

Annual meeting of the AEME Regional Group

Chairman summary

Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 1-3 November 2016

Overview

The annual meeting of the INSARAG AEME Regional Group was held on 2-3 November 2016 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. The meeting was hosted by the Government of The Netherlands and was chaired by Mr. Carlo Post in his capacity as AEME Regional Chair.

The meeting gathered a total of 70 participants from 30 countries and organisations as well as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in its capacity of INSARAG Secretariat. The meeting was supported by Mr. Arjan Stam, Mr. Robert Merx and Mr. Camille Michel who facilitated the group work sessions. The countries and organizations present were represented by their INSARAG focal points or their delegated representatives. See annex for complete list of participants.

Below is the summary of the meeting. All the presentations and meeting documents are available in the Virtual OSOCC (<http://vosocc.unocha.org>) and on the INSARAG website www.insarag.org.

Mr. Jelte van Wieren, Director Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid Department welcomed the participants to Amsterdam and to the AEME Regional Meeting 2016 wishing all a fruitful meeting. Mr. van Wieren recognised that while The Netherlands is not earthquake prone country, the Government decided in 2003 to establish a USAR team which grew and professionalised itself under the auspice of INSARAG. Recalling the “collective duty to maximise resources”, Ms. van Wieren welcomed the Beyond the Rubbles concept noting that USAR.NL has the capacity to provide extra support, such as performing as a TAST team within the European Union Mechanism.

Mr. Carlo Post, the AEME Chair, assisted by the incoming Vice-Chair Mr. Fatih Özer of Turkey welcomed the audience to the INSARAG AEME meeting and welcomed the Swiss Delegation as representatives of the INSARAG Global Chair, Mr. Manuel Bessler, who was excused. Mr. Mohammad Al Ansari, outgoing vice-chair was also unable to attend. The Chair highlighted the importance of the role of INSARAG and the role of mutually agreed standards as well as the importance of regional and international collaboration. Mr. Post then presented Amsterdam as well as the NEMO Science Museum, where the meeting was held.

The Chair recalled that in the last Regional Meeting - held back to back with the Global Meeting in Abu Dhabi - a number of countries and teams had volunteered to elaborate on one or more topics of common concern. During the year, those working groups met and several conference calls were held, including with the regional chairmanship group, the Global chair and the INSARAG Secretariat. He explained that for this meeting, three topics were selected for discussions: International Light Teams, Beyond the Rubble and National Accreditation.

The Chair noted that the Nepal earthquake reminded us of the importance of good coordination and logistics support and the difficulties to manage and coordinate all non-classified teams. The Chair mentioned the good work done in other regions contributing to improving the standards and strengthening the system. Similarly, the Chair recalled the recent Italy earthquake which did not required international assistance and was a testimony of the importance to keep the politics separate from the operational requirements.

Following the introductory remarks, the Chair requested the audience to approve the agenda. The Agenda was approved without modifications. (See agenda annex 2)

The agenda of the meeting evolved around four parts:

1. INSARAG activities in 2016 AEME region.
2. Presentation and feedback to thematic working groups.
3. Presentation and feedback on the INSARAG Strategy.
4. Designation of the Regional Chairmanship group for 2017.

Summary and Action Points

1. INSARAG activities in 2016 the AEME region

A. 2016 earthquakes

After a short introduction recalling that the INSARAG network has a history of developing itself to remain ahead of the curve and learn lessons from its operations, the Chair of the INSARAG Secretariat, Mr. Jesper Lund, provided an overview of the 2016 earthquakes noting that not all of them have required international assistance.

The Ecuador earthquake has been a relatively “traditional” response and the lessons were that the country’s internal disaster response decentralized mechanism did not allow for the most optimal reallocation of resources as much of the inter-municipal support is done on an ad-hoc basis. 15 non classified international USAR teams and two classified teams (UME and ERICAM, from Spain albeit not with their level of classification) deployed as well as an UNDAC team to support the overall response. Following the request of the government, the INSARAG Secretariat supported a lessons learnt workshop on the USAR response carried out in July 2016 (report is available here: http://www.insarag.org/images/stories/Americas_good_practices/INSARAG_Ecuador_terremoto-2016_informe-lecciones-aprendidas_ENG.pdf) . Additional experience sharing and lessons learnt exercise was conducted in the Regional Exercise in Colombia and it will also be discussed as part of the regional INSARAG America’s upcoming meeting.

