



Chairman Summary: INSARAG Asia Pacific Regional Meeting 2025

Tokyo, Japan
7-8 August 2025



Overview

The INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting was held in Tokyo on 7–8 August 2025, hosted by the Government of Japan, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), together with representatives from international organizations and countries across the region. A total of 108 participants from 17 countries joined the meeting, including 33 who participated online. The list of participants is enclosed in **Annex A**. The meeting aimed to enhance disaster response coordination and promote strategic alignment among member states in line with global INSARAG initiatives, including priorities set by the INSARAG Steering Group (ISG). It sought to foster international dialogue, review and contextualize policy guidelines, and identify gaps in existing regional and national frameworks to enhance coherence with INSARAG's mission, standards, and strategic direction in the region.

Key agenda items included governance and operational updates within INSARAG. Under **INSARAG Governance**, discussions focused on the 2025 activity plan and mid-term strategy, feedback on the Governance Review and Guidelines revision, and future implementation structures for the Asia-Pacific (AP) region. Discussions were also held regarding the candidate countries for the AP Regional Chair and the host country for the upcoming Earthquake Response Exercises (EREs).

A **review of recent emergency response deployments**, including landslides in Papua New Guinea (Australia), the Vanuatu earthquake (New Zealand), and the Myanmar earthquake (Singapore) provided valuable insights for enhancing future response capabilities and preparedness in the AP region.

A major topic was the **Humanitarian Reset**, presented by Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, INSARAG Secretary. He outlined OCHA's ongoing restructuring due to financial constraints and declining global support for the humanitarian community, emphasizing the need for INSARAG to adapt while maintaining operational quality. Notably, due to 'humanitarian reset' initiatives, some responsibilities may be transferred to the INSARAG network itself.

During the **Host Country Session**, Japan showcased its disaster response history, technologies, and international contributions. Country examples reinforced the importance of strengthening preparedness.

The meeting concluded with the official confirmation of Australia as the INSARAG Asia-Pacific Chair for 2026 and a call to decide the 2027 Chair by year-end. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to regional solidarity and future collaboration.

The meeting agenda is attached in **Annex B**.

All meeting Presentations are included in **Annex C**.

Session 1: Welcome and Official Opening

The meeting commenced with a cultural opening event featuring a live calligraphy performance, during which the words “dedication” and “solidarity”, reflecting the spirit of the regional meeting, were inscribed. This was followed by welcome remarks from three speakers, the speakers underscored the importance of regional collaboration in disaster response and preparedness, particularly in addressing key challenges, including localization and capacity building:

Mr. ANDO Naoki, Senior Vice President, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), highlighted the growing compound crises facing the international community along with the worrying decline in international cooperation underscoring the need to strengthen humanitarian collaboration, particularly in emergency response and urban search and rescue. As the Regional Chairmanship country, Japan emphasized their commitment to demonstrating solidarity within INSARAG, recognizing the tireless dedication of all stakeholders to protect lives, and reaffirming the region’s aim to deepen partnerships across the network and enhance operational effectiveness.

Mr. IWATA Shinya, Emergency Relief Coordinator and INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Chair 2025, Humanitarian Assistance and Emergency Relief Division, International Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, delivered remarks on behalf of Mr. TAGUCHI Kazuho (representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan). He noted Japan’s appreciation for the strong support and engagement by the participants and highlighted Japan’s long-standing engagement in international disaster relief and INSARAG, including hosting the Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting for the fourth time and previous INSARAG global events: the first INSARAG Global Meeting in 2010 and the Team Leaders Meeting in 2016. He emphasized that climate change and urbanization were increasing disaster impacts and the complexity of international responses in the Asia-Pacific, driving greater regional interest in expanding rapid response capacities, as reflected in recent support to the Myanmar earthquake response in March 2025. He also highlighted Japan’s support to the Myanmar earthquake response in March 2025 by deploying an Emergency Medical Team (EMT) providing relief goods and supporting ASEAN disaster logistics. Finally, he reiterated the importance of continuing localization and capacity building of search and rescue under INSARAG.

Mr. Abdi Mohamed Farah, Chief of Administration, OCHA’s Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), who spoke on behalf of Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, INSARAG Secretary, thanked the INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Chair 2025, Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and JICA for hosting the meeting and leading regional efforts in 2025, including work on the INSARAG Governance Review and ICMS. He noted that this was the largest Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting since the pandemic and welcomed the Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka who were joining the AP regional meeting for the first time. He also thanked JICA for providing sponsorship to 10 international participants amid OCHA’s financial constraints. He highlighted the meeting’s role in advancing Steering Group outcomes towards the 2026 Global Meeting and the new INSARAG Guidelines by collecting inputs from the Asia-Pacific region to ensure all the regional and local perspectives are reflected in the global products.

