

Chairman's Summary

Overview

The 2019 INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting took place on 15-16 August in Cairns, Australia, and discussed on INSARAG strategic and operational issues for the region. The meeting was generously hosted by the Government of Australia, and co-organized by the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The Hon. Craig Crawford, the Queensland Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, Mr. Lam Hen Huot, Vice President, National Committee for Disaster Management of the Kingdom of Cambodia and Mr. Jamie Isbister, Australian Humanitarian Coordinator, attended the meeting. The Regional Meeting was co-facilitated by Australia and OCHA's Emergency Response Section in its capacity as the INSARAG Secretariat. The presentations, resource materials and products from the meeting sessions are available on the INSARAG website: <http://insarag.org>. The meeting agenda adopted by the participants can be found at Annex A.

The meeting brought together 84 senior heads and officials from diplomatic authorities and national disaster management agencies from 16 countries and organizations, plus UN INSARAG representatives. (Please see Participants list at Annex B). In preparation for the upcoming INSARAG Global Meeting (IGM) in Warsaw, Poland in 2020, Polish delegates took part in the Asia-Pacific Meeting, to promote and share global policy objectives, and considered the three strategic priorities from the 2019 Steering Group meeting; focusing on Quality Standards, Flexible Response, and Enhancing Preparedness Activities and Bolstering Partnerships. The inputs will be consolidated along with those from the other two regional meetings and shared with the INSARAG Steering Group (ISG) in 2020.

The meeting served as a platform to harness ideas on how to operationalize the key issues arising from the 2019 INSARAG Steering Group meeting. Particular areas of focus were: the INSARAG External Classification (IEC) System, with an emphasis on the International Assistance arrangements in sudden onset emergencies; institutionalization of the Ownership Model to the Regional Troikas; the INSARAG Global Meeting 2020; the INSARAG Guidelines Review 2020; the Training of IEC/R Mentors and Team Leaders; the implementation of new technologies (ESRI) and the First International Light Team Classification arrangements.

Under Australia's leadership, the meeting sought to advance INSARAG strategic and operational priorities in the region, taking into account broader humanitarian reform efforts, particularly protection and localisation.

Session 1 – Opening Statements, Adoption of Agenda, Introduction of Participants

Ms Henrietta Murrie AM assisted by Carl Fourmile, of the Gimuy Walabarra Yidinji Clan performed the Welcome to Country. The meeting was opened by Hon. Craig Crawford, Queensland Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. Minister Crawford welcomed the meeting participants and expressed his appreciation to the INSARAG Secretariat, QFES, FRNSW and DFAT for organizing the meeting.

Mr. Jamie Isbister, Australia's Humanitarian Coordinator, highlighted the growing need for capacity building and coordination with local and national actors to respond to increasing need in the Asia-Pacific, which will continue to be exacerbated by climate change and rapid urbanization. He noted as Asia Pacific Regional Chair, Australia's focus was on ensuring INSARAG remains relevant and fit for purpose. This includes the need to ensure we protect vulnerable populations and empower local actors.

Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa joined the delegates in welcoming participants and commended the Regional Troika for the strong leadership, exceptional support to the IEC/R System and activities to enhance the response capacities of both national and international responders. He noted priority themes for him in his new role are gender, localization and moving beyond the rubble.

Following introductions, Mr. Winston Chang, INSARAG Global Lead, introduced the meeting agenda which was formally adopted by the participants.

Session 2 – Protection in Humanitarian Responses

Ms. Emma Kettle, Protection Advisor, challenged the meeting on the need to '*think different*' about how sectors in humanitarian response work and how they work together. Humanitarian protection is about improving safety, well-being and dignity for crisis-affected populations. Ms. Kettle emphasized the importance of mainstreaming protection throughout the response and the need to move our understanding beyond our own individual sectors and to work across sectors to ensure we are providing the right assistance to people in ways that ensure their dignity, safety and security. Working through silos can exacerbate issues – protection cannot be separated from assistance, the risks to vulnerable populations, team reputation, member state reputation, the INSARAG brand and OCHA are too great to continue to ignore in the current climate. Protection is the responsibility of all humanitarian actors.

Chairman's Summary

Session 3 – Review of Action Points from INSARAG Asia Pacific Regional Meeting 2018 and INSARAG Global Updates

Mr. Paul Baxter facilitated the session to review the action points from the 2018 meeting, summarising progress on the 2018 Work Plan, and the upcoming review of the 2019 Work Plan. Mr. Winston Chang presented INSARAG Global Updates, highlighting various regional priorities and global events in 2019. Chairman Summaries of the ISG and other regional meetings are available on the INSARAG website.