The Italy earthquake showed that the country has a strong and resilient system in place and is able to swiftly shift response assets to the affected area. In such cases, the role of INSARAG is to facilitate the information sharing and the Virtual OSOCC platform was widely used: 1300 people from 142 countries and organization followed the discussion topics, 43 international relief teams were monitoring the situation. It was noted that, ideally, the affected country should post information directly on the VO. This, with relevant contributions from all the INSARAG members allows to have a better picture of the situation. It is also important for INSARAG to have collective voice on any given situation and therefore in crisis situation, the Secretariat makes contact with the Global and Regional chair to have a common understanding and approach to the required response. It was also noted that while member of INSARAG, Italy could be more engaging and contribute with their experience within the network. Finally, it was recalled that all deploying teams should keep the community informed and not deploy in “stealth mode”.

B. INSARAG Events

The Chair reviewed the different activities conducted this year, those included:

- Two new teams joined INSARAG: Malaysia (SMART) and Russia (Siberia).
Both succeeded the classification and mentors and classifiers are part of that success
- 8 IER were successfully conducted.

IER of USA-Fairfax, Spain-UME, Spain-ERICAM, UK-ISAR, Austria-SARUV, Russia-EMERCOM, Lithuania, Korea. One IER (Turkey-AKUT) was postponed - due to no fault from the IER team.

- 3 INSARAG Regional exercises conducted in Turkey, Indonesia and Colombia.

It was noted that the exercises started as USAR focused exercises but over the years, acknowledging that USAR response is part of a bigger system, the exercise has been revised and is now a multi-stakeholder event, still based on the national contingency plan. It therefore includes a larger role for other actors such as the Emergency Medical Teams, United Nations Country Team, etc. The lead is still very much with the national authorities and in support to the national response plans.

- 2 Capacity Assessment Missions (Philippines and Palestine).

Those missions were not for building IEC teams but evaluate – at their request - the risks and capacities of the national response system and to make recommendations on how to handle earthquake responses, how to build better capacity and how can INSARAG contribute to that effort.

- Continuous dissemination of the 2015 INSARAG Guidelines.

The Guidelines are now translated in 6 languages and available online as well as via smartphone apps (available on App Store and Google Play). It was noted that countries are free to choose the format of printing the different volumes as per their requirements. All countries are also invited to continue to support translation. It is foreseen to start the revision process of the document in 2018 for a new edition in 2020.

- The Earthquake Response Exercise Package is completed and has been tested during the three exercises mentioned above. It is a living document and all teams are welcomed to use it and adapt it for their exercises. The package is available on the INSARAG website.

- A joint INSARAG-EMT event was held during the World Humanitarian Summit.

The purpose of the WHS was to bring all actors together to see how we can improve the humanitarian system which is facing unprecedented challenges notably an historic 65 million displaced people. While the humanitarian requirements is dramatically increasing, the funding is unfortunately not following. Recognizing the role INSARAG is doing in the area of standardization and response best practice, the INSARAG network was invited to be part of the conference to present a way forward to improve the quality of the response. The standardization of other sectors (beside USAR and EMT) was discussed and would be leading to increased interoperability amongst responders.

- Partnership building

Maintaining links and collaborating with other partners in the response is important to INSARAG. In particular with the global clusters. INSARAG can serve as a model for its standard setting methodology but also INSARAG teams can contribute to identify and fill temporary some gaps in the response. In this view, linkages with clusters such as the WASH is important. This year, the Secretariat was approached by the WASH cluster to conduct a survey of the WASH capacities of the INSARAG teams.

- The Humanitarian Network and Partnership Week was held in February 2016.

This important meeting brings many professional networks together on a yearly basis. This forum was created to offer the opportunities for the different networks to identify issues of common interest and find ways to tackle them together. It also offers an opportunity to address issues that are a concern for a specific network but which origin and potential resolve is independent of that network and need to be address with other partners. Some 16 networks and working groups were present discussion issues such as field coordination, Information Management, Cash programming, etc. INSARAG, UNDAC, and Operations Support Partners are 3 networks led by FCSS as part of the HNPW.

- INSARAG Working Group:

Five working group were created following the Global Meeting and carried out their work during the year in review.