Subsequently, the participants were introduced, representing a diverse range of Asia-Pacific countries and organizations, and the agenda was formally adopted. The opening set a tone of unity and shared commitment to strengthening USAR capabilities across the region.

Session 2: Global and Regional 2025 Workplans and Updates

Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, INSARAG Secretary, outlined key challenges entitled ‘OCHA humanitarian reset’, focusing on impacts on INSARAG and the humanitarian community. The UN is experiencing a severe financial crisis, with OCHA planning up to a 35% staff reduction. Beyond funding shortages, attacks on humanitarian principles and international law are increasing. In preparation for the UN’s 80th anniversary, structural reforms are underway to consolidate overlapping functions. The “humanitarian reset” initiative promotes localization and efficiency, but supporting countries with limited access to regional processes remains a challenge. INSARAG continues to play a central role, yet the frequency and format of IEC/IER and ERE activities may need revision. With fewer staff at the secretariat, some responsibilities may shift to the network itself. To ensure inclusivity, INSARAG must avoid becoming a “wealthy nations club” by reassessing classification costs and meeting formats. Flexibility and collaboration will be essential as humanitarian aid models evolve. INSARAG must adapt and move forward together.

Ms. Haruka Ezaki, INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Focal Point, presented updates on INSARAG’s global initiatives, including the ISG 2025 outcomes, IEC/R Calendar, Working Groups updates, and INSARAG Regional updates from the AEME and Americas regions. Key developments included the endorsement of a sustainable funding model for ICMS and regional feedback on its implementation. Asia-Pacific countries expressed varying levels of support, with suggestions for tiered payment systems and flexible access. Regarding the Global Simulation Exercise 2026 in Qatar (Q2-Q3) under the INSARAG framework, she mentioned that three regions have shown strong interest, particularly by the AP region.

In the Asia-Pacific region, Australia, Japan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Thailand had expressed their intention to participate in the Global Simulation Exercise, while Japan raised concerns about the feasibility of conducting an effective exercise due to the expected high number of participants. Australia welcomed the idea of virtual participation options, considering the travel time and cost, especially for Pacific countries.

Ms. Ezaki provided an update on the IEC/R Schedule. Following the review of the global IEC/Rs schedule for 2025, the Asia-Pacific region’s plans for 2026 and beyond were discussed. In 2026, Hong Kong, China Search and Rescue Team (CHN-10), IEC – Medium would be scheduled in March, and Malaysia’s IER – Heavy (MAS-01) would be set in September. Ramunion Rescue Brigade (CHN-11) also planned to conduct an IEC in 2026. It was initially shared that Japan’s IER (JPN-01) and India’s IEC (IND-10) were scheduled for 2027. However, Japan later clarified that, after coordination with the INSARAG Secretariat, the revised schedule now places Japan’s IER in 2029. No objections were raised regarding the other scheduled activities.

Mr. IWATA Shinya, Emergency Relief Coordinator and INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Chair 2025, reminded participants of the 2025 Asia-Pacific Strategic Plan and requested confirmation on whether there were any updates to the region’s annual schedule based on the current situation.

Session 3: Host Country Session - Capacity Building

This session was led by Ms. SAKAMAKI Eriko, Advisor, Secretariat of Japan Disaster Relief Team, Japan International Cooperation Agency. The session aimed to provide an opportunity to explore disaster response capacity enhancement from a broader, more diverse perspective, showcasing Japan's experience and initiatives, while inviting INSARAG member countries to share their efforts in enhancing both national capabilities on disaster response and USAR capabilities amid increasingly complex disaster risks.

Prof. NISHIKAWA Satoru, Senior Advisor on Disaster Reduction Strategy, Japan International Cooperation Agency, shared historical insights and lessons from major Japanese earthquakes, emphasizing the importance of vulnerability reduction and community resilience. He shared Japan's experience in applying the full disaster risk reduction cycle, response, recovery and "build back better," reconstruction, prevention and mitigation, and preparedness, emphasizing how these approaches were shaped by lessons learned from past disasters. He highlighted Japan's support in the aftermath of the Vanuatu earthquake in December 2024, noting JICA's emergency relief, water purification equipment, and a deployment of the Disaster Standby Expert Team to assess Build Back Better recovery needs. He emphasized that Japanese-funded infrastructure that was built before the earthquake remained fully functional after the incident. He also delivered on the joint programs with partners such as Mexico, Türkiye, and Chile, as well as support to ASEAN on building country-specific, tailor-made programmes on capacity development.

