



INSARAG USAR Team Leaders Meeting

San Jose, Costa Rica, 05-07 April 2011

Chairman's Summary

Opening Remarks

The annual meeting of INSARAG USAR team leaders was held in San Jose, Costa Rica from 05 to 07 April 2011. The Government of Costa Rica hosted the meeting, which was organised by the National Emergency Commission and the Field Coordination Support Section (INSARAG Secretariat), OCHA-Geneva.

Opening remarks were made by Mr Terje Skavdal, Head of the Field Coordination Support Section, UN-OCHA; Mr Tim Callaghan, Regional Chair, INSARAG Americas Region; Ms Luiza Carvalho, UN Resident Coordinator and Regional Coordinator for UNDP; Mrs Vanessa Rosales Ardon, Chair of the National Emergency Commission of Costa Rica.

Participants Introduction and Adoption of Agenda

Mr Joe Bishop, the meeting facilitator, advised that 76 participants were attending the meeting from 24 countries and organisations. The list of participants is attached (**Annex A**)

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

Meeting Proceedings

Day 1 - 5 April 2011

Update from the INSARAG Secretariat

Winston Chang, on behalf of the INSARAG Secretariat, updated the meeting on the main events that have occurred during the year since the last Team Leaders meeting in March 2010.

Terje Skavdal as INSARAG Secretariat and Chief of FCSS, updated the Team Leaders meeting on the outcomes from the INSARAG Global Meeting held in Japan in 2010. He also informed the meeting on the key upcoming events scheduled by INSARAG during the next year. He informed the meeting of the UNDAC review, now scheduled for later this year.

Update from the INSARAG Training Working Groups:

- Warwick Kidd (Training Working Group): gave a presentation on behalf of the Chair of the TWG, Dewey Perks. He updated the meeting on the activities of the TWG over the last year and gave a look-forward of its planned activities into 2013.
- Trevor Glass (Chair - Medical Working Group): gave a presentation on behalf of the Medical Working Group. He updated the meeting on the activities of the MWG over the last year and provided an overview of the Technical Guidance Notes that the MWG has been developing.
- David Norlin (Chair – Operations Working Group): gave a presentation on behalf of the Operations Working Group. He informed the meeting that the Steering Group had authorised the formation of the OWG in February 2011 and that the group had just completed its first meeting.

The Chairman's Summary of the 3 Working Groups that met the week earlier, are available in the virtual OSOCC.

Costa Rica National Disaster Management System

Mrs Vanessa Rosales Ardon, Chair of the National Emergency Commission of Costa Rica gave a presentation on the work and structures of emergency management in Costa Rica. She indicated Costa Rica's intention to apply for an INSARAG IEC in the near future.

The meeting moved to the National Fire Academy in San Jose, Costa Rica where the participants were shown a field demonstration on the capabilities of the international USAR team of Costa Rica and the range of operational equipment and training facilities.

National USAR Capacity Building – INSARAG Guidelines Chapter G

Kjell Larson (Sweden) introduced the meeting to the recent events and developments in the field of capacity building within Urban Search and Rescue. Terje Skavdal clarified that a number of countries in SE Asia requested support for capacity building following the Global Meeting in Japan in 2010. Mr Qu Guosheng informed the meeting that China will be developing over 30 national USAR teams across China as part of its capacity building programme, and the build up will reference the INSARAG Guidelines Chapter on Building National USAR Capacity.

The new addition above, can be found in the INSARAG Guidelines version 2011 in the virtual OSOCC.

INSARAG Homepage (<http://www.insarag.org>)

Kjell Larson (Sweden) informed the meeting of the developments of the new INSARAG website sponsored (initially) by MSB, which should be online and available to view by the summer of 2011. The web address is www.insarag.org. Winston Chang explained that the website will include sections that will be the responsibility of the Regional Groups and others that will be populated by the Working Groups. The INSARAG USAR Directory will also be migrated to this site. He explained the features and navigation to different sub locations

where all the information will be posted and located. There is a test web site available at www.advant.se/insarag/ . The INSARAG/ Regional Group Members and Working Group members are allowed to access their respective discussion forums using the following log-in passwords:

Username: testuser
Password: testuser

Username: testuserwg
Password: testuserwg

Participants were requested to go on-line, view the site and make any comments to the INSARAG Secretariat at insarag@un.org before 15 April 2011 for consideration.

INSARAG External Classification (IEC)

Winston Chang introduced a presentation concerning the developments in the INSARAG External Classification (IEC) system. He clarified the objectives of the IEC system and why it was developed. He explained to the meeting what is involved in the IEC process and the work needed by teams to be successful in the classification process. He mentioned that new teams seeking classification would not be able to undergo their assessment procedure until 2015.

Winston Chang introduced Pekka Tiainen (FinnRescue) who described to the meeting the process that his organisation is going through in preparing for the IEC assessment. He emphasised the amount of training required to meet the requirements for their assessment that is scheduled in 2012.