Beyond the Rubble discuss the USAR team's capacities to support the response beyond USAR activities. Considering that USAR teams are present and can offer their capacities beyond their usual work, there was a need to have a better definition of this potential role and how this can be implemented. Questions such as how can USAR do more, how can we change a USAR team to EMT or WASH team, what are the coordination mechanisms involved, etc. were at the center of the discussion. The working group recognized that those questions need to be planned, included in trainings, etc. and not be an ad-hoc decision. In short, it was reported that if a USAR team does activities "beyond the rubble", they need to be done in a professional manner (eg. Do a WHO EMT classification). It was clarified that the medical component of the USAR team is an integrated part of the USAR team and that this component is classified as part of the INSARAG process. The Beyond the Rubble discussion is led by the AEME group.

International Light Teams discuss the possible opportunity of having INSARAG classified International Light Teams. The group has been meeting during the year and presented a concept note for discussion during the meeting. Main considerations have been given to propose a definition of the Light Teams, including size, function and structure as well as potential accreditation model for certification process. The International Light Teams discussion is led by the AEME group.

Capacity Building discuss how the INSARAG network can contribute better to capacity building. The group's recommendations so far include to recognize the variety of situation of each country in terms of threats, risks, and national response capacities and for INSARAG to have a flexible approach to meet the requirements for those different settings. Hence, INSARAG should be able to provide tailored support, from training courses to International response to preparedness missions. The Capacity Building discussion is led by the Asia Pacific group.

International External Reclassification Process discuss ways to streamline the IER process to ensure sustainability of the INSARAG classification system. There are currently 31 Heavy Teams, 16 Medium Teams ie. A total of 47 INSARAG classified teams. Most of them are in Europe and INSARAG is advocating for more teams in other regions, noting that Chile, Colombia and South Africa will classify in 2017. Given the exponential reclassifications needs, the discussion was open on the format of the reclassification looking at frequency, involvement of Chair and Secretariat, validity of missions, roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders. After discussions in the group, it was recommended to have no changes to the five years reclassification cycle; to keep the oversight of the INSARAG secretariat; that the mission would not count as reclassifications (as some deployments are not up to the standards and as there are no mechanism to review the performance of the deployment); that for existing team, the responsibility of organizing the IER will be on the IER teams themselves; that new recommended processes should be implemented as pilot as of 1st January 2017, which should be slightly lighter with "pre-greening" of the check list; IER teams will select their own mentor, etc. (more information is available in the IER Concept Paper).

For reclassification of European teams, the Secretariat encourage to use MODEX exercise. Those exercises that serve a standard check for EU modules, including USAR modules for the Voluntary Pool for which the EU is using the INSARAG standards. The MODEX can also be used for the yearly mandatory training. Mr. Juan-Alfonso Lazano Basanta from EU-ECHO added that ISAR and ERICAM reclassified this year using the MODEX and that it was a positive experience that brought some good lessons to ensure the support to the next IER is improved. Some of the benefits mentioned were that the exercises and worksites are organized by an EU contracted 3rd party which eases the preparatory work for the reclassifying teams. It also add some realism for the teams as they arrive in a set environment to which they have to adapt. If interested, the teams

should contact their National Focal Point. The discussion on IER is led by the Asia Pacific group and the INSARAG Secretariat.

National Accreditation Process discussion stemmed from the request of some countries to ensure the quality of their domestic teams - for domestic response - using the INSARAG standards. While those teams are not interested to provide international response, they would like to have some level of recognition within the INSARAG network. Within the working group and within the INSARAG community, a lot of discussions have evolved around the type and nature of the INSARAG recognition. It was recalled that it should be about standard setting not about badges. It was also noted that the potential involvement of INSARAG would be on validating the national accreditation process not the individual teams. Finally, it was noted that while the discussions are still ongoing, some countries such as France are moving forward and started a similar process.

2. Presentation and feedback to thematic Working Groups

After the summary updates of the working groups, the facilitators of the three working groups were invited to present the afternoon group work and further elaborate on their topic. Following, the participants were divided in three groups that rotated between three discussion rooms. The objective of this exercise was to allow for all National Focal Points to be able to comment and provide feedback on each of the working group findings and recommendations. After the three rounds of discussions in the working group during the afternoon, the Chair closed the meeting thanking all for the open and frank discussions held during the day.

