



Chairperson's Summary: INSARAG Africa, Europe, and Middle East (AEME) Regional Meeting 2026

7-8 July 2026, Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil



The INSARAG Africa, Europe, and Middle East (AEME) Regional Meeting was held alongside the Fourth INSARAG Global Meeting in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, on 7-8 July 2026. The event was generously hosted by the Government of Brazil. A total of 68 participants from 26 countries and 2 organizations attended the meeting. The list of participating countries and organizations is in [Annex A](#), and the presentation slides are in [Annex B](#).

Day 1

Session 1 – Welcome and Official Opening

i. AEME Regional Chair, Colonel-General Anatoly Suprunovskiy

Colonel-General of Internal Service Anatoly Suprunovskiy opened the Regional Meeting by welcoming participants, and expressing appreciation to the Government of Brazil and the INSARAG Secretariat for their support in organizing the event. Referring to the recent earthquakes in Venezuela, he invited participants to observe a minute of silence in solidarity with the victims and affected communities.

The Colonel-General highlighted the significant contribution of the AEME region to the international response, noting that from the AEME region, 12 INSARAG-classified teams deployed to Venezuela. He also recognized the coordination roles undertaken by Switzerland through the Reception and Departure Centre (RDC), as well as Germany and Spain through Sector Coordination Cells. Colonel-General Suprunovskiy emphasized that the response once again demonstrated the value of the INSARAG methodology and encouraged participating teams to share lessons learned from the operation. Concluding his remarks, he thanked AEME member countries for their continued commitment to INSARAG and wished participants productive discussions during the Regional and Global Meetings.

ii. Brazil Host, Minister José Solla

Minister José Solla (Brazil) welcomed participants to the Fourth INSARAG Global Meeting in Foz do Iguaçu, the first Global Meeting held in the Americas and in a developing country. He paid tribute to the people of Venezuela following the recent earthquake, expressing solidarity with affected communities, survivors, first responders and authorities involved in the response and recovery efforts.

Minister Solla highlighted INSARAG's 35-year contribution to strengthening international USAR cooperation through common standards, quality assurance, shared methodology, and the classification system. He noted that the recent response to the Venezuela earthquake demonstrated the continued value of the INSARAG network and its operational framework.

He also emphasized the importance of strengthening local and national response capacities and adapting to the growing impact of climate-related disasters, particularly floods and other extreme hydrometeorological events. Drawing on Brazil's recent experiences, he encouraged discussions on how INSARAG can continue to evolve to address these challenges.

Concluding his remarks, Minister Solla reaffirmed Brazil's commitment to developing its national USAR capabilities, enhancing international cooperation, and supporting the Americas Regional Group. He expressed his hope that the meeting would foster productive discussions, collective learning, and stronger global humanitarian response.

iii. INSARAG Global Lead, Mr. Martijn Viersma

Mr. Martijn Viersma, INSARAG Global Lead, thanked the AEME Regional Chair for his leadership and contributions to the INSARAG network. He expressed his deepest condolences and solidarity with the people of Venezuela following the devastating earthquakes, and commended the rapid deployment of 19 INSARAG-classified teams, alongside additional search and rescue and medical teams, in support of the response.

Mr. Viersma noted that the Venezuela operation demonstrated the value of the INSARAG network and the importance of international solidarity in addressing humanitarian crises. At the same time, he highlighted the increasingly challenging humanitarian environment, characterized by growing needs, escalating conflicts, climate-related emergencies, and significant funding constraints affecting humanitarian operations worldwide.

Referring to the ongoing humanitarian reform efforts led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), he emphasized the principle of “as local as possible, as international as necessary”, and the importance of strengthening local leadership and response capacities.

In concluding, Mr. Viersma reaffirmed OCHA's continued commitment to INSARAG, emphasizing its critical role in delivering life-saving assistance during the initial stages of disasters. He encouraged participants to continue their cooperation and wished them productive discussions during the meeting.