Session 4 – INSARAG Working Group Updates

The INSARAG Working Group Chairs and representatives provided an update on their ongoing work to make INSARAG fit for the future. The work of the INSARAG working groups are available for review on the INSARAG website.

- Mr. Anwar Abdullah represented the *Guidelines Review Group* and encouraged Asia-Pacific wide consultations on the INSARAG guidelines to share useful feedback to the GRG. Mr. Abdullah informed that a progress update report and draft Vols and Manuals are available on the INSARAG website.
- Mr. Winston Chang provided an update on behalf of the *Medical Working Group*. Ongoing engagements with the WHO EMT is taking place to harmonise field operations and will be practised in upcoming INSARAG Regional Earthquake Response Exercises.
- Mr. Ian Duncan represented the *Information Working Group* and provided an update on development of a concrete implementation and training plan for Information Management applications prior to its inclusion to the IEC/R checklist.
- Mr. Brad Commens provided an update on the behalf of the *Light Team Quality Assurance Working Group*, providing an overview of how light teams will integrate with medium and heavy teams, noting the classification of German NGO @Fire in 2020.
- Mr. Graeme Hall presented on behalf of the *Training Working Group*, highlighting development of separate checklists for the IER and the need for teams undergoing IER to demonstrate a higher level of maturity beyond minimum standards.

The Asia-Pacific network appreciates the strong commitment and dedication of the working group members in the development of quality work outcomes.

Polish Delegation Presentation

Mr. Krzysztof Piersak, Deputy Director of International Cooperation Department, Polish State Fire Service, provided an update on preparations for IGM 2020, to be held in Warsaw, Poland. He announced the Conference theme of “Reinforce, Advance and Partner for Effective Response” and provided an indicative schedule for the meeting.

Session 5 – Singapore – AAR and Best practices for 2018 IER

Mr. Anwar Abdullah presented the lessons and best practices from their 2018 IER, outlining the changes they had instituted to enhance the technical skills and capacities of the team since their last IER. These enhancements included restructuring and expanding the team from 55 to 79 members, maintaining and expanding partnerships, both inter-governmental and commercial that contribute to the team's mobilization and deployment mechanisms, such as cache management and transportation. The report from the classification team highlighted seven areas of best practices from the IER, including: introduction of psychologists into team structure; pre-deployment medical screening for K9s as well as team members; leveraging technology, including UAV and technology for cache management; enhanced K9 unit capability by cross-training of doctors in veterinary care; joint operations with other international USAR teams to improve coordination; development of a dedicated EXCON centre for live monitoring of exercises; and enhancements to BoO setup and management. Details in <http://insarag.org> and anwar_abdullah@scdf.gov.sg

Session 6 – Summary Global and Regional Asia Pacific Strategy and Breakout Sessions – In line with the IGM 2020 Draft Goals

Mr. Paul Kelly, Assistant Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, provided a brief introduction to the session, highlighting the need to ensure INSARAG remains relevant, by embedding principles of the broader humanitarian system into INSARAG strategic objectives.

Participants were encouraged to consider how the three strategic objectives for the INSARAG third Global Meeting can be enhanced by mainstreaming protection, recognizing the capacity of local and national actors and strengthening coordination and engagement with regional actors.

Chairman's Summary

Participants were divided into three discussion groups around the objectives: Strengthening Quality Standards and Coordination; Enhancing Preparedness Efforts and Bolstering Partnerships; Advancing Flexible Assistance. Participants were instructed to consider the application and implementation of these objectives in an Asia-Pacific region.

Session 7 – Breakout Session Review

The outcomes of the breakout discussions presented in the plenary can be found in ANNEX C.

Formal Dinner hosted by Australia at the Tjapukai Cultural Centre

Session 8 – Regional Chairs Updates on their regional Workplans

Mr. Paul Baxter and Mr. Paul Bailey provided an overview of the status of the Asia Pacific regional workplan and how it has been operationalized for 2019. *Objective 1 promote and support the building of effective national USAR response activities* included incorporation of a protection component into the UCC training conducted in New Zealand has now been reflected into the global UCC syllabus; an information and training day targeted at female staff in NSW; introducing the humanitarian principles into USAR doctrine; and developing a humanitarian strategy that will guide engagement across the region. *Objective 2 – improve the quality and coordination of international USAR response*: Australia conducted a pre-event risk assessment in Solomon Islands, based on learning from the Cyclone Gita response in Tonga and conducted a joint simulation exercise in collaboration with the US and Australian USAR, as well as their NDMOs and militaries. Mr. Baxter encouraged countries to continue to support the AP strategy and for countries to proactively add their activities into the work plan in order for any support for these can be prioritized.