The key take away of the discussions are listed below. For a detailed note on both the introductory comments of the Working Group lead, the Group plenary debrief and post debrief comments from the audience, please refer to the Annex 1.

The INSARAG Chair concluded this agenda item by thanking all members for their inputs that will help the Working Group amend their proposals for endorsement by the INSARAG Steering Group.

The Chair proceeded noting that the first day of the meeting was an opportunity to look back at our activities and that the following sessions will look forward, starting with a presentation of a new tool to support the field work USAR teams followed by a presentation of a new course, and a discussion on the strategy until 2020.

3. New Technologies to support USAR activities: KOBO Toolbox

As part of the new developments within the INSARAG network, the Kobo toolbox was presented by Mr. Peter Wolf from THW Germany. During his presentation, the importance of leveraging new technologies to work faster and better was highlighted. In short, Kobo allows to digitally capture information currently collected on paper by USAR team. Hence, all INSARAG forms can now be filled in online on devices (Android) and information immediately shared with the Base of Operations and other partners. The tool was successfully piloted in the INSARAG EQ Exercise in Yogyakarta. Its use and in particular the visualisation of data was supported by the British NGO MapAction. The tool helps to have better “speed, accuracy and accessibility”. Kobo is a system that is free to use for the international community and currently used by hundreds of partners in many different settings.

The tool is supported by OCHA and the INSARAG secretariat recommends its use. The benefits of the tool includes GPS capture, photo integration and link with other platforms such as HDX and forms can be available in all languages. Mr. Wolf summarised it as: “Faster data collection improves analysis; Faster analysis improves prioritisation and tasking; Faster tasking means faster response to needs; Faster response to needs means better outcomes for victims.

As for the next steps, Kobo will be introduced into the UCC courses in 2017 and used during the Swiss Exercise in May 2017. It will be presented to the ISG and guidance will be prepared and shared with the teams. It is expected that a support Kobo – INSARAG task force will be set up to define the rules for Kobo. The guidance note should

also include potential weaknesses and threats as requested by a member of the audience. Overall, the use of Kobo was welcomed by the participants but the Secretariat reminded that it will be for the ISG and Guidelines Review Group to decide if the use of the tool should become mandatory or not.

4. USAR Coordination Cell Training

The Chair introduced a short presentation by Mr. Dewey Perks, Head of the Training Working Group by recalling that with the ever increasing number of teams and professionalization of the response, there is an increased need for strengthening the role of the UCC Cell. UNDAC was set up to meet such functions in its early days, but has now to focus more into the overall coordination mechanism and has less capacity to facilitate and lead the more technical USAR coordination. Therefore, the USAR Coordination Cell concept has been formalized and a dedicated, specialized training has now been developed. Following, Mr. Perks explained that the course which is in a format of Training of Trainer (ToT) was developed during a workshop held in February in the UK. It was added that given the importance of this course, it is key that National Focal Point nominate the right people for the course. The next course will be held in Singapore, followed by a course in France. It is foreseen that the first three courses will be targeting IEC teams only and it will be the responsibility of the Regions to have an oversight of the number of courses needed. It is expected that over the coming years there should be about 10 in the AEME, 2 in the Americas and 3 in Asia Pacific region. The Secretariat will send the invitations to the National Policy FP for nominations of participants. Participants will be selected by the organizing team.

5. Presentation and feedback on the INSARAG Strategy

The Chair introduced the INSARAG Strategy and recalled that with regards to Preparedness, the strategy falls under the precept: “*Think Global, Act Local*” and with regards to response activities “*as Local as Possible, as International as Necessary*”. In practical terms, this means for INSARAG that the international guidelines are used locally (during response) and that they should be leveraged to enable the development of capacities of national governments in preparedness. In all cases, INSARAG teams are not taking over the responsibilities of the local actors but supporting and taking the lead from them.

