the establishment of the AHA Centre was the fact that Indonesia would be the next Chair of ASEAN and the host of ASEAN Summit in the following year, when the agreement was expected to be signed.

Both the ACDM Task Force and the National Task Force worked in parallel and very closely together through several joint meetings. This resulted in the finalisation on the Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre, agreed annual and equal contributions, and a fully renovated office for the AHA Centre. It was also successful obtaining support from Dialogue Partners, including ICT support from the Government of Japan for the Emergency Operations Centre of the AHA Centre. These positive developments helped propel the decision that a “Provisional AHA Centre” should be established to take advantage of momentum gained.

5



Following the conclusion of the previous Interim AHA Centre, the ACDM agreed to establish the Provisional AHA Centre as a 'parallel' approach while waiting for the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre (the Agreement) and the official launch of the AHA Centre. The establishment of the Provisional AHA Centre was necessary so that initial facilities for operations room and office could be utilised, opportunities from donors could be translated into projects, and awareness and momentum of AHA Centre could be maintained.

This Provisional AHA Centre was initially tasked with such actions as developing ICT, undertaking disaster monitoring and response, and developing partnerships, operational procedures and preparing for the official launch of the AHA Centre. The Provisional AHA Centre was still being resourced by the Government of Indonesia as the Host Country, but open to support from Member States, donors and partners. It was also agreed that the staffing of the Provisional AHA Centre would take place through secondments from the Host Country, although it could receive staff voluntarily seconded from Member States, or include project staff hired by donors and partners. This was without doubt a large and unknown journey for the Provisional AHA Centre.

The Government of Indonesia, through the National Task Force, appointed Mr. Said Faisal as the Executive Director of the Provisional AHA Centre in early 2011. Mr. Said was assigned by his chief, Dr. Kuntoro Mangkusubroto, the then Head of President's Delivery Unit for Development Monitoring and Oversight (UKP4), who was also the former Minister for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias post-tsunami (BRR). Prior to this appointment, Mr. Said was the Deputy Minister for BRR and thereafter Senior Advisor to the Special Envoy of Secretary-General of ASEAN for post-Nargis recovery in Myanmar.

During his initial days in the office, Mr. Said was the only individual working for the AHA Centre. Not quite sure where to start, he would bring his own personal laptop and flash drive, working from a modest office of the Provisional AHA Centre in Jakarta. As a reminder of the emptiness of the office and a humble beginning of the AHA Centre that greeted Mr. Said on his first day, he remembers an Office Boy knocking on his door, enquiring if he would like a drink. Mr. Said replied that he would like a coffee, to which the boy told him that they had no coffee, let alone the cups to serve it.

One of the early decisions made by the Provisional AHA Centre was to request the support of the ASEAN Secretariat, specifically Mr. Dhannan Sunoto as the former Director of Cross-Sectoral Cooperation Department,

and Ms. Adelina Kamal, as the former Head of Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance Division of the ASEAN Secretariat. Alongside this, the New Zealand Government provided consultants who, together with Mr. Dhannan, Mr. Said and Ms. Adelina, guided the Provisional AHA Centre through the development of its first ever strategic plan.

The Provisional AHA Centre was also supported by United States Forest Service (USFS) to develop Standard Operating Procedures, manuals and guidelines for their work. These documents would be developed and improved in the years to come, growing to form the core of the organisation's policy and procedures as the AHA Centre evolved. Meanwhile, the Government of Japan, through Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF), supported the Provisional AHA Centre by providing ICT equipment and expert knowledge, which in particular supported the development of a state-of-the-art Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), that would become the "heart" of all AHA Centre emergency responses. As the Lead Shepherd/Chair of ICT under the ACDM, Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) provided technical leadership and expertise to the Provisional AHA Centre when the Government of Japan approved the ICT Phase 1 Project.

The tremendous support received from many individuals and organisations during this primary stage cannot be underestimated. The support from the Host Country, ASEAN Member States and Dialogue Partners throughout the early years of the AHA Centre allowed the Provisional AHA Centre to quickly stand on its own two feet and begin creating tangible outcomes. The ASEAN Secretariat was also incredibly generous with its support of the AHA Centre, increasing the opportunities and capacity of the team to work when resources were extremely tight. This show of faith in the Provisional AHA Centre placed it firmly in the position to accomplish many of its goals.

During this short period of time, the Provisional AHA Centre built awareness of its existence by participating in various events, workshops and conferences, even playing a major role in few of them, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum - Disaster Relief Exercise (ARF-DiREx) in Manado, Indonesia in 2011, participated by various countries around the world, including the ten ASEAN Member States, as well as UN agencies and other organisations. At that time, the Provisional AHA Centre was represented by the Executive Director, the only person working at the centre. Despite that, the AHA Centre was active in the ARF-DiREx by continuously projecting the presence of AHA Centre, and voicing its main mandate and functions to gain the attention of the

world. This event increased the curiosity levels of all stakeholders involved regarding the existence of the AHA Centre. The ARF-DiREx showcased a developing sense of understanding and feeling of ownership over the AHA Centre by the ASEAN Member States engaged.

One interesting moment during the event was the debate on the roles and mandates of the AHA Centre and the UN. While the UN is tasked by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) for coordinating international humanitarian assistance, the AHA Centre is given the mandate through AADMER to facilitate cooperation and coordination of Member States during disaster emergencies in the ASEAN region. This difference in perspectives opened more opportunities to understand each other better, to continue dialogues and to strengthen partnerships between the AHA Centre and the UN, in particular UNOCHA, that continue that flourish until this day.

Structurally, the Provisional AHA Centre consisted of an Executive Director and team members who would be responsible for four different functions, namely Preparedness and Response, Risk Assessment, Early Warning and Monitoring, ICT Development, and Administration. Since the first immediate goal of the Provisional AHA Centre was to create momentum and display real results, it was necessary to build a strong, full time team with passions and proven credibility.

Mr. Adi Bishry was one of the first experts to join the Provisional AHA Centre, seconded by the Government of Indonesia. One of his first tasks was to support the AHA Centre develop its basic and preliminary ICT system, which was simply some desktop computers and the internet. Later on, Mr. Adi was selected to support the AHA Centre full time, based upon the availability of Japanese Government funding. Around the same time, Mr. Janggam Adityawarma submitted his application for the Expert on Risk Assessment, Early Warning and Monitoring position, also funded by Japan. Mr. Janggam, who had previously worked in Banda Aceh on tsunami-related projects, submitted his application, went through selection process and finally became the second staff member to join the AHA Centre.