Session 2 – Global and Regional 2026 Workplans and Updates

i. Global Updates

Mr. Martijn Viersma, INSARAG Global Lead, provided the Global Updates for 2025. He provided an update on planned IEC and IER activities for 2026, noting that nine IECs, six IERs, eight training courses, and two exercises are scheduled during the year. The Secretariat will also support several training courses, exercises and meetings, including the INSARAG Global Exercise in Qatar in October 2026. (now moved to early 2027 dates tbc).

The presentation highlighted the impact of recent funding reductions, which have resulted in decreased Secretariat capacity and greater reliance on support from the INSARAG network, particularly for hosting events and providing classifiers. Participants were thanked for their continued contributions and encouraged to maintain and expand this support.

An overview of the 2026 classifiers was also provided, including classifier experience levels and gender representation.

Finally, an update was shared on the global distribution of classified teams and upcoming discussions on potential improvements to the IEC/IER process. Participants were encouraged to continue supporting these the IEC/R and to consider the INSARAG Readiness and Assurance Process (IRNAP) as a complementary pathway for strengthening preparedness and readiness within the network.

ii. Regional Updates

Colonel-General of Internal Service Anatoly Suprunovskiy presented an update on the implementation of the AEME Regional Work Plan, which is aligned with the INSARAG Strategy 2026–2030 adopted by the INSARAG Steering Group in Geneva. In addition to the network's three strategic priorities, maintaining quality standards, promoting flexible response, and strengthening localization, he highlighted two additional priorities of the Russian Chairmanship: strengthening cooperation with African countries and promoting neutral and inclusive cooperation across the INSARAG network.

With regard to Africa, Colonel-General Suprunovskiy noted the successful reclassification of the Algerian team and the ongoing preparations for the classification of the Egyptian team in August. He also highlighted growing interest in INSARAG cooperation from several African countries and informed participants of preparations for the INSARAG Africa USAR Conference to be held in Kenya in November, organized in cooperation with OCHA and Kenyan partners.

On governance matters, he reaffirmed the importance of preserving consensus-based decision-making within INSARAG and commended the Secretariat and host countries for ensuring equal participation opportunities for all accredited Member States.

Reporting on regional activities, Colonel-General Suprunovskiy noted that five classifications and reclassifications had already been completed within the region during the year. He highlighted ongoing mentoring arrangements, including Russian support to Iran and South Africa, Swiss support to Lebanon, United Kingdom support to Kenya, and French support to Egypt. He encouraged all classified teams to continue supporting the network through mentoring activities, and by providing experts for INSARAG External Classification and Reclassification missions.

Colonel-General Suprunovskiy also reported on progress in regional training activities, including courses delivered in Italy and the United Kingdom, and welcomed the planned delivery of a shoring course. He expressed support for the continued promotion of the INSARAG Recognition of Prior Learning and National Accreditation Process (IRNAP) concept and encouraged participation in the first Global INSARAG Exercise scheduled to take place in Qatar later in the year.

Finally, he reiterated the Russian Chairmanship's strong support for the flexible response concept and the work of the Flood Response Working Group, while emphasizing the importance of regional partnerships and collaboration. In concluding, Colonel-General Suprunovskiy stressed that the ultimate measure of INSARAG's success remains the saving of lives, and the protection of affected populations through effective international search and rescue operations.

Session 3 – Foz do Iguaçu Declaration

Mr. Martijn Viersma briefly presented the draft 2026 INSARAG Global Declaration, prepared by Brazil in consultation with the INSARAG Secretariat and the Global Chair, and incorporating comments from the Russian Federation.

Mr. Vasily Evseev provided clarification on the comments submitted by the Russian Federation, noting that they were intended primarily to improve the clarity and consistency of the draft Declaration's language, and to align terminology with that used in previously adopted United Nations documents. He also emphasized the importance of maintaining flexibility in INSARAG's response concept to address a broader range of disasters, including floods and other hydrometeorological emergencies, which occur more frequently than earthquakes in many countries. He observed that the principles and coordination mechanisms traditionally applied to urban search and rescue operations could also contribute to effective international response in such contexts.