Ms. UEDA Natsumi and Ms. TANAKA Yuki, JAXA's Sentinel Asia Secretariat, Sentinel Asia Secretariat, Satellite Applications and Operations Center, Space Technology Directorate I, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, introduced how satellite data support disaster management, from response to recovery, through timely and accurate damage assessments. Sentinel Asia supports all stages of the disaster cycle: it provides hazard maps and early warnings for mitigation, training and SOP support for preparedness, emergency satellite observations and damage assessments for response, as well as long-term monitoring for recovery. The speaker outlined Sentinel Asia's rapid satellite support for recent disasters, including the 2024 Vanuatu earthquake, the 2025 Myanmar earthquake, and Typhoon YAGI, providing emergency observations, damage proxy maps, and flood assessments that guided response and were praised by partners. The speakers noted that Sentinel Asia covers the full disaster management cycle and offers ongoing 2025 capacity-building trainings on SOPs and the use of satellite data for disaster response.

Following those, panelists from Australia, China, and Fiji illustrated their efforts. Mr. Gao Bowei, Department Head, Equipment Support Department, National Earthquake Response Support Service, presented China's IRNAP, noting the country's high exposure to disasters, especially major earthquakes, which has driven the development of a comprehensive emergency management and rescue system. Since the creation of MEM in 2018, China has integrated national rescue forces and strengthened its Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capacity, with National Comprehensive Firefighting and Rescue Force-China Fire and Rescue (CFR) as the core supported by specialized and community teams. Key milestones include establishing CISAR in 2001, expanding rescue capacities after major earthquakes, and achieving IER for two heavy USAR teams in 2019 and again in 2025. The speaker also outlined China's ongoing IRNAP preparations, including self-assessment, documentation review, and upcoming TSG/TRG verification activities through late 2025. He emphasized the importance of aligning national standards with INSARAG methodologies and fostering expert networks.

Ms. Jennifer Noble, A/G Assistant Secretary, Humanitarian Preparedness and Response Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, discussed Australia's humanitarian response strategy, focusing on regional partnerships, flexible response mechanisms, and support for Pacific nations. She highlighted that leveraging regional systems and partnerships to strengthen locally led disaster response capabilities is key to sustainable and effective capacity building. DFAT leads humanitarian response efforts, with policy focused on preparedness, resilience, local leadership, and strong regional partnerships. Australia worked closely with INSARAG teams (AUS-1, AUS-02, NZL-01), AUSMAT, the Rapid Response Team, and mechanisms such as FRANZ, the Quad, and the Australian Humanitarian Partnership. In the Pacific, capacity building follows the principle "as local as possible, as international as necessary," supporting NDMOs, twinning arrangements, peer mentoring, and EMT cooperation. Case studies, such as Vanuatu's EMT-led earthquake response in December 2024, showed growing regional capability. Challenges include sustainability and adapting to global standards, while opportunities lie in stronger lesson sharing, tailored local solutions, and more Pacific-to-Pacific responses.

Ms. Litiana Naidoleca Bainimarama, Manager, Emergency Planning and Coordination Unit, National Disaster Risk Management Office, Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management, shared Fiji's roadmap for strengthening national disaster response systems. She outlined Fiji's disaster preparedness initiatives, grounded in the National Disaster Risk Management Act 2024, which establishes governance structures, funding, special emergency protocols and resources, a humanitarian actors registry, as well as the National Emergency Response Team (NERT). Fiji maintains 42 Emergency Operations Centres, strengthening early-warning systems, and have structured assessment and response planning processes. It was highlighted that NERT can surge support and international assistance both in and outside of the country. The Single Window International Facilitation Team (SWIFT) can manage foreign aid and enhance civil-military coordination through SOPs and exercises. Current priorities of Fiji NDMO are on upgrading EOCs, building USAR capacity, advancing contingency planning, and expanding training and exercises.

During the Q&A session, there was an active discussion on topics such as how to handle unfounded disaster-related rumors without causing public anxiety, how China determines the selection process for target provinces (teams) for IRNAP, and what can be done to make satellite-based technologies more useful for INSARAG operations in the field. Through this session, participants deepened their understanding of various approaches and perspectives on capacity-building initiatives.

Session 4: Asia-Pacific Regional Workplan 2026 Consultations

In this session, the participants conducted group work in four breakout groups, which included remote participants. The discussions focused on three strategic objectives from the current INSARAG strategic plan:

- Quality Standards was moderated by Mr. Craig Stolte, Superintendent, Queensland Fire Department, Disaster Assistance Response Team, Australia, and note-taking by Mr. Safrizan bin Suhaini, Head of Logistics Section, Special Malaysia Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team, National Disaster Management Agency. The discussion focused on strengthening alignment with INSARAG standards and global quality assurance initiatives. Expected outcomes included updating and consolidating a calendar of both regional and national training

events, with an emphasis on identifying opportunities to invite international trainers, participants, and observers to enhance interoperability and adherence to INSARAG standards.