Mr. Carlo Post provided an overview of the AEME region and activities achieved in 2019, under their three goals of participating in Working Groups, promoting and building effective national USAR, improving quality and coordination on international USAR.

Mr. Joe Kaleda stated that in the Americas region they are looking at whether it would be possible to conduct an international exercise and how that could be hosted/facilitated.

Session 9 – INSARAG A-P Workplan for 2019 – Discuss and Consolidate

The participants were divided into three Breakout groups and have discussed the following topics:

1. International Assistance Models;
2. IEC/R Regional ownership; and
3. Beyond the Rubble (Operations).

Outcomes in Annex D.

Session 10 –Discussion on setting up workshops in regional meetings to discuss system innovation: requests and receiving assistance

Ms. Megan Northrope and Mr. Carlo Post proposed the theme 'receiving assistance', which was first tabled at the 2018 AP Regional meeting by Japan, become a standing item at all regional meetings.

Mr. Post discussed the current situation, its benefits and issues, and put forward for discussion a three-part strategy to address the issues. Attendees provided well-considered suggestions on how we could better ensure harmonisation with local disaster management systems during disasters that require countries to request international assistance.

Participants emphasised the need to understand and support local systems and to be able to better harmonise international systems with them. Participants noted that as countries in the region continue to develop their systems, we need to develop better ways to utilise the INSARAG platform to share information and find opportunities to influence this development towards international standards. Partners acknowledged that while the ERE is a useful way to test and practice interlinkages between international and local systems, there is need to identify other opportunities. Participants also discussed how the UCC and other coordination platforms can increasingly become the "translation" point between the international and local systems.

Session 11 – Belt and Road initiative (BRI) and Humanitarian initiatives

A Delegation from China, Led by Mr. Weimin Liu, Director General.

Mr. Weimin Liu, Director General, Dept International Cooperation and Rescue, Ministry of Emergency Management (MEM), provided a summary of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the creation of MEM, which was established in 2018 to

Chairman's Summary

improve effectiveness and efficiency in emergency management. Under the BRI initiative, China seeks to host a Ministerial Forum for International Cooperation on Natural Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Management in 2020. Mr. Liu also outlined international responses where China has responded and some of the capacity building initiatives conducted.

Session 12 – Developments of the Chairman's Summary and Closing Remarks

The Asia-Pacific group thanked Australia as the chair for 2019 and welcomed the AP Troika for 2020, where Singapore will be the AP Chair, Indonesia as the incoming chair, and Australia as the outgoing chair. The role of incoming chair is yet to be announced. Australia recognised and thanked Japan as outgoing chair. The representatives thanked the AP group for their support and commitment to support INSARAG's mandates and workplans and to achieve these in 2020 with the strong support and commitment from the AP group.

Member States Announcements

Event	Country	Timeframe
1. Capacity Assessment Mission	India	24-27 September 2019
2. IERR CISAR and IEC CSAR	China	20-23 October 2019
3. IEC	Pakistan	28-31 October 2019
4. IEC Basarnas	Indonesia	25-29 November 2019
5. Regional ERE 2019	Thailand	9-13 December 2019
6. Regional ERE 2020	China	TBC
7. Expressed willingness to become the AP Regional Chair 2021	Indonesia	
8. Expressed willingness to become the AP Regional Chair 2022	South Korea	
9. Request for assessment mission	Cambodia	TBC 2020
10. USAR Coordination course	Malaysia	TBC 2020
11. IER KDRT	South Korea	TBC November 2021
12. USAR Coordination course	South Korea	TBC 2021

Closing Statements

Mr. Rhodes Stampa reiterated his appreciation to Australia for the strong leadership and dedication to promoting the INSARAG agenda in the region and meeting facilitators, organizers and OCHA in its capacity as INSARAG Secretariat for working hard behind the scenes to prepare the regional meeting. He further thanked member states for their support to the INSARAG activities and active contribution to the discussion.

Mr. Kelly joined Mr. Rhodes Stampa in expressing his deepest appreciation to the INSARAG Focal Points and guests for participation in the meeting. He further touched upon the achievements of the meeting and expressed his strong belief that the regional network indispensable for the effective disaster response was consolidated through this regional meeting. He concluded by thanking all the member states and donors for their support to the INSARAG regional activities and all the personnel involved in the organization of the meeting.

The next INSARAG AP Regional Meeting will be held in Warsaw, Poland as part of the third IGM.

ANNEXES:

- Annex A: Meeting Agenda
- Annex B: Participants List
- Annex C: Outcomes of the INSARAG Global Meeting 2020 discussions
- Annex D: INSARAG AP Workplan 2020 Discussions