The audience was invited to discuss the INSARAG strategy and provide feedback. Several comments were collected in plenary:

- The order of the activities in the document puts capacity development and national activities before the international response, which should remain the clear objective of INSARAG and therefore better reflected in the document;
- In the same spirit, point 1.4 should be coming first in the document;
- The relevance of a reference to “long term recovery” in 3.2 was questioned as going beyond INSARAG mandate;
- The importance of coordination could be further strengthened in the document;
- Some wording could be reconsidered such as the reference to “proper” rescue which is a relative concept;
- Suggestion to replace “ensure” by “encourage” in 1.6 as this would be better reflecting the role of INSARAG;
- The alignment of the strategy to the Global Meeting should be adopted and dates changed on the document.

6. Update from the INSARAG Secretariat

The INSARAG Secretariat, Mr. Jesper Lund, presented an overview of OCHA Field Coordination Support Section that hosts the INSARAG Secretariat. Mr. Lund explained that there are currently significant financial constraints on OCHA and that a 8% budget reduction has been implemented across the organisation. This has also affected FCSS with one post being abolished. Recent changes include the departure of two staff (Majid Rafiri and Claudia Hartgarten). It is expected that a new colleagues, Mr. Georges Murray will join FCSS and act as INSARAG focal point for Central Asia and Middle-East. It was recalled that Mr. Winston Chang is the INSARAG Focal Point for all

IER and IEC and that Regional Focal points should be copied for information. For non IER/IEC, Regional focal points should be contacted directly with Winston in copy. In addition, Ms. Hanako Kataoka-Hafiz is assisting for all INSARAG matters. It was reminded that the INSARAG Chair is available to provide support shall the members not receive responses from the Secretariat in a reasonable amount of time.

Plan and priorities for 2017:

7. Upcoming Activities

The INSARAG Chair presented the upcoming activities including:

- 4 IECS: South Africa, Turkey (AFAD), Algeria, Chile, and Israel (to be confirmed).
- 12 IERs.
- 1 Regional EQ Exercise confirmed in Malaysia.
- Capacity Building mission in Iran and Cambodia at the request of those governments. Additional and similar requests might be upcoming during the year.
- A UCC course in Singapore 7-11 Nov 2016 and France 27-3 March 2017 and in the Americas in 2017.
- The Regional AEME meeting will be in Istanbul or Ankara, in a year from now.
- A Team Leader meeting to be held in the Americas.
- Medical Working Group will meet in February.
- The Guidelines Workgroup will meet during the Team Leader meeting in the Americas.
- The Humanitarian Network and Partnership Week (HNPW), 6-10 February 2017, Geneva.
- The most relevant dates for INSARAG Focal Points are the 8th and 9th of February. It was noted that the INSARAG Steering Group meeting will be this year restricted to group members.
- TL refresher course will be conducted to update members on their new responsibilities with the new IER process. It is planned to be conducted by June 2017 latest.

If not already published, those events will be posted on the Virtual OSOCC under *Meeting* or *Training* when the dates are confirmed.

8. Announcement of international events:

- Regional Training in Russian on INSARAG and OSOCC in Belarus in 2017 (date to be confirmed).
- ERICAM invited teams to contact them if interested in joining an EU proposal related to light team activities.
- Turkey invited to host the next INSARAG EQ exercise in 2017, as they have done this year.
- OSOCC eLearning will be online in the coming months.
- UK offering to host a course for IEC TL course, or any other relevant courses.
- Romania offers to host a TL meeting in 2018 or 2020.

Summary and Concluding Remarks

The INSARAG Secretary shared key take away from the meeting, and in particular those on the working group discussions.

International Light teams Discussions:

- There was a need for a clear technical definition for Light Search and Rescue teams and such a definition has now been proposed by the working group;

- It was clarified that the light team discussion is not about specialized teams as the light team will include all the current functions. There could be specialized teams (for RDC, OSOCC, e.g. support) and we welcome that, but this is not part of the light team discussions;
- It is important in the ongoing process to fully appreciate different views and consider the concerns related to the introduction of a new “concept” and to ensure that the process will lead to better coordination and more predictable response (and not to an increase in the number of teams lowering the requirement of capacity).
- In this discussion, we further need to ensure there is stability in the system and if/when adding a “new category”, we need to have the capacity to manage the quality control process. Some noted however that there still are additional capacities within the existing team at least in terms of available classifiers;
- We need to make sure that we have a constant message to the donors, highlighting that there is a role for medium and heavy teams, this to mitigate a potential risk that donors will aim rather for Light teams which are less costly;
- Some discussions are still needed on the validation of light teams process and the workgroup has not yet finished their work and need to have recommendation ready for the ISG in February 2017;
- There were some questions about the nature of the teams and what does it mean to be a member of INSARAG. In practical terms, there are two elements 1. That the team’s country has an INSARAG Focal Point 2. That the team is listed in the INSARAG registry. The current directory includes over a 100 teams although some might not exist anymore.

