

## INSARAG Governance Review

Mr. Alan TOH, INSARAG Consultant, proceeded with the session by dividing all participants into three groups for breakout sessions to share ideas and make suggestions on the regional consultation on the INSARAG Governance Review. Three leading facilitators from AP countries guided each group for further discussion on the following topics. Each group had a chance to visit each topic for 40 minutes.

- Group A: Leadership and Governance & Decision-Making Mandate and Responsibilities
- Group B: Global Meeting, Accountability and Compliance & Classification
- Group C: Global Strategy 2026 – 2030, NGOs and Partners & Localization

## Outcomes of the Governance Review Discussion and Drafting the AP Regional position on the Governance Review

Col Raza Iqbal facilitated Group A: Leadership and Governance & Decision-Making Mandate and Responsibilities. The participants from the Asia Pacific (AP) generally expressed the view that the role of Deputy Global Chair, selected from among the Regional Chairs, is superfluous, given that the existing system is operating effectively. Regarding the definition of consensus, which is affirmed when no eligible voter raises an objection, the participants disagreed with this interpretation due to concerns surrounding voting eligibility. Furthermore, the AP participants voiced apprehensions regarding the decision-making process of the Global Chair in conjunction with the three Regional Chairs, highlighting the potential for political influences to affect these decisions. The majority expressed opposition to granting the chairs veto power in the decision-making process, advocating instead for the restoration and reconsolidation of decision-making authority at the regional level.

In the discussion facilitated by Dr Farhan Khalid: Global Meeting, Accountability and Compliance & Classification. The AP participants expressed their desire to maintain the Global Meeting. Several countries have suggested that a global meeting is essential. However, if resource constraints are an issue, we could consider extending the interval between meetings from the current five years to seven years. It is important to ensure that these meetings continue, as they provide a unique opportunity for representatives from all three regions to come together, share their experiences, and exchange expertise. Besides, the AP participants support to discuss the operational issues at the Team Leaders' Meeting. There is a perspective among some countries that certain aspects of the INSARAG Guidelines should be established as standards, while others should remain as guidance. This approach would allow for greater flexibility and adaptability within the system. If everything were to be classified as a standard, it could pose challenges in adhering to all requirements, particularly during response situations. In instances where a country may struggle to address all incidents, rigid standards could hinder timely responses. While a number of countries advocate for a mixed approach of standards and guidelines, the majority prefer that all elements be standardized. The AP participants generally believed that penalties should be soft rather than hard. A softer approach encourages countries to acknowledge their mistakes and violations, rather than concealing them. While many support the idea of maintaining certain practices, it is important to establish clear standards and guidelines. Additionally, implementing a mechanism for accountability will help ensure that these standards are upheld.

Regarding the Classification, The AP participants emphasized the importance of enhancing national capacity within the NAP. Countries that have already achieved IEC classification are generally in favor of advancing towards national accreditation. Conversely, those still working towards obtaining IEC

classification believe it is essential to first secure that status before focusing on national accreditation. These insights reflect the diverse perspectives shared by the group.

Mr Iwata led the Group C discussion on the Global Strategy 2026 – 2030, NGOs and Partners & Localization. The AP participants addressed a diverse array of disasters and incorporated additional humanitarian principles; it is essential to further explore the roles of USAR teams. Additionally, there is a pressing need for enhanced humanitarian assistance within the nation.

The AP participants underscored the importance of maintaining the current state of affairs and upholding authority. It is imperative for the government to sustain its governance, as the PFP serves as the nation's representative. Participants in the AP emphasized the necessity for the government to retain comprehensive authority. In certain countries with numerous NGOs, effective management becomes challenging if the PFP assumes the role of a "gatekeeper." For example, the presence of NGOs displaying an INSARAG patch, even if not officially recognized, underscores the urgent need for the development, enhancement, and implementation of standards and policies. Nonetheless, there are differing opinions regarding the legal authority of the PFP to make decisions. Participants in the AP indicated that all communications should be directed to NFP, which will subsequently disseminate the information to the appropriate agencies or organizations. At the regional level, some AP member countries adhere to the guidelines established by ASEAN and the AHA Centre. Collaboration at the operational level is feasible when engaging with government representatives. In view of this, the establishment of Regional Operational Meetings is not applicable.

The AP participants expressed that the capacity assessment of the region should be conducted, followed by an evaluation of the capacities and gaps in priority countries as AP region is particularly vulnerable to disasters. By mapping these capacities and identifying gaps, the AP countries could provide timely and effective support. They also indicated that there should be support for the mapping of vulnerable countries. Furthermore, several countries reported that the capacity-building program has already commenced.