Mr. Martijn Viersma informed participants that the Americas region had adopted the draft Declaration, while the Asia-Pacific region had proposed some amendments relating to references to development finance institutions and the applicability of international law. He outlined the next steps in the process, noting that all comments received would be consolidated and, if necessary, reviewed with the regional chairs before a final version was presented for adoption at the Global Meeting.

During the discussion, participants raised procedural questions regarding the use of the term “endorsement” in the text. It was noted that the INSARAG Steering Group remains the principal decision-making forum of the network and that the Global Meeting adopts declarations by consensus among political focal points. Several participants therefore suggested replacing terminology implying formal decision-making authority, such as “endorses” with more appropriate wording like “adopts”.

A substantive discussion focused on paragraph 14 of the draft Declaration, which proposed the establishment of a “light touch mechanism” to monitor implementation of INSARAG strategic objectives between Global Meetings. Representatives from several delegations, including the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, questioned the purpose of the proposed mechanism, noting that existing INSARAG structures already provide oversight and coordination functions. Concerns were expressed that the proposal could create unnecessary additional structures, responsibilities, and potential resource implications without a clearly defined mandate.

The Regional Chair noted broad reservations regarding paragraph 14 and proposed seeking further clarification from the host country, Brazil, on the intent and practical implications of the provision. Pending such clarification, participants indicated that deletion of the paragraph should be considered.

Session 4 – Updates from the Team Leaders Meeting 2026

Mr. Camille Michel, Team Leaders’ Representative, presented a summary of the discussions and key outcomes of the Team Leaders Meeting held over the previous two days. He reported that the meeting opened with updates from the INSARAG Secretariat, including reflections on the recent Venezuela earthquake response. Participants observed a moment of silence in honour of those affected, and agreed that lessons identified from the operation should be assessed through a formal After Action Review before conclusions are drawn. He also announced the Republic of Korea’s offer to host the next Team Leaders Meeting in February 2027.

The Team Leaders meeting reviewed a range of strategic and operational developments, including updates on the INSARAG Classification and Reclassification (IEC/R) process, the INSARAG Strategy 2026–2031, modernization of the Virtual OSOCC platform, and the revised INSARAG Guidelines. Team Leaders welcomed ongoing efforts to improve INSARAG and emphasized the importance of maintaining accurate and up-to-date information, including team fact sheets and operational data.

Discussions in the meeting also focused on the implementation of ICMS 3.0, which received strong support from participants as a means of enhancing and simplifying information management. Updates to the IEC/R checklist were reviewed through group consultations, with the work of the Quality Assurance Working Group acknowledged, and the proposed revisions broadly endorsed, subject to minor refinements identified during the meeting.

Significant attention at the meeting was given to the functioning of INSARAG working groups. Team Leaders noted the need to strengthen engagement across the network, and recommended the development of clearer terms of reference (TORs) covering membership, duration of service and renewal mechanisms. Support was also expressed for further exploration of an Operations Working Group, with a more detailed proposal to be

presented at a future Team Leaders' Meeting. Team Leaders additionally highlighted the need to clarify the role of the Team Leaders' Representative within the INSARAG governance structure through the development of a more formal terms of reference.

Capacity building and quality assurance were also prominent themes. The meeting emphasized the importance of recruiting, training, and mentoring future classifiers, team leaders and mentors, including through a newly developed leadership course, expanded online training opportunities, and closer collaboration between the Quality Assurance and Training Working Groups. Team Leaders further supported the development of mechanisms to assess classifier performance, and provide structured feedback following classifications and reclassifications.

Finally, Team Leaders discussed communication within the INSARAG network and encouraged the adoption of more effective information-sharing mechanisms among team leaders. The meeting concluded with a strong emphasis on continuous improvement, succession planning, knowledge-sharing, and maintaining an active and engaged global INSARAG community.

