

Opening Remarks

The annual meeting of INSARAG USAR Team Leaders was held in The Hague, Netherlands from 15-18 September 2013, hosted by the Government of Netherlands and the City of The Hague. This meeting was jointly organised by USAR.NL and the Field Coordination Support Section (FCSS-INSARAG Secretariat), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Geneva.

Opening remarks were made by the following:

- Mr. Jozias van Aartsen, the Mayor of The Hague;
- Mr. Joost Andriessen, Director Humanitarian Affairs of the Ministry of International Trade and Development;
- Mr. Peter Bos, National Commander of USAR.NL; and
- Mr. Terje Skavdal, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Secretariat of INSARAG.

Terje Skavdal, on behalf of OCHA and the participants, expressed appreciation and thanked the Government of the Netherlands for organizing and hosting this meeting.

Participants Introduction and Adoption of Agenda

A total of 135 participants, from 44 countries and organisations attended the meeting (**see Annex A**).

The meeting adopted the agenda unanimously (**see Annex B**).

Meeting Proceedings

Day 1 – 16 September 2013

1. Update of INSARAG Activities in 2012/13

Terje Skavdal updated the participants on the events that have occurred within INSARAG since the 2012 Team Leaders meeting. Areas reported on included the outcomes of the INSARAG Steering Group and UNDAC Advisory Board Meetings held in Geneva in February 2013, the 2012 meetings of three regional groups, and other regional events. Key on the agenda of these meetings was discussions on the INSARAG Governance.

He also informed the participants on the upcoming key events scheduled for the rest of 2013. The participants were also strongly encouraged to contribute relevant articles and information to the INSARAG Secretariat for posting to the INSARAG Homepage: <http://www.insarag.org>.

2. Update from the INSARAG Working Groups:

- Mr. Dewey Perks, Chair of the Training Working Group, gave a presentation on behalf of the Training Working Group. He updated the participants on the work done by the TWG over the last year and gave an overview of its planned activities into 2013-14. Key updates are: The TWG is represented in the GRG and will work on the conversion of Guidelines Chapter G to a “Capacity Building” Handbook and will facilitate USAR inputs to the UNDAC Handbook revision process. The 1st Responder training package is completed and will be available for the INSARAG community. The work on ‘e-learning’ processes continues.
- Mr. Trevor Glass, Chair of the Medical Working Group, gave a presentation on behalf of the Medical Working Group. He updated the participants on the activities of the MWG over the last year and provided an overview of the ongoing linkages with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Foreign Medical Teams (FMT). Key updates include the drafting of a provisional medical guidance note on “USAR in Extreme Environments”, support to the GRG for review of the INSARAG Guidelines and collaboration with TWG and OWG in reviewing the IEC/R checklist. MWG member, Mr. Rudi Coninx from WHO provided additional information on the ongoing collaboration about FMTs on (minimum) standards setting and future coordination of responding medical trauma/surgical teams.

The Chairman’s Summaries of the Working Group Meetings including their work plans will be made available on the Virtual OSOCC and INSARAG web site.

3. INSARAG External Classification/Reclassification Process and Lessons from USAR Teams, Mentors and Team Leaders

The Chair of the TWG reported on the progress of the revision of the IEC/R Handbook and the objective was to clarify issues pertaining to the checklist items. The TWG in consultation with the other working groups will develop these revisions and recommend that it be introduced in 2014.

The INSARAG Secretariat updated the meeting on the IEC/R developments in 2013 and planned activities for 2014 and expressed appreciation for the support from IEC member countries for contributing suitable classifiers. The INSARAG Secretariat welcomes IEC teams to nominate suitable classifiers to participate as classifiers in 2014 and to contribute to the ‘reserve pool’ of classifiers. Following current Best Practice, teams preparing for classification (or reclassification) are strongly encouraged to participate in upcoming IEC/R exercises as observers.

Lessons sharing on the IEC/R were made by the following:

- IEC/R 2012 experience from Hungary (successful Classification and Reclassification),
- IER preparations- updates from China (IER roadmap till 2014);
- Capacity building model used by Chile for its Classification (target for 2016)

Singapore shared on a proposal, to review the current resource heavy approach to the IER process. The initiative was welcomed by the Steering Group in 2013, and will be discussed in the upcoming regional group meetings.