National Accreditation system Discussions:

- The badge appears to be an issue for both the classified and the national teams and we can’t ignore it. But we should still ensure that the focus of the domestic accreditation is on the process and that it is government that leads that national process, not INSARAG; At the end of the day it is about insuring the provision of professional and qualified service to people in need.
- Concerns were expressed about the terminology as the terms are confusing. We need to understand the difference in terminology and include guidance in the recommendations to ISG;
- While we have the core INSARAG standards, there are national differences that should be respected as long as the minimum standards as described in the INSARAG Guidelines are met.
- INSARAG provides international recognised standards which must be kept in mind when we discuss the local issues;
- The badge wearing comes with a responsibility that you are supporting the network, both in and outside of response operations. This should be kept in mind and reminded to all group members;
- It is clear that the national accreditation is, after all, a responsibility of the government, while the IEC is a peer review process for international deployment. Let’s be clear that the INSARAG has no rights to demand to governments how their national team USAR should be organized but - as a network of professional operators - we will provide the framework that governments are striving towards.;
- We need to recognise that the cause of Government wanting to have high standards and using INSARAG is noble and we should support it;
- Some countries are already implementing national processes (Armenia, France) and are bringing their experience back to INSARAG;
- There are still some work to do in clarifying our views and applications of those recommendations (eg. why is the team set up for, national or international, cross border support, etc.).

Beyond the Rubble Discussions:

- The proposal offers ways for USAR teams to fill identified gaps in the response before those are filled by other humanitarian actors;
- Such work outside USAR needs to be planned and not performed on an ad hoc basis. I.e. either you are prepared for it and bring the expertise and equipment with you or you don’t do it engage in those activities;
- Those activities need to clearly be needs driven;

- Those activities need to be coordinated with the right body. When doing USAR coordination, this is done in the UCC, but when operating outside the USAR phase, the engagement is to be done with the right coordination bodies such as the relevant clusters lead, WHO, EMTCC and/or the national government;
- An exit strategy need to be considered from the beginning to ensure that a gap is not created when leaving the activity;
- In discussing those non USAR activities, we need to make sure the teams connect with the relevant counterparts (eg. WASH cluster).

After this overview of the “take away”, the INSARAG Secretary, thanked The Netherlands for their chairmanship and for hosting the meeting.

The AEME Chairman in his concluding remarks noted that this forum allowed for constructive and open discussions and commented that in the AEME region “we agree to disagree and we listen to each other”. He added that unfortunately the AEME regions still did not have many representatives from the Middle East and Africa and those countries would deserve more attention as there are also earthquakes in the African continent. He highlighted that it is therefore important to build capacities in those regions as well to bring the national response system to the next step.

The Chair added that it is important that INSARAG, when evolving, remains inclusive of other countries rather than exclusive. As such, it is therefore important to keep things simple and that sometime “less is more” and that the working group discussions should not make the system heavier. There is a need to keep the focus on the people we serve, as such in those discussions, we should “exclude the badges (as a reference to the domestic accreditation process), include the victims”.

Designation of the Regional Chairmanship group for 2017

The Netherlands as AEME Chair handed over the chairmanship to Turkey which will Chair the AEME group as of the 1st January 2017. Mr. Fatih Özer, Head of the Response Department of AFAD, commended The Netherlands for the good work done during the Chairmanship and informed that they will be pleased to take the Chairmanship over to continue the fruitful work conducted so far. Mr. Özer welcomed the participants to come to Turkey for the next meeting and thanked all countries for their great support to the INSARAG work.

Mr. Ozer presented AFAD, highlighting that it is currently supporting to 3mio Syrian refugees in Turkey and, in addition, providing support worldwide in 56 countries. In the last two years, AFAD has acquired equipment for their teams, providing them with new tools and latest technology, this, based on INSARAG standards.