Day 2

Session 5 – Recap of Day One and Agenda for Day Two

Mr. Martijn Viersma provided a recap of the previous day and presented the agenda for day two.

Session 6 – Updates from the Working Groups

The Training, IEC/R Quality Assurance, Information Management, Medical, and Search and Rescue in Flood Response Working Groups provided updates on their activities, including recent meetings, ongoing projects, and plans for future training and exercises.

The Guidelines Review Group did not present their results in this session as they had a dedicated session later.

iii. Training Working Group (WG)

Mr. Andrew Shurety, Member of the Training Working Group (WG), presented the expected outcomes of the WG. These include ongoing efforts to strengthen training and capacity development across the INSARAG network, with a particular focus on classifier, mentor and team leader development. He reported that discussions had taken place on proposed amendments to the triage form; however, the prevailing view was that the current system remains fit for purpose and does not require significant revision.

Mr. Shurety highlighted the importance of ensuring that participants nominated for classifier and leadership training meet the established prerequisites, noting the significant investment associated with these courses and their role in developing future mentors, classifiers and team leaders. He also provided an update on the INSARAG training directory, encouraging teams to share information on training facilities, exercise opportunities, and courses available to other network members to strengthen international cooperation and interoperability.

Additional priorities identified by the WG include support for earthquake response exercises (EREs), coordination of training activities through national focal points and the Secretariat, enhancement of coordination capabilities and digital information management competencies, and continued promotion of INSARAG guidance materials. Mr. Shurety emphasized the importance of broader participation in the Training Working Group and invited qualified members of the network to contribute to its activities.

iv. Information Management Working Group (IMWG)

An update from the Information Management Working Group (IMWG) was presented by Mr. Peter Wolff, co-Chair of the Working Group. He outlined the WG's ongoing efforts to develop and promote efficient information management systems that support coordination, situational awareness, and decision-making during international USAR operations.

Mr. Wolff presented the development of the Information Coordination and Management System (ICMS) 3.0, which has been designed in response to lessons identified during recent major disaster responses, including the Türkiye earthquake. The new system aims to simplify data collection, improve operational flexibility, significantly reduce reporting times, lower bandwidth requirements, and integrate both digital and offline operational workflows. Following successful testing and endorsement by the Team Leaders Meeting, ICMS 3.0 is scheduled for phased implementation, supported by online training modules, user manuals, and in-person training opportunities.

He also highlighted several related initiatives by the IMWG, including the redesign of the INSARAG website, modernization of the Virtual OSOCC platform, development of enhanced mapping and imagery capabilities, reinstatement of logistics functionalities, automated reporting tools, and future digital solutions to support IEC/R processes. The WG will continue to provide technical support, training and operational assistance to the network while working to ensure all teams transition successfully to ICMS 3.0.

v. IEC/R Quality Assurance Working Group (WG)

Mr. David Sochor, Co-Chair of the IEC/R Quality Assurance Working Group (WG), presented the expected outcomes of the WG. These include continued oversight and strengthening of the INSARAG External Classification and Reclassification (IEC/R) system, which was recognized as a cornerstone of INSARAG's quality assurance framework and is marking its twentieth year of operation.

The Working Group reported that it had completed its review of the IEC/R-related provisions within the revised INSARAG Guidelines and was now focused on updating the IEC/R checklist to align it with the INSARAG five-year planning cycle. The review seeks primarily to improve clarity, consistency, and shared interpretation of assessment criteria while maintaining stability within the classification system.

The WG is also developing proposals to improve classifier quality assurance and training in cooperation with the Training Working Group. Additional work includes reviewing IEC/R application procedures, supporting the Secretariat in classifier management and process administration, and exploring updates to the portfolio of evidence format.

Mr. Sochor highlighted several proposed amendments to the IEC/R checklist, including technology-neutral language, increased consideration