Key IEC/R findings discussed:

- Timely and close engagements amongst all stakeholders; (National focal point, USAR team, mentor, IEC team leader and the INSARAG Secretariat) is crucial for a successful IEC/R;
- Capacity building should start at the national level (chapter G) before embarking on IEC;
- Singapore's IER proposal reinforces current language found in the IEC/R Handbook. Participants were reminded that changes to the Reclassification process however need to consider the reasoning behind current practices such as considerations for staff turnover, continuity plans and the value of such exercises with the presence of a selected group of international peer review team.

4. Proposed USAR Coordination: Assessment, Search and Coordination Methodology

The INSARAG Secretariat reiterated the importance of the INSARAG guidelines and the crucial role of coordination to ensure efficient delivery of aid and rescue to the affected population. There is a need for the international community to adapt and change accordingly to meet the challenges faced in the disaster environment. Coordination may be scaled up when necessary; while remaining cautious that over empowering coordination could hinder the response process.

Mr. Peter Crook, acting Chair of the Operations Working Group (OWG) informed the participants on the status of the work done on the USAR Coordination Methodology process.

The Day 1 meeting adjourned at 1730 hrs.

DAY 2 – 17 September 2013

5. INSARAG Guidelines Review Process and Breakout Group Discussions

The Chair of the Guidelines Review Group (GRG), Ambassador Manuel Bessler and attending GRG members provided an update on the work done thus far and presented their work plan.

To gain input from the attending Team Leaders, breakout groups were established to discuss the following operational and technical inputs to assist the work of the GRG:

Task 1: Discussions on Volume II: INSARAG Operational Guidance - what are the areas to be incorporated, what needs review, and who can provide the resource.

Task 2: Discussions on Volume III: INSARAG Field Guide - what are the areas to be incorporated, what needs review, and who can provide the resource.

Task 3: Discussion on Technical References - how can your organisation contribute to this, and what are their limitations.

The main GRG discussions are summarized as follows :

- Volumes I and II are distinctly separated by their Policy Content (Volume I) and Technical and Operational (Volume II);
- Volume III or the “INSARAG Field Operations Guide” is a pocket book size document that contains operational content applicable for response. It will take into account the realities and practicalities of USAR tactical operations, including media management and safety, and cultural issues (in checklist format);
- ‘Thick books’ will not be the recommended final product. Regardless the size however, all work will be designed to share electronically and in apps for smart devices. An important consideration is to maintain a balance between hard copy documents and electronic form;
- The INSARAG Secretariat was asked to determine a way to provide better communication with the INSARAG community. Presently the INSARAG Political and Operations Focal Points are used for distribution, but this does not seem to be reliable or consistent;
- Ambassador Bessler reminded the participants that ‘Nothing is cast in stone’, including the naming of the volumes and feedback from the INSARAG community remains crucial. The attending USAR Team Leaders were challenged to take ownership of the INSARAG Guidelines and should actively contribute to the review work;
- The INSARAG Guidelines remain a living document and while main revisions are conducted every 5 years. New changes which are accepted would be announced, and would be added to replace the particular chapter/paragraph and recorded;
- Volumes I and II are equally important and serve various stakeholders. These include countries accepting international USAR assistance, those providing international assistance, and building USAR capacity at all levels as stated in GA 57/150;
- The Team Leaders have identified 2 members from the USAR community to represent them in the GRG. **They are Mr Arjan Stam from USAR.NL, and Mr Paul Burns from the New Zealand Fire Service;**
- The current version of the INSARAG Guidelines remains in force, till the approval of the INSARAG Steering Group (ISG) in 2015.

(The outcomes of the Breakout discussions will be forwarded to the GRG for consideration)

6. Proposed USAR Coordination: Assessment, Search and Coordination Methodology(continued)

The OWG continued to provide briefings on the coordination methodology to prepare the participants for the breakout group discussion conducted during the meeting’s last day.

(The draft coordination handbook is available on the Virtual OSOCC)

The Day 2 Meeting adjourned at 1800h. An informal BBQ hosted by USAR.NL was organized in the evening for participants.