- Localization was moderated by Mr. Winston Chang, IRNAP Advisor, Ministry of Emergency Management of China and note-taking by Mr. Ken Cooper, Assistant National Commander, Operations Department, Fire and Emergency New Zealand. Discussions emphasized advancing INSARAG's localization agenda and supporting nationally led capacity development. The expected outcome of Localization was a comprehensive calendar of IRNAP and First Responder training events across the region, with a clear need for external support and opportunities for international collaboration.
- Partnerships was moderated by Mr. MINATO Yusuke, Senior Deputy Director, Afghanistan Office, Japan International Cooperation Agency and note-taking by Mr. Jeremy Stubbs, Chief Superintendent, Technical Capability Department, Fire and Rescue New South Wales. The expected outcome of Partnership was to identify practical partnership models that enhance INSARAG's preparedness and response in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Online group discussion, covering Quality Standards, Localization and Partnerships, was moderated by Ms. Haruka Ezaki, INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Focal Point and note-taking by Ms. Apassara Suwanprasert, INSARAG Secretariat.

Session 5: Finalization of the Asia-Pacific Regional Workplan 2026 and Development of Asia-Pacific Regional Calendar 2026 and Onwards

The plenary session consolidated inputs from breakout groups to finalize the Asia-Pacific Regional Workplan 2026 and draft the regional calendar. Countries proposed training events, IRNAP activities, and collaborative exercises.

As a result of the open discussion on Partnership, three key areas were shared:

Quality Standards: the INSARAG Asia-Pacific network highlighted strengthening bilateral cooperation through shared understanding of INSARAG methodology and capacity-building via mentors and classifiers. China would run a USAR Coordination (UC) Training of Trainers (TOT) and UC courses in 2026, while Pakistan is planning to run an Integrated Search and Rescue Training in late 2026 and will host international rescue and volunteer challenge events in 2025/2026. New Zealand is developing a five-year training plan, and India is aiming to run a UC course in 2026 with support from UC trainers in the region. The Republic of Korea will hold a UC TOT in late 2025. Indonesia is planning an international expo in late 2026. The Philippines is targeting IRNAP in 2027, and Thailand will seek an IER mentor after their IEC.

Localization: the network emphasized the importance of understanding each country's context and tailoring localization efforts, accordingly, recognizing that countries with strong national systems may prioritize optimization of the current structure rather than creating a new framework such as IRNAP.

Partnerships: the network underscored promoting outreach to private sector stakeholders, particularly in logistics and engagement in INSARAG training activities and highlighted the importance of strengthening partnerships across the Asia-Pacific to enhance disaster coordination and response as well as emphasized leveraging existing regional mechanisms such as the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Centre (AHA Center), ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT), Pacific Humanitarian Response Coordination Mechanism (PResCoM), and Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance (PIEMA), along with bilateral training, mentoring, and private-sector logistics support. Several countries, including China, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM), stressed sponsorships and support for countries with varying response capacities. The Republic of Korea and New Zealand noted the value of subregional alliances and locally driven frameworks. Indonesia and Thailand seek better alignment between INSARAG and ERAT roles, while the Philippines looked towards the AHA Centre for NAP/IRNAP and Pakistan would seek UNDAC support for regional training.

Long-term planning discussions included future INSARAG Asia-Pacific chair nominations and Asia-Pacific Earthquake Response Exercise hosts countries. A list of past INSARAG Asia-Pacific Chairs since 2000 was shared, and countries were invited to propose their candidacy for 2027 and beyond. Similarly, a list of APERE host countries since 2002 was reviewed. It was confirmed that no APERE will be held in 2025, and discussions were held on whether to proceed with APERE in 2026, considering the possibility of a Global ERE in Qatar. For 2027 and beyond, the list was used to encourage further dialogue. As a result, the Republic of Korea expressed interest in serving as the INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Chair in 2028 and potentially hosting APERE thereafter. Japan proposed that the TWG assess both the package and the necessity of conducting annual EREs. The session concluded with a reaffirmation of regional solidarity and strategic alignment with INSARAG's global vision.

Session 6: Recap of Day 1 and Agenda of Day 2

Day 2 began with a recapture of Day 1, highlighting the importance of solidarity, capacity building, and localization in disaster response. Key updates included the INSARAG Strategic Plan 2021–2026, regional workplan progress, and upcoming IEC/IER activities.

- The meeting was opened with a Japanese traditional art performance celebrating the strong solidarity and dedication of INSARAG Asia-Pacific regional group in the work of saving lives.
- All keynote speakers (JICA, MOFA and OCHA) emphasized the importance of a strong network, capacity development and localization in disaster response.
- The regional group reviewed the outcome of ISG 2025, updates from the Technical Working Groups and other regional groups: AEME and Americas. Followed by confirming the progress regional work plan 2025.
- There would be two IECs (CHN10 – Hong Kong, CHN11- Ramunion) and one IER (MAS01) in the AP region in 2026. IND10 is planning to conduct an IEC in 2027, and JPN01 will conduct their IER in 2029.