Arjan Stam from the Netherlands USAR team described how his team are preparing for their re-classification in September 2011. He explained how the report from the IEC is helping them assess their strengths and weaknesses and to build for the future, part of which is their re-classification assessment.

The meeting was invited to contribute to an open forum regarding the IEC process. The facilitator was Joe Bishop (FCSS) and the panel comprised Terje Skavdal (FCSS) and Alan Toh (Singapore).

The meeting discussed the overall future of disaster response and how the IEC process would fit within that future. Terje Skavdal pointed out that USAR is perhaps the only part of international emergency response already carrying out a self-regulation process and that this process will have to be more widely developed across the whole range of disaster response. Not only will the process need to be more widely developed, but also the process of quality control will need to examine areas not yet assessed during the IEC process.

The issue of reducing the cost of the IER process was raised. AT described how teams could use actual deployments as evidence for a re-classification. The issue of de-centralising the IEC process to the Regions was raised, it was mentioned that this would be a more effective process. TS answered that the bottleneck in the system was the lack of classifiers nominated by IEC teams, particularly in the Americas and Asia-Pacific regions. It thought it would be some time before those regions had enough classifiers to support an authentic classification process that could be supported within the region.

The Chairman's Summary for the IEC Meeting of 4 April 2011 is attached (**Annex C**)

The Day 1 meeting adjourned at 17:25hrs.

DAY 2 – 6 April 2011

The INSARAG Secretariat reconvened the meeting, welcoming participants back and explaining the format of the day. The day comprised of a number of workshops held during both the morning and afternoon. The concept behind the workshops was to capture information from the participants and to formulate ideas and strategies for the way forward, across a number of issues affecting INSARAG and international disaster response.

The workshop topics covered the areas of USAR Preparedness and Response as follows:

Workshop 1: Preparedness - INSARAG USAR Capacity Building and Preparedness Activities and Initiatives

Workshop 2: Response – Operating Beyond the Life Saving Phase

Workshop 3: Response – Assessment, Search and Coordination

Workshop 4: Response - USAR Coordination Cell, Safety and Security

The Outcomes of the 4 Workshops are presented in **Annex D (Appendix I – IV)**

The Day 2 Meeting adjourned at 1730.

DAY 3 – 7 April 2011

Reports from the Workshops

Workshop 1: Preparedness - INSARAG USAR Capacity Building and Preparedness Activities and Initiatives

Heidi Huusko presented the findings from Workshop 1. She explained that the concepts behind capacity development are that partnerships form the basis of progress, multiple simultaneous approaches often offer the most effective way forward and that capacity development takes time. Specific outcomes include:

- Capacity development should be targeted at different levels – operational, technical and strategic
- Capacity development should always be done on the basis of a proper needs assessment
- Pilots allow capacity development to be tested prior to implementation of full programmes
- Sustainability and ownership of the project by the recipient is key, with the donor having a clear exit strategy

She then described the challenges facing the INSARAG community in its involvement in capacity development projects; these include funding, leadership, communication and cultural difficulties, political interference and the development model not being clear to all parties.

The workshop recommended the development of an INSARAG Code of Conduct for capacity development and that INSARAG develop a mechanism (possible on the new website) where an exchange of capacity development experiences could take place.

Workshop 2: Response – Operating Beyond the Life Saving Phase

Arjan Stam presented the findings from Workshop 2. He explained the current situation and how feedback from the Haiti earthquake and the Hyogo declaration had led to pressure to develop guidelines for USAR teams operating beyond the rescue phase. The workshop was intended to develop and refine ideas towards the development of guidelines, building on work done by the DACH group and the INSARAG Training Working Group. Specifically;

- USAR teams already have sufficient skill-sets and capability to contribute significantly in the post-rescue phase. This contribution can be measured in terms monetary savings for both donor organisations and the country affected.
- Information management and distribution through the phases will be a key task for USAR teams and common standards and templates need to be developed. Further work should examine mechanisms allowing communication and information exchange across the various phases of the disaster.
- A new function of ‘Transition Officer’ should be developed; further work needs to develop a role description and training requirements.

Workshop 3: Response – Assessment, Search and Coordination

David Norlin presented the findings from Workshop 1. He explained that the group examined the search phase in its entirety and made a number of recommendations that will be taken forward by the Operations Working Group, specifically;

- There is a need to prepare affected countries to receive international assistance in terms of information – availability and commonality
- The Virtual OSSOC needs more automation
- The INSARAG community needs to embrace new technology whilst maintaining the capability of operating effectively when that technology is not available
- A new ‘Level V’ search needs to be established.