DAY 3 – 18 September 2013**7. Proposed USAR Coordination: Assessment, Search and Coordination Methodology – Discussions and Summing Up (continued)****The main discussions are summarized as follows :**

- International USAR is primarily a bilateral response; with voluntarily participation by responders. Greater clarity (and importance) on engagements with LEMA, OSOCC and national Teams should be taken into account;
- The existing systems within the INSARAG and OSOCC Guidelines took a decade to be disseminated and for many national teams to adopt and integrate into their training programme and national response systems. The methodology is a positive first step, and needs to be clearly seen as an “improved evolution”, instead of a drastic make over;
- Several participants expressed their concern that the sector coordinator could be responsible for all areas;
- It is understood by all that the UC (USAR Coordination) function is a part of the OSOCC Operations function;
- It was suggested that the levels might be improved by merging ASR 1 and 2;
- The methodology could possibly be improved with further simplification that includes greater flexibility and uses a realistically 'scalable system';
- It was suggested that additional clarity is needed about the types of USAR coordination meetings needed. As example number of Team Leaders meeting, and how these relate to Sector meetings;
- Responding international USAR teams are expected to second staff (liaison officers) to the RDC/OSOCC, as per the INSARAG Guidelines. That Liaison Officer will now be used as intended by supporting the UC;
- There were numerous comments and suggestions on the various Triage and Extrication forms—these will be addressed;
- The 2015 INSARAG Guidelines Volume II will be the “home” of the USAR Coordination Handbook; a detailed implementation plan will be drafted.
- EMERCOM of Russia is of the view that the proposed UC system could be too complex and might hamper rapid USAR response.

In summary, the majority of the participants are positive to the concept and welcome this initiative; encourages more opportunities to practice (and refine) the new system in INSARAG earthquake response exercises.

The work of the OWG is now completed. As this new initiative moves forward, the key elements that have been agreed on will be taken on by the TL representatives to the GRG, together with the existing Working Groups and translated into the INSARAG Guidelines Volume II.

Training materials and courses would need to be developed and gradually implemented. The feedback from the Team Leaders will take leadership in this regard, and so the concept can be progressively introduced to their respective teams. Close interaction with Team Leaders and other relevant stakeholders will continue so as to refine the new process.

(The outcomes of the Breakout discussions would be forwarded to the GRG, MWG and TWG for consideration)

8. Experiential Sharing Sessions:

The following technical topics were presented to the participants:

- USGS PAGER Program (by The USGS)
- Structural Assessment (by PUI France)
- Unmanned Ground and Air Vehicles (by ICARUS)
- Central American USAR Academy (by Costa Rica)

The INSARAG Secretariat thanked all the presenters for their contributions. The respective presentations are available in the VO.

9. Any Other Business

a. Next Meeting

Qatar offered to host the INSARAG Team Leaders Meeting in 2014.

The date and venue of the 2014 meeting will be confirmed and announced by the INSARAG Secretariat at the beginning of 2014.

b. Suggested Agenda Items for 2014 TL Meeting

Participants provided suggestions for possible agenda items for the 2013 meeting as follows:

- INSARAG Guidelines Revision for 2015 edition
- USAR Coordination methodologies in earthquake response
- USAR Capacity Building
- Innovation and Technological Advancements in USAR

The INSARAG Secretariat encouraged participants to submit further suggestions to the 2014 agenda to the INSARAG Secretariat by 31 December 2013, for consideration.

c. Other Remarks

Representatives of the Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC) [Bahrain; Kuwait; Oman; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; United Arab Emirates] and Jordan have indicated that they will be establishing a GCCJ Subregional Group lead by the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The objectives of the cooperation is to increase regional interaction, streamline bilateral assistance during disasters and collaborate on training opportunities. This concept was discussed with Mr Terje Skavdal, Chief of FCSS, during the USAR Team leaders meeting who has given his support to the initiative.

10. Meeting Closure

The INSARAG Secretariat, on behalf of OCHA and the international participants reiterated thanks to the host country, and USAR.NL for their warm hospitality and support to the meeting.