- The host country session emphasized the importance of capacity building and localization, sharing examples from Australia, China, Fiji, and. Each presenter also referred to collaboration and partnerships in capacity development both nationally and internationally.
- OCHA updated on the ‘humanitarian reset’ and OCHA restructuring, which may affect INSARAG through reduced funding and staffing, but support will continue with a stronger focus on the people we serve, efficiency, and greater collaboration from member states.
- The regional group discussed the regional work plan 2026, based on the INSARAG Strategic Plan 2021-2026. The calendar of national and international training and IRNAP had been updated. Commitment to localization and regional partnership engagement ideas were discussed.
- The plenary discussion of the long-term planning of the Asia-Pacific regional Chair and ERE host was discussed. No concrete decision was made; however, the INSARAG Secretariat, TWG, and regional group agreed to keep discussing the frequency and scale of APERE. The regional chairs of 2027 and onwards remained unconfirmed, and the network members were encouraged to plan when they can take the role of AP chair proactively.
- The AP region agreed that there is no need to organize APERE in 2026, as there would be a global ERE hosted by Qatar.

Session 7: Governance Review Consultations

As part of the governance review, Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, INSARAG Secretary, opened the session by outlining its background and objectives. The discussion revisited three thematic areas: Decision-Making Mandate, Accountability and Compliance, and Localization, which were not endorsed at previous ISG. He provided explanations for each proposed change in those thematic areas, along with consolidated feedback collected from regional members via the Regional Chairs before the meeting.

- Thematic Area 2: Decision-Making Mandate: for item 2-1, it was noted that the interpretation of certain terms differs across regions. To address this, the wording was revised from “Consensus is when nobody eligible to vote objects.” to “Consensus is reached when all members have agreed to adopt a proposal. Members can agree to adopt a proposal, but still have reservations”. Following this adjustment, Singapore suggested minor amendments from “but still have reservations” to “but reservations”. As there were no objections to the change, they would be incorporated into the final text. For item 2-2, the Americas region had expressed concern about including the INSARAG Secretariat as an entity to which unresolved issues would be referred in cases where consensus cannot be reached. Upon review, it was confirmed that the Secretariat does not hold such authority. Therefore, the word “INSARAG secretariat” will be removed.
- Thematic Area 3: Accountability and Compliance: given that the INSARAG Guidelines have a non-legally binding status and cannot be unilaterally altered by members under international law, this item will be excluded from the governance review.

- **Thematic Area 7: Localization:** the content of this item was found to encroach upon areas that fall under the responsibility of National Authorities. For this reason, it will also be excluded from the governance review.

The Asia-Pacific region expressed support for the revised mandate language in Thematic Area 2, and also raised no objections to the proposal to exclude Thematic Areas 3 and 7 from the Governance Review. Furthermore, the region reaffirmed its endorsement of the INSARAG Secretariat's suggestions for further discussion and endorsement at ISG 2026.

Session 8: INSARAG Deployment in 2024/2025

In this session, three major disasters were reviewed: Papua New Guinea landslides, the Vanuatu earthquake, and the Myanmar earthquake. Ms. Haruka Ezaki, INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Focal Point, served as the moderator, and at the beginning, Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, INSARAG Secretary, shared an overview of three disasters, along with a summary of the international response, including the deployments of the UNDAC team.

Mr. Craig Stolte, Superintendent, Queensland Fire Department, Disaster Assistance Response Team, presented the Papua New Guinea landslides response by New Zealand. He highlighted several key lessons, including the growing need to adopt a broader DART-focused response rather than relying solely on USAR capabilities. Establishing a reliable communications bubble has become essential for effective coordination, while safety and security challenges increasingly restrict operational activities in adverse environments. Enhanced connectivity now allows certain Incident Management Team (IMT) functions to be supported remotely, reducing the need for full field deployment. Additionally, strong intelligence capabilities, covering country briefs, situational updates, and political and environmental analysis—are critical for informed decision-making during disaster response.

Mr. Ken Cooper, Assistant National Commander, Operations Department, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, presented on the Vanuatu Earthquake Response in December 2024. Response activities focused on search and rescue operations and a wide range of assessments covering critical infrastructure, freshwater reservoirs, government buildings, rivers and waterways, evacuation centres, wharf facilities, and areas affected by landslides. Rapid Building Assessments were also conducted to determine structural safety. Key learnings from the Vanuatu response include the value of integrating engineers into response teams, the importance of supporting psychological wellbeing during operations, and the need for strong coordination between NDMOs and USAR UCC to ensure effective disaster response. The response was further enabled by pre-existing relationships built through preparedness missions, strong collaboration between Australia and New Zealand under INSARAG, and the use of ICMS for coordination.