Mr Janggam recalls that as the first group of team members within the AHA Centre, there wasn't much thought given to the conditions at that time, and they basically took on whatever was required of them, even just setting up meetings or moving around tables, chairs and equipment. Everything was new and exciting, providing

freedom for them to experience different tasks and try a range of possible solutions. At that early stage, undertaking basic tasks such as monitoring and sharing information could be a challenge in itself, as data was scattered and reports were often provided in local languages. On top of this, there was also a need for trial-and-error testing with a range of different software available at that time, in order to determine one that would be most useful for all Member States. This resulting software would later be named ASEAN Disaster Information Network (ADINet), which is still in use today, and enables the AHA Centre to document a range of disasters taking place in the region within specific time period. Having full time and experienced team members, who were able to translate decisions into actions, was one of the key success factors for the Provisional AHA Centre to start carrying out its mandated functions.

The existence of the Provisional AHA Centre was a parallel approach to the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre. There was a 'two-track' approach being taken within ASEAN at the time; the first track was 'political', with a focus to getting the Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre agreed and signed by all ten Member States. The second track was 'operational', that focused towards more operational issues such as the office, the EOC, staffing, IT equipment and standard operating procedures. This pioneering and action-oriented approach was proven to be effective. On 17 November 2011, not only that the Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre (the Agreement) was finally signed by ASEAN Foreign Ministers at the 19th ASEAN Summit in Bali, witnessed by ASEAN Heads of State/ Government, but also the AHA Centre was ready to operate. By then the office was fully renovated, new state-of-the-art Emergency Operations Centre was already in place, key team members were ready, and the strategic work plan was prepared for implementation.

EVENTS LEADING TO
THE BIRTH OF THE AHA CENTRE

8 Aug

24 Feb

26 Jun

7 Oct

6 Jan

18-22 Jan

1967

BANGKOK
DECLARATION

Commitment 1976 of ASEAN to promote regional co-operation in Southeast Asia in the spirit of equality and partnership and thereby contribute towards peace, progress and prosperity in the region

1976

DECLARATION
OF ASEAN
CONCORD I

Member countries shall extend assistance for relief of Member Countries in distress.

1976

ASEAN
DECLARATION
ON MUTUAL
ASSISTANCE
ON NATURAL
DISASTERS

Cooperation in improving disaster management capacities, and mutual assistance in case of calamities.

2003

DECLARATION
OF ASEAN
CONCORD II

Intensify cooperation in addressing problems with, inter alia, disaster management.

2004

INDIAN OCEAN
TSUNAMI

2004-
2010

ASEAN
REGIONAL
PROGRAMME
ON DISASTER
MANAGEMENT
(2004-2010)

Includes implementation of an ASEAN Response Action Plan.

2005

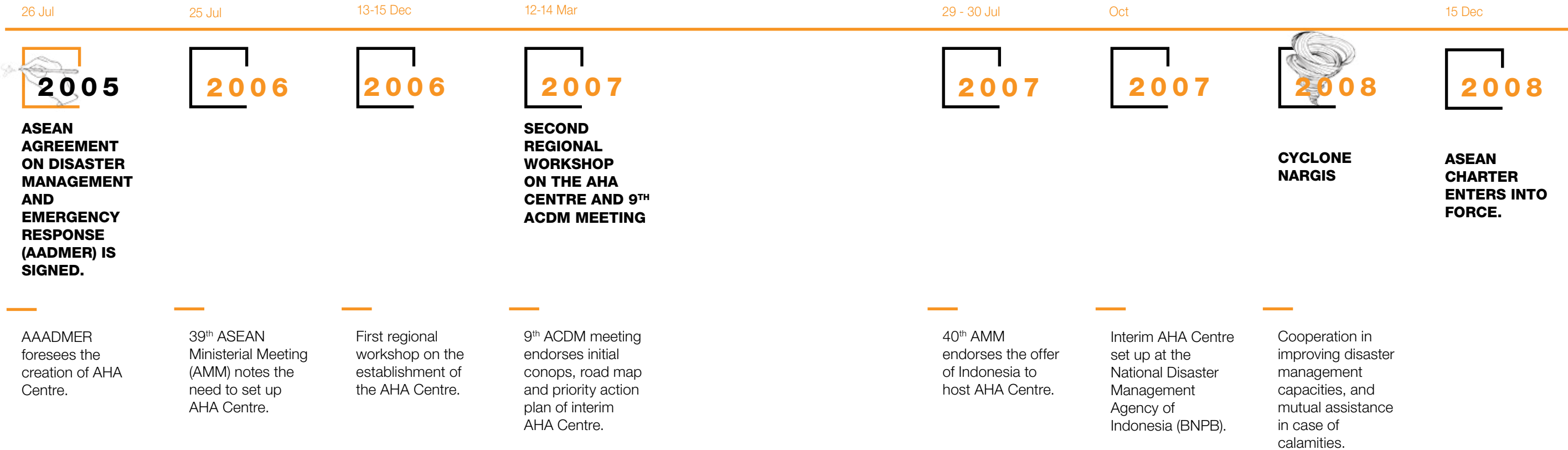
Declaration on Action to Strengthen Emergency Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Prevention in the Aftermath of the Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster of 26 December 2004

2005

HYOGO
DECLARATION
AND HYOGO
FRAMEWORK
OF ACTION

Strengthening regional approaches to disaster response.





23-25 Oct

2009

**HUA HIN
DECLARATION
ON THE
ROADMAP OF
THE ASEAN
COMMUNITY
(2009-2015)**

15th ASEAN Summit, Cha-am Hua Hin, instructs ACDM to set up a fully functioning AHA Centre.

1 Dec

2009

14th ACDM meeting sets up task force to establish AHA Centre. ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) enters into force.

30 Oct

2010

17TH ASEAN SUMMIT

ASEAN leaders looking forward for operationalisation of the AHA Centre

23-25 Feb

2011

17TH MEETING OF ACDM

ACDM agrees on steps to set up provisional AHA Centre.

8 May

2011

18TH ASEAN SUMMIT

The Chairman of ASEAN reaffirms commitment to ensure effective operation of AHA Centre and reaffirms importance of establishing AHA Centre.

19 Jul

2011

44TH ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING

Ministers agree on the content of the Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre.

9-10 Sep

2011

18TH ACDM MEETING

States announce readiness to sign AHA Centre Agreement.

17 Nov

2011

19TH ASEAN SUMMIT IN BALI, INDONESIA

Signing of Agreement on the Establishment of AHA Centre.

6



17 November 2011 was a truly a historical day for the AHA Centre. It was the day when all 10 Member States finally signed the Agreement of the Establishment of the ASEAN Co-ordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management. The key points relating to the AHA Centre's existence are stated clearly within this 14-page document, points that were the centre of discussions and negotiations for almost two years following the ratification of AADMER by all ASEAN Member States. It re-emphasised the AHA Centre's purpose as an organisation that facilitates cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member States, relevant United Nations and other international organisations related to disaster management and emergency response across the region. From the very beginning, the AHA Centre was to mean more than just the creation of a new organisation. It embodies a higher ideal of ASEAN strength and solidarity, especially during times of great need.

The signing of the Agreement, and the initial readiness of the Provisional AHA Centre to operate did not mean that the job was done. Although significant progress had been made, there was a need for ASEAN to solve numerous new challenges that were emerging. At the time, there were several critical issues faced by the AHA Centre, mainly based on operational and financial gaps, which even had the possibility of resulting in temporary closure of the AHA Centre before it even had the chance to begin. The ACDM needed to immediately convene a meeting to address these critical issues, however, the regular meetings of ACDM were usually twice per year, and the next meeting was scheduled to take place the first quarter of 2012. The solution was to conduct a Special ACDM Session on the AHA Centre in Jakarta, Indonesia, before the end of 2011.

During December 2011, participants of the Special ACDM Session on the AHA Centre visited the newly renovated AHA Centre office on the 17th Floor of the BPPT Building in Jakarta. Huddled in a meeting room surrounded by clear glass, overlooking the busy city of Jakarta, a number of strategic decisions were made. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Abdul Razak Abdul Raheem, representing the national focal point of Singapore, and sitting as the ACDM Chair. The meeting was convened with the understanding of the reality that unless financial and operational gaps were addressed, the AHA Centre could face a "death upon arrival" scenario, in which the Agreement was signed, the office facilities and EOC were ready, but the AHA Centre would have to be closed down even before it could begin its operations. As the AHA Centre was designed to be a long-term institution, all parties involved believed that the sustainability of this organisation should be discussed and ensured very early on.

One of the core issues for sustainability was the means by which the AHA Centre would be funded. Within the Agreement it was stated that Member States' contribution was to be annual and equal. Despite the fact that the Member States agreed to contribute funding for the operationalisation of the AHA Centre, it would not automatically mean that the fund was ready to use. The ASEAN Member States would need time to undergo internal process and transfer their contributions into the AHA Centre Fund. Therefore, finding a solution to bridge this financial gap was imperative. The ACDM also highlighted the need for the AHA Centre to find additional funding to support its operations and activities.

One of the potential funding sources to bridge this financial gap was through initial funding of AUD1 million offered by the Australia-Indonesia Facility for Disaster Reduction (AIFDR), co-managed by Australia and BNPB of Indonesia. This fund was already set aside to support ASEAN on disaster management, and therefore could be utilised to support the AHA Centre. However, this fund could only be utilised by the AHA Centre if the ACDM agreed to accept. While different views exchanged during the Special Meeting on utilising Australian funds to support the AHA Centre, the ACDM finally reached consensus that the funding was critical if they were to bridge the financial gaps.

The meeting then discussed options on managing the Australian fund for the AHA Centre, either through procuring a management service provider to recruit and manage the staff contracts, or having the ASEAN Secretariat taking on the role of hiring staff and managing the fund. The AHA Centre was not yet ready to perform such tasks, as it did not have the human resources, or even its own bank account. After considering proposals and offers from potential management service providers, it was clear that it would be a costly procedure. Therefore, the meeting requested the ASEAN Secretariat to support the AHA Centre to recruit team members and to manage the fund.

The support of the Government of Australia was timely, strategic and critical to help maintaining operational sustainability, as then the existing funding support from the Government of Indonesia and the Government of Japan was due to end in December 2011. Therefore, the funding from Australia helped kick-start the long, unique and unforgettable journey towards the AHA Centre as we know it today. The trust, support and the confidence shown by ASEAN Member States and partners have been a key factor in the progression and success of AHA Centre as a whole.

Further addressing the operational gaps, the Special ACDM Session on the AHA Centre discussed in detail the formation and shape of the AHA Centre's structure. There were strong discussions on staffing numbers between having 7 members or 13. The preference for a smaller number was based on the view that the AHA Centre should start with leaner structure, due to the concern that the Australia's support may only available until the end of 2012. Meanwhile, another perspective was that an adequate number of team members was integral to allow enough resources so that the AHA Centre could function immediately and show results. Finally, the Member States agreed on 13 team members, after considering various operational aspects and addressing the issue of sustainability through a mix of funding between the AHA Centre Fund and support from Dialogue Partners and other partners. The initial structure of the AHA Centre would consist of an Executive Director, heads of divisions and officers.

To ensure the operationalisation of the AHA Centre, the meeting agreed to extend the services of the existing Executive Director and other current team members. Moving forward, the ACDM also agreed to remove the term "provisional" from the name of the AHA Centre, and to use "AHA Centre" in all its communications and correspondence. The ACDM would serve as the Governing Board for the AHA Centre, until such time that the Governing Board was fully implemented. Furthermore, in this meeting the ACDM confirmed the endorsement of the AHA Centre's Strategic Plan.

For the Member States to be able to transfer the annual and equal contribution to the AHA Centre, a Conference of Parties (COP) to AADMER had to be held to endorse the amount. The COP is a ministerial body that oversees AADMER implementation, and hadn't been held since the AADMER entered into force in December 2009. This meeting finally took place on 15-16 March 2012, in Jakarta, Indonesia. Preceding the COP, the 19th ACDM Meeting was held on 13-14 March 2012 where Member States discussed, among a range of topics, financial rule for ADMER Fund, which was then to be presented to the COP 1 for adoption. Within this financial rule of ADMER Fund was the provision that the Executive Director of the AHA Centre would be given the authority to release a specific amount of the ADMER Fund per incident.

The discussion then expanded after members realised that the AHA Centre had not yet formally appointed an Executive Director, who must be appointed by the ACDM as the Governing Board of the AHA Centre, and agreed by all ten Member States. It also became clear that the Executive Director of the Provisional AHA

Centre was a seconded member, and was soon to be called back to his previous role within the Government of Indonesia. The best process for appointing the first Executive Director of the AHA Centre was then discussed, with some Member States directly nominating Mr. Said to be appointed as the Executive Director of the AHA Centre. After taking on-board the opinion of each Member State, the meeting unanimously agreed that Mr. Said would serve as the first Executive Director of the AHA Centre for the coming three years, and this appointment to be brought to the COP for endorsement.

In the following COP Meeting, the ministers agreed on the amount of contribution for the following three years, with the amount to be reviewed after 2014. Furthermore, the 1st COP endorsed the ACDM decision to appoint Mr. Said Faisal as the first Executive Director of the AHA Centre, and he was tasked to immediately operationalise the AHA Centre. The appointment of the Executive Director was formalised by the Governing Board during its 1st Meeting in October 2014 in Brunei Darussalam. The Governing Board also formalised the appointments of other staff members in this meeting.

A key driver of success at this time was that those involved came from disaster management agencies; therefore, they worked swiftly, were action oriented and resourceful in finding solutions. The combination of strong determination, close friendship and mutual respect among those involved proved to be the strengths that set aside differences in order to achieve bigger vision for ASEAN.

COMMEMORATING FIRST ANNIVERSARY ON GROUND ZERO

One of the most memorable responses undertaken by the AHA Centre was the 2012 Myanmar Earthquake. An earthquake with magnitude of 6.8 on the Richter Scale hit Myanmar on the 11 November 2012, with Mandalay and Sagaing were the two worst-hit regions. The disaster took the lives of 7 people, injured 114, and adversely affected more than 6,000 individuals.

Upon learning of the earthquake, the AHA Centre immediately deployed two of its members: Mr. Said Faisal (Executive Director of the AHA Centre) and Mr. Arnel Capili

(then Senior Emergency Preparedness and Response Officer), supported by Mr. Zin Aung Swee (Senior Programme Officer of Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund) and Ms. Lai Lai Aye (then member of ASEAN-ERAT from Myanmar). They were there to assess the damage as well as to determine support options that could be provided by the AHA Centre to Myanmar. Establishing ASEAN presence during this particular disaster, the AHA Centre promptly delivered numerous tents and tarpaulins after the earthquake. Strong coordination between the Government of Myanmar and the AHA Centre was established, as well as ongoing dissemination of disaster information to all Member States through the AHA Centre’s systems.

This response was memorable because it was the first response ever and it happened during the First Anniversary of the AHA Centre. There were no celebrations, only a strong sense of realisation regarding the important role that the AHA Centre could play within the region during disaster as this one. The team recalled the heart-warming acceptance and sense of gratitude shown by the government and communities in Myanmar for the support provided by ASEAN, through the AHA Centre. For ASEAN, an emergency response is not just about operational mission, but it is also an emotional one. It is about the feeling that we are connected as a big family of ASEAN; the feeling of “We”.



Typhoon Haiyan
The Philippines, 2013

EXPERIENCE THAT INSPIRED ONE ASEAN ONE RESPONSE

Typhoon Haiyan

The Philippines, 2013

Typhoon Haiyan made landfall in the Philippines on 8 November 2013. It is considered to be one of the strongest typhoons ever recorded in world history, with maximum wind speeds of 320 km/hour at its peak. The number of lives lost reached 6,300, with over 1,000 people missing, and more than 28,000 injured. Haiyan caused widespread damage to infrastructure and property, with over 16 million people affected and more than 4 million displaced. The total cost of damages is estimated at more than USD 142 million. Haiyan is one of the largest disasters faced since the original creation of ASEAN, alongside the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004, and Cyclone Nargis in 2008. Though the loss of life caused by Haiyan was less than the Indian Ocean Tsunami and Cyclone Nargis, the number of people adversely affected was twice as many as the Nargis, and six times more than that of the Tsunami.

ASEAN Member States immediately provided life-saving assistance to the Philippines in the form of personnel support, cash and in-kind contributions — food, water, sanitation and hygiene, health care services and shelter. The AHA Centre pre-positioned ASEAN-ERAT team members in the capital Manila, 2 days before the storm struck, with one member flying to Tacloban the day before the typhoon made landfall. This decision provided integral communications support at ground zero, proving extremely beneficial when all communication infrastructure was destroyed. The AHA Centre itself extended direct assistance to Philippines National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) operations, by erecting pre-fabricated offices and warehouses, and facilitating the delivery of relief goods such as food, water, emergency shelters, and hygiene kits through the NDMO.

The scale, impact, and scope of the destruction caused by Haiyan, alongside the challenges created by the emergency response process, tested the existing procedures and mechanisms within ASEAN emergency response. At the time, ASEAN's mechanisms, including the AHA Centre, had not yet been designed to respond to disasters that require a multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary, and multi-sector approach, a key part of responding to disasters of this magnitude and complexity. A response of such proportions entails the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, alongside the NDMOs, including other government bodies like military and foreign affairs units, as well as private sector, civil society organisations, and many other entities.

As an addition to the ASEAN response, this experience gave clarity to the need to engage as many stakeholders as possible, and that coordination work was required across many different 'layers'; strategic or political, operational, and tactical. This delicate balance requires such regional responses to achieve coordination between Heads of State/Government and the ASEAN Secretary-General, operational cooperation between Member States, and tactical cooperation when undertaking activities on the ground. An efficient combination of these elements can ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency within an ASEAN response.

This experience led to the development of the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN One Response, which was recently signed by Leaders of the ASEAN Member States on 6 September 2016 during the 28th and 29th ASEAN Summits. The declaration aims to harness the individual and collective strengths of different sectors and stakeholders within ASEAN to effectively respond to disasters across, and later outside, the ASEAN region. Through the declaration, ASEAN committed to achieve speedier responses, mobilise greater amounts of resources, and establish stronger coordination to ensure the effectiveness of ASEAN's collective response to disasters.

7



After the first COP meeting in 2012, the AHA Centre hit the ground running. Yet once more, there was much to be done and results still to be achieved. To maintain the strength and successes it has managed to achieve so far, the AHA Centre must sustain the trust of Member States and partners, as well as develop the confidence that derives from holding the capacity and the ability to deliver results. These two elements – trust and confidence – are the building blocks that positively elevate the unique position of the AHA Centre.

Across the years, the AHA Centre has been driven by the call to strengthen the ASEAN region as a whole. For the last five years, the AHA Centre has responded to 14 disasters and 4 preparedness missions within ASEAN region and has provided continuous information related to disaster situations. It has strived to do so through a variety of programmes and working areas, and as a result has numerous achievements to its name. Establishing Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA), an emergency relief supply stockpile, allows highly-needed supplies to be delivered to those most in-need immediately following a disaster. The stockpile, housed in WFP-UN Humanitarian Response Depot in Subang, Malaysia, is supported through funding from the Japanese Government and coordinated by the AHA Centre.

Having DELSA has enabled the AHA Centre to practically test the effectiveness and efficiency of regional logistics mechanism, including to deal with assistance arriving from other ASEAN Member States to the affected countries. DELSA has further strengthened the AHA Centre's knowledge and ability to coordinate disaster response within the region, as well as provided a confidence boost to support Member States. Since its establishment, DELSA has undergone significant transformation, hand-in-hand with the AHA Centre itself. Currently, the AHA Centre is in the process of developing a road map for the future which aims to further improve the regional logistic system for emergency. The implementation of this roadmap hoped to eventually position ASEAN as a global reference for disaster emergency logistic management.

Another major accomplishment of the AHA Centre in the last five years is the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT), originally trained by Singapore, managed by the ASEAN Secretariat and supported by Australia. ASEAN-ERAT forms the first team to be deployed during disasters, consisting of people from different ASEAN Member States and partners who are trained in emergency response and assessment. The name itself is derived from “ASEAN Emergency Rapid Assessment Team”, before more recently being

changed to “ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team”, to reflect the importance of undertaking more aspects of emergency response than merely assessment. Today, ASEAN-ERAT is managed, trained and deployed by the AHA-Centre as the symbol of ASEAN confidence in the centre's coordinating role. When ASEAN-ERAT team members are deployed to an affected country, it creates a functional symbol of ASEAN solidarity, a message that ASEAN stands by the affected country and promotes the continuous development and strengthening amongst ASEAN nations and communities. As of today, ASEAN-ERAT consists of more than 150 team members and has been deployed to 18 different responses in 7 ASEAN countries.

The AHA Centre manages the AHA Centre Executive (ACE) Programme, a strategic long-term training course that develops the future leaders of ASEAN in disaster management. Capacity building of Member States is one of main priorities for the AHA Centre, and the ACE Programme provides the opportunity to develop and implement relevant and long-term skills of ASEAN Member States representatives. Taking the form of an intensive six-month training course, the programme guides participants through technical and non-technical aspects of disaster management, with participants identified as potential future leaders by their own country governance. The ACE Programme is funded by the Japanese Government, and supported by a variety of partners who provide technical and physical support on various programmatic aspects. Participants also finish the programme with another valuable outcome, that being the new and strengthened friendships and partnerships forged throughout the course among themselves and with the AHA Centre. With 45 graduates through three batches, the ACE Programme is the AHA Centre's efforts to build a strong and united ASEAN.

Another notable achievement is the successful establishment of the AHA Centre' Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), which aside from providing state-of-the-art technology, also represents the connection between the AHA Centre and all Member States. In monitoring disasters, AHA Centre utilises the near-time disaster information system called Disaster Monitoring Response System (DMRS). More than just physical ICT equipment and endless screens of data, the EOC symbolises the spirit of togetherness within the region, with the sharing of valuable information, and willingness to support one another in times of need.

One of the major developments that truly strengthens the position of the AHA Centre within ASEAN was the signing of the “ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN One Response” by the Heads of State/Government as part

of the 28th – 29th ASEAN Summit in Lao PDR, held from 6-8 September 2016. It confirms AADMER to be the main regional policy backbone and common platform for the implementation of One ASEAN, One Response. The declaration affirms that the AHA Centre is the primary ASEAN regional coordinating agency on disaster management and emergency response. The signing of the declaration was done so at the highest level of government, ensuring ASEAN will be united in response, not only inside region, but also outside of the ASEAN boundaries.

The strength of the AHA Centre should never be confined within the AHA Centre itself; it should always be fostered within the ASEAN Member States and stakeholders. The AHA Centre shall continue to learn and understand the needs of its Member States in relations to disaster management because they define the direction of the AHA Centre and guide its pathway through this complex environment. As a relatively new regional organisation, the AHA Centre understands the existence of cautiousness alongside the multitude of support. The AHA Centre has valued and considered inputs from all parties, and has evidentially managed to balance opportunities and risks while moving forward.

The continuous positive support and strong ownership from Member States to the AHA Centre, through the Governing Board, have helped the AHA Centre walked through its first five years and given confidence needed to move ahead in years to come. The Governing Board places importance in the leadership and continuously finding ways to strengthen the AHA Centre, including securing its sustainability. Even in the 1st Meeting of the Governing Board, the members already discussed options to increase the annual and equal contributions to the AHA Centre, based on the two-years operationalisation of the centre. Recently, the 5th Governing Board Meeting secured the approvals from the Ministers to increase the annual equal contribution to the AHA Centre to almost doubled from the previous amount. This amount will be continuously reviewed in view of the AHA Centre's vision, growth and needs.

Since its establishment five years ago, the AHA Centre has developed from only concepts, discussions and meetings, to become an active element whose presence brings positive impacts to those affected by disaster. The AHA Centre sees responding to disasters within its region as more than just 'doing their job'; it sees its work as functional symbol of ASEAN solidarity. Taking on challenges and opportunities to test themselves has

fostered a practical learning environment, and the agility, flexibility and willingness to continuously accommodate the needs of all stakeholders has time and again proven crucial in disaster situations.

In the future, ASEAN aims to become a global leader in disaster management as stated in “ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management”. This vision also opens the vast possibility for the AHA Centre to expand the current scope and focus as AADMER recognises both natural and human-induced disasters. Translating this ASEAN vision into the next 10 years, the AHA Centre's vision is to become “A highly professional and trusted organisation which serves as the co-ordinating agency in the ASEAN region for disaster management and emergency response that aims to make ASEAN as a global leader on disaster management by 2025.” Furthermore, it commits to the mission “To facilitate and co-ordinate ASEAN's effort in reducing disaster losses and responding to disaster emergencies as one through regional collaboration, national leadership and global partnership in disaster management.”

The AHA Centre is more than just “a centre”; it is the realisation of a dream, the ASEAN dream. It is about making the lyric of the ASEAN Anthem a reality: “We dare to dream. We care to share. Together for ASEAN. We dare to dream. We care to share. For it is the way of ASEAN.”



**Support from Dialogue Partners
and Other Partners**

In addition to the tremendous support from the ASEAN Member States, the AHA Centre received support from various Dialogue Partners (such as Australia, Japan, the USA, New Zealand and China), European Union, the United Nations agencies, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, civil society and private sector.

Since 2011, the Government of Australia has provided as much as AUD\$4.56 million to the ASEAN Secretariat for the implementation of AADMER, including the operationalisation of the AHA Centre, specifically to fund 12 positions and the Centre’s operational costs. Australia’s support for staffing, operational and training costs has enabled the AHA Centre to share critical information before, during and after disasters to ASEAN Member States and the broader humanitarian response community. Australian assistance has also helped ASEAN to implement some of the AADMER work programme, such as training of ASEAN-ERAT and establishment of the ASEAN Disaster Training Institutes Network (ADTRAIN).

Another key supporter of the AHA Centre since its inception is the Government of Japan. Through Japan ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF), the Government of Japan has provided the AHA Centre with important and strategic funding of more than USD24 million since

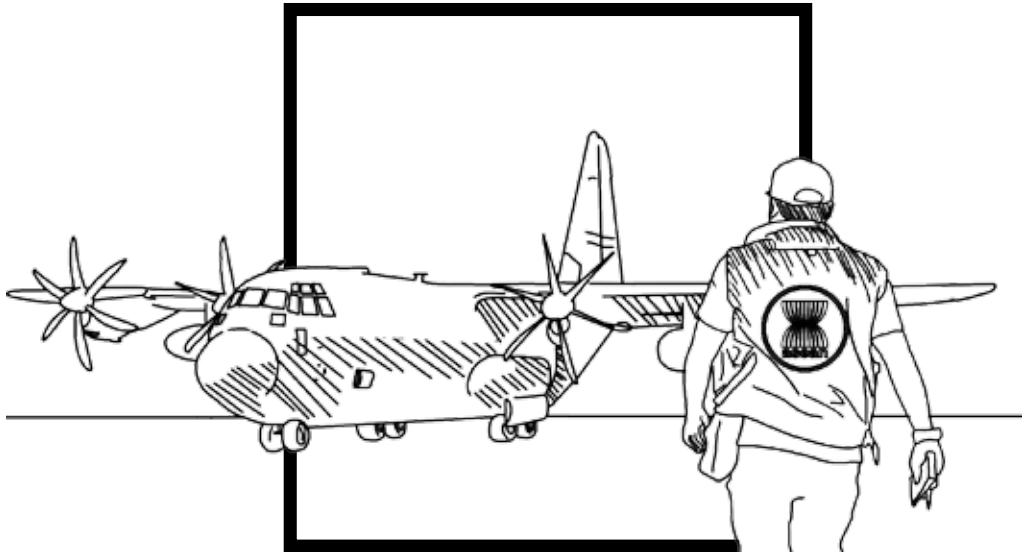
2011, that began even before the Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre was finalised. The funding from Japan has been to support a study on the establishment of the AHA Centre, three phases of ICT project, ACE Programme, DELSA and preparations for the next phase of DELSA project.

The Government of the USA through the support from its Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster and Civic Aid (OHDACA) has provided series of capacity building for the AHA Centre staff and ACE Programme officers, as well as the provision of Disaster Monitoring Response System (DMRS).

The support from the USA is mainly in strengthening the operationalization of AHA Centre through support from US Forest Services (USFS), US-PROGRESS, Center for Excellence and Pacific Disaster Center. Moreover, support also came from the Government of New Zealand in the forms of expertise, ICT equipment and training for ACE Programme, as well as commitment from the Government of China to support the operationalisation of the AHA Centre.

From the European Union, through ASEAN-EU Management Programme, the AHA Centre received support in capacity building to strengthen its corporate administration system, as well as the exchanges of knowledge, capacities and experience with the emergency management institutions of EU Member States.

The AHA Centre received support from private sector, such as Corporate Citizen Foundation based in Singapore, in the form of in-kind relief items as well as funding. Various support also came from AADMER Partnership Group (APG), a consortium of seven civil society consists of Child Fund International, Help Age International, Mercy Malaysia, Oxfam, Plan International, Save The Children International and World Vision International, the United Nations agencies (UNOCHA, UNWFP, UNHRD Subang, UNDP), International Office of Migration (IOM), Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and others.



Apparently he was a colonel in the Singapore Navy, who happened to be there delivering aid to the people of Tacloban. Without hesitation, after learning that we represented ASEAN, he assured us he would talk with the US leader-in-charge and get us onto a C130 plane right away.

Within minutes, we were on-board the US C130 flying out of Tacloban, alongside numerous community members who had been rescued. We had been stranded there for days, without limited food and even less sleep, and had just been turned away from the airport attempting to fly out that morning. This was a truly appreciated favour.

The colonel did not even know me, but because we were from ASEAN, he helped us without hesitation. The memory of this story still gives me goose bumps. For me, this represents what ASEAN is about.

ARNEL CAPILI

Director of Operations
The AHA Centre

REFLECTIONS



One of important things that I have experienced from many years being involved in managing responses to various natural disasters is that sincerity shines through, no matter how chaotic and confusing the situation can be. Sincerity can be seen and felt by everybody, most especially by the people whose lives have been shattered by a disaster, and it goes a very long way throughout the response efforts: opening doors, building friendships, setting aside differences and strengthening bonds. Strangers become comrades; friends become families.

This sincerity is what the AHA Centre has become a symbol for the entire ASEAN Community. That is the “spirit” of the AHA Centre, and I must say it has become more successful in doing so since its birth in 2011. The AHA Centre is more than an organisation with staff working and a building, it resembles the beautiful sincerity and solidarity of ASEAN that shine through and through for others to take notice, even to the rest of the world.

The path ahead is no doubt going to pose more challenges, with possibly more disasters to deal with and more hands to join together. The precious lives of our citizens are at stake, and our sincerity to be there for one another will be more needed than ever. However, looking back to the last five years and how ASEAN, through the AHA Centre, has tackled one obstacle after another, I have strong faith that this region is just going to go from strength to strength.

H.E. WILLEM RAMPANGILEI

Chair of ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management and AADMER Conference of the Parties, 2016

CLOSING THOUGHTS



Natural disasters have their ways of shocking people at its core. Imagine to have everything you ever worked for wiped away by a major flood; or a house your family have lived in for generations destroyed by an earthquake. It is beyond sad and even more heart-breaking when it happens right at our own backyard, to our own neighbours and family members.

When a disaster strikes one of ASEAN Member States, ASEAN should strive to be there first. During a major disaster, even a nation can be taken aback by its size of destruction. We need to be there like families taking care of each other, especially in times of great need, lending whatever support we can provide.

At the AHA Centre, this has been the main drive of everything that we do. We understand the importance of facilitating seamless coordination between Member States when disasters strike because it eventually means people’s lives being saved and damages minimised. While we work on strengthening our organisation since our establishment in 2011, we have also been making sure that we can support Member States with everything that we have during disasters.

Today, five years on, the AHA Centre remains humbly rooted in ASEAN and supports its vision for One ASEAN One Response. We are grateful for the journey we have taken so far. We are thankful for the people and organisations who have gone beyond what were required by their duties to support the AHA Centre. As stories within this book told you, the history of the AHA Centre has been about collective beliefs and leaderships of many people, pushing things forward and finding solutions, all in good intentions to make ASEAN great. We dare to dream and care to share.

MR. SAID FAISAL

*Executive Director
ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management*



ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management held on 7 December 2004 where the Ministers discussed the need to have ASEAN Regional Instrument on Disaster Management. Few weeks after the meeting, the Great Indian Ocean Tsunami happened and created massive devastations to 4 ASEAN Member States.



ASEAN initiated Special Leader's Meeting following the unprecedented, global catastrophe of Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami.



4th Meeting of the ACDM and Negotiation Session of the ASEAN Regional Instrument on Disaster Management and Emergency Response in 2005 that led to the birth of AADMER.



Interim AHA Centre participated for the first time in Thailand ARDEX-08 in 2008. Executive Director of the Interim AHA Centre, Mr. Tabrani, and some of the staff were manning the Reception Center at the airport.



Launching of office for Provisional AHA Centre by National Task Force for the AHA Centre



Chair of National Task Force, Mr. Willem Rampangilei and Dr. William Sabandar, Executive Secretary of the National Task Force, conducted meeting with donors to build partnerships with the AHA Centre.



ASEAN Heads of States/Government in the 19th ASEAN Summit held in Bali, Indonesia in November 2011 witnessed the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre.



Special ACDM Session held in the newly-renovated AHA Centre office back in 2011. The Meeting agreed to take out the word “provisional” from AHA Centre name.



The AHA Centre's very first emergency response to Myanmar Earthquake in November 2012, exactly 1 year after the establishment of the AHA Centre.



The 3rd ASEAN-ERAT Induction Course in 2013 marked the last course organised by Singapore before the ASEAN-ERAT being handed over to the AHA Centre.



1st Governing Board Meeting held in Brunei Darussalam in 2014, back-to-back with the 25th ACDM Meeting.



The ASEAN Leaders signed the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN One Response at the 28th and 29th ASEAN Summit in Vientiane, Lao PDR.



The AHA Centre would like to express its deepest gratitude and appreciation to all representatives of all ASEAN Member States, organisations, partners, donors and individuals who have supported the AHA Centre since the beginning until today.

The AHA Centre would like to acknowledge that without the support, time, energy and passion that of all of you have invested in us and in each other, we would not be here today. We invite you to continue to walk this journey with us into the future as One ASEAN One Response.

Abdul Kalam; Abdul Rahim Ismail; Abdul Razak Abdul Raheem; Adelina Kamal; Adi Rahmatsyah Bishry; Adik Bantarso, Budi Dhewajani; Adthaporn Singhawichai; Agnes Ade Ririn Dwi Haryani; Agung Laksono; Agustina Trunay; Ahmad Muzamil; AKP Mochtan; Alexander Kesper; Alexander P. Pama; Alicia Bala; Andrew Mardanugraha Subakti; Andri Suryo Maharaj; Anggiet Ariefianto; Anita Dwyer; Annisa Wahidah; Anwar Abdullah; Arnel Capili; Arthit Boonyasopat; Arun Pinta; Asri Wijayanti; Avianto Amri; Bachtiar Andy Musaffa; Bagas Hapsoro; Belkacem Benzaza; Benito Ramos; Bernadus Wisnu Widjaja; Billy Sumuan; Bronwyn Robbins; Bruno Maestracci; Chainarong Vasanasomsithi; Chatchai Phromlert; Chris Chiesa; Dam Hoa; Dato' Che Moin; Dato' Misran Karmain; Dato' Ogu Umar Salim; Dato' Zaitun Ab. Samad; Datuk Mohamed Thadjudeen bin Abdul Wahab; David Chow; David Katruct; David Taylor; Del Rosario; Dhannan Sunoto; Dicky Fabrian; Djohari Oratmangun; Dodi Ruswandi; Dominic Morice; Dr. Ko Ko Naing; Dr. Vu Kien Trung; Durudee Sirichanya; Dwi Nurlita; Edgardo Ollet; Emir Wisnu; Emmanuel de Guzman; Eric Yap Wee Teck; Erin Hughey; Farah Rahmat; Fatchul Hadi; Ferny Hapsari; Foster Gultom; Francisco Vontan Pardo; Franck Viault; Fujisaki Seiyu; Gaynor Tanyang; Glenn J. Rabonza; Grace Endina; Halia Haddad; Harlan Harle; Hassan Ahmad; Heather Bell; Heny Suwardi; Heru Prasetyo; Hervey Gazeau; Hiroko Kitamura; Hisashi Kamogawa; Hitoshi Baba; Isman Tony Justanto; Jackson Lim; Jamal Ishak; Janggam Adhityawarma; Jayne Duke; Jeganathan Ramasamy; Jemilah Mahmood; Jennifer Collier Wilson; Jeong Park; Jessica Hoverman; Jinichi Watanabe; Joe Martin; John Norton; Jon Burrough; Kadir Maideen; Kazuhiko Yamazaki; Keone Kali; Kevin Misenheimer, Laura Martin Chapman, Bruce Baughman; Khiam Jin Lee; Kimihiro Ishikane; Kindavong Luangrath; Kirk Yates; Koichi Aiboshi; Kobchai Boonyaorana; Koki Yoshida; Kristen Knutson; Kuntoro Mangkusubroto; Kurt Leffler; Lan Mercado; Larry Maramis; Le Luong Minh; Lee Yam Ming; Leny Jakaria; Lim Boon Teck; Ling Kok Yong; Ma Norith; Mala Selvaraju; Malyn Tumonong; Mardiansyah; Margaret Olson; Markus Werne; Marqueza Reyes; Marty Natalegawa; Matt Hayne; Mehakaa Rountree; Meiliany Susanto; Mel Capistrano; Michael Sashin; Miguel Musgni; Mohd Ariff Bin Baharom; Mohd Sakri Husin; Muamar Vebry; Neni Marlina; Nhim Vanda; Nina Hichigan; Nitas Polachai; Nor Hisham; Nwet Yin Aye; Oliver Lacey-Hall; Olivia Christina; Ong Keng Yong; Ow Yong Tuck Wah; Paladin Ansharullah; Pannapa Na Nan; Pat Duggan; Pengiran Dato' Paduka Hj Rosli bin Pengiran Hj Chuchu; Peou Samy; Peter Lim Sin Pang; Philip Hewitt; Phillip Gibson; Pierre Honnorat; Pj Sabli bin Tj Damit; Prak Kim Hong; Prasith Phummatheth; Prasong Vongkhamchanh; Priscilla Duque; Pornpoj Penpas; Puji Pujiono; Puspasari Indra; Rajan Gengaje; Raman Letchumanan; Ray Shirkhoday; Retno Astrini; Retno Utaira; Ricardo B. Jalad; Ridwan Djamalludin; Rina; Rio Augusta; Rivatus Sovia; Rivie Ayudhia; Robert Francis Garcia; Roberto Schiliro; Rodzi Md Saad; Romeo Fajardo; Rosliza Abdul Rahman; Ross Sovann; Ryo Horikawa; Samsul Ma'arif; Sanny Ramos Jegillos; Santy Hendra; Saroj Srisai; Sebastian Rhodes Stampa; Setsuko Miyakawa; Simon Merrifield; Stavros Petropoulos; Stephanie Pamela Lee; Surin Pitsuwan; Tabrani; Takako Ito; Takio Yamada; Toshihiro Hatta; U Soe Aung; Un Sovannasam; Van Phu Chinh; Vera Mazzara; Vilayphong Sisomvang; Vong Thep Arthakaivalvatee; Vu Vantu; Wanri Naibaho; Wiboon Sanguanpong; Willem Rampangilei; William Sabandar; Winston Chang; Wipsar Dina Andari; Fenny Chandra; Yahya bin Abdul Rahman; Yeny Susilowati; Yoram Alfi Lucas; Yos Maryo Malole; Yukiko Okano; Yuliana Nur Samad; Yves Dussart; Zin Aung Swee

ACRONYMS

AADMER

ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response

ACDM

ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management

ACE Programme

AHA Centre Executive Programme

ADINET

ASEAN Disaster Information Network

ADMM

ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting

ADPC

Asia Disaster Preparedness Center

AHA Centre

ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management

AHAC

ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator

AJDRP

ASEAN Joint Disaster Response Plan

AMMDM

ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management

AMS

ASEAN Member States

APG

AADMER Partnership Group

ARDEX

ASEAN Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercises

ARF

ASEAN Regional Forum

ASEAN

Association of Southeast Asian Nations

ASEAN-ERAT

ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team

BNPB

Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana (Indonesian National Agency for Disaster Management)

COP

Conference of the Parties

CPR

Committee of Permanent Representatives

DELSA

Disaster Emergency Logistic System For ASEAN

DMRS

Disaster Monitoring and Response System

EOC

Emergency Operations Centre

ICCT

In-Country Coordination Team

ICS

Incident Command System

ICT

Information and Communication Technology

ACRONYMS

JAIF

Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund

JOCCA

Joint Operations and Coordination Centre of ASEAN

NADMA

Malaysia's National Disaster Management Agency

NDMO

National Disaster Management Office

NFP

National Focal Point

OCHA

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

PDC

Pacific Disaster Centre

PRWG

Preparedness and Response Working Group

PSC

Project Steering Committee

SASOP

Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations

SCDF

Singapore's Civil Defence Force

SMART

Special Malaysia Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team

UNHRD

United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot

WFP

World Food Programme

WHO

World Health Organisation



ONE **ASEAN**
ONE **RESPONSE**

BOOKS OF THE AHA CENTRE KNOWLEDGE SERIES

1

**DARE TO DREAM
CARE TO SHARE**

2

AHA CENTRE
PARTNERSHIP

3

DISASTER EMERGENCY
LOGISTIC SYSTEM FOR
ASEAN (DELSA)

4

ASEAN EMERGENCY
RESPONSE AND
ASSESSMENT TEAM
(ASEAN-ERAT)

5

AHA CENTRE EXECUTIVE
(ACE) PROGRAMME

6

COORDINATING REGIONAL
DISASTER EMERGENCY
RESPONSE

7

COORDINATING UNITY


8


THE STORY OF THE
AHA CENTRE IN PICTURES


The AHA Centre

ASEAN Coordinating
Centre for Humanitarian
Assistance on disaster
management

Graha BNPB
Jl. Pramuka Kav. 38,
13th floor
Jakarta - 13120, Indonesia

 www.ahacentre.org

 @ahacentre

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Japan-ASEAN Cooperation



ONE ASEAN ONE RESPONSE