The INSARAG Team Leaders Meeting 2013 adjourned on 18 September at 1715hrs.

ANNEXES

- 1 The list of participants (**Annex A**)
- 2 The Meeting Agenda (**Annex B**)

INSARAG USARA Team Leaders Meeting List of participants

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AGENDA

15 September 2013 (Sunday):

Time	Event	Responsible
Whole day	Arrival of INSARAG USAR Team Leaders Meeting Participants and Registration	Host Country
2000	Welcome Reception (casual attire) at The Steigenberger Kurhaus Hotel	Host Country

16 September 2013 (Monday): USAR Team Leaders Meeting

Time	Event	Responsible
0800-0900	Registration open for participants	Host Country
0900-0930	Official Opening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Jozias van Aartsen, Mayor of The Hague - Mr. Joost Andriessen, Director Humanitarian Affairs of The Ministry of International Trade and Development - Mr. Peter Bos, National Commander USAR.NL - Terje Skavdal, INSARAG Secretariat - 	Host Country
0930-0945	Group photo	Host Country
0945-1015	Coffee Break	
1015-1045	Participants Introduction and Adoption of the Agenda	INSARAG Secretariat
1045-1145	Update of INSARAG activities in 2012/2013	INSARAG Secretariat
1145-1215	INSARAG Working Group Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training Working Group (TWG) - Medical Working Group (MWG) 	INSARAG Working Groups Chairs or Representatives
1215-1330	Lunch	
1330-1500	INSARAG External Classification and Reclassification Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updates - Lessons from IEC Team (Hungary, China, Chile, Singapore), IEC Team Leaders, Classifiers, Mentors - IER Review Discussion 	INSARAG Secretariat and Facilitators
1500-1530	Coffee Break	
1530-1730	INSARAG Operations Working Group (OWG) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update New USAR Coordination Methodology 	INSARAG OWG
1800	Adjourn	INSARAG Secretariat
	Dinner (own arrangements)	Participants

17 September 2013 (Tuesday): USAR Team Leaders Meeting

Time	Event	Responsible
0900-1000	INSARAG Guidelines Review Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update by the GRG Chairman and GRG Members 	Amb Manuel Bessler and GRG
1000-1030	Coffee Break	
1030-1130	INSARAG Guidelines Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Breakout Group Discussions (focusing on technical issues) 	INSARAG Guidelines Review Group

1130-1430	Social/Cultural Event including packed Lunch	
1430-1530	INSARAG Guidelines Review - Summary of Discussions and Recommendations to GRG	INSARAG Guidelines Review Group
1530-1600	Coffee Break	
1600-1730	INSARAG Operations Working Group (OWG) - New USAR Coordination Methodology - Breakout Group Workshops (continued)	INSARAG OWG
1730	Adjourn	INSARAG Secretariat
1845	Informal Barbecue	Host Country

18 September 2013 (Wednesday): USAR Team Leaders Meeting

Time	Event	Responsible
0900-1030	New USAR Coordination Methodology - Breakout Group Workshops (continued)	INSARAG OWG
1030-1100	Coffee Break	
1100-1230	New USAR Coordination Methodology - Breakout Group Workshops (continued) - Summing up of Recommendations	INSARAG OWG
1230-1400	Lunch	
1400-1545	Experiential Sharing: - USGS PAGER Program by US Geological Survey Golden - Structural Assessment by Pompier Urgence International, France - Unmanned Ground and Air Vehicles by Belgium First-Aide and support team - Central American USAR Academy by Costa Rica	Respective Presenters
1545-1615	Coffee Break	
1615-1630	Any Other Business - Identification of proposed agenda items and venue for INSARAG TL meeting 2014	INSARAG Secretariat
1630-1700	Development of Key Outcomes of the Meeting <i>(The Chairman Summary will be prepared by the Secretariat and sent to participants in the days following the meeting)</i>	INSARAG Secretariat
1700-1715	Closure of the Meeting	INSARAG Secretariat
	Dinner (own arrangements)	Participants

19 September 2013 (Thursday):

Time	Event	Responsible
Whole day	INSARAG USAR Team Leaders Meeting Participants Departure	Host Country