Mr. Chew Keng Tok, Director, Training Department, Singapore Civil Defence Force, presented the Singapore deployment to support Myanmar Earthquake Response in March 2025. Singapore deployed 80 SCDF personnel, four canines, and additional Home Team Science and Technology Agency (HTX), ASEAN-ERAT, UNDAC, and Singapore Emergency Medical Team (SGEMT) staff to Myanmar from 29 March–8 April 2025. Working closely with the AHA Centre, ASEAN-ERAT, and Myanmar's NDMO, the team accessed affected areas quickly and completed operations at 26 sites, including one live rescue. They also supported medical operations, treating nearly 2,000 patients through field hospitals and medical posts, and provided humanitarian donations. Key challenges included restricted communications equipment and deviations from INSARAG coordination. Positive outcomes included strong regional

partnerships, rapid logistics support, and diversified communication systems. Next steps involve expanding airlift options, upgrading satellite communications, and strengthening stakeholder networks through annual events.

Mr. Li Li, Director, International Rescue and Cooperation Department, National Earthquake Response Support Service, Ministry of Emergency Management of China, shared operational insights, coordination challenges, and lessons learned from the Earthquake Response in Myanmar in March 2025. He highlighted that the Myanmar response involved 31 international USAR teams from 13 countries. The operation underscored the value of pre-established partnerships, flexible logistics, and cultural sensitivity. Major challenges included weak internet, poor signals, dispersed locations, restricted areas, and the absence of UNDAC in the first week. Chinese USAR teams improved coordination by appointing a national coordinator, standardizing reporting, assigning team IDs, centralizing the BoO, and using VO and ICMS guidance. International coordination continued through daily calls, messaging platforms, and shared situation reports. Lessons highlighted the value of the new Worksite ID system in low-connectivity settings, the need for UC training to cover situations where LEMA does not accept UC structures, and the importance of defining minimum ICMS requirements, as VO and paper tools may be more efficient when many non-classified teams are present.

In conclusion, Ms. Haruka Ezaki, INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Focal Point, highlighted lessons from the Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and Myanmar disaster responses. The Myanmar response was challenging in international coordination due to the limited connectivity on the ground. However, it proved the strength of the international coordination system and standardized communication and reporting tools including the Virtual OSOCC. Overall, partnerships, interoperability, and adaptable logistics were key to enhancing future INSARAG deployments in the Asia-Pacific region and the INSARAG Secretariat will continue to support the regional initiatives to strengthen regional preparedness levels for earthquake response.

Session 9: INSARAG Guidelines Review

Mr. John Cawcutt, Guidelines Review Group Co-Chair, Chief Fire Officer, Queensland Fire Department, presented the final draft of the INSARAG Guidelines (2026 edition), developed through extensive global consultations and technical reviews. The 12-member Guidelines Review Group incorporated key recommendations from the Türkiye/Syria After-Action Review, the Governance Review, and all working groups. Major updates include restructuring the guideline volumes, introducing gender-neutral language, clarifying policy elements such as activation speed, medical practice approval, and host nation support, as well as strengthening national capacity-building guidance including modular USAR development and revised NAP/IRNAP processes. Operational revisions integrate lessons from Türkiye/Syria, update ICMS and VOSOCC alignment, refine worksite and sector definitions, and enhance IEC/IER requirements, particularly for medical scenarios and flexible exercise durations. The introduction of ICMS 3.0 brings simplified data collection, flexible coordination layers, updated paper forms, and unified terminology. The Guidelines now better reflect flexible response models, national capacity building, and updated field operations protocols, and will be presented for approval at the 2026 INSARAG Steering Group.

During the discussion, Ms. Haruka Ezaki, INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Focal Point, raised a question regarding revisions in Volume I: Policy, specifically about the induction process for new INSARAG Focal Points. She asked who would conduct these quarterly inductions and noted that Regional Focal Points

organize introductory sessions for new focal points upon request and could hand over the general INSARAG overview PPT to the inductor. Mr. John Cawcutt clarified that, as usual, the INSARAG Secretariat will lead the induction for new focal points.

Mr. Jeremy Stubbs, Chief Superintendent, Technical Capability Department, Fire and Rescue New South Wales, expressed appreciation to the Guideline Review Group for incorporating flexible response models, particularly flood response, into the revised guidelines. Mr. Winston Chang, IRNAP Advisor, Ministry of Emergency Management of China, provided further comments on integrating key recommendations from the Türkiye/Syria earthquake AAR, highlighting the importance of clarifying the UNDAC–USAR liaison role. He noted that strengthening this element in the guidelines would reinforce how UNDAC can directly support USAR teams and the UCC, ensuring better alignment and collaboration among all stakeholders in support of national authorities.