Mr. Lund, on behalf of Global Chair and the INSARAG Secretariat followed by thanking Mr. Mohammad Al Ansari, the outgoing Vice-Chair who will end his Vice-Chairmanship in January and welcomed the new incoming Chair, Mr. Phillipe Nardin from France. Mr. Nardin in a short introductory note, praised the good work done by INSARAG and noted the benefit to link this network with other networks such as the EMT and the EU mechanism, this, in the spirit to “work better together”.

Acknowledgements

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in its capacity as INSARAG Secretariat and all participants to this meeting would like to thank the Government of The Netherlands for having organized this meeting.

Annex 1: Summary of Group Work Presentation and Discussions

International Light Teams:

Session Introduction

Mr. Arjan Stam presented the work carried out by the Working Group on International Light Teams. The working group has a far ranging level of representation as it includes classified and no classified teams, medium and heavy teams and teams from different regions. The discussions focused on four aspects: Capability and Tasks, Organization, Quality Assurance and INSARAG Identification. The working group came up with a number of recommendations (available in the related concept note). The most salient recommendations are that the light teams should include all USAR functions and have a size from 17 to 20 members. The recommendations of the group were presented at the 2016 team leaders meeting and buy-in of team leaders gauged via an online survey showing the proposal was welcomed.

Group Discussions

During the AEME meeting, the National Focal Points discussed this subject and provided a number of comments for consideration to the Working Group. Those will be taken for further discussions in the Working Group and included with comments from the Asia Pacific and Americas Meeting for final recommendation to the INSARAG Steering Group.

Comments presented during the plenary debrief:

- The members acknowledged the concept of light teams for international deployment;
- Quality assurance is needed and should be based on external and independent evaluation in balance with time and effort to make this happened;
- The national focal point should have a role in the process;
- Light should not be reflecting a lower standards;
- There is a risk to have an increased workload which could lead to lowering of the standards;
- Some note find difficult to manage this given the current capacities issue INSARAG face. But it was also noted that some teams are offering classifiers that are not used;
- INSARAG needs to standardize also light, not only Medium and Heavy, this to maintain the overall INSARAG methodology;
- Light teams are existing already but not as part of a formalized INSARAG standard and creating Light teams will allow to capture them better and embrace them in the network;
- Some commented that there is a risk to have a large number of additional teams straining the system;
- It is also a concern that INSARAG might lose its Medium and Heavy capacity to the benefit of lighter teams which are easier to set up and maintain. But medium and heavy capacity is also needed in the response;
- There is an opportunity for the working group to work together with the national accreditation working group as there are some similar themes/bridge on classification/accreditation processes;
- It was suggested to start small, eg. Asking all small teams to register online, then looking at certification, which is a higher, medium/long term objective;
- It was clarified that Light teams are not special team for coordination, support or logistics, etc. but will have all the functions it them to carry out USAR activities.

National Accreditation Process

Session Introduction

Mr. Robert Merckx recalled that Manual A of guidelines is already providing an indicative framework for domestic classification and the Americas have proposed a model were the accreditation process is certified by INSARAG. France is also contributing to the developments and proposing a way forward. Mr. Camille stressed the importance to focus on the accreditation process, not the badges.

Group Discussions

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Comments presented during the plenary debrief included the quotes below:

- Domestic teams must comply with their own legislations, risk assessment, methods, etc. so national standards might be different from the international, so how to handle this in the external validation if there are national variations. Then, can we put an INSARAG logo on a process that is (partly) different from one country to another, and different from the international standards?
- The experience of France is that it is very useful to have national accreditation that is mirroring the INSARAG guidelines;
- The Chair is concerned about the fact that the domestic classification is a national issue and does not see the need to have an INSARAG logo in a domestic issue, also considering the workload as well;
- It was noted that many countries are asking for the INSARAG reconnaissance via the patch but being part of INSARAG means also that you send classifiers, attend meeting, etc. Hence, wearing the badge includes much more. It was noted that national teams would have to participate into the national events, not the international ones;
- Conversely, it was noted that participating in INSARAG is not about the badge as there are teams that are not classified that are active in INSARAG;
- France commented that for the national accreditation, they are using the same requirements/standards as the IEC, with mentors, etc. and chose this way only because the capacity of INSARAG is saturated to have more IEC;
- It was noted that while France might accredit national teams 100% in line with the guidelines, some countries have different risk analysis and are proposing another model for their national teams;
- It was added that it is the role of INSARAG Secretariat to ensure the accreditation process is good or not;
- It was noted that INSARAG provides strict standards and this is the purpose of INSARAG but that if we look at national classification, it gets out of our hand as we might certify the process but who will do the quality assurance and monitoring;
- INSARAG is international minded but spent a lot of time of national issues promoting capacity building, but national standards are national standards and vary between countries. So, we should better do capacity building, rather than focusing on the badge issue and how it can be provided;
- The focus of INSARAG is International, and how to react to earthquake. We do capacity building with guidance provided in Vol. II Manual A on Capacity Building, the rest is done nationally, so it not the task on INSARAG as this remains the country's responsibility as it affects its sovereignty;
- There is a proposal from the Americas but there are still doubts and concerns. INSARAG is still looking for the right directions with this theme;