Workshop 4: Response - USAR Coordination Cell, Safety and Security

Alan Toh presented the findings from Workshop 4. He explained that discussion took place regarding the security and safety issues in recent disasters. It was agreed that the OSOCC is the key provider of security information, given their overview of the whole incident. Key to the findings of the workshop was the establishment of a USAR Operations Cell. Further work will be done by the Operations WG to establish the methodology of the UOC and by the Training WG to develop the role description and training needs for individuals staffing the UOC.

He also explained that the workshop felt that improvements needed to be made in the sectorisation of an incident. It would be the role of Heavy USAR teams to take on the role of sector coordination.

Q: Why the need for the UOC, doesn't the OSOCC already perform those functions?

A: The UOC is really an extension of the OSOCC and merely formalises the USAR cell that has always existed within the OSOCC.

Q: Are we not developing a system where there are two OSOCC's?

A: It is not the intention to create two OSOCC's but the relationship between the OSOCC and the UOC needs to be carefully defined. The Operations Working Group stated that they are aware of the issues and will consider them when developing the UOC methodology.

Winston Chang thanked all the presenters and summarised the challenges ahead for the INSARAG community and the work requiring to be done.

Experiential Learning

Individual Classification and Certification of Rescuers

Alexander Romanov (EMERCOM) gave a short presentation on the individual classification and certification of rescuers. He referred to the national system in use in Russia for the certification of rescuers and proposed that it be used as a model by the INSARAG Training Working Group in the establishment of a system of certification across the INSARAG community.

This system establishes various levels or 'ranks' of rescuer, each with its own skill levels and specialities. Development through the ranks provides a comprehensive system for personal learning and development for individual rescuers. He advised that the benefits of such a system were many, improving the professionalism of rescuers and improving the life saving capability of the USAR teams.

He requested that the INSARAG Training Working Group work with EMERCOM to develop such a classification and certification system and invited them to meet in Moscow in the future to share experiences and knowledge.

The Survivability of Victims

Dr Anthony MacIntyre (Fairfax County) gave a presentation focussing on the survivability of victims in an earthquake disaster. He explained that a lot of the knowledge concerning victim survivability is actually based on anecdotal evidence instead of proper research.

He explained that his research group had first conducted an extensive review of medical literature, which established some data concerning the time-line and quantity of rescues undertaken. He stated that his research showed that there was no time constant for survivability across different disasters and that there are more important factors that determine how long individuals can survive in a collapsed structure.

He shared that there were three major implications for the USAR Teams, specifically;

- Search and rescue strategy should not be based on a time constant and teams should adopt a phased approach rather than an 'all or nothing' approach to operations

- Data collection is a weakness and we need to do a better job of gathering useful data on the rescues and other work the USAR teams undertake
- The INSARAG community needs to do a better job of explaining the value of search and rescue operations and that more emphasis needs to be put on the tasks the teams undertake rather than on lives saved.

He finished by directing the meeting to look at the research article, which is posted on the Virtual OSOCC under 'Discussions' > 'USAR related research and articles'.

Any Other Business:

1) There were no items of additional business.

All participants were asked to note that all documents and presentations used during the INSARAG Team Leaders Meeting would be available on the Virtual OSOCC in the near future.

Next Meeting

Mr John Cawcutt of Queensland Task Force 1 offered to host the INSARAG Team Leaders Meeting in 2012. The date and venue of the meeting will be confirmed and announced by the INSARAG Secretariat at a later date.

Suggestions for agenda items for the 2012 meeting are as follows:

1. Further emphasis needs to be placed on the 'lessons learned' from disasters occurring throughout the year prior to the TL meeting.
2. Technical presentations on the difference between traditional post-earthquake response to those undertaken following storm-surge or tsunami events.
3. The topic of 'Beyond the Rubble' needs to be expanded as this development is a paradigm shift for search and rescue teams and is potentially a huge benefit to disaster response.
4. Input from the UNDAC community, updating INSARAG TL's on the developments within UNDAC.
5. Workshops offered by THW concerning a) the interaction with civil engineers and b) practical steps in local capacity building. Supported by Chile, who would like more input concerning working with civil engineers for building assessment.
6. Support for more presentations on the research and development aspects underpinning the international search and rescue community.
7. Should the Team Leaders Meeting be renamed 'the Team Leaders Workshop'?
8. Presentations or workshops for working in extreme climatic conditions.

Winston Chang advised the meeting that further ideas for agenda items for the next Team Leaders meeting should be passed to the INSARAG Secretariat in the first instance.

Mr. Yoshii from Japan(Ministry of Foreign Affairs) thanked the meeting on behalf of the Japanese people for INSARAG's support and assistance during the recent disaster that had affected their country.

Meeting Closure

The INSARAG Team Leaders Meeting 2011 adjourned on 7 April at 1230hrs.

ANNEXES

The list of participants (**Annex A**)

The Meeting Agenda (**Annex B**)

Chairman's Summary for the IEC Meeting of 4 April 2011 (**Annex C**)

Outcomes of the 4 Workshops **Annex D (Appendix I – IV)**