Session 10: Asia-Pacific Regional Inputs to the Draft INSARAG Strategic Plan 2026-2030

Ms. Haruka Ezaki, INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Focal Point, provided an overview of the session objectives and process, which aimed to gather regional inputs to the draft INSARAG Strategic Plan 2026–2030. The session focused on three thematic areas: 1. Values and Operational Norms, 2. Quality Standards and Flexible Response, 3. **Strengthening Localization and Bolstering Partnerships and Technological Advancements**. Participants were briefed on the 5-year INSARAG Strategic Plan, which articulates the network’s vision, goals, and strategic objectives, and builds lessons learned from the previous Strategy and governance reviews. This document would be finalized through regional consultations in 2025 and endorsed at the INSARAG Global Meeting in 2026. Participants were divided into four groups to review and discuss the draft content for each theme, focusing on the contents, terminology, and potential gaps. Values and Operational Norms was moderated by Mr. MINATO Yusuke, Senior Deputy Director, Afghanistan Office, Japan International Cooperation Agency and note-taking by Mr. YAMAZAKI Arisa, Secretariat of Japan Disaster Relief Team, Japan International Cooperation Agency.

- Quality Standards and Flexible Response was moderated by Mr. Jeremy Stubbs, Chief Superintendent, Technical Capability Department, Fire and Rescue New South Wales and note-taking by Mr. Craig Stolte, Superintendent, Queensland Fire Department, Disaster Assistance Response Team, Australia.
- Strengthening Localization and Bolstering Partnerships and Technological advancements was moderated Mr. Winston Chang, IRNAP Advisor, Ministry of Emergency Management of China and note-taking by Mr. Ken Cooper, Assistant National Commander, Operations Department, Fire and Emergency New Zealand.
- Online Discussion, covering Values and Operational Norms, Quality Standards and Flexible Response and Strengthening Localization and Bolstering Partnerships and Technological advancements, was moderated by Ms. Haruka Ezaki, INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Focal Point and note-taking by Ms. Apassara Suwanprasert, INSARAG Secretariat.

Session 11: Regional Asia-Pacific Strategic Plan Summary Discussion

Following session 10, summaries of each breakout group were shared by the facilitators and notetakers. Overall, the wording used in the Strategic Plan and the alignment of content with each topic were carefully reviewed.

Regarding the values and operational norms, Mr. MINATO Yusuke, Senior Deputy Director, Afghanistan Office, Japan International Cooperation Agency, highlighted that the discussion emphasized the importance of defining the document's audience, whether INSARAG stakeholders or broader disaster response agencies, as this affects the interpretation of ownership and localization. Key points of each topic included:

- Gender: Instead of strict fifty-fifty equality, use terms like *fair balance* or *fair representation*.
- Needs-driven: Avoid strong emphasis; use *request basis* instead.
- Coordination: Should incorporate perspectives of *flexibility* and *adaptability*.

Regarding the Quality Standards and Flexible Response, Mr. Jeremy Stubbs, Chief Superintendent, Technical Capability Department, Fire and Rescue New South Wales, summarized discussions on making strategic objectives measurable and accountable. For Quality Standards, concerns included terminology ("uphold" may sound punitive), accountability mechanisms (WG TORs or Regional Plans), sustainability planning, and clarifying intent. For Flexible Response, the statement should be simplified; remove examples like floods, replace "internet" with "connectivity," and drop UCC references. The group supported objective 2.3 as it provides measurable elements for Working Groups.

Regarding the Strengthening of Localization and Bolstering Partnerships and Technological Advancements, Mr. Ken Cooper, Assistant National Commander, Operations Department, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, shared the proposed revision below.

- 4.1 Add: Civil Society and emphasize suitable national resource mobilization in the context of establishing new partners.
- 4.2 Delete: Overly detailed or off-topic descriptions.

Add: "Focus on preparedness."

Comment: Further discussion required on intent, risk, and unintended consequences.

- 4.3 Revise: Clarify the subject and include artificial intelligence alongside technology.

Regarding the summary from online participants, Ms. Haruka Ezaki, INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Focal Point, noted that under Values and Operational Norms, participants stressed the importance of respecting cultural practices in affected countries and highlighted the need for culture awareness training for INSARAG teams. On Localization, flexibility was emphasized, not only adopting new technologies but also using paper-based solutions when appropriate to ensure tools fit the context. For Partnerships, the group reaffirmed the importance of strong relationships with local actors for effective operations. The feedback provided, together with feedback from other regions, will be brought back to the INSARAG Secretariat and reflected in the Strategic Plan 2026–2030.

Session 12: Member States Announcements and Presenting the New Troika 2026

As member state announcements, the Republic of Korea reminded their propositions regarding the roles they are willing to take in the Asia-Pacific region, including the organization of the TL meeting in 2027, taking on the role of AP Regional Chair in 2028, and hosting APERE in the following years. Also, New Zealand shared updates on their priority initiative, the Pacific Uplift Program, including the development of training package contracts in collaboration with Pacific islands partners for private sector engagement, as well as a National Management ICM course. As the pre-cyclone season approaches in October and November, New Zealand will prioritize support for the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea by delivering training on disaster management, aimed at enhancing preparedness levels across the region.