- It is important for the national team that want to have a quality label on them to come up with a tangible solution;
- We need to consider the cost/burden to the system if we go head;
- This proposal helps to promote the use of INSARAG guidelines standards, method and techniques by domestic teams, makes national and international more compatible and increases inter-operability;
- There are concerns that the proposal leads to confusion because of the terminology (classification, certification, accreditation, validation, etc. also considering the language translation);
- The aim of the national teams need to be clarified (are they only domestics, cross-border, internationally deployable?).

Beyond The Rubble

Session Introduction

Mr. Camille Michel presented the status of the working group that was shared via the Concept Note Paper, noting that this theme had been around for a long time and is now back on the table for discussion.

Mr. David Sochor led the debrief discussion and provided a graph showing the different phases of the initial response that showed that there is a time when the USAR teams could bridge a gap between the needs and the upcoming other responders.

Group Discussions

The National Focal Points discussed this subject and provided a number of comments for consideration to the Working Group. Those will be taken for further discussions in the Working Group and included - with comments from the Asia Pacific and Americas Meeting - for final recommendation to the INSARAG Steering Group.

- The Beyond the Rubble (BTR) should start from the beginning (“Before the Rubble”), so the work should focus on the capability of the teams but also on the timelines for such activities;
- The teams have in the field access to a lot of information and have a potential to collect and better share this information (eg. Water and sanitation, affected population needs, etc);
- It is clear that those BTR activities must be needs driven, ideally coming from the LEMA who must be in the driving seat;
- In the same lines, it was commented that is the operational considerations that should be leading the engagement on the USAR team; If there is a gap in the response, whoever has the capacity should make efforts to bridge it;
- It is important that all activities have an exit strategy. This is clear and relatively easy for USAR activities but for other non-USAR activities, we need to ensure we don’t leave a gap;
- The hand-over of information to the incoming humanitarian responders is crucial; It is not only about filling a form but also do a physical, face to face hand over of the tasks to the specialists coming after you;
- Those activities are done on a voluntary basis, a guidelines will be presented to the ISG but each team will have their own approach and capabilities, so the paper is a framework but not prescriptive;
- The framework should be presented to the ISG in February and be part of the Guidelines ie; Provide the necessary information and guidance for teams wanting to engage in BTR activities.

Annex 2: AEME Meeting Agenda

2nd November (afternoon session)

14.00	Break out discussions (3 groups, first round)
15.00	Coffee break
15.30	Break out discussions (3 groups, second round)
16.30	Break out discussions (3 groups, third round)
17.30	Annual meeting adjourned
18.45	Social event (Waterfront old Amsterdam and dinner)

3rd November

09.00	Reopening of the annual meeting
09.15	Wrap up of the break out discussions
10.00	New tool for USAR assessment (KOBO)
10.15	Summary of FCSS activities and relevant topics
10.45	Presentations on Strategy 2017-2021
11.15	Coffee break
11.45	Sharing impressions on the INSARAG Strategy 2017-2021
12.45	Lunch break
13.45	Presentation and election of the AEME-chairmanship 2017
14.15	Any other business
14.45	Summary of the results of the AEME-2016 meeting
15.15	Formal closing of the AEME-2016 meeting
15.30	Farewell cocktail

As of 15.00 Shuttle from Hotel Mövenpick to Amsterdam Schiphol Airport

4th November

Until 18.00 Shuttle from Hotel Mövenpick to Amsterdam Schiphol Airport