



ONE ASEAN
ONE RESPONSE

COORDINATING REGIONAL DISASTER EMERGENCY RESPONSE



6

**The AHA Centre
Knowledge Series Book #6**

Coordinating Regional Disaster Emergency Response

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This book explains the fundamental reason for the establishment of the AHA Centre and how the Centre has evolved through 5 years of experience in carrying out its roles and mandate.

The AHA Centre Knowledge Series

Book #6

COORDINATING REGIONAL DISASTER EMERGENCY RESPONSE
Roles and Mandate of the AHA Centre

**C O O R D I N A T I N G
R E G I O N A L
D I S A S T E R
E M E R G E N C Y
R E S P O N S E**

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Collections of the AHA Centre, ASEAN
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H.E. WILLEM RAMPANGILEI

Chief of BNPB
National Disaster Management Authority of Indonesia

FOREWORD

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



This year Indonesia has been honoured to chair the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM), the AADMER Conference of the Parties (COP), the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) and the Governing Board of the AHA Centre. Sitting in these roles during 2016 has allowed Indonesia to witness the hard work and achievements reached by the AHA Centre throughout the last five years, and we are honoured to be part of the ongoing efforts undertaken in coordinating disaster management across the ASEAN region.

Indonesia has stood beside the AHA Centre since its establishment, and throughout the last five years has acted as the Host Country to facilitate the ongoing establishment and expansion of all AHA Centre’s work. We are proud to have supported the AHA Centre through such processes, and have found great value in overseeing the movement. The Centre’s role as the coordinating body for disaster management within the ASEAN region has become increasingly relevant and clear as we constantly face the increasing threat of disaster that affects our communities, our infrastructure and our social fabric as a whole.

We recognise the key roles played by National Disaster Management Offices of all ASEAN Member States, and highly value their engagement, support and input across all that we have undertaken throughout the last five years. We also extend our appreciation and thanks to all of our ASEAN Dialogue Partners and other partners who have supported and added value to the progress of our work, and hope that such support continues as we progress in the coming years.

2016 has also seen the important step of the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN One Response signed in September by all ASEAN Leaders. This vision, and its universal support, creates the strongest of platforms for the advancement of emergency management within ASEAN into the future. Indonesia is proud to have been a supporting member of the advancement of this vision, and looks forward to working with all parties towards the vision’s realisation.

We offer congratulations to the AHA Centre in all its work undertaken as captured by the AHA Centre Knowledge Series books. We also wish continued success for the future to come as we continue towards a coordinated and prepared ASEAN region in the face of disaster.



MR. SAID FAISAL

Executive Director
ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian
Assistance on disaster management

FOREWORD

**From the Executive Director
of the AHA Centre**



The first five years of the AHA Centre has been full of achievements, challenges, surprises and overall hard work by our dedicated team, stakeholders and supporters. Through the books of the AHA Centre Knowledge Series, we take a moment and a step back to witness the impact that the AHA Centre has had since its formation in 2011, to appreciate the achievements, to recognise the challenges and lessons, and to move forward as a united ASEAN region in the midst of the turbulence and instability that disaster can create.

Across the last five years, the AHA Centre and the overall solidarity of the ASEAN region has been tested time and again by disaster, and has grown stronger and more unified than before. Whether responding to large-scale destruction, developing world-class programmes, or implementing and promoting regional mechanisms to solidify the ASEAN emergency management sector, the AHA Centre has relentlessly strived to achieve its overall goals. However, we appreciate these achievements always with vision towards the future, understanding and preparing for the challenges and obstacles that lie ahead.

The recent ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN One Response by the leaders of our region’s nations forms the next key building block for continuing the expansion and unification of our work within the ASEAN region. With this substantial declaration, the AHA Centre received not only full support for the work we have undertaken over the previous five years, but importantly regional confidence and trust for the AHA Centre to continue in the role of coordinating ASEAN’s futures in the face of disaster. This confidence placed in our work provides even more passion and drive to reach new heights, and ensures the AHA Centre is fully resourced and prepared for what lies in wait.

It must be recognised that the outcomes realised since the AHA Centre’s establishment in 2011 could not have been achieved without the support of many, primarily from the ASEAN Member States and their National Disaster Management Offices. Their ongoing willingness to engage, support, and work with the AHA Centre has been the key factor in the development of our working areas. The support from the ASEAN Secretariat has also been highly valued. Our Dialogue Partners and partners have

provided valuable ongoing support across the scope of our work. Finally, we recognise the leadership and support provided by the ASEAN Member States through the AMMDM, AADMER COP, ACDM and Governing Board over the last five years and also show great appreciation to Indonesia as the host country for the AHA Centre’s operations since formation.

With this book, we remember all those who have been affected by disaster, we learn the lessons to strengthen and improve our readiness in the future, and we duly appreciate the achievements and efforts of the AHA Centre and all its supporters. While predicting the future of disaster impact on the region is a near-impossible action, our region’s ability to prepare and respond as one single movement is a vision that gives us great confidence and hope for the future of a united and engaged ASEAN in the face of disaster.

ABOUT SOUTHEAST ASIA

NATURAL disaster presents itself in a range of shapes and sizes, with little warning as to when and where it will strike. As the world advances its preparation and prediction mechanisms to better mitigate losses due to natural disaster, the full magnitude of disaster impact remains relatively unknown, dependant on elements such as population size, density and location.

Southeast Asia forms a dynamic region, home to more than 600 million people, with its population and geography making it one of the largest regions in the world. It covers an area of approximately four million square kilometres, with its geographical position leaving it prone to a range of typhoons, earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters on a yearly basis. Southeast Asia has been home to some of the most violent natural disasters in recent history, with their intensity and impact resulting in great loss of lives and extensive damage to infrastructure and livelihoods. The Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004 stands as the most significant recent example of a large-scale disaster within Southeast Asia, causing the deaths of more than 230,000 people, and impacting 14 countries in and outside the Southeast Asian region.

ABOUT ASEAN

THE ASSOCIATION of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, was established on 8 August 1967. The Member States of the Association are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The aims and purposes of ASEAN are:

- To accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations;
- To promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter;
- To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest in the economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields;
- To provide assistance to each other in the form of training and research facilities in the educational, professional, technical and administrative spheres;
- To collaborate more effectively for the greater utilisation of their agriculture and industries, the expansion of their trade, including the study of the problems of international commodity trade, the improvement of their transportation and communications facilities and the raising of the living standards of their peoples;
- To promote Southeast Asian studies; and
- To maintain close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organisations with similar aims and purposes, and explore all avenues for even closer cooperation among themselves.

The ASEAN Secretariat was set up in February 1976 by the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN. The ASEAN Secretariat's basic function is to provide for greater efficiency in the coordination of ASEAN organs and for more effective implementation of ASEAN projects and activities. The ASEAN Secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia.

ABOUT AADMER

THE ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) is a legally binding framework for regional cooperation and coordination in all aspects of disaster management. AADMER was signed by the 10 ASEAN Foreign Affairs Ministers on 26 July 2005 and entered into force on 24 December 2009.

The Agreement guides the development of operational procedures to respond collectively and promptly to disasters. For example, it includes provisions to facilitate the movement of relief items and to expedite customs. It also defines the utilisation of military and civilian personnel in disaster relief operations. The Agreement mandates the creation of a centre to coordinate regional disaster response (the AHA Centre).

**ABOUT THE
ACDM &
GOVERNING
BOARD OF
THE AHA
CENTRE**

THE ASEAN Committee for Disaster Management (ACDM) serves as the main subsidiary body that oversees the operational implementation of AADMER under the Conference of Parties. Its main roles include:

- To provide leadership and guidance towards fulfilling the goals and objectives of AADMER, according to the vision of disaster-resilient nations and safer communities within ASEAN by 2015;
- To initiate, direct and oversee the development, monitoring and implementation of the AADMER Work Programme and other initiatives implemented by the respective working groups;
- To strengthen coordination with relevant ASEAN bodies;
- To collaborate with ASEAN Dialogue Partners, multilateral agencies, NGOs and the private sector.

The ACDM is headed by a Chair, supported by a Vice Chair, and consists of the heads of national agencies responsible for disaster management of ASEAN Member States. The ACDM meets at least once a year.

The ACDM also serves as the Governing Board for the AHA Centre, which assumes the overall responsibility and is accountable and for the operations of the AHA Centre. The AHA Centre reports to and serves as the Secretariat of the Governing Board.

**ABOUT THE
AHA CENTRE**

FOLLOWING the entry into effect of AADMER, between 2009 and 2011 ASEAN Leaders vigorously promoted the establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (the AHA Centre).

The AHA Centre was formally established during the 19th ASEAN Summit in Bali on 17 November 2011, through the signing of the ‘ASEAN Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre’ by ASEAN Foreign Ministers and witnessed by the respective Heads of State/Government.

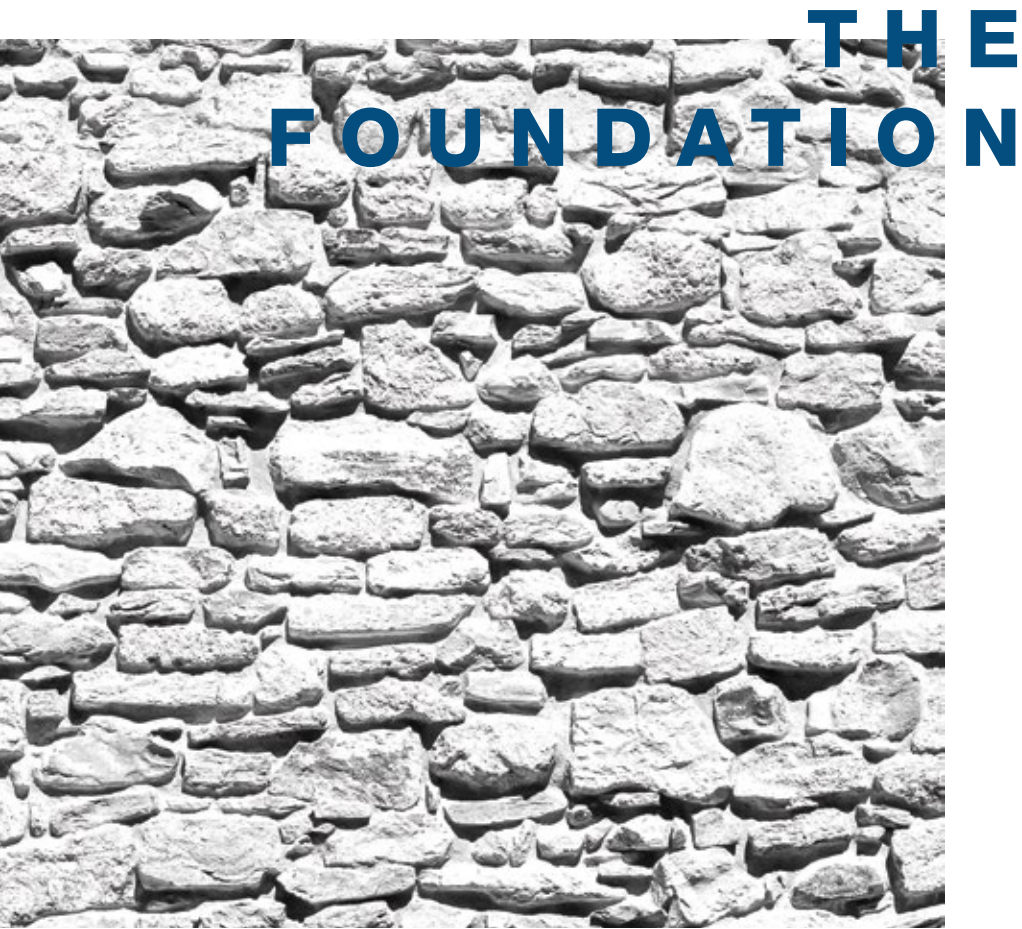
The AHA Centre was established to facilitate cooperation and coordination both internally among ASEAN Member States and externally with the United Nations and international organisations for disaster management and emergency response.

The AHA Centre’s primary functions are to facilitate regional cooperation for disaster management, to facilitate joint emergency preparedness and response, and to operationalise regional coordination mechanisms for emergency preparedness and response.

When a major disaster strikes the region, the AHA Centre plays a central role in facilitating the flow of information. It follows precise communication and coordination protocols as defined by the Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP).

During emergency response, the AHA Centre can also help mobilise ASEAN’s standby assets and personnel. The AHA Centre has the capacity to send relief items and deploy the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT). The AHA Centre also organises simulation exercises on a regular basis to test regional emergency response mechanisms.

1





A BOLD VISION BECOMES REALITY

INCREASED REGIONAL ATTENTION TOWARD DISASTER

The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) was established on 17 November 2011, through the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre by 10 ASEAN Member States in Bali, Indonesia. The birth of AHA Centre is the embodiment of a common desire amongst ASEAN nations, the desire to develop a regional disaster management centre that would strengthen the region's capacity in managing disasters both at national levels and throughout the region.

The threat of natural disaster is not a new phenomenon for the ASEAN region. Recognition of ASEAN's vulnerability to disaster was evident from the early days of ASEAN's establishment, as has been the recognition of disaster's detrimental impact on the region's development¹. In 1971, a group of disaster management experts from the five ASEAN founding nations met for the first time, and five years later, Member States issued a Declaration of ASEAN Concord I that emphasised the necessity for cooperation in disaster management². Based on this understanding, ASEAN began to extend relief assistance to Member States in distress, and later began exploring cooperation to improve communications for early warning, relief supplies, information sharing, and exchange of expert resources.³

However, it wasn't until the early 2000's that disaster management reached priority status within ASEAN's overall agenda, as the turn of the 21st century saw many of the Member States experience the full force of an increasing number of natural disasters. In 2003, Member States agreed to establish the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), whose membership was formed by the Heads of ASEAN National Disaster Management Organisations (NDMOs). As a result, ASEAN began to implement concrete action to prioritise disaster management within the ASEAN agenda. During a meeting in December 2003, ASEAN Member States agreed to adopt the ASEAN Regional Programme on Disaster Management (ARPD) for 2004-2010, which, among other key actions was to develop an ASEAN Response Action Plan. This plan was to form a vital element in the development of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) signed in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 26 July 2005.⁴

AADMER forms a monumental document for ASEAN, and has become the main reference for a multitude of actions and decisions since.⁷ The agreement was deliberated on for merely four months, accelerated by the advent of the Indian Ocean tsunami, an event that opened the eyes of ASEAN Member States regarding the impact of major disaster, and the importance of working together to cope with the effects. The overall objective of AADMER is to “provide effective mechanisms to achieve substantial reduction of disaster losses in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of the Member States, and to jointly respond to disaster emergencies through concerted national efforts and intensified regional and international co-operation.”

One of the key elements of AADMER is the proposal to establish a regional disaster management coordinating centre. At the time, such an idea was a relatively new concept, with only the European Union having established such an institution in the ECPM (European Civil Protection Mechanism).⁸ However, for numerous reasons⁹, the ratification process of AADMER itself was a drawn-out process, with the final ratification not taking place until 24th of December 2009. The ratification followed on the back of the Cyclone Nargis emergency response, which served to further demonstrate the issues faced by the ASEAN mechanism in supporting its Member States when responding to disasters. About two years later after AADMER came into force, the AHA Centre was officially founded in November 2011. Governed by the members of the ACDM (namely the Heads of Member States’ NDMOs), the AHA Centre took up its home in Jakarta, accepting the Government of Indonesia’s offer to host its headquarters within the same city of the ASEAN Secretariat.

14 EMERGENCY OPERATIONS AND COUNTING

What started out as a raw idea has quickly developed into one of the most respected regional disaster management centres in the world, becoming a working example for other regions hoping to develop similar mechanisms.¹⁰ Since its establishment, the AHA Centre has implemented its full emergency response for 14 times across six ASEAN Member States, responding to an array of disasters, including earthquakes, typhoons and floods. The AHA Centre has also undertaken an additional four preparedness missions to countries facing impending natural disaster events. The AHA Centre began its initial emergency response operations in 2012. These early years were primarily the development period of the AHA Centre’s response operations, which generally involved deploying a small team to support an NDMO during a disaster, alongside the distribution of relief items. During the first two years, the AHA Centre responded to eight disasters throughout ASEAN.¹¹

One of the defining moments in the development of the AHA Centre’s response capacity was when the giant Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines in November 2013. The deadly storm swept through numerous districts, having a disastrous impact on millions of lives. Thousands of people were killed or missing in the typhoon’s wake, with around four million people losing homes or suffering damage. Overall, Typhoon Haiyan’s destruction presented an enormous challenge in disaster response for the Philippines and ASEAN. At this stage, the AHA Centre was still in the early stages of developing its disaster response strategies, mechanisms and tools, and therefore its presence was still relatively limited due to its developmental stage. However, the presence of the AHA Centre and ASEAN-ERAT proved of benefit to the Government of the Philippines during the Typhoon Haiyan response. Positive engagement from the Government, who allowed broad access during the response, enabled the AHA Centre and ASEAN-ERAT to collect relevant information regarding disaster impact and required support that was then distributed to the Assisting Member States. The AHA Centre also facilitated the planning and coordinated distribution of relief items to disaster victims in need.¹² The deployment of ASEAN-ERAT members in the days leading up to the typhoon made it possible for the AHA Centre to prepare emergency communication tools that were later used to open up the first communication lines from ground zero to the central Government of the Philippines.¹³

While successful, the response to Typhoon Haiyan was also an indication that the AHA Centre still had work to do if it were to effectively perform its role as a facilitator of cooperation and coordination in emergency situations of the magnitude of Typhoon Haiyan.¹⁴ The team deployed was not yet equipped with proven supporting mechanisms or information, and the responders, although deployed as the AHA Centre’s team, had little direction on how to perform as part of such a team.¹⁵ Each individual generally had to rely on their own personal knowledge gained through previous experience. Decisions and actions taken were somewhat ad-hoc and intuitive, mainly due to a lack of formalised institutional frameworks and practices at the time.

It was this experience of Typhoon Haiyan that encouraged the ASEAN Member States to accelerate the process of strengthening the AHA Centre to respond to emergency situations of a greater scale. After 2013, the development of AHA Centre began to take place on a much more exponential scale. There was increased commitment and concrete support from Member States, ASEAN Dialogue Partners, and other working partners to ensure that the AHA Centre would be ready the next time it faced a disaster of Typhoon Haiyan’s magnitude.

In the initial years after its establishment, the AHA Centre began the development of its response operations, which would later be used to develop its Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) operational guide, and then further transformed into the current Emergency Response Organisation (ERO). During early 2013, the new Emergency Operations Manual was further developed and used during the Philippines earthquake emergency operation in October of the same year. Various existing strategies

and response mechanisms, such as SASOP, ASEAN–ERAT, DELSA and ERO were further strengthened after 2013, while new mechanisms, such as JOCCA and AJDRP, were developed.

Of equal importance, the AHA Centre also developed and further improved a more reliable internal disaster monitoring and communication system through programmes such as DMRS and WebEOC. All of these mechanisms and tools are continuously tested and improved through regular internal simulation exercises within the AHA Centre, as well as collectively with all ASEAN Member States through ARDEX, ARF DiREx and other national, regional or international disaster simulation exercises. In carrying out its role, the AHA Centre also works with other relevant parties, including the Civil Society Organisation (CSO) and private sector. More recently, the AHA Centre has agreed to a number of Memoranda of Intent with the private enterprises and entities that will further enhance its work.

AHA CENTRE EMERGENCY RESPONSES 2011-2016

THABAITKKYIN EARTHQUAKE

NOVEMBER 2012, MYANMAR

Thabaitkkyin, Myanmar
11 November 2012

Magnitude
6.8 Richter Scale

1 Impact as of
22 November 2012

Affected Population
6,687 people

Deaths
11 people

Injured
140 people

House Damaged
1,836 houses

ASEAN RESPONSE

Deployed coordination support team

Delivered:

250 MULTI PURPOSE TENTS
covering 250 families approximately 1,250 people

70 ROLLS OF TARPAULINS
covering up to 700 families or approximately 3,500 people



TYPHOON BOPHA

DECEMBER 2012, PHILIPPINES

Mindanao, Philippines
3 December 2012

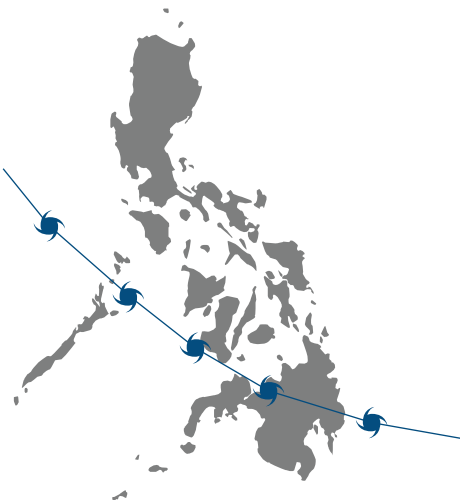
1 Impact as of
25 December 2014

Affected Population
6,245,998 people

Deaths
1,067 people

Injured
2,666 people

House Damaged
216,816 houses



ASEAN RESPONSE

Deployed emergency response and ERAT team

Provided:

250 MULTI PURPOSE TENTS
covering 250 families approximately 1,250 people

600 ASEAN FAMILY KIT

5,000 ROLLS OF TARPAULINS

USD 100,000 WORTH OF RICE

MEAL FOR 200 VOLUNTEER
in Inter-Agency Relief Operation hub in Davao City

NFI 3 MOBILE STORAGE UNIT (MSUs)
to power up emergency response operation centres

45 KVA GENERATORS
to power up emergency response operation centres

10-WHEELER TRUCKS
to transport relief items

JAKARTA FLOOD

JANUARY 2013, INDONESIA

Jakarta, Indonesia
15 - 21 January 2013

1 Impact as of
21 January 2013

Affected Population
245,119 people

Deaths
20 people




ASEAN RESPONSE


Deployed portable toilets and provided drinking water, trash bags, sanitary wipes for approximately 3,000 evacuees.

BENER MERIAH & ACEH TENGAH EARTHQUAKE


JULY 2013, INDONESIA




Aceh, Indonesia
2 July 2013




Deaths
40 people




Magnitude
6.2 Richter Scale




Injured
2,532 people




Impact as of
14 July 2013




House Damaged
18,902 houses




Affected Population
52,113 people




ASEAN RESPONSE


 Deployed response team


PROVIDED:


 250 FAMILY TENTS

 500 SHELTER TOOLKITS

MALAYSIA DELIVERED:


 1,000 FAMILY TENTS

 1,000 BLANKETS


 1,000 TARPAULINS

TROPICAL STORM MARING


AUGUST 2013, PHILIPPINES




Manila, Philippines
19 August 2013




Impact as of
23 August 2013




Affected Population
1,928,685 people



Deaths
10 people




Injured
41 people





Estimate Cost of Damaged
USD 2.2 million

ASEAN RESPONSE

 Deployed response team


PROVIDED:

 9 RESCUE BOAT for NDRRMC




FLOOD IN CENTRAL & NORTHEN REGION OF LAO PDR


AUGUST 2013, LAO PDR




Lao PDR
27 August 2013



Impact as of
27 August 2013




Affected Population
112,586 people





Deaths
20 people

ASEAN RESPONSE

 Deployed response team


PROVIDED:

 200 ASEAN FAMILY KIT




BOHOL EARTHQUAKE


OCTOBER 2013, PHILIPPINES




Bohol, Philippines
15 October 2013




Impact as of
15 October 2013




Affected Population
3,221,248 people




Deaths
222 people



Injured
976 people




Missing
8 people





House Damaged
73,000 houses

ASEAN RESPONSE


 Deployed response team


PROVIDED:

 250 FAMILY TENTS

 250 FAMILY KITS

MALAYSIA ASSISTED:

 2 C-130 PLANES to deliver relief goods



TYPHOON HAIYAN

DECEMBER 2013, PHILIPPINES



Leyte, Philippines
8 December 2013



Affected Population
16,078,181 people



Impact as of
24 December 2013



Deaths
6,109 people



Injured
28,636 people



Estimate Cost of Damaged
USD 142,191,945



Missing
1,779 people



ASEAN RESPONSE



Deployed response team and ERAT

PROVIDED:

-  EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION SUPPORT
-  2.5 TONS OF RICE OF RICE
-  2,000 BOTTLED WATER
-  2,000 ROLLS OF TARPAULINS
-  2,200 PERSONAL HYGIENE KITS
-  2 OFFICE PRE-FABRICTION UNITS
-  1 GENERATOR
for OCD temporary office in Tacloban
- NFI


1 MOBILE STORAGE UNIT (MSUs)
for temporary warehouse in Giuan
-  250 SHELTER TOOL KIT

ASEAN COUNTRIES ASSISTANCE FOR TYPHOON HAIYAN:


 Brunei Darussalam	 4 CH-235 full of food items, non-food items, medical supplies.	 3 Naval ship full of food items, non-food items, medical supplies.	 4 Personnel to support AHA Centre field team
 Cambodia	 US \$ 100,000 In-cash donation		
 Indonesia	 6 C-130 full of food items, non-food items, medical supplies.	 US \$ 1,000,000 In cash donation	
 Lao PDR	 US \$ 50,000 In-cash donation		
 Malaysia	 3 C-130 full of food items, non-food items, medical supplies.	 1 Field hospital and mobile medical service.	 53 Medical personnel and Special Malaysia Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team (SMART).
	 US \$ 1,000,000 In-cash donation		
 Myanmar	 US \$ 100,000 In-cash donation	 Provide various relief items	
 Singapore	 2 C-130 full of food items, non-food items, medical supplies.	 2 Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) personnel	 Provide relief items worth of US \$ 260,000
 Thailand	 2 C-130 full of food items, non-food items, medical supplies.	 2 Naval ship full of food items, non-food items, medical supplies.	 US \$ 2,700,000 In-cash donation
 Viet Nam	 US \$ 100,000 In-cash donation		

TYPHOON RAMMASUN


JULY 2014, PHILIPPINES & VIET NAM




Bohol, Philippines
15 July 2014




Injured
630 people




Impact as of
24 July 2014




Missing
5 people




Affected Population
4,000,987 people



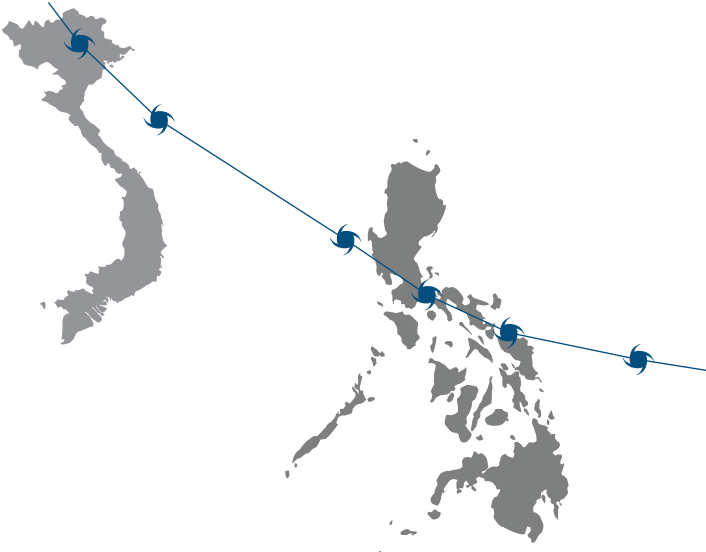
Displaced
27,380 people




Deaths
98 people




House Damaged
497,276 houses







Northern Region, Viet Nam
15 July 2014



Deaths
24 people



Impact as of
24 July 2014




House Damaged
1,300 houses

ASEAN RESPONSE




Deployed response team

PROVIDED:




500 ROLLS OF TARPULINS




2 GENERATOR
for OCD temporary office

TYPHOON HAGUPIT


DECEMBER 2014, PHILIPPINES




Bohol, Philippines
3 December 2014




Deaths
18 people




Impact as of
19 December 2014



Injured
916 people




Affected Population
4,149,484 people



Displaced
100,264 people



ASEAN RESPONSE



Deployed emergency response and ERAT team

PROVIDED:



650 ROLLS OF TARPULINS



5,000 SHELTER
for families in Pasay City

MALAYSIA FLOODS

DECEMBER 2014 - JANUARY 2015*, MALAYSIA



Affecting 6 States:
Johor, Kelantan, Perak,
Pahang, Terengganu, Sabah



Deaths
17 people



Affected Population
77,703 people



House Damaged
3,840 houses



most roads in affected
areas blocked




ASEAN RESPONSE



Deployed 3 ASEAN-ERAT
team

PROVIDED:




538 family tents




538 family kits



498 shelter toolkits




1,000 rolls of tarpaulins




1,500 kitchen sets


SINGAPORE PROVIDED:



7 water purification units



Singapore Civil Defence Force
(SCDF) and Singapore Armed
Forces personnel



Pleaded SGD 100,000 of aid
channelled through Singapore Red
Cross to Malaysian Red Crescent
Society

THAILAND DELIVERED:



500 tons of rice

*taken from various sources

MYANMAR FLOODS

JULY - AUGUST 2015*, MYANMAR

- Deaths
110 people
- Affected population
1,615,335 people
- People displaced
333,178 people
- House Damaged
16,095 houses
- Crops damaged
910,000 acres of crops damaged
- Agricultural land
1.4 Million acres of agricultural land inundated



ASEAN RESPONSE

- Deployed In-Country Coordination Team (ICCT), consisting of 2 AHA Centre staffs + 7 ASEAN ERAT members

PROVIDED:

- 2,000 tarpaulins
- 2,000 collapsible jerry cans
- 2,000 mosquito nets
- 4 aluminium boats with engine
- 3 mobile storage unit
- 2,000 family kits (purchased locally)
- 2,000 kitchen kits (purchased locally)

CAMBODIA DELIVERED:

- USD 100,000 of aid

THAILAND DELIVERED:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs: THB 5 Million (US \$ 142,000)
- His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen: THB 5 Million (US \$ 142,000)
- Government of Thailand: 120 tons of relief supplies (medical supplies, medical equipment, family kits, tents, blankets,
- The Ministry of Commerce provided 200 tons of rice

*taken from various sources

TYPHOON KOPPU (LANDO)

OCTOBER 2015*, PHILIPPINES

- Casiguran, Philippines
October 2015
- Deaths
48 people
- Injured
83 people
- Missing
4 people



ASEAN RESPONSE

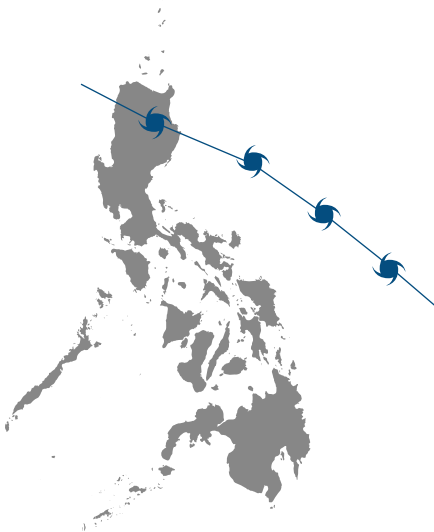
- Deployed 3 AHA Centre staffs + In-country ASEAN-ERAT members
- 1,000 rolls of tarpaulins

*taken from NDRRMC Situation Update no. 22

TYPHOON HAIMA

OCTOBER 2016, PHILIPPINES

- Landfall
19 October 2016
- Max sustained winds
225 kph
- Gustiness
315 kph
- Deaths
14 people
- Injured
4 people
- Affected Population
46,592 people
- House Damaged
90,035 houses



ASEAN RESPONSE

- Deployed In-country Coordination Team (ICCT) consisting of 2 AHA Centre Staff and deployed 2 ASEAN-ERAT member from the Philippines
- Provide 8 units of generator set 20-25 KVA



WHY REGIONAL RESPONSE?

MAKING A CASE FOR REGIONAL RESPONSE

Well before ASEAN agreed on a regional framework to manage disaster as a single entity, its Member States have often supported each other bilaterally during disasters. Even after the creation of the AHA Centre, such bilateral support still exists, with the development of mutual cooperation across a range of fields. For ASEAN nations, supporting each other across the region is generally a given, as not only are they geographically bound to one another, but the region and its nations also hold a range of cultural roots, social contexts and shared histories.

ASEAN was founded in 1967 by the Governments of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Singapore. These initial five nations were later joined by Brunei Darussalam (1984), Viet Nam (1995), Lao PDR (1997), Myanmar (1997) and Cambodia (1999). ASEAN was originally formed as a political entity with a limited scope; a multilateral means to encourage economic growth, socio-cultural cooperation, as well as maintaining stability and peace in the region, particularly within the context of the Cold War at the time.⁵ Through ASEAN, countries in the region have an alternative mechanism to resolve issues that could potentially trigger conflicts between states, such as a number of conflicts that took place in the lead-up to the 1970's.⁶

A number of studies have shown that as a result of these historical and political contexts, ASEAN nations are often more likely to use a non-structural approach by promoting national sovereignty and non-interference in the affairs at the regional level.⁷ The Cold War context has made the ASEAN Member States more comfortable with non-interference international political relations, particularly with some countries in the region under authoritarian or semi-authoritarian systems.⁸ As a result, there is an approach used by ASEAN Member States that continues to respect national sovereignty by not interfering in the internal affairs of any country, no matter how it may affect the region. This perspective concerning national sovereignty and non-interference is understandable, given the fact that some ASEAN countries have experienced colonisation by, and liberation from European nations in the not so distant past. This context sees ASEAN nations affording high importance to the independence of a single nation, and therefore reject any form of foreign intervention on a sovereign state.⁹

Hence, it is somewhat natural that the ASEAN Member States may be sensitive or apprehensive to any kind of institutionalisation or procedural binding for countries in the region, precisely because it may potentially interfere with national sovereignty. As a point of difference from other regional organisations, such as the EU, which in almost all affairs has institutions and standardised binding procedures, ASEAN prefers to use formal and informal meeting mechanisms as a method for decision making. Instead of using a legalistic approach, ASEAN has traditionally favoured the consultative and consensus building approach.¹⁰ This ASEAN approach is often referred to as the ‘ASEAN Way’.¹¹

In a certain sense, ASEAN’s cooperation in disaster management, which has given rise to formal structures and procedures, can be said to constitute a new approach to its regional affairs. ASEAN chose to agree on common principles and guidelines, as well as institutionalise some procedures in such a way to ensure that the ASEAN Member States can swiftly and effectively help one another in time of disaster in the region. The willingness of ASEAN nations to move towards a regional approach within disaster management can, then, be based upon three key elements.

**POLITICAL ELEMENT:
IMPLICATIONS OF JOINING THE
REGIONAL ENTITY**

Modern ASEAN is an increasingly important community for Member States, primarily because its framework has penetrated many crucial sectors, which in one way or another influence the internal economic, cultural, social and institutional components of each country. The increased influence of ASEAN has reciprocally raised higher expectations for ASEAN itself, including in relation to its presence in disaster management.

Within this context, and as a result of previous emergency situations, criticisms had often emerged from within the region and outside regarding ASEAN’s lack of preparedness and support for its own Member States when disasters strike. Often there was the perception that ASEAN should be present an even more rapid and adequate response at times of disaster, particularly in comparison to other international organisations and mechanisms. At bare minimum, it was expected that ASEAN should not be less quick or less serious. At times when the ASEAN response seemed late or less effective, the resulting criticism cut to the core of the credibility of ASEAN as a regional organisation.

Criticisms aside, ASEAN nations themselves are aware that the presence of Member States during disaster responses is an inherently positive outcome for the regional organisation. The presence and

support serves to show that ASEAN is truly meaningful to its Member States. There is a symbolic political significance in any support provided during a disaster, and such a symbolic meaning may hold even more power than the physical form of the support itself. This can often be the case even if a State has the internal capacity to cope with the impact of disaster itself, and support provided by ASEAN may appear minimal in comparison to the State’s own response resources.

However, ASEAN support often provides more than just material or financial value. The presence and support are primarily a symbol of solidarity that ultimately strengthens relations between nations and people. This is a reflection of the spirit of togetherness that has been shaped among ASEAN Member States throughout recent times. By facing disaster as a united region, the Member States essentially engage their political decision to join the regional organisation.

Choosing to live as one regional community in the ASEAN context means being willing to engage with each other, particularly in difficult situations such as major disasters. For ASEAN, responding to disaster as one region is the result of choosing to bond together. Living as one region would be politically impossible if each nation chose to ignore the difficulties faced by other nations. On the contrary, living together becomes more possible if each State is willing to show solidarity in the face of the most difficult situations.

**TECHNICAL ELEMENT:
WHEN ONE COUNTRY’S RESPONSE
IS NOT ENOUGH**

Capacity to manage and cope in the face of large-scale disasters is an issue for any nation large or small. Large-scale disasters in ASEAN such as the Indian Ocean Tsunami, Cyclone Nargis, or Typhoon Haiyan have shown that countries still need, or at least will benefit further, from support provided by other countries, whether through governments, NGOs, militaries, or private enterprises. Such support can ease the burden of a nation and accelerate outreach to disaster victims, which can also critically determine the life or death of those on the forefront of disaster. Furthermore, in certain cases, a single disaster can also impact more than one country, as more than ever natural disaster knows no borders.

In such circumstances, the need arises for a collective disaster response, at least between affected countries, with critical activities such as information sharing vital to the overall response implementation. Typhoons form a stand-out example of a disaster that is transnational in nature. Events such as Typhoon Rammasun, which hit the north-eastern Philippines on 15 July 2014, then moved in to affect the northern areas of Viet Nam and southern China on 19 July 2014.

Regional support mechanisms fill the gaps when one country’s response capacity is not sufficient. For ASEAN, regional response requires managing disasters in a coordinated manner at the regional level, to increase the disaster management capacity of the affected countries, and thus allowing faster and more adequate responses. Primarily, for affected countries, the existence of institutions such as the AHA Centre to support the coordination of regional assistance can ease the burden, allowing them to concentrate further towards managing their own national response.

From the perspective of countries offering assistance, the presence and role of the AHA Centre can also reduce the non-technical and administrative obstacles. During emergency responses, both the affected and assisting countries often now coordinate with one single entity, namely the AHA Centre. This context facilitates a more technically smooth and coordinated response, creating efficiency and improved impact across areas such as information sharing and mobilisation of relief materials and other resources. Such efficiencies also support a decrease in the possibility of assistance overlap, an occurrence known to do more harm than good in the event of disaster response. The AHA Centre can be viewed as the single ‘entry point’ for ASEAN nations wishing to support another in times of disaster.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL REASON:
THE POSITIVITY OF
TOGETHERNESS**

Upon choosing to join the ASEAN community, a Member State enters into an overall context of ‘togetherness’. The state of this togetherness compels Member States to, at the very least, to pay attention to the plight of other ASEAN Member States. Such a context is reflected visibly at times of disaster. If one or more Member States are experiencing disaster, the support of other ASEAN nations can be viewed as affirming the existence of the solidarity and unity of the ASEAN region. Within this perspective, therefore, the difficulties faced by another ASEAN country are therefore also difficulties faced by ASEAN. In other words, showing solidarity with other Member States contributes to the upholding of the ‘togetherness’ of ASEAN, and any step in the opposite direction may weaken such a spirit of unity.

The significance and importance of solidarity can be the key-binding ingredient for ASEAN nations through almost any situation the region encounters. From the beginning of the organisation, ASEAN countries have cooperated on a voluntary basis, incorporating overall respect for one another throughout their engagement. Such cooperation is only possible when based on strong solidarity, as it is this

solidarity, and not obligation or compulsion, that drives the ASEAN Member States to cooperate in the management of the diverse interests across the region.

Solidarity in disaster can also support the strengthening of relations in other areas, whether it be economic, political, security, or socio-cultural affairs. It can build a foundation to ensure a relationship is not transactional, or motivated by internal priorities, instead built on solidarity and support for those facing difficulties or displaying certain needs. Support during disaster response may not result in specific or measurable gains for the affected countries, however it carries the important and symbolic meaning of displaying solidarity.

Within this context, the AHA Centre forms a real embodiment of the solidarity of ASEAN, particularly the unity displayed as fellow Member States across a region so vulnerable to disaster. Without the existence of such solidarity, the AHA Centre itself would not exist, as each nation would have chosen to take care of themselves during a disaster. ASEAN solidarity is thus an essential characteristic of the existence of the AHA Centre for disaster management.

**PRINCIPLES OF SOLIDARITY, NATIONAL
SOVEREIGNTY AND EQUALITY**

Ms. Adelina Kamal, who led the team from the ASEAN Secretariat during the response to Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar in May 2008, still holds a strong memory of an experience that reflects relationships between the ASEAN Member States. At that time, the ASEAN Secretariat had only three staff dedicated to disaster management, herself included, and therefore the ASEAN Secretariat was only able to send a small team to Myanmar, and this had to be supplemented by other members of the Secretariat and partner agencies. At that time, the AHA Centre was not yet established.

Ms. Adelina and the team were not able to immediately engage in the response, and as with many other response teams from a variety of organisations and countries, spent days waiting for permits from the Government of Myanmar to enter the affected areas. At this time, Myanmar had limited experience in receiving international assistance of any kind.

Ms. Adelina recalls that the situation during the initial days of the disaster was quite precarious, as the Government of Myanmar raced against time to rescue and support its citizens. There was a clear capacity gap in the ability of local authorities to manage the huge onset of international assistance, with the situation increasingly strained even though the intentions of those offering support were good.



Image on left page: The first ASEAN-ERAT team during the first ASEAN-ERAT mission to Cyclone Nargis, Myanmar, May 2008

The result was a variety of a ‘deadlock’ situation. On one hand, the Myanmar government had little experience in coordinating international assistance, however high the need was. On the other hand, the responders from various countries faced a lack of information about the unfolding situation, including the kind of support and assistance actually required by disaster victims at ground zero.

The Secretary-General of ASEAN attempted to break the deadlock by discussing the benefits of international support with officials from Myanmar government, attempting to display the value that the support could bring to the government and its people. The ASEAN Secretariat offered to support Myanmar to facilitate assistance from the international community, with the ASEAN team ready to assist the national and local authorities. It was offered that members of the ASEAN team would take on responsibilities to help the Myanmar government through the ASEAN-led coordinating mechanism, known as the Tripartite Core Group, comprising the Myanmar government as the lead, ASEAN and the UN..

Such an offer was welcomed by the Myanmar government. The government then allowed the ASEAN team to stay on in Myanmar until the completion of the emergency response as well as the recovery period two years later, continuing to facilitate the coordination of international support. The Government of Myanmar opened the door for ASEAN, resulting in the region’s representatives undertaking the support mechanism of coordinating international assistance.

Ms. Adelina reflects that the acceptance of Myanmar to the ASEAN team shows that ASEAN occupies an important position in the national consciousness of its Member States. It also serves to display the idea of the ‘ASEAN Way’, specifically the way in which ASEAN builds trust and confidence, and manages relationships and cooperation amongst its Member States, in this case working in the context of disaster management. This specific experience in which Myanmar was open to the presence of ASEAN in disaster response and recovery, can also continuously be seen across more recent response activities undertaken by the AHA Centre.

THE ASEAN WAY AS THE AHA CENTRE WAY

Since its establishment, ASEAN has formed institutional norms that represent a mechanism to undertake its business, as well as to manage friction within the organisation. These norms are based on the principles of informality, non-interference, consultation and consensus building.¹² Alongside this, ASEAN nations mutually uphold national sovereignty, and oppose all forms of foreign interference on an independent nation.

The AHA Centre was established by adhering to this ASEAN Way. Overall, the characteristics of the AHA Centre essentially reflect the characteristics of ASEAN as a region. The AHA Centre's evolution is therefore following the evolution ASEAN's approach and ways of working. The AADMER document clearly states that the existence of the AHA Centre is not intended to replace national response and action towards disaster emergency situations. In an emergency situation, the leadership of the response remains entirely in the hands of the national government. The AHA Centre, and other countries in the region, only serve to help when the affected countries request or permit such assistance. Hence, if the affected countries do not request or permit such engagement, the AHA Centre will not undertake any activities. The AHA Centre, in this regard, does not work as a first responder, and ensures that the national agency of the affected country will lead the operations on the ground.

This commitment to national sovereignty and non-interference forms the basis of all disaster responses conducted by the AHA Centre. The response of the AHA Centre and ASEAN has always been perceived as part of the overall response of the affected countries. The AHA Centre at all times merely responds to the needs and requests made by governing authorities of the affected States. It is this approach that provides States receiving assistance with trust and comfort to engage the AHA Centre and other Member States in a response. As a result, the work of the AHA Centre will always be measured by the extent to which it serves the interests of the ASEAN Member States.

In fact, this is perhaps the key reason for the existence and success of the AHA Centre. Member States are not tied to the ASEAN regional mechanisms. On the contrary, any regional mechanisms are seen as adaptable to the needs and situations faced by the disaster-affected countries, and as an extension to the national response. In the words of Arnel Capili, the AHA Centre's Director of Operations, "They (the Member States) are the AHA Centre's bosses; we will always have to act in accordance with their values and directives."

Furthermore, under ASEAN mechanisms, any assistance or support from the Member States in disaster response is voluntary, in which the States are not formally bound to assist others that are lacking the capacity to respond to disaster. In this regard, the solidarity of ASEAN is once more revealed. Its

solidarity is not legalistic in nature, but developed on a basis and source of volunteerism to support other countries. In this sense, involvement in supporting other countries can fundamentally be viewed as a form of a moral commitment that reaches far beyond the binding nature of formal rules and requirements. It is in this spirit of solidarity that the AHA Centre prioritises relationships with disaster-affected nations over any moves to display AHA Centre's and ASEAN Member States' contributions during an emergency situation. The AHA Centre and ASEAN still aim to display their presence during a disaster, however not for a sense of pride or attention, but to maintain a genuine display of solidarity across the region.

The AHA Centre's operational environment is developed upon a foundation of such solidarity, characteristics and norms. As a result, ASEAN now has a set of disaster mechanisms and standard procedures that are, to some extent, binding for the Member States. However, the core value of ASEAN and the AHA Centre in disaster response remains of solidarity and respect for the norms of national sovereignty and non-interference. Without solidarity and respect for the norms, the AHA Centre may just form another technical and mechanical support mechanism, with little difference to other existing mechanisms, and perhaps little overall impact.

As a regional organisation, the AHA Centre displays similar characteristics to its parent organisation, namely ASEAN. Such identical appearances have proven to be decisive for the operations of the AHA Centre itself, as seen within the 14 disaster emergency responses throughout its formation years. The AHA Centre subscribes to the ASEAN way of working, as it is precisely this that enables the organisation to gain the trust and support of the ASEAN Member States.

Even after the establishment of the AHA Centre, ASEAN Member States still receive and provide support on a bilateral basis, working outside of the regional mechanism. In the context of ASEAN, such bilateral mechanism will always be intact, as it is not the ASEAN way to determine any single Member State's approach. However, it can be said that the Member States increasingly view the AHA Centre as the primary mechanism to respond to large-scale disaster emergencies. This was evidenced through the signing of the Declaration of "One ASEAN, One Response" by the ten Heads of State/Government on 6 September 2016.

At this point, it is fair to acknowledge the increasing quality of relations between the ASEAN Member States themselves. In a state of emergency, ASEAN nations, through the AHA Centre, will generally have increased access to support for disaster affected areas than can be provided by other nations or international humanitarian organisations. Testimonies of the AHA Centre staff who have been involved in response missions indicate that the AHA Centre was often seen as an extension of the NDMOs, in terms of helping to coordinate the support of the regional community, particularly support from ASEAN Member States. In most cases, the ASEAN team were given permission by NDMOs or local governments to attend key meetings concerning the response actions.



SITTING THE SAME LOW, STANDING THE SAME HEIGHT

In solidarity and mutual respect for the national sovereignty, the ASEAN Member States also emphasise the equality of all nations in the region. Although each country has its unique features, such as population size or national wealth, such differences are not raised or affect the rights and position of each country in the ASEAN organisation. No country receives more privileges than any other. ASEAN holds value of a saying: Sitting the same low, standing the same height. No matter how great the gap between the Member States, their positions are always equal in ASEAN.

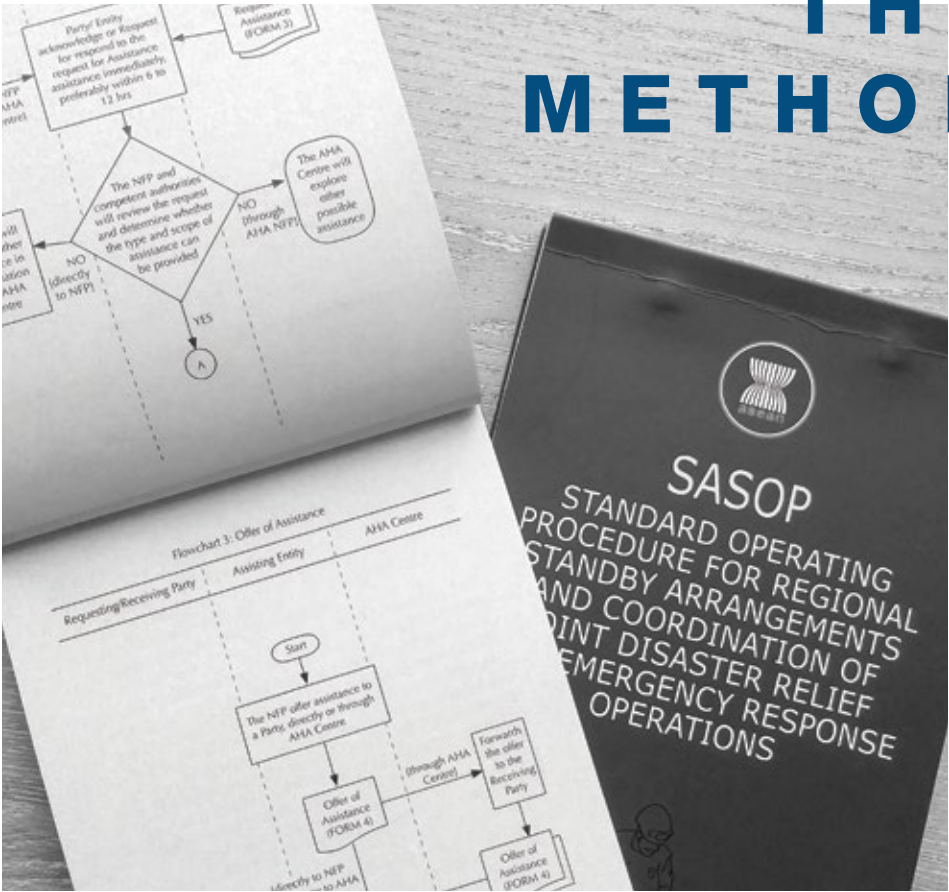
This principle applies in the AHA Centre, as illustrated in the budgeting of the institution. The AHA Centre receives funding through two types of funds from the Member States. The first is an annual and equal contribution to the AHA Centre Fund under the Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre, and the second is in the form of a voluntary contribution to the ASEAN Disaster Management and Emergency Relief (ADMER) Fund under the AADMER. In addition to the contributions from Member States, the AHA Centre receives great support from its partners.

Within such a context, particularly related to the relatively small annual and equal contributions from Member States, is the underlying philosophical that ASEAN Member States prefer that all nations will always sit the same low and stand the same height. For that reason, the ASEAN Member States set a specific contribution amount that is considered as to not create difficulties for all. With each country contributing the same value, each also has a same share in the organisation. By doing so, they have equal rights within ASEAN, where no member may feel more entitled to determine the direction and style of the organisation due to provision of a greater contribution. The AHA Centre is an equal asset of all 10 ASEAN Member States, not only the strongest or richest.

Looking ahead, there may be an increase from time to time to the amount of annual and equal contributions from the Member States to the AHA Centre. However, this will always be done through preserving the principle of equality. Overall, the AHA Centre has never just been technical organisation formed as a means for disaster management, but stands as a reflection of the ASEAN Way. This is the essence of the existence of the AHA Centre, forming the key element of any future emergency responses. Importantly, it reflects the principle of solidarity, respect for national sovereignty, as well as equality among ASEAN Member States.

2

THE METHOD





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

ONE AGENCY, TWO MISSIONS

AADMER defines ‘disaster’ as “a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses.” It recognises both natural and human-induced disasters. However, during the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the AADMER on 15-16 March 2012 in Jakarta, Indonesia, it was agreed to accept the ACDM’s proposal that the current focus of AADMER implementation and the AHA Centre should be solely towards natural disasters. This focus may be expanded in the coming 10 years, after the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management flagged the possibility that the AHA Centre may respond to other disasters, including human-induced disasters, such as transboundary haze pollution, emergencies in the waters of Southeast Asia, and the development of nuclear power plants that pose a significant risk to the region.

In AADMER, ‘disaster emergency’ is described as “a situation where a Party (Member State) declares that it is unable to cope with a disaster”. The AHA Centre was established for the purpose of facilitating co-operation and co-ordination among the Parties (Member States), as well as with relevant United Nations and international organisations, and for promoting regional collaboration, not only but especially in emergency situations. In an emergency situation, the AHA Centre will work on the basis that the affected country will act first to manage and respond to a disaster. When the affected country requests support, or when Member States offer assistance, the AHA Centre’s mandate is to facilitate the process. The AHA Centre then acts as the focal point of cooperation and coordination for the response at the regional level.

Furthermore, according to AADMER, the AHA Centre performs the following broad functions:

- 1 Receive and consolidate data as analysed by, and recommendations on risk level from the National Focal Points (the National Disaster Management Organisations/NDMOs);
- 2 On the basis of such information, disseminate to each Party, through the National Focal Points;
- 3 Where appropriate, conduct analysis on possible disaster regional-level implications;

- 4

Receive information regarding available resources for the regional standby arrangements for disaster relief and emergency response;
- 5

Facilitate the establishment, maintenance and periodical review of regional standby arrangements for disaster relief and emergency response;
- 6

Facilitate periodic review of regional standard operating procedures;
- 7

Receive data on earmarked assets and capacities which may be available for regional standby arrangements for disaster relief and emergency response, as communicated by each Party and their updates;
- 8

Consolidate, update and disseminate the data on such earmarked assets and capacities, and communicate with the parties for their utilisation;
- 9

Receive information on measures taken by the Parties to mobilise equipment, facilities, materials, human and financial resources required to respond to disasters;
- 10

Facilitate joint emergency response;
- 11

Where appropriate, facilitate the processing of exemptions and facilities in respect of the provision of assistance;
- 12

Where possible and appropriate, facilitate the processing of transit of personnel, equipment, facilities, and materials in respect of the provisions of assistance;
- 13

Facilitate activities for technical cooperation;
- 14

Facilitate activities for scientific and technical research;
- 15

Receive from each Party information on designated National Focal Point and Competent Authorities and any subsequent changes in their designations; and
- 16

Regularly and expeditiously provide information to the Parties, and as necessary, to relevant international partners.

Except for points 13 and 14 of the above functions, all other points display two missions or major tasks for the AHA Centre. Firstly, to manage information, not only but particularly during emergency situations (see points 1 to 9, as well as 15 and 16). Secondly, to mobilise resources for response purposes (note points 10 to 12).

As a consequence, in coordinating the regional response during disasters, the AHA Centre is inherently undertaking two tasks. It is firstly ensuring the effectiveness of disaster communications by managing information to be disseminated to Member States through National Focal Points. Then concurrently, it is also managing resource mobilisation to the affected country, which includes personnel, logistics supplies, ICT support, emergency equipment, and other resource aspects.

HOW IT WORKS

Implementation of these two missions usually depends on the scale of a disaster or hazard, and the decision made by the AHA Centre together with the affected countries and other ASEAN Member States regarding the necessity of a response in the form of resource mobilisation. Under “normal” circumstances, the AHA Centre usually only responds to large-scale disasters. However, in some cases that may be classified as relatively small to medium-scale disasters, where the affected countries are still very much able to handle the response, the AHA Centre, with the support of the Member States, will often respond primarily as a symbolic gesture to show the presence and solidarity of ASEAN.

Through the last five years, the AHA Centre and ASEAN have developed various response mechanisms aimed at improving the quality of response, and focusing on the information management and the distribution of relief items and personnel at ground zero. Key mechanisms in the disaster emergency response include:

- 1

Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP);
- 2

Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and Web-based EOC (WebEOC);
- 3

Emergency Response Organisations (ERO);

- 4

ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT);
- 5

Disaster Emergency Logistic System for ASEAN (DELSA);
- 6

ASEAN Joint Disaster Response Plan (AJDRP);
- 7

Joint Operations and Coordination Centre of ASEAN (JOCCA).

All of these mechanisms regulate, or are related to certain standard aspects of emergency response. AJDRP and SASOP provide guidance for the preparation of, demand for and provision of support. EOC along with the WebEOC are activated to provide a single command and communications system for disaster response. ERO is a form of response organisation to develop and execute the operations plan. ERAT is a community of trained professionals ready to be mobilised to ground zero for response. DELSA allows the mobilisation of logistics resources within a regional approach. JOCCA is an on-site coordination system to support the affected Member State.

These operational mechanisms are not designed as stand-alone features. This, in itself, forms another strength of the AHA Centre and ASEAN within a regional response approach: in that operational capacity is strengthened with political mandate, and with what is referred to as “the we feeling”. The political mandate is provided through AADMER, recently reinforced by the signing of the “One ASEAN, One Response” declaration by the Heads of State/Government of ASEAN and with the full support from the Secretary-General of ASEAN as the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator (SG-AHAC). Meanwhile, “the we feeling” is a sense of solidarity among the ASEAN countries, which continues to be deliberately fostered by the Member States over time.

The AHA Centre and ASEAN believe that the operational mechanisms will be less effective without a strong political mandate, let alone without a sense of solidarity among the Member States. With that, disaster management or response cannot be approached only from a technocratic, privileged point of view, in which a disaster occurrence is treated as a scientific practice with a technical and calculative perspective. It must be viewed also as a socio-cultural event related to humanity and humanitarian dynamics. This social attribute of disasters is often much more complex, and therefore requires greater attention than the operational aspects.

FROM NOTIFICATION TO
DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES



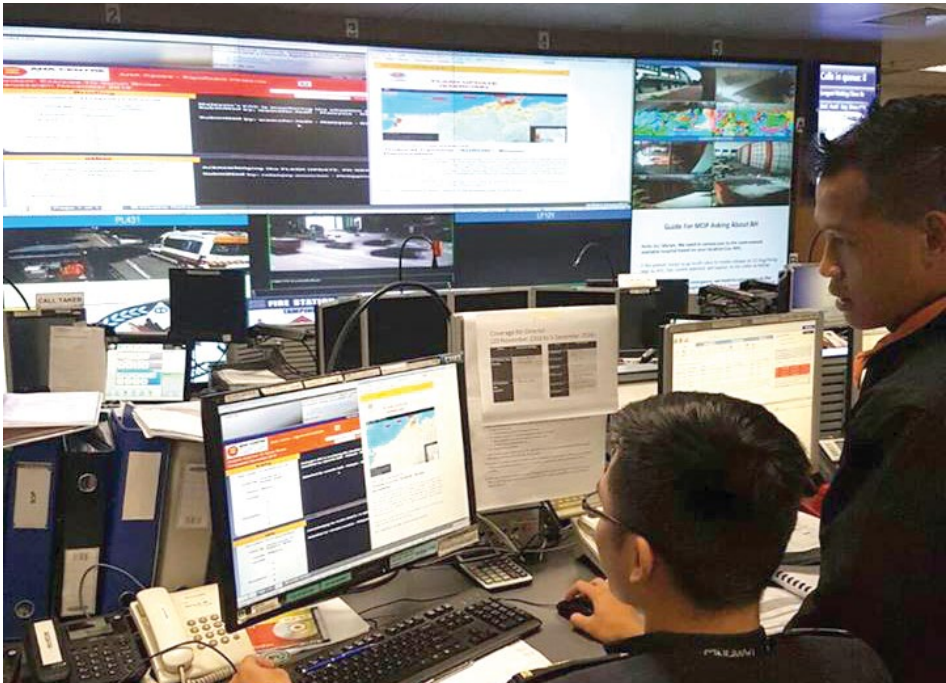
The AHA Centre and ASEAN emergency responses span from the disaster emergency notification to the distribution of human resources, logistics, assets, and other vital elements directly to disaster sites. The AHA Centre is the primary mechanism engaged between the affected country or countries and the assisting countries, and stands as the entity, which allows for effective communication to mobilise resources.

When a disaster occurs, or there are indications of a potential disaster, the AHA Centre will collect, analyse and disseminate information to the Member States, and open the channels of communication directly with the affected country. If there is the onset of more than one disaster at the same time, the AHA Centre will focus on the larger disaster, determined by considering the impacts and required resources. If a large-scale disaster occurs, the entire response mechanism moves to ‘Yellow’ alert (stand-by) status with the activation of EOC and ERO. The AHA Centre will coordinate and communicate with the affected country regarding options to mobilise regional resources.

The AHA Centre conduct full response operations, namely managing information and mobilising resources, if the affected countries approve or request support from the AHA Centre and other ASEAN Member States. Technically, a full operation is characterised by a red alert status issued by the AHA Centre, under which all response mechanisms are activated, Including deploying ASEAN-ERAT personnel, setting up an emergency response organisation, distributing relief items through DELSA, providing situation updates on an ongoing basis, as well as ensuring the readiness of management and strategic support for the NDMO. All these actions aim to improve the accuracy of information and the thoroughness of resource mobilisation during emergency response. The standard length of full operation is two weeks, but subject to consultation with the affected countries, in which case the duration can be extended or shortened as required. The receiving countries and the AHA Centre will then agree on the demobilisation of the operation.

On the other hand, if the disaster-affected nation states that they can manage the impact of disaster independently, the AHA Centre will usually engage on standby status, only performing the management of information and communication across the Member States. This operational classification is signified by a ‘Yellow’ alert status.

Further elaboration about emergency response activities of the AHA Centre follows within the coming chapters.



THREE LAYERS OF COORDINATION

Image on left page: NDMOs of Lao PDR (top) and Singapore (bottom) monitor the disaster situation through the WebEOC

During an emergency response, the AHA Centre will coordinate at the three layers as follows:



At the strategic level, in the head office in Jakarta, Indonesia: The coordination takes place within the scope of the ASEAN leaders and senior officials, whereby the AHA Centre regularly conduct executive meetings and briefings with the Secretary-General of ASEAN, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and other relevant senior officials to ASEAN. If necessary, the Secretary-General of ASEAN will assume the position of ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator (SG-AHAC) to mobilise greater resources from the Member States in all sectors.



At the operational level in the capital city of the affected country: The coordination takes place within the affected country's national response framework, in which the role of AHA Centre is to develop bridges between the AHA Centre Headquarters in Jakarta and the affected country's NDMO, as well as with representatives of Member States in the affected country. Aside from maintaining coordination with the receiving NDMO, the AHA Centre in-country coordination team will conduct meetings with ASEAN embassies in the affected country, to provide regular updates on the unfolding situation, and convey information on behalf of the affected NDMO.



At the tactical level at ground-zero: The coordination takes place at the disaster site, where the AHA Centre activates and manages the operationalisation of ASEAN-ERAT, JOCCA, DELSA, and other resources to ensure support to the local disaster management agency.

All processes of coordination are inter-related. Coordination at the strategic level, which is usually conducted in major disaster situations that require higher-level decision-making, will provide the basis for more efficient coordination at the operational and tactical levels. Reciprocally, coordination at the tactical level will influence the extent of coordination at the operational and strategic levels. In each large-scale disaster, the AHA Centre will hold an executive briefing and invite the Ambassadors of ASEAN and other related high-ranking officials to continuously update the emergency response plan.



ACTIVATION OF SG-AHAC

Image on left page: Mr. Said Faisal, Executive Director of the AHA Centre provides briefing to the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN following the landfall of Typhoon Haiyan, November 2013

When the AHA Centre confirms the occurrence of a large-scale disaster, whether it be a natural disaster or otherwise, the Secretary-General of ASEAN can be activated as the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator (SG-AHAC) at the request of the affected country, or with the consent of, or lack of objection, by the affected country upon the offer of assistance made by the Secretary-General. This mandate was performed for the first time by the Secretary-General of ASEAN following Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in November 2013. The experience gained through Typhoon Haiyan has encouraged ASEAN to further define and strengthen the role of the SG-AHAC through the development of a Terms of Reference (ToR) for SG-AHAC, adopted by the ASEAN Coordinating Council (comprising the ASEAN Foreign Ministers) in May 2014. The Operational Procedure to implement the TOR of SG-AHAC was subsequently developed and adopted at the 24th ACDM Meeting in October 2014.

Activation of SG-AHAC is particularly useful in times when a high-level coordination is required to ensure access and agreement from the affected country, as well as when there is an urgent need to call for high-level coordination among the Member States to support and mobilise resources. To ensure timely and effective implementation of the mandate, within six hours after the occurrence of a major disaster, the Secretary-General of ASEAN shall communicate with the Head of State/Government of the affected country to offer assistance and propose the activation of the role of SG-AHAC. The Secretary-General of ASEAN will then report to the ASEAN Leaders.

SG-AHAC will engage with the AHA Centre to ensure ASEAN’s coordinated and timely response to the disaster. The Executive Director of AHA Centre and the SG-AHAC will immediately establish a coordination line. The SG-AHAC will be supported by the ASEAN Secretariat, which will conduct regular briefings for the ASEAN CPR, ASEAN Dialogue Partners and other key partners/stakeholders. At the technical level, the Multi-Sectoral Coordination Group (MSCG) will be established to support SG-AHAC and coordinate with the EOC of the AHA Centre for information sharing and communication. The SG-AHAC will convene a response strategy meeting with the AHA Centre at the AHA Centre’s office and support the operation by calling for mobilisation of resources within ASEAN.

MANAGING INFORMATION IN
DISASTER RESPONSE

COMMUNICATION AS THE CORE OF DISASTER RESPONSE

Since its establishment, the AHA Centre has undertaken the role of coordinating disaster response through managing information disseminated to the Member States. In this case, the targeted information recipients are the Member States, particularly the designated National Focal Points. The AHA Centre also distributes information to its ASEAN-ERAT members, partners, other responder organisations, mass media, and the wider public, with information conveyed through channels such as email, SMS, social media, as well as via open access routes to the DMRS. However, it is the ASEAN Member States’ NFPs, who are the key targets for overall information management.

Therefore, the main communication model used by the AHA Centre to forward information regarding emergency situations is a model of communication with the following characteristics: (1) official (as it utilises formal agreed institutional channels); (2) limited (targeted to certain parties); (3) two-way communication (ongoing interaction between sender and receiver of the information); and (4) is intended primarily to support institutional decision-making.

This type of emergency communication model has fundamental differences compared to emergency communications undertaken to provide early warning to affected people at ground zero, or communications to evacuate at the time of slow-onset disasters such as floods, typhoon or volcanic eruptions. In the latter communication models, the communication can be characterised as: (1) open (because it targets all people); (2) one-way (giving the command with a single message for the people to evacuate, with no space for the recipients to reply or dialogue); and (3) is intended primarily for life preservation or rescue. Another important characteristic is that the language used in the AHA Centre’s model of communication is diplomatic in nature, whereas in the context of emergency communications for evacuation, for example, the language used must be the language of command (one-way, single meaning) with the objective that the recipient of the message will adhere to the “order”.

The supreme goal of the AHA Centre’s communication in disaster emergencies is to ensure that the concerned parties, in this case the ASEAN Member States, obtain the necessary and accurate information to implement a response, in the form of mobilisation of resources. To inform and facilitate communication during a disaster, the AHA Centre provides flash and situation updates which contain the needs of the affected country, undertakes video-conference meetings, as well as holding executive briefings attended by embassy representatives in Jakarta. This process is to support the Member

States with their decision regarding the nature of assistance to be provided in a response. Therefore, the accuracy and speed of information is imperative, and will greatly impact the quality of the response. Accurate and timely information will improve decision-making quality; just as late and inaccurate information can inhibit such a process. Information accuracy develops a certainty in information and communication, an element so fundamental in any crisis situation.

Furthermore, in disaster situations, the ability to appropriately and quickly mobilise resources can also determine the success of response, not only guiding relief distribution to victims, but also importantly increasing the opportunity to save lives. The quality of the information primarily determines such resource mobilisation effectiveness.

Overall, this highlights the reasoning for the importance of communication, which is central to the overall mechanisms within disaster response. Thus, within the context of the AHA Centre’s role, effective communication—the process of dissemination of accurate and timely information to and between Member States—will increase the likelihood that resources and support will meet the needs of the affected nation. On the contrary, ineffective communication will increase the likelihood that support provided is not appropriate to the situation, or even result in inefficient allocation and overlap.

During large-scale disasters, when often hundreds of responding parties from a range of backgrounds converge on the affected area, information management and effective communication has become increasingly crucial to the success of a response. The AHA Centre’s experiences in disaster response, such as during Typhoon Haiyan, has evidenced the importance of effective communication and information management. Information management is essential for the affected countries to receive the necessary support on time, and for the assisting countries and entities to ensure specific needs are addressed.

For ASEAN Member States, one of the key benefits of the AHA Centre’s presence is its function as a solitary information provider, as well as being the central point for coordination of resource mobilisation. This streamlines the process of support for both the affected and the assisting nations, as it removes the need for the singular activation of other bilateral arrangements in an emergency situation.¹³



UTILISING DISASTER COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

Image on left page: Emergency Operations Centre of the AHA Centre

To support disaster emergency communications, the AHA Centre has developed operational tools that utilise the potential of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Two major platforms developed so far are the ASEAN Disaster Monitoring and Response System (DMRS) and the Web-Based Emergency Operation Centre (WebEOC).

The ASEAN-DMRS was operationalised within the AHA Centre during early 2012. The DMRS is disaster information software that provides hazard data from regional and international sources, allowing the AHA Centre and NDMOs to monitor developing emergencies in almost real-time conditions, and predicting the possible impacts of any impending disaster. Information from this platform is used to guide decisions for any disaster preparedness or response activities. With the DMRS, the AHA Centre can, from time to time, identify the development of slow-onset hazards such as floods, volcanic eruptions and typhoons, and obtain early information about quick-onset threats such as earthquakes and tsunamis.

The system, that was developed with the support of the Pacific Disaster Center (PDC), has been used in various preparedness and response situations throughout the last five years. In 2015, with funding from the US Government, an initial supporter of the system’s establishment, the AHA Centre began to develop DMRS capacity with the aim to increase user-friendliness and compatibility with mobile platforms. This upgrade allows responders to access integral data (including spatial data) and information through the DMRS in a faster method and from a range of locations whether in the central office or responding in the field.

While the AHA Centre uses DMRS to monitor and predict disasters, it is the WebEOC that serves as the platform to conduct internal coordination. Such communication falls within the scope of communications between the AHA Centre and ASEAN Member States during emergency situations. The platform allows emergency responders to communicate and share information in a real-time manner. The responders can remain connected to each other and engaged with regard to the unfolding situation, simply by accessing the WebEOC through their mobile devices. In practice, in addition to sending information in text form, the responders, in particular the ASEAN-ERAT members, can also upload images and other information in various formats from the field to the WebEOC, allowing all parties access to two-dimensional information of the developing emergency.

In emergency situations, the ASEAN WebEOC is used for providing data and information from the field and disseminating such information to the Member States for decision making purposes. The existence of WebEOC has improved the connectivity between the AHA Centre and NDMOs or NFPs. Emergency communications can be conducted faster, in real-time, and integrated with one another. During the emergency situations, Member States and all responders can directly monitor the situation in the affected countries by accessing the information and communications traffic through the WebEOC platform.

During non-emergency situation, the AHA Centre continuously provides WebEOC training for the Member States’ EOCs staff and managers. Training sessions were also held for NDMO officials to familiarise them with this system.

FLOW OF INFORMATION IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

While a specific guidance to regulate communication and information management during disaster emergencies has yet to be implemented, for crisis communication activities the AHA Centre refers to documents that are already available, particularly the ASEAN-SASOP, the ASEAN-ERAT, as well as the ERO guidelines. The flow of information is as follows:

1 Early warning – dissemination

Communication channels in disaster situations begin when a disaster strikes, or there is evidence of an ongoing hazard. Early information on disasters or hazards is usually obtained from the DMRS. The AHA Centre also monitor disaster information from various sources, such as television news and online media, as well as social media. The Executive Director of the AHA Centre and all staff will be notified via email, SMS and telephone by the AHA Centre’s Emergency Alert System.

While the SASOP stipulates that the NFP of the affected country is expected to provide an initial report to the AHA Centre within 3 hours from the onset of a disaster event, the AHA Centre’s EOC in Jakarta always takes proactive approach by establishing active communication with the affected country and issuing flash updates that are continuously forwarded to the Member States through various communication channels such as email, SMS and social media.

If the available information indicates that there has been a large-scale disaster, then the information will be forwarded directly to the ASEAN Secretary-General through the Executive Director of the AHA Centre. The AHA Centre also disseminates a news flash to ASEAN Dialogue Partners, international organisations, and other interested parties, as well as publishing it through social media.

2 Analysis – standby status

After the initial information is disseminated, the AHA Centre then activates the WebEOC with all NDMOs of the ASEAN Member States having access to this system. EOC at the AHA Centre will communicate intensively with the NFP of the affected country to collect more information on the disaster. All communication channels are activated to monitor new significant developments, including from wider media sources.

All AHA Centre’s staff on the emergency roster are required to convene at the EOC within three hours of receiving the information. The Disaster Monitoring and Analysis Unit at the EOC will then recommend that the Director of Operations raise the alert level to ‘Yellow’. At this point, all staff will be put on standby in accordance with pre-defined roles by the ERO Guidelines. The ERO is an organisational structure that is activated during emergency response with all staff on the roster hold a certain role, and have been trained to carry out such a role at times of disaster. At the same time, all ASEAN-ERAT members available to be mobilised are requested to standby.

AHA Centre then activates the ASEAN-ERAT roster to obtain information about ASEAN-ERAT members within the affected country, and possible deployment of members from other ASEAN Member States if necessary. The ASEAN-ERAT members will receive alert by telephone, automated voice, SMS and email. Information is also conveyed through social media accounts. At the same time, the NFP of the ASEAN Member States may also alert their respective ASEAN-ERAT members of the disaster through internal communication channels. In some cases, the AHA Centre also receives information from the ASEAN-ERAT members in the affected areas through social media groups or telephone. Information from ASEAN-ERAT members is treated as additional information to be formally confirmed to the NFPs if required. In this stage, the AHA Centre will also activate DELSA and review the current availability of assets and capacities of the ASEAN Member States, and move them to a standby status.

Based on all available information, the Director of Operations will provide possible Courses of Action (CoA). The CoA includes the mission objectives, response strategies options, ERO structure, field team composition and available resources. This plan is then reported to the Executive Director for approval and guidance.



Image on left page: AHA Centre's executive briefing with ASEAN Committee of Permanent Representatives, Defence Attache, and the United Nations following Myanmar flood in August 2015

Simultaneously on the strategic level, the Executive Director of AHA Centre will send condolence letter and if possible, establish communication with the affected NDMO leadership to discuss on the actions and response. The AHA Centre will also keep ASEAN Secretariat in the loop, including for possible activation of SG-AHAC should the impact of disaster requires full regional response.

3

Offer or request assistance – activate mechanisms

Based on the decided courses of action, the AHA Centre will offer assistance to the affected NDMO, in most cases together with the letter of condolence. If the affected countries accept the offer of assistance, or request assistance directly, the response status is then raised to ‘Red’, which ultimately means the AHA Centre and ASEAN-ERAT are in “Active Response” mode. During ‘Red’ status, all AHA Centre staff are entirely dedicated to the response, and therefore their daily roles and tasks are side-lined.

A video-conference meeting with all EOCs of the NFPs will be conducted as soon as ‘Red’ status is declared, to provide updates, identify potential support and discuss the action plan’s implementation. At this stage, situational updates will continue periodically as well as ad-hoc if required, to provide any significant information to the concerned parties.

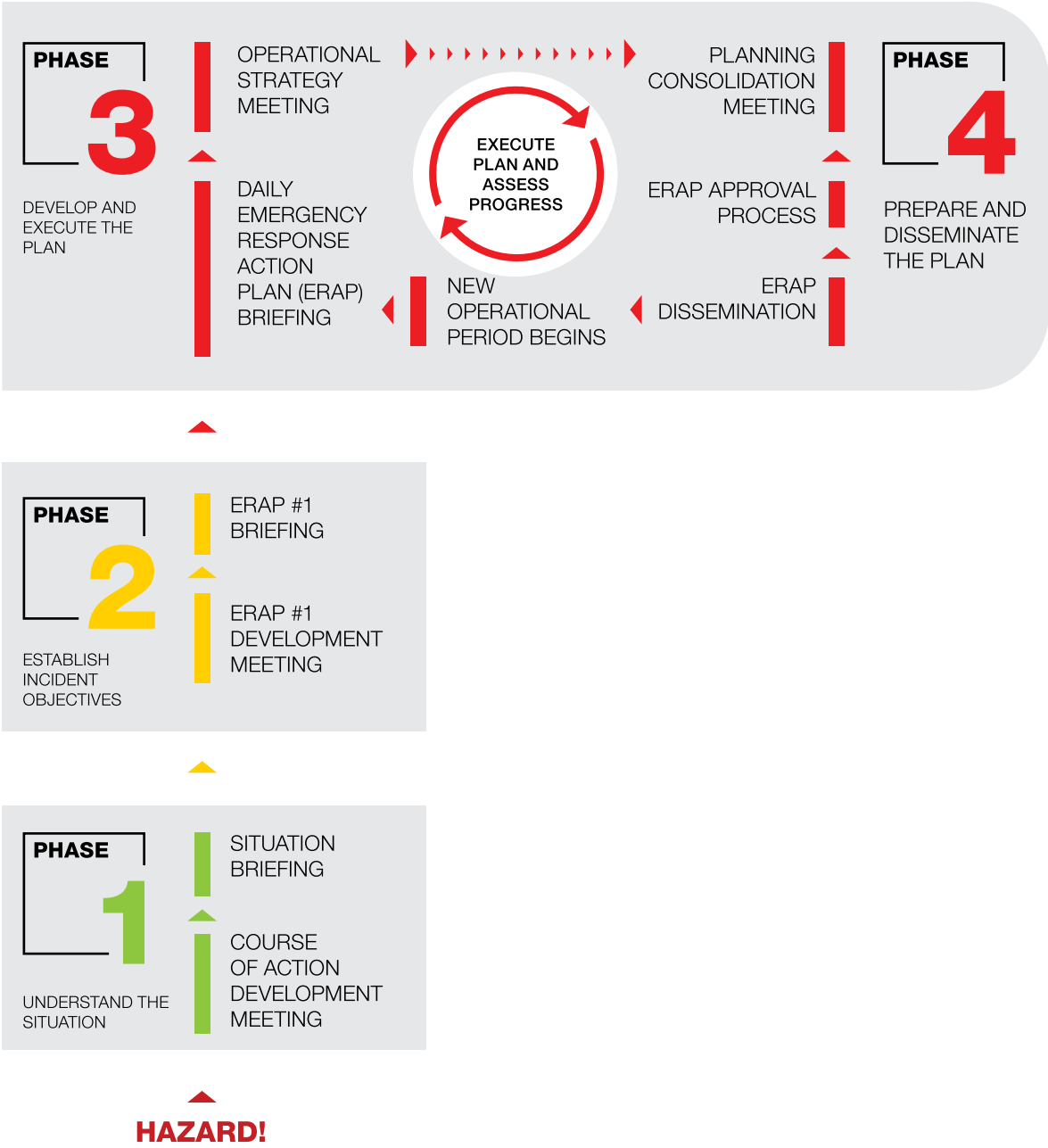
If deemed as necessary, the AHA Centre will hold an executive briefing with the CPR of ASEAN, Defence Attaché of the ASEAN Member States, ASEAN Dialogue Partners and other partners to provide updates on the situation and the action plan.

EMERGENCY
RESPONSE
ORGANISATION
(ERO)

The ERO was established by adapting processes from the Incident Command System (ICS) to suit context of the AHA Centre and ASEAN. The ERO was further developed by utilising numerous years of experience held by the AHA Centre and ASEAN related to disaster emergencies. The following picture illustrates the planning and operations process of the ERO.

Planning “P” (shown on the right page) depicts the stages in the ERO Action Planning process. The stem of the “P” includes the initial steps to develop awareness of the situation, and establish the objective and organisation to support response activities. Although maintaining situational awareness and having clear objectives are essential throughout the life cycle of the incident, the steps in Phase 1 and 2 are undertaken only one time. Once they are accomplished, activities shift to a cycle of planning and executing operations that continues and is repeated for each operational period. This cycle, which is depicted above, then transforms to become the Operations “O”.

AHA CENTRE CURRENT
PLANNING PROCESS



JOINT ASSESSMENT

The AHA Centre and ASEAN-ERAT, if requested or authorised by the affected countries, will conduct a joint rapid assessment with the NDMO or NFP to directly collect information at the disaster site, regarding impact and support that may be required. The ASEAN-ERAT members are equipped with the assessment guidelines and processes, and ASEAN-ERAT members have undertaken specific training to implement this activity. Communication with the AHA Centre and NFP/NDMO in the field is conducted using the WebEOC, as well as other available methods.

The findings of the assessment are presented to the AHA Centre and the NFPs, forming input into decision making regarding resource mobilisation. Information from the assessment should at least provide an overview to the AHA Centre and the NFPs regarding what, where and how immediate assistance should be directed, considering the greatest possible impact of such assistance, in terms of reducing losses in lives and assets, and quickly assisting those in greatest need. The analysis will focus on the scale and impact of the disaster, the most affected areas, the most vulnerable populations, and the immediate needs that must be met in order to save or assist the most vulnerable.

Member States can then determine the specific needs they can fulfil in accordance with their respective capacities. The AHA Centre will communicate if needs are not met, or when any needs have been fulfilled. This one-stop communication approach may reduce any overlapping assistance efforts that often occur when all parties converge to provide assistance without clear information regarding the type of assistance needed, as well as the impact of the disaster itself. In this case, the AHA Centre will act as a medium of communication to ensure both the affected countries and Member States obtain accurate information and can make decisions based on said information.

MOBILISING RESOURCES

The next key mission of the AHA Centre in disaster emergency response operations is to assist the disaster-affected countries to coordinate resource mobilisation from assisting countries. In this case, the main beneficiary of the AHA Centre resource mobilisation role is the NDMOs and/or NFPs. The AHA Centre does not mobilise the resources directly to the disaster-affected areas. Support or assistance for those affected is provided through the affected country’s NDMO.

During emergency situations in the aftermath of large-scale disasters, the affected countries will usually receive huge amounts of aid and support offers from various parties. The variety and number of responders and aid creates huge challenges for coordination of resource mobilisation. If the mobilisation is poorly conducted, then “there is a high chance that aid is duplicated in some places and under-resourced in others”.¹⁴ This may hamper the distribution of assistance to those in need. There is also the possibility that the failure of resource mobilisation, namely slow or inappropriate mobilisation, could cause casualties. In this case, a mobilisation failure can create a disaster in itself.

Image on left page: The AHA Centre facilitates mobilisation of disaster relief items during Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in November 2013



IT BEGINS WITH CONSENT

AADMER Article 11 of the Joint Emergency Response through the Provision of Assistance stipulates that the affected country may request assistance from any country directly, or through the AHA Centre. Assistance will also be provided when the affected country accepts an offer from another country.

AADMER also states that wherever possible, the affected country shall determine the scope and type of assistance required, and the assisting country will verify the extent to which it is able to meet the request. In the event that it is not practicable for the affected country to specify the scope and type of assistance required, then both parties shall jointly assess and decide upon the scope and type of assistance required. The countries shall, within the limits of their capabilities, identify and notify the AHA Centre of military and civilian personnel, experts, equipment, facilities and materials which could be made available for the provision of assistance to other countries in the event of a disaster emergency.

Furthermore, AADMER requires that the receiving country shall exercise the overall direction, control, coordination and supervision of the assistance, including distribution of relief items, within its territory. The requesting or receiving country will decide on the type of relief items sent by the AHA Centre, subject to availability and based on recommendation of the AHA Centre itself. The relief items provided by the assisting country should meet the quality and validity requirements of the countries concerned for consumption and utilisation (AADMER Article 12). The assisting entity will pay for the response and assistance, while according to AADMER Article 14, the requesting or receiving country will accord the assisting entity exemptions from taxation, duties and other charges of a similar nature on the importation and use of equipment, including vehicles and telecommunications, facilities and materials brought into the territory for the purpose of the assistance.

The above AADMER directives relating to joint emergency response through the provision of assistance have several implications for resource mobilisation activities during disaster emergencies. First, all resource mobilisation activities can be undertaken only if the disaster-affected country make a request or approve the offer of assistance. Second, that the ultimate responsibility for the coordination of resource mobilisation is in the hands of the requesting or receiving country. The AHA Centre’s role is to facilitate and support the affected country to coordinate the mobilisation of resources from the assisting entities. Third, there must be efforts to ensure that the assistance provided meets the defined quality and requirements of the parties concerned.

In that regard, the AHA Centre assists the disaster affected countries to coordinate the mobilisation of resources from various countries and entities in ASEAN. To that end, the AHA Centre must undertake

at least three main activities. Firstly, coordinating the process of request and offer of assistance from the affected countries and the assisting countries. Secondly, providing operational support to the NDMO by mobilising AHA Centre’s staff and the ASEAN-ERAT members to work with NDMO and manage the coordinating post at ground zero. Thirdly, facilitating the logistics aspect of emergency relief items from the assisting countries as well as from the ASEAN logistics warehouse.

COORDINATING ASSISTANCE

The AHA Centre process of coordinating assistance begins when ASEAN Member States decide to request or offer assistance through the AHA Centre in emergency situations. This is undertaken as a two-way process, with the AHA Centre forming the centre of coordination, primarily acting as the mediating party between the affected and the assisting countries, facilitating decisions and actions regarding what is needed and what can be provided. As stated in the SASOP, in the event that the affected country request for assistance, the AHA Centre will forward the request to the Member States while exploring other possible options to meet the requested assistance requirements. Meanwhile, any offers of assistance from Member States are forwarded by the AHA Centre to the affected country. In all previous disaster responses, relief for the affected country has always been undertaken through an offer of assistance by other Member States. This once more evidences the existence of solidarity among ASEAN nations.

The basis of assistance provided is formed by information on existing needs, gained from the NDMO or NFP of the affected countries, as well as from the ASEAN-ERAT assessment results. The latter is often a joint assessment with the NDMO of the affected countries. The AHA Centre and NDMO will mobilise members of ASEAN-ERAT to conduct a rapid assessment of the disaster impact, the people affected and most in need of immediate assistance, and the type of assistance required. The ASEAN-ERAT will present the assessment results to the NDMO, and use it to feed the information to the AHA Centre’s EOC in Jakarta.

In the process of facilitating the mobilisation of these resources, the AHA Centre provides critical information and recommends courses of action to the NDMO or NFP. If necessary, the AHA Centre will also facilitate the deployment of relief teams and the arrival of relief items at the point of entry (airports, seaport, roads). Through such coordination, numerous time-consuming administrative and bureaucratic processes can be avoided or decreased, allowing affected NDMO to focus on mobilisation of national resources towards urgent actions, particularly assisting victims and distributing relief items.

**ASEAN
EMERGENCY
RESPONSE AND
ASSESSMENT
TEAM
(ASEAN-ERAT)**

The ASEAN-ERAT was founded in 2008 during ASEAN's Cyclone Nargis Emergency Response Mission. The team initially stood for ASEAN Emergency Rapid Assessment Team whose main duty was to conduct impact and needs assessments. Later, the ERAT role was expanded to manage both rapid assessment and other emergency response duties, including facilitating assistance from ASEAN Member States and conducting on-site coordination with NDMOs and all stakeholders. The 23rd ACDM Meeting in Da Nang, Viet Nam in November 2013, agreed on the evolution of ASEAN-ERAT from “ASEAN Emergency Rapid Assessment Team” to “ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team”.

The ASEAN-ERAT members were trained to conduct emergency response and assessment activities. After the training, the ERAT members return to their respective workplaces, prepared for the call to be mobilised during a disaster. In performing their duties, the ERAT members are equipped with the ERAT Guidelines, life-saving kit and emergency telecommunication kit.

In addition to ERAT specific training, the members are also given the opportunity to participate in various training and workshops. For the AHA Centre, the capacity development of the ERAT members is a priority, thereby ensuring ASEAN always has professionals in the disaster management field who are ready to be mobilised in emergency situations. By the end of 2016, in overall 155 people have been trained through the ERAT course, and become part of the ASEAN-ERAT family.

*Graduation ceremony of the 5th
ASEAN-ERAT Induction Course, Sentul,
Indonesia, 2015*



SUPPORT TO NDMO

After the affected countries request or agree to accept offers of assistance, the AHA Centre then activates the ERO mechanism, in which the structure of the AHA Centre is transformed into the structure of a disaster emergency response operation. The AHA Centre's ERO will primarily focus on gathering and analysing data, making strategic decisions, and disseminating information to ASEAN Member States and concerned parties. The AHA Centre's ERO will maintain a strategic and operational level of engagement, and will not directly control field assets. Tactical decisions will ultimately be left to the field teams.

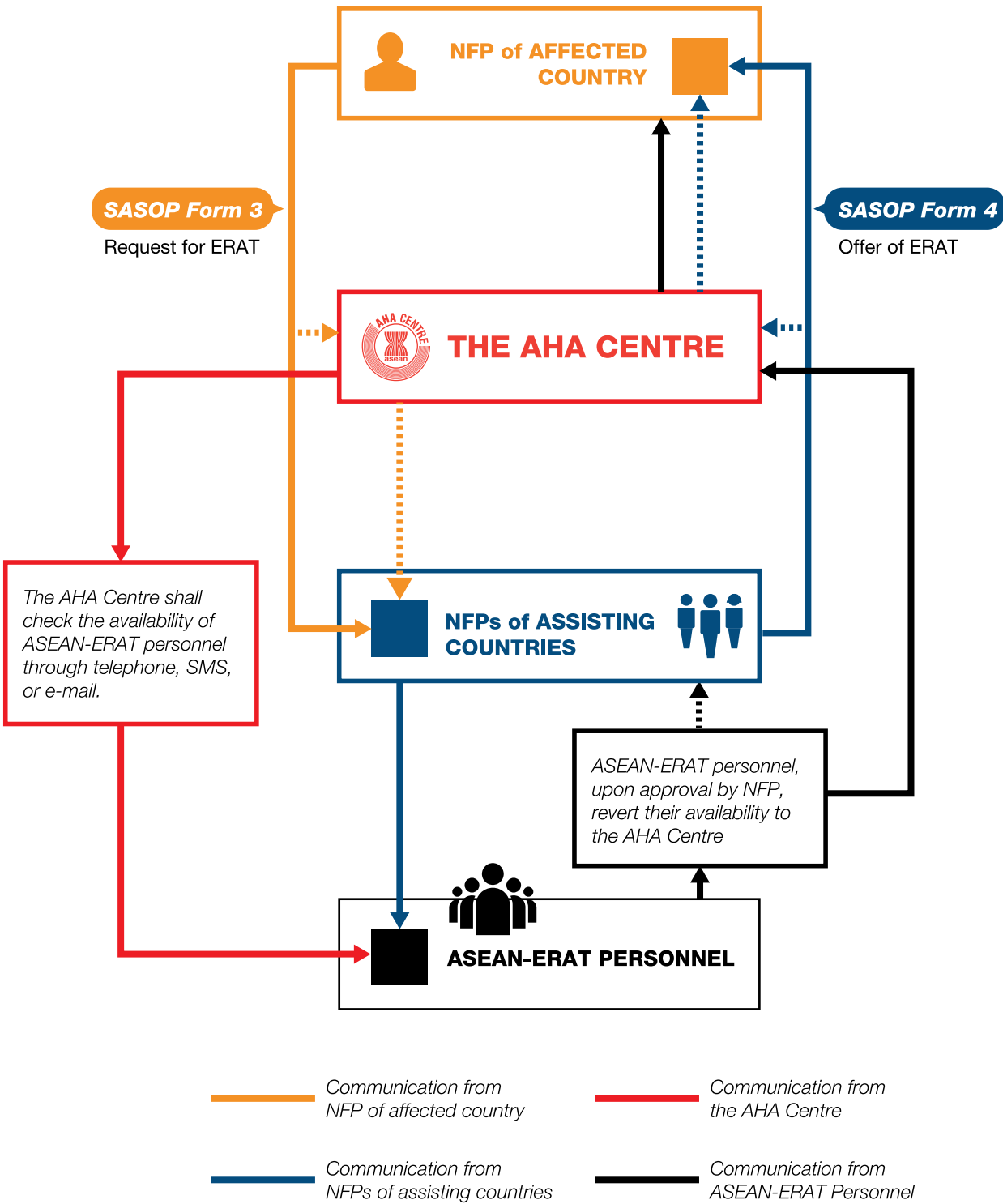
The deployment system is managed by the AHA Centre in Jakarta. ASEAN-ERAT members will be mobilised to ground zero to conduct a rapid assessment, as well as support the local NDMO at ground zero to coordinate incoming assistance from ASEAN Member States. The ASEAN-ERAT members can

arrive at the site at very short notice, approximately 8 hours after activation anywhere in the ASEAN region. The deployed team coordinates with the AHA Centre for the mobilisation of regional disaster management assets, capacities and relief items to the affected areas.

ASEAN-ERAT members have been trained and earmarked for regional missions by their respective NFPs. They are experienced emergency managers with specific skills in information management, rapid assessment, as well as logistics and operational coordination in an emergency situation. ASEAN-ERAT members are expected to submit their first assessment report within 72 hours of arriving at ground zero. They are prepared to be deployed for a period of 10 to a maximum of 14 days.

For ASEAN-ERAT mobilisation, the AHA Centre will confirm the availability of the members through their respective NFPs and directly via telephone, SMS, email, automated voice, SMS and email alerts. The AHA Centre primarily seek to mobilise ASEAN-ERAT members who are the citizens of the affected countries, under the consideration that they are more likely to understand the local language, culture, and the context at hand. Their perspective and background as an 'insider' is undoubtedly beneficial for the response activities.

ASEAN-ERAT MOBILISATION PROCEDURE



ACTIVATION OF ASEAN-ERAT PERSONNEL

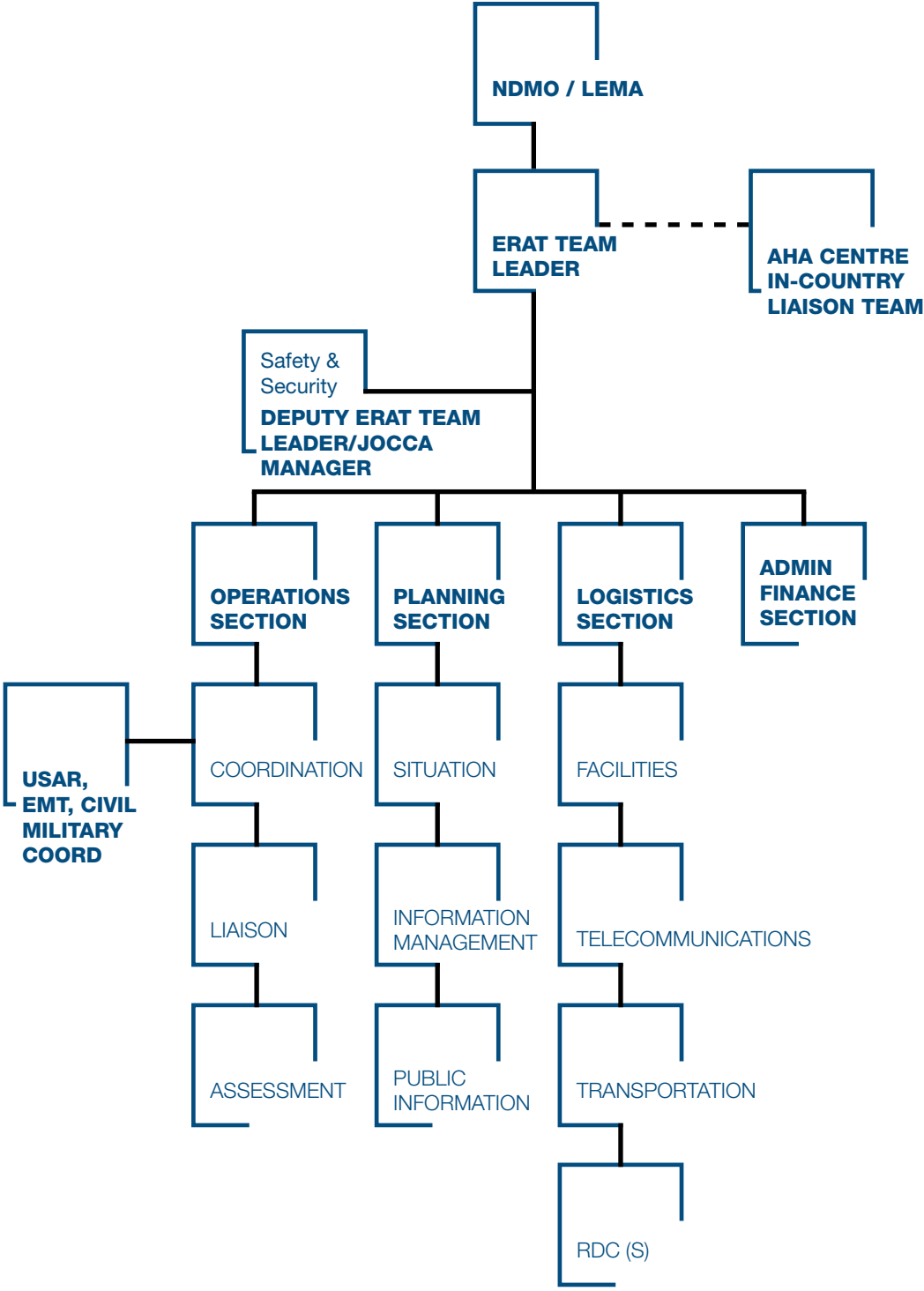
Furthermore, the AHA Centre and the ASEAN-ERAT then establish JOCCA, a coordination post at ground zero, with the key aim of coordinating the response process in the field. The ASEAN-ERAT are tasked to manage JOCCA, with the ERAT Team Leader given the overall responsibility for the operationalisation of the mechanism. JOCCA is normally part of the formal emergency response coordination structure, with the specific role of coordinating specific response efforts from ASEAN Member States.

In detail, JOCCA is designed to perform the following functions: (1) providing situation updates and maps; (2) briefing on the response priorities of the local government (urgent needs and gaps); (3) coordinating the arrival and departure of ASEAN response teams and relief items; (4) providing information about who is doing what, where, and when; (5) gathering information on logistical aspects (entry points, flight arrivals and departures, transportations, accommodations, supports operational); (6) supporting emergency telecommunications; (7) providing information on safety and security, and; (8) providing a collaboration and coordination space.

JOCCA is not designed to provide direct assistance to affected communities, but to focus on support for the NDMO in coordinating international assistance. In practice, JOCCA will also form a stopover post for various responder teams. In this post, the responders can work, rest, coordinate, seek or obtain current information related to the situation. The JOCCA mechanisms and structures are designed to be flexible in accordance to the internal system in each country. By doing so, JOCCA can be quickly integrated into the NDMO's response structure.

JOCCA ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

JOCCA will be established in the event of a large-scale disaster emergency, with the consent from the NDMO of the affected country. Prior to its establishment, the tasks of JOCCA will be developed between the AHA Centre In-Country Liaison Team, the ASEAN-ERAT Team Leader and the NDMO of the affected country. Once the UN-OSOCC is established, JOCCA will link with it to provide an interface between ASEAN and the UN system, as well as other relevant international organisations.



**JOINT
OPERATIONS AND
COORDINATION
CENTRE OF
ASEAN (JOCCA)**

In 2014 based on the outcome of the lessons learning from Typhoon Haiyan, the AHA Centre introduced the “One ASEAN, One Response” strategy, which includes the utilisation of the Joint Operation and Coordinating Centre of ASEAN (JOCCA) during emergency situations. JOCCA is primarily a field coordination post, established in the affected areas to support and coordinate response activities at the ASEAN level. JOCCA is operationalised with the following principles:

- 1** Respect to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of the ASEAN Member States. Hence, the JOCCA will only be established with the consent of the affected country through the NDMO.
- 2** JOCCA's primary objective is to support the government of the affected Member State. When established, JOCCA is under the coordination and leadership of the NDMO.
- 3** JOCCA is an inclusive coordination mechanism, which is open to the concerned parties in ASEAN, including all State actors and non-State actors.
- 4** JOCCA's operations shall be dynamic and flexible allowing it to adapt to national or local mechanisms, and respecting existing mandates and structures.
- 5** JOCCA is a living concept that can be updated based on lessons learned from emergency response experiences or exercises.

JOCCA will also provide a home for ASEAN teams and the ASEAN-ERAT, to allow for effective coordination among them.





LOGISTICS MOBILISATION

Image on left page: To support the affected Member State, the AHA Centre mobilises DELSA stockpiles, in combination with local procurements

An integral facet of the AHA Centre and ASEAN support for a disaster-affected country is the mobilisation of logistical resources and relief items to directly meet existing needs. Logistics mobilisation is undertaken through the earmarked assets and capabilities of the ASEAN Member States and the DELSA.

According to AADMER, the Member States earmark, and voluntarily make available, assets and capacities for disaster emergency response. These include search and rescue directory, military and civilian assets, emergency stockpiles of disaster relief items, and disaster management expertise and technologies, which, when needed, can be requested by the affected country, in order to supplement its own disaster response capacities. The assisting entity has the authorisation to mobilise stand-by assets and capabilities.

In a disaster emergency situation, in addition to coordinating aids that are provided by the assisting Member States, the AHA Centre will also communicate with the affected country to inform the availability of stand-by assets in DELSA warehouse. Upon agreement with the affected country, the AHA Centre will release the logistics from the DELSA warehouse for delivery to the affected country.

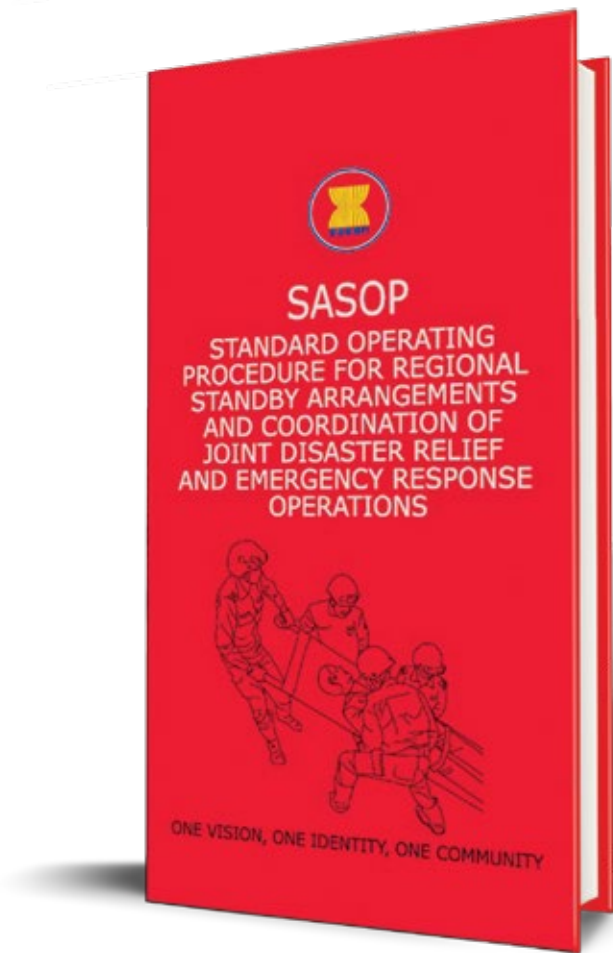
Logistics in DELSA are the property of the ASEAN Member States, and available to be distributed when there is a request or acceptance from affected Member States. DELSA has become an increasingly important mechanism in ASEAN disaster response, to ensure affected countries receive required support in a timely manner. ASEAN has built a regional stockpile of relief items in Subang, Malaysia, and plans to establish several satellite warehouses, including in locations such as the Philippines and Thailand.

The AHA Centre has held a number of DELSA and logistics management training sessions for NDMO officials, as well as participants of the ACE Programme, with the aim of increasing awareness about the system. Periodically, the AHA Centre updates data on the availability of logistics and relief items in DELSA, to be integrated with the list of logistical resources earmarked by NDMOs for the purposes of disaster response at the regional level.

**ASEAN STANDBY
ARRANGEMENTS
FOR DISASTER
RELIEF AND
EMERGENCY
RESPONSE**

The establishment and engagement of the SASOP is mandated by AADMER. This document is a standard operating procedure that is intended to guide the actions of ASEAN Member States and the AHA Centre in implementing: (1) the regional standby arrangements for disaster relief and emergency response; (2) the utilisation of military and civilian personnel, transportation and communication equipment, facilities, goods and services, and the facilitation of the trans-boundary movement; (3) the coordination of joint disaster relief and emergency response operations, and; (4) the methodology for the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise (ARDEX).

To improve the scope of the SASOP, a chapter on facilitation and utilisation of military assets and capacities, known as Chapter VI, was developed by the ASEAN Defence Senior Officials Meeting (ADSOM) and endorsed during the 9th ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting (ADMM) on the 16 March 2015 in Langkawi, Malaysia. The 29th Meeting of the ACDM in October 2016 approved Chapter VI as an integral part of the SASOP.



**DISASTER
EMERGENCY
LOGISTIC
SYSTEM FOR
ASEAN (DELSA)**

On 7 December 2012, ASEAN launched the Disaster Emergency Logistic System for ASEAN (DELSA) stockpile in Subang, Malaysia. The AHA Centre signed an agreement with the World Food Programme (WFP) to manage the DELSA warehouse, which is located at the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) in Subang, as well as provide training to the AHA Centre on the logistics system. The DELSA establishment project costing was approximately US\$12 million, and was funded by the Government of Japan through the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF).

The AHA Centre’s staff, ASEAN-ERAT members and ACE Programme participants are well trained in the DELSA mechanisms. Periodically, the AHA Centre coordinates with the UNWFP and UNHRD, as the DELSA stockpile manager, to ensure the availability and readiness of stockpile items, suppliers and transporters. Since its establishment, DELSA stockpile has been mobilised for all 14 AHA Centre’s emergency operations.





Image on left page: Full-scale field simulation exercise in ARDEX-13 in Viet Nam in October 2013

ENHANCING CAPACITY THROUGH FREQUENT EXERCISES

The current state of emergency management for the AHA Centre and ASEAN was not an overnight achievement. Developments in disaster emergency response capacity were obtained through planned and gradual efforts, with an open attitude to identify gaps and areas for improvement. Even in moments of strengthening weaknesses, there have been moments of realisation that flaws even exist in what may have once been considered a strength. These realities ensure that continuous improvement is high on the agenda of the AHA Centre and ASEAN, not just historically, but moving through the present and into the future.

Improving methods of operation for the AHA Centre and ASEAN are generally undertaken through activities of review, simulation, and exercise. Specifically, there are events that have been used as mechanisms for improvement, namely ARDEX, ARF DiREx, EAS exercises, as well as AAR and internal simulations within the AHA Centre. The results of these activities are often directly applied to the next disaster emergency operations and activities in which the AHA Centre and ASEAN engage. The most common follow-up is the review of existing guidelines through consideration of findings or lessons learned from previous implementations or operations.

Almost all of AHA Centre's and ASEAN's disaster management and emergency operation guidelines and SOPs have been reviewed and adapted to the current context and best practice objectives. Looking ahead, this type of review and improvement will continue, in view of the complexity and evolving nature of emergency response. From experience, emergency response has continuously presented a greater challenge with each step, due to the relatively different context and settings faced from one disaster to the next.

FULL-SCALE SIMULATION THROUGH ARDEX

The ARDEX is a comprehensive simulation exercise aimed at practicing and evaluating ASEAN's emergency response and disaster management mechanisms. All aspects of the operational methods of ASEAN and the AHA Centre are tested under ARDEX activities. These activities are usually carried out every two years, for six to seven days, and participants join from all Member States. To this point there have been a total of 6 ARDEX conducted by ASEAN.



The AHA Centre, with the support of ACDM Preparedness and Response Working Group has developed the ARDEX Handbook to guide the exercise, which was endorsed at the 27th ACDM Meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in December 2015. The manual was then tested for the first time during the ARDEX in Brunei Darussalam in 2016. In the ARDEX Handbook, it is stated that the objective of conducting ARDEX is to “practice, evaluate and review the SASOP in facilitating a close and effective collaboration among the Host Country, other ASEAN Member States, and between ASEAN and the relevant UN and international organisations in handling a major disaster”.

At the strategic level, the ARDEX aims to test guidelines and templates for ASEAN’s standby arrangements, information sharing, processing requests and offers of assistance, joint assessments by ASEAN-ERAT, as well as cross-border mobilisation of resources and response teams. At the tactical level, ARDEX helps to test ASEAN’s command and control structure, interoperability of response teams from the Member States, communications and casualty management.

Each ARDEX has formed an invaluable opportunity for ASEAN and the AHA Centre to measure the extent to which its capacity can perform emergency response and disaster management in general. A particular ARDEX of importance was the ARDEX-13, held in Viet Nam in 2013. During the four-day simulation exercise, in which all ten Member States participated (with a total of 800 participants), ASEAN comprehensively tested the operational capability of the AHA Centre for the first time since its establishment in November 2011. The results from this ARDEX were used as a basis for planning the ongoing development of the AHA Centre itself.

Through the implementation of ARDEX, the AHA Centre acts as co-organiser, alongside the Host Country. The Host Country usually funds these activities. However, there is also additional support from numerous ASEAN Dialogue Partners and partners. To plan an ARDEX, the AHA Centre and the Host Country will design a specific disaster scenario, taking into account regional priorities and the need to test specific emergency procedures, which is then used as the basis for the ARDEX simulation.

ARF-DIREX

Image on left page: Coordination between ASEAN-ERAT and military during the ARF-DiREx 2013 in Cha-Am, Thailand

ASEAN also carries out simulations and exercises engaging countries outside the region, as part of efforts to improve wider cooperation in disaster management, especially during emergency situations. First held in 2009, the ARF-DiREx takes place every two years and is co-hosted by one ASEAN Member State and one non-ASEAN ARF participating country.

ARF-DiREx focuses on inter-agency coordination and civil-military coordination and becomes one of the most inclusive simulation exercises in the Asia Pacific region. ARF-DiREx involves multiple agencies from the ARF participating countries, the civilian and military actors and the international humanitarian players. Coordination issues and complexity of the international humanitarian architecture as exercised in ARF DiREx represent the actual situation when a disaster occurs in the region.

The most recent ARF-DiREx was conducted on 24-26 May 2015 in Alor Setar, Perlis State, Malaysia. Participants included a number of countries outside the region, such as the People’s Republic of China (PRC), which became the co-chair of the event. The ARF-DiREx implemented in 2015 was used as an opportunity to test civilian-military coordination in responding to large-scale disasters.

EAST ASIA SUMMIT DIREX

Another simulation exercise that involves even more countries outside the ASEAN region is the EAS simulation exercise. The EAS simulation exercise involves 18 participating countries, including ten ASEAN Member States as well as Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russia and United States of America. EAS, which is an ASEAN-related mechanism, aims to further advance the regional peace, security and prosperity through strategic dialogues and cooperation on political, security and economic issues. Disaster management has been identified as one of the priority issues under the EAS.

The EAS Leaders adopted the EAS Statement on Rapid Disaster Response in November 2014. To operationalise the EAS Statement, the EAS participating countries came up with an EAS Rapid Disaster Response Toolkit in 2015. This Toolkit was developed by the Emergency Management Australia and Indonesian NDMO (BNPB), in collaboration with NDMOs of the other EAS participating countries and in consultation with the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM).

During disaster situation, the Toolkit would assist disaster management officials in making decisions on the following:

- 1
- Preparing and readying for the consequences of a disaster nationally and in the region;

- 2
- Requesting, receiving and managing offers from Assisting Countries;
- 3
- Rapidly providing disaster response to an Affected Country;
- 4
- Rapidly facilitating the transit of goods and personnel where relevant.

The Toolkit is in line with the AADMER and utilises the existing ASEAN regional mechanisms under AADMER, such as the AHA Centre and SASOP. The AHA Centre, together with EAS participating countries, have participated in two simulation exercises, such as the 2014 Mentawai Megathrust Disaster Relief Exercise (DiREx) and the Ambon DiREx in 2016 where the EAS Rapid Disaster Response Toolkit was tested. Through participation in these exercises, the AHA Centre had a chance to practice its role in enabling ASEAN to respond to disasters outside the region as envisaged under the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response.

AFTER-ACTION REVIEW

After the completion of an emergency operation, AHA Centre will undertake an AAR to evaluate the quality of operations. This is done by assessing the extent to which the operation had been carried out in accordance with the existing mechanisms and procedures, and identifying areas that worked and did not work. The results of the AAR usually form recommendations for improvements or changes in the mechanisms and procedures, both internal for the AHA Centre, and more broadly within the ASEAN context.

Aside from actual emergency operations, the AHA Centre and ASEAN also undertake self-evaluation, performing AAR following the implementation of ARDEX and other simulation exercises. Based on the after-action review, improvements to the various mechanisms and procedures are identified and implemented.

INTERNAL SIMULATION

In addition to the joint simulation and exercise, the AHA Centre implements regular internal simulation as an exercise for the muscle memory of the AHA Centre staff regarding their individual roles and tasks during emergency situations, as well as to evaluate and improve AHA Centre processes and methods of operation.

In a state of disaster emergency, the organisational structure of the AHA Centre will be transformed into the organisational structure for emergency, under the ERO Guidelines. Each staff is appointed and trained to perform certain functions in times of emergency, usually based upon their expertise.

Internal simulation is conducted on a monthly basis, with varying scenarios and subjects used to test the organisation. All staff, especially those designated particular roles during the emergency, are requested to participate in these simulations. The simulation allows a unique opportunity to discuss related matters that may have been unrecognisable under a daily routine situation. During the simulation, notions or ideas regarding broader operational methods beyond the AHA Centre scope may also arise. Such inputs may be brought to the proper forum to be discussed further.

This internal simulation is an activity that is multi-beneficial in nature, as it benefits both the organisation and the individual. From an organisational perspective, the simulation allows the AHA Centre to develop internal working processes and methods, improving and strengthening its adaptiveness to new challenges. For individuals, the simulation supports the preparedness of staff to their designated roles during disaster situations. Both the organisational and individual elements require openness and willingness to continue to learn, as only by doing so can the AHA Centre and its team remain relevant and prepared for disaster response. This is also a key factor to maintain the trust provided to the AHA Centre by the ASEAN Member States.

3

LESSONS LEARNED AND MOVING FORWARD



LESSONS LEARNED

The work of ASEAN, and in this case particularly the AHA Centre across the past five years of coordinating regional disaster response, offers a variety of learning opportunities, both for the AHA Centre’s future, as well as other interested organisations. The following form some of the key recurring lessons that have emerged related to disaster response.

1

THE RELEVANCE, AND THEREFORE STRENGTH OF THE REGIONAL MECHANISM FOR DISASTER RESPONSE, LIES IN PROVIDING A SINGLE PLATFORM FOR COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION, WHICH THEN INCREASES THE SPEED AND ACCURACY OF RESOURCE MOBILISATION.

The importance of effective communication and coordination in disaster emergency settings cannot be underestimated. Emergency situations almost always result in chaos and confusion, due to the lack of certainty regarding the situation itself, as well as actions regarding how to overcome the impacts. An individual or organisation may have all varieties of physical or technical provisions for the disaster. However if they fail to obtain a level of certainty about what has happened and how they should act—a certainty that can only be achieved through effective communication and coordination—their response to the disaster will almost be definitely inadequate.

The ASEAN’s regional disaster response mechanism has provided the possibility for effective communication and coordination by providing a single platform to communicate and coordinate. The platform includes one common framework in AADMER, one standard operating procedure in SASOP, one single point of contact in the NDMO of the disaster affected country, one field coordination centre in JOCCA, and one regional coordinating agency in the AHA Centre. The use of this common platform improves the quality assurance of information by filtering out the wrong information and increasing access to accurate information. Such information can then be used to coordinate a more proper mobilisation of resources.

2

THE EXISTENCE OF A FULL-TIME AND CAPABLE ENTITY IS GREATLY BENEFICIAL IN IMPLEMENTING COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION FUNCTIONS PROPERLY IN DISASTER EMERGENCY RESPONSES.

Prior to the establishment of the AHA Centre, ASEAN countries responded to disasters by communicating and coordinating between countries bilaterally. This method led to at least three fundamental problems. First, the response was relatively slow, as the affected country would usually have to focus primarily on assisting disaster victims, decreasing their capacity to communicate with the assisting countries. Secondly, the affected country faced difficulties affording enough time and effort to communicate and coordinate properly, resulting in an increasing chance of lower quality information and coordination, particularly during the initial response phase. Thirdly, as a result of the above situations, it increases the possibility of overlapping or miss-allocation of resources from assisting Member States, resulting in decreased efficiency and gaps in meeting the needs of the affected country.

Through the establishment of the AHA Centre, such problems can be significantly reduced or overcome completely. The AHA Centre lessens the burden on the affected country to communicate and coordinate with a wide variety of parties. More than this, however, is the fact that the AHA Centre can also ensure the accuracy of the information for the coordination by collecting, analysing and disseminating data and information to the Member States. In this case, the AHA Centre is the medium that possesses the capacity to carry out communication and coordination, as from the beginning, coordinating the regional response was its designed purpose. This capacity is not necessarily possessed by each country in the case of bilateral coordination, including if the coordination is conducted through an ad hoc or part timer organisation or entity.

3

IT IS IMPORTANT FOR REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS SUCH AS THE AHA CENTRE TO ADOPT THE SAME PRINCIPLES TO THE PARENT ORGANISATION, AND WORK WITH A STRONG POLITICAL MANDATE TO BE ABLE TO PERFORM ITS ROLE EFFECTIVELY.

The AHA Centre can move relatively freely in response to disasters in the region, as the organisation has been considered as an integral part of ASEAN by the Member States and other stakeholders. This integrity is represented not only legally on paper, but also through the day to day experience and perception of all parties regarding the unity of the AHA Centre and ASEAN. Ultimately, the AHA Centre has developed to the point of being

perceived as one with ASEAN. This strong perception of the AHA Centre was developed through the characteristics of this organisation, as it reflects and works within the same principles with the ASEAN region, namely solidarity, national sovereignty (non-interference) and equality. The political mandate provided by AADMER serves to reinforce this perception.

ASEAN Member States still have options outside the AHA Centre mechanism to respond to disasters in the region. In addition to responding bilaterally, Member States may also engage in multilateral mechanisms, such as through the UN. While other options are continue to be used, there has been a tendency towards taking advantage of the regional mechanism offered through the AHA Centre for Member States to respond to disasters. This is again promoted and strengthened by the characteristics of the AHA Centre being viewed as an integral part of the ASEAN and even considered as the national asset of the ASEAN Member States.

4

POLITICAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS SUCH AS THE AADMER ARE ESSENTIAL TO BREAK THROUGH POTENTIAL BUREAUCRACY AND POLITICAL BARRIERS IN REGIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE. AADMER ALSO UNITES ALL ASEAN MEMBER STATES TOWARD COMMON OBJECTIVES AND COMMITMENT IN DEVELOPING DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSE CAPACITY.

The political mandate of AADMER enables the ASEAN countries to move in the same direction towards developing capacity in emergency response and disaster management. For the AHA Centre itself, whose existence is mandated in the AADMER, the political umbrella has affirmed its legitimacy in coordinating the regional response. The similarity of direction and the political forces that are provided within the AADMER are crucial in overcoming potential bureaucracy, political and legal obstacles that may hamper response and disaster management activities. Disaster response, in reality, is never solely a matter of the response itself. Within it lie various political and bureaucratic dynamics that need to be penetrated to facilitate an effective and speedy response. This is the reality of disaster response activities in the modern world that continues increasing in complexity and diversity. The AADMER, to a certain extent, acts as the mechanism to overcome these nuances.

5

THE AHA CENTRE AND ASEAN ARE EVOLVING IN THE DISASTER RESPONSE ARENA, IN WHICH THEIR DEVELOPMENT TAKES SHAPE DISASTER BY DISASTER. THE WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY TO CONTINUE TO EVOLVE ARE VITAL FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF RESPONSE WITHIN SUCH A DYNAMIC REGION.

The AHA Centre has evolved remarkably in terms of regional response since its establishment in 2011. Alongside this, ASEAN as a whole has also evolved in its capacity to respond to disasters. All these developments made possible through self-awareness and a commitment to constantly improve and adjust to the new dynamics. One example of this evolution is the expansion and strengthening of the role of the ASEAN-ERAT, developing from merely undertaking rapid assessments, to now conducting the full-scale emergency response in support of the NDMO, particularly undertaking certain response duties at ground zero. After each disaster response operation, the AHA Centre and ASEAN assess and evaluate the process and achievements as part of their commitment to continuous improvement.

6

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO CONSTANTLY ADD VALUE TO THE MEMBER STATES, PARTICULARLY TO CONTINUE BUILDING AND MAINTAINING TRUST.

The AHA Centre is not the only available response mechanisms for the ASEAN countries in responding to disasters, and therefore, it must continue to ensure its ongoing relevance for the Member States. Striving to constantly add value, and continuing to meet the expectations of Member States stands as an AHA Centre a non-negotiable standard. All the mechanisms and commitments, no matter how complete and robust, will face implementation difficulties if there is a lack or decrease in confidence and trust. The AHA Centre staff constantly show awareness of the need to maintain the mentality of “we can”, when serving the Member States. When they have made this commitment, the AHA Centre must ensure that they produce a satisfactory result to their best ability. It is within this context that trust can be built and maintained.



THE AHA CENTRE AND ASEAN REACHED THEIR CURRENT LEVELS IN THE DISASTER EMERGENCY RESPONSE DUE TO THE SUPPORT OF ITS DIALOGUE PARTNERS AND OTHER PARTNERS. IN THAT CASE, THE ABILITY TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALL THE PARTNERS IS IMPERATIVE.

The fact cannot be stated more simply: without the generous support from the ASEAN Dialogue Partners and other partners, ASEAN and the AHA Centre would be facing various difficulties to develop new initiatives to improve its disaster response capacity. This support is not only in the form of financial assistance, but also information sharing, knowledge transfer, and various technical cooperation opportunities.

For the Dialogue Partners, supporting ASEAN and AHA Centre holds, in terms of international relations, a strategic value, given the importance of the region for political and economic stability, not only in Southeast Asia, but throughout Asia and beyond. However, relations with partners are always two-way, in which support may be granted only if ASEAN is able to demonstrate the broader benefits of the quality of disaster management and response to the partnerships.

FIVE YEARS LATER: TOWARD “ONE ASEAN, ONE RESPONSE”

STRENGTHENING ASPIRATIONS

At the 28th and 29th ASEAN Summits in Vientiane, Lao PDR on the 6 September 2016, the ten Heads of State/Governments of the ASEAN Member States pledged to bring the “One ASEAN, One Response” (OAOR) into reality by the year 2020. This was the first time that the ASEAN Heads of State/Government have signed a political agreement in the field of disaster management and response, with previous agreements only signed by ministry-level officials or leaders of institutions. In this regard, it could be stated that ASEAN is currently on the path towards an advanced phase of efforts to strengthen disaster response in the region.

Most of the points of OAOR vision have begun implementation since at least 2011. In the period 2011-2014, ASEAN implemented the operationalisation phase of the “One ASEAN, One Response” through the development of the AHA Centre. Starting in 2015, ASEAN developed mechanisms for coordination with various parties with the aim to achieve an environment in which ASEAN responds to disasters as one. This will continue until 2020, whereby ASEAN wishes to achieve coordination beyond the Member States, with the capacity to respond to disasters outside the region as one.

To realise that vision, in the OAOR declaration, the ASEAN Heads of State/Government confirmed that AADMER is the main regional backbone and common policy platform for the implementation of OAOR. They also affirm that the AHA Centre is the primary regional ASEAN coordinating agency on disaster management and emergency response, and confirm the commitment to strengthen the capacity and enhance the sustainability of the AHA Centre.

Furthermore, the Heads of State/Government confirm that the SASOP as a protocol under AADMER is the main standard operating procedure to be used for mobilisation of both civilian and military response. They endorse the ASEAN-ERAT as the official resource of ASEAN under AADMER, and recognised the need for the Member States to earmark on a voluntary basis, both civilian and military assets, resources, capabilities and capacities, of which may be available for the ASEAN Standby Arrangements that can be mobilised immediately to disaster-affected areas through the coordination of the AHA Centre. As a symbol that ASEAN is responding to disasters as one, Heads of State/Government called for the use of both national and ASEAN flags and emblems during disaster response.

Moreover, ASEAN will strengthen cooperation with countries outside the region in responding to disasters, including through the implementation of the Statement on EAS Disaster Rapid Response. There are two implications within this commitment. Firstly, that ASEAN intends to cooperate more closely with other countries to respond to disasters within the region. Secondly, that ASEAN will respond to disasters outside the region as one. In that case, the AHA Centre will be a key channel to enable ASEAN to respond to disasters outside the region, particularly with partnerships between regional and international agencies.

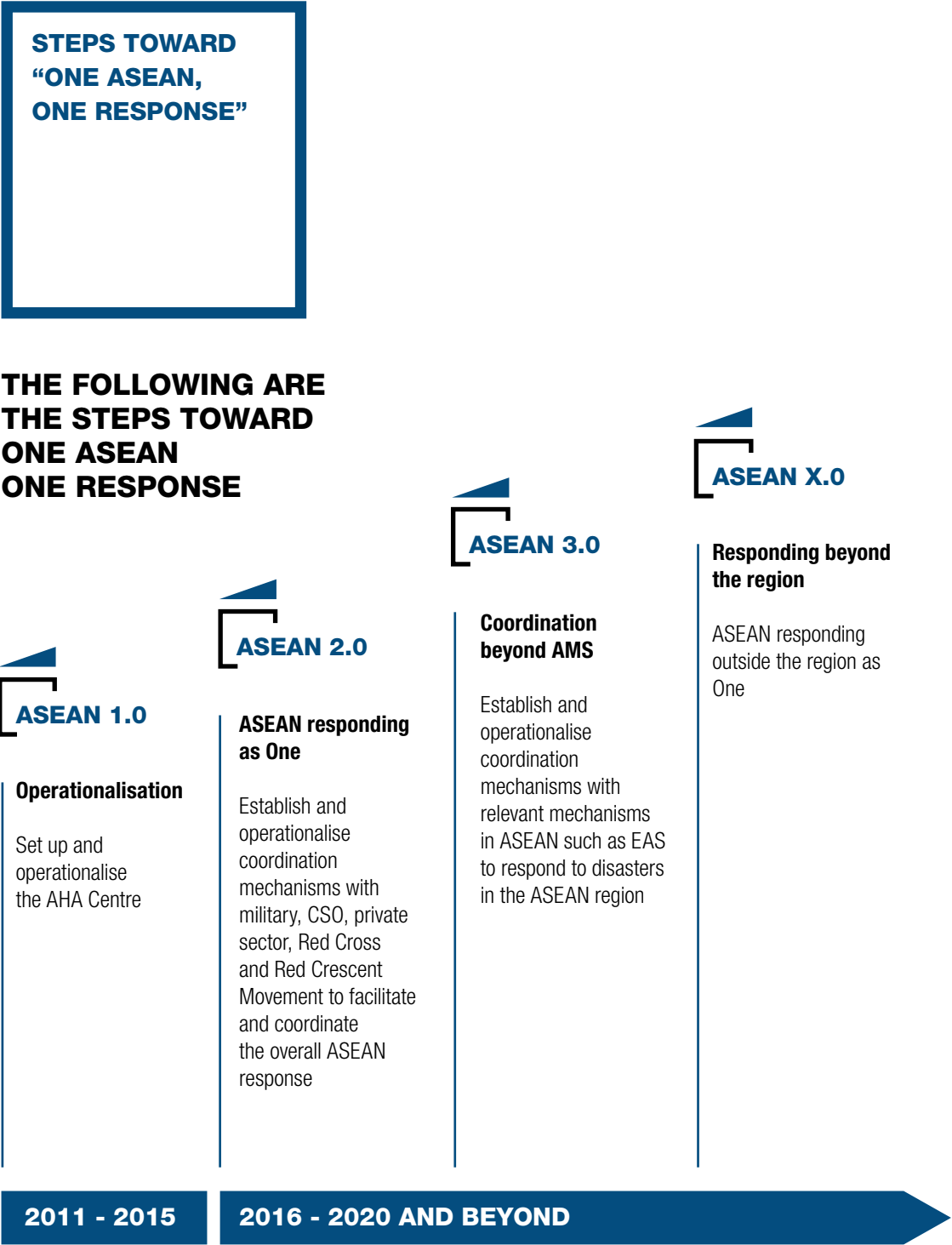
Prior to the signing of OAOR declaration, the AHA Centre and ASEAN have not had a mechanism for disaster response outside the region. During this time, in order to respond to disasters outside the region, the AHA Centre has only facilitated communication through the provision of situation reports on disaster occurrence and impacts, as well as linking the parties by holding a video conference meeting. An example of this was during the 2015 Nepal earthquake response.

Another key point that was agreed through the OAOR implementation, is a commitment to increase the contributions to the ASEAN Disaster Management and Emergency Relief (ADMER) Fund and the AHA Centre Fund to provide resources for the effective and sustainable implementation of OAOR. ASEAN also adopted the Terms of Reference of the Secretary General of ASEAN as the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator (AHAC), which underlines the importance of his/her role in realising OAOR.

In addition to the OAOR, the Member States have also adopted the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management as a strategic policy document that will guide ASEAN to improve in three particular, mutually inclusive elements items, namely: (i) Institutionalisation and Communications; (ii) Finance and Resource Mobilisation; and (iii) Partnerships and Innovations. The document that was passed on the 16 December 2015 aims to guide the implementation of AADMER toward a more people-centred, people-oriented, financially sustainable and networked approach by 2025.

Image on left page: The ASEAN Leaders sign the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN One Response at the 28th and 29th ASEAN Summits in Vientiane, Lao PDR





Accordingly, in February 2016, the ACDM endorsed the AADMER Work Programme 2016-2020. The new five-year work programme is a continuous programme that seeks to build a resilient ASEAN Community to collectively respond to disasters and reduce disaster losses. In terms of disaster preparedness and response, the AADMER Work Programme 2016 - 2020 has identified six (6) priorities to solidify ASEAN’s leadership in the regional humanitarian landscape, which include: (1) Development and implementation of the AJDRP; (2) Promotion of regional understanding of the ICS; (3) Enhancement of DELSA; (4) Maximising the ARDEX as testing ground of established coordination mechanisms; (5) Improving civil-military coordination; and (6) The transformation of the ASEAN-ERAT.

The ACDM has endorsed the implementation of AJDRP, which seeks to determine the working arrangements of all ASEAN’s mechanisms in an emergency situation, and identify standby resources in the form of assets, experts, and other response capacities. This includes engaging opportunities to meet such needs from private sector, CSOs, and military resources, as part of the overall ASEAN Standby Arrangements. In this case, the Standby Arrangement allows for earmarked resources to be mobilised in most emergency response situations.

To develop the AJDRP, three major disaster scenarios were selected as reference points, namely Metro Manila earthquake in the Philippines, Mentawai Megathrust tsunami in Indonesia, and a large-scale cyclone event in Myanmar. Based on the scenarios and the vision toward “One ASEAN, One Response”, eight modules to address the humanitarian needs have been identified. Each module provides specific types of assets and capabilities required during an emergency response. The Plan is intended to be evaluated each year, as necessary, through disaster exercises and lessons learned from actual disaster response activities. This process will further serve as input to continue the enhancement of SASOP and other coordination response protocols and guidelines.

UTILISATION OF ASSETS AND CAPACITY OF EXTERNAL SECTORS

ASEAN has also adopted a standard operating procedure for coordination between ASEAN military establishments and civilian humanitarian responders, especially in terms of facilitating and utilising military assets and capacity in humanitarian operations. This mechanism is incorporated in SASOP Chapter 6, and was endorsed at the 9th ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting (ADMM) on 16 March 2015 in Langkawi, Malaysia.



Image on left page: Military personnel and assets support the AHA Centre in several emergency operations, as in the case of Bohol earthquake response in 2013

The ADMM submitted the document to the ACDM, and the ACDM Preparedness and Response Working Group made some refinements to the text, in consultation with the ADSOM Working Group through ASEAN Technical Working Group on Civil Military Coordination. SASOP Chapter VI was adopted by the 29th ACDM Meeting in October 2016 as an integral part of SASOP. It is expected to strengthen the commitment of the parties to the standby position for response, as well as accelerate the speed of mobilisation of the military and other assets in disaster emergency response.

According to Chapter VI, the use of the military in humanitarian operations will be centred on emergency phase, with the provision of military assets that the affected country may not possess. The operations undertaken by the military can be divided into three broad categories: (1) Direct Assistance - face to face distribution of goods and services; (2) Indirect Assistance - is at least one step removed from the population and involves such activities as transporting relief goods or relief personnel; and (3) Infrastructure Support - involves providing general services, such as road repair, airspace management and power generation that facilitate relief efforts.

Foreign military assets involved in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations remain under their own national command and control, in which they must be relevant to the scope and scale of the disaster. Militaries from assisting states are expected to liaise, communicate and coordinate with the affected country's NFP and military, civilian assisting entities, and with each other to develop and utilise one common set of practices and procedures. In large-scale emergencies, the militaries of assisting states coordinate through a Multi-National Coordination Centre (MNCC), which work under the direction of the NFP.

The affected country shall specify the scope and type of military assistance required and, where practicable, provide the assisting country with such information as may be necessary to determine the extent to which it is able to meet the request. In the event that it is not practicable for the affected country to specify the scope and type of assistance required, the affected country and assisting country shall, in consultation, jointly assess and decide upon the scope and the type of assistance required.

In terms of coordination of military assets and capacities, the AHA Centre will usually invite defence attaches from the affected country and assisting country to an executive briefing with ambassadors of ASEAN and other relevant officials. In line with Chapter V of SASOP, the AHA Centre could also facilitate the mobilisation of a joint ASEAN-ERAT, which may include ERAT-trained military personnel. All militaries of assisting states will conduct designated humanitarian operations with the full consent

and knowledge of the affected country. If required, liaison officers from the affected country can be deployed to assist in the coordination of tasks to be undertaken for the humanitarian operation. It is encouraged that liaison officers and/or planning teams be placed at the MNCC and AHA Centre during the humanitarian operation.

Furthermore, in the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management, ASEAN entails greater coordination with other bodies from outside the region, such as the United Nations (UN). ASEAN and UN will hold joint pledging conferences for disasters to improve the synergy between flash appeals and national recovery plans by 2025.

ACHIEVING OPTIMAL FUNCTIONALITY

The success measure of the operationalisation of “One ASEAN, One Response” is the extent to which ASEAN can quickly respond to disasters in an adequate and coordinated manner, and in accordance with the needs of the affected country. Particularly during the last five years, the AHA Centre and related regional response coordination mechanisms in ASEAN have been significantly strengthened. With improved capacity and coordination, ASEAN and the AHA Centre have been able to mobilise the response unit to the affected country within a span of 24 hours after the disaster occurrence. In some cases of slow onset disaster, ASEAN can even mobilise a team before the incident, for example in the event of Typhoon Bopha in 2012, Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, Typhoon Hagupit in 2014, and Typhoon Rammasun in 2014. Deployment of the ASEAN-ERAT can also take place within 24 hours upon acceptance of the offer by the affected Member States.

Nevertheless, ASEAN still faces many challenges and areas for improvement, both in operationalisation of response mechanisms, mobilisation of resources during a disaster response, and scale up the resources coming from other sectors and stakeholders. This, to some extent, shows that the regional disaster response efforts do not always function optimally. The following two examples present an insight into issues related to optimal functionality.

In the case of ASEAN-ERAT, there are issues related to a low ratio of ERAT graduate who are ready and can be deployed in response situations. Often, many ERAT members are not ready to be mobilised due to various constraints, such as lack of skills, language limitations, and availability. The latter is not only related to the individual’s willingness to be mobilised, but also the willingness of NDMO or NFP of the Member States to mobilise the ERAT members when requested. Only a few Member States have stated they are ready to release the ERAT members for mobilisation at any time.

Delivery of relief items through DELSA has also at times posed an issue. Previously, the length of time it takes for delivery has not been predictable, and often ranges from 1 to 11 days. This is due to various challenges, such as length of procurement and speed of transportation. As a result, ASEAN cannot always undertake delivery in the soonest possible time, thus impacting the effectiveness of the response itself. ASEAN and the AHA Centre aim to achieve a state in which the delivery of relief items can be undertaken in timeframes guided by the needs of the affected country.

The two examples above, as well as other constraints and weaknesses that are still visible through various operations and simulated emergency responses, indicate that in addition to moving forward and achieving greater things, ASEAN and the AHA Centre must continue to focus on existing mechanisms and processes to ensure continuous improvement. Under all accounts, the highest measure of the disaster response is not in the mechanisms that have been developed, but the extent to which these mechanisms can function to their optimal level.

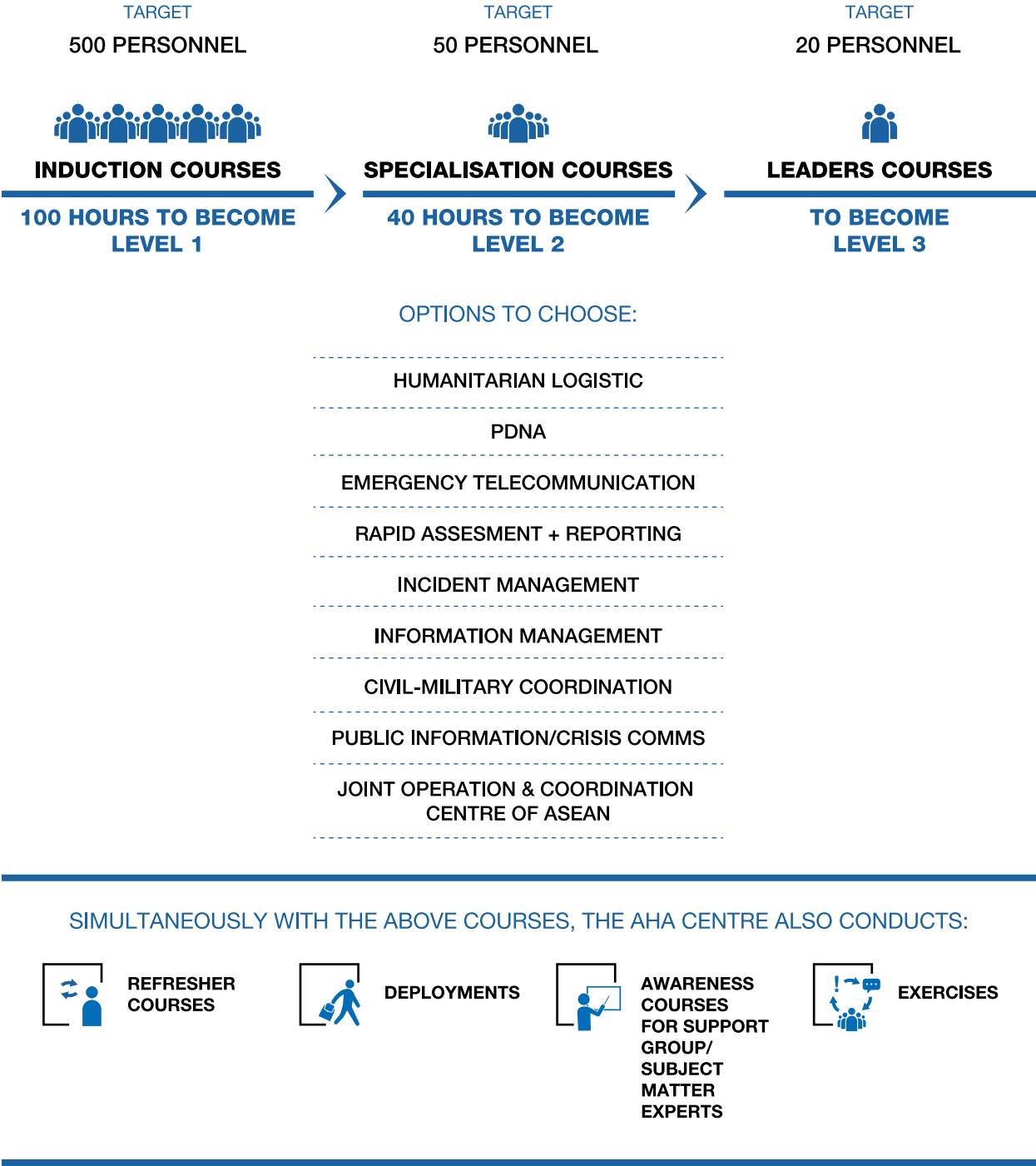
ASEAN and the AHA Centre are taking the necessary steps to address emerging issues. In order to overcome the length of procurements, the AHA Centre has encouraged the procurement of relief items locally within the affected country. This was done, for example, in the delivery of relief items from Brunei Darussalam to the Philippines during the Typhoon Haiyan in 2012. At a macro level, ASEAN is implementing the DELSA Phase 2 by developing satellite warehouses and training in-country logistics staff.

Meanwhile, with regard to the optimisation of ASEAN-ERAT, ASEAN will encourage the inclusion of non-NDMO staff within the ERAT roster, for example, from relevant government agencies, civil society organisations, the private sector, as well as military personnel. The AHA Centre will also strengthen the ERAT minimum standards for certification by taking into account the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of participants. In general, to ensure that responses are conducted according to the existing guidelines, the AHA Centre plans to undertake a compliance audit during and after each operation in the future.

THE ASEAN-ERAT
TRANSFORMATION
PLAN 2015 – 2020

The ASEAN-ERAT Transformation Plan aims to strengthen ASEAN's preparedness and response capacity in responding to natural disasters in a manner that is collective, fast, reliable and in line with humanitarian standards. The project will focus on strengthening the ASEAN-ERAT system as one of the tools to facilitate joint disaster response in the ASEAN region. There are several components to the ASEAN-ERAT transformation project component and these include enhancing curriculum and methodology of the ASEAN-ERAT courses, enhancing ASEAN-ERAT member's skills and capacity in coordinating the ASEAN effort in responding to natural disaster, and enhancing ASEAN-ERAT deployment procedures to ensure swift deployment of the team to support the government of the affected Member State.

The Transformation plan is proposed to be implemented in three phases within the five years period (2015-2020). AHA Centre will be the main implementer of the project with support from the ASEAN Member States and partners such as UNOCHA, WFP, and the AADMER Partnership Group (APG).



Moving forward for ASEAN and the AHA Centre, therefore, is formed by continuing the journey to achieve the vision of “One ASEAN, One Response”, as well as rectifying and improving previous processes and mechanisms. Improving the quality of disaster response services require not only a great vision, but also the humility to be aware of any deficiencies, which may seem trivial but truly key for ensuring the quality of the emergency response itself. Such is the old saying, the devil is in the detail.

For the AHA Centre and ASEAN, the journey is far from over. The challenges that lie ahead are perhaps even greater. However, the cause is worth the effort, as in the end, disaster management and response is primarily about preserving human life and understanding mother nature. This is the noble nature of disaster response, which is worth more than any price that must be paid to achieve it. Disaster response is a willingness to share a crisis with those who suffer, day after day, doing what can be done to reduce the impact. At its deepest essence, this is about working selflessly, with solidarity and without fanfare, providing assistance to those most in need. It is that simple, but also that difficult.

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² Pennisi, “Building,” 18.

³ Pennisi, “Building,” 18.

⁴ Pennisi, “Building,” 18.

⁵ Pennisi, “Building,”

⁶ Pennisi, “Building,” 5.

⁷ Pennisi, “Building,” 5.

⁸ Petz, “Strengthening,” 6.

⁹ Pennisi, “Building,” 7. See also Peter Sutch and Juanita Elias, International Relations The Basic (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2007).

¹⁰ Pennisi, “Building,” 8.

¹¹ Petz, “Strengthening,” 7. The principles of the so-called ASEAN way are laid down in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (1976). These principles guide regional cooperation centered on the commitment to solidarity, informality, minimal institutionalization, non-interference and respect for national sovereignty.

¹² Petz, “Strengthening,” 7.

¹³ Pennisi, “Building,” 11.

¹⁴ Picucci, “Two Earthquakes,” 2017.

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 Authority for Disaster Management)

COP

Conference of the Parties

CPR

Committee of Permanent Representatives

DELSA

Disaster Emergency Logistic System for ASEAN

ACRONYMS

DMRS

Disaster Monitoring and Response System

EOC

Emergency Operations Centre

ICCT

In-Country Coordination Team

ICS

Incident Command System

ICT

Information and Communication Technology

JAIF

Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund

JOCCA

Joint Operations and Coordination Centre of ASEAN

NADMA

Malaysia's National Disaster Management Agency

NDMO

National Disaster Management Organisation

NFP

National Focal Point

OCHA

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

PDC

Pacific Disaster Center

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**


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PARTNERSHIP | # 6 | COORDINATING
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EMERGENCY
RESPONSE |
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