Australia was introduced as the Regional Chair for 2026, and it was emphasized that the need of decision of the Regional Chair for 2027 by the end of this year by the MC. The composition of the regional Troika was also outlined: Japan would serve as the outgoing Regional Chair for 2026 and was the Chair in 2025; Australia would act as the Incoming Regional Co-Chair for 2025 and Regional Chair for 2026; and the Incoming Regional Chair for 2026, who will become the Regional Chair for 2027, was yet to be confirmed.

Session 13: Key Regional Meeting Outcomes and Closing Address

Ms. Haruka Ezaki, INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Focal Point, presented the key outcomes from the regional meeting:

- The INSARAG Asia-Pacific regional group expressed its support for the INSARAG Governance Review led by the Secretariat and reconfirmed the region's feedback on the proposed ICMS funding model, agreeing in principle while requesting additional clarity on fund management, due diligence, and flexibility in the payment cycle and timing. Participants provided inputs for the new INSARAG Guidelines and the INSARAG Strategic Plan 2026–2030 and affirmed the region's commitment to supporting the finalization and adoption of both documents. The region further confirmed its support for Qatar to host the Global Earthquake Response Exercise (ERE) and highlighted the importance of localization and capacity development, with concrete examples shared during the host country session. Lessons learned from three 2024–2025 deployments, to Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and Myanmar, were also presented. Australia was welcomed and supported as the INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Chair for 2026, and appreciation was extended to Pakistan for its service as a Troika member from 2023 to 2025.
- Looking ahead, the INSARAG Asia-Pacific regional group requested the Training Working Group to assess the ERE package and the need for annual EREs, and to begin discussions on the Asia-Pacific ERE in 2027 and beyond. The INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Chair for 2027 would be expected to be confirmed by the end of 2025. Coordination and implementation of member-state-led training activities would continue, including the rescheduling of the USAR Coordination Training of Trainer that was originally planned for June 2025 in the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, INSARAG Secretary, shared the 2025–2027 schedule for INSARAG-related meetings; ISG 2026 is planned for March, and the Global Meeting is being coordinated with Brazil for June to avoid overlap. The Global ERE in Qatar is under consideration for Q3 of 2026. In 2027, the Team Leader’s Meeting is expected in February in the Republic of Korea, followed by ISG in March.

Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik, Chairman NDMA & INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Chair 2024, delivered a farewell message as the outgoing chair via a recorded video, marking the conclusion of their activities as part of the Troika.

In the closing session, Mr. IIMURA Tsutomu, Director General, Secretariat of Japan Disaster Relief Team, Japan International Cooperation Agency, expressed appreciation to all participants for their active discussions, contributions, and support in organizing the meeting, emphasizing the solidarity and dedication within the INSARAG network.

Mr. IWATA Shinya, INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Chair 2025, Emergency Relief Coordinator, Disaster Relief Team Leader of Japan, thanked participants for their cooperation and acknowledged the support of the INSARAG Secretariat and OCHA ROAP. He extended gratitude to Pakistan as the outgoing Regional Chair and welcomed Australia as the incoming Chair. He further highlighted the continued growth of the INSARAG network, reflected in the expanding membership and strengthened collective commitment to INSARAG’s mission and objectives.

Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, INSARAG Secretary, closed the 2025 INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting by thanking all present participants for their active inputs, noting that the robust discussion on the regional work plan reflects the region’s solid commitment to INSARAG. The meeting outcomes would contribute to the INSARAG Global Meeting, the 2026–2030 Global Strategic Plan, and regional planning. Appreciation was extended to the Government of Japan for the leadership and hospitality.

Following the closing remarks, a token exchange ceremony was held between OCHA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Mr. Abdi Mohamed Farah, Chief of Administration, OCHA ROAP, represented OCHA; Mr. IWATA Shinya, INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Chair 2025, Emergency Relief Coordinator and Disaster Relief Team Leader of Japan, represented the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan; and Mr. IIMURA Tsutomu, Director General, Secretariat of the Japan Disaster Relief Team, represented the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Annexes:

Annex A: INSARAG AP Regional Meeting 2025_List of Participants

Annex B: INSARAG AP Regional Meeting Agenda 2025

Annex C-1: INSARAG AP Regional Meeting 2025 DAY1_PPT

Annex C-2: INSARAG AP Regional Meeting 2025 DAY1_Session3_01_Nishikawa_20250807

Annex C-3: INSARAG AP Regional Meeting 2025 DAY1_Session3_02_Sentinel Asia 20250807

Annex C-4: INSARAG AP Regional Meeting 2025 DAY2_PPT

Annex D: TWG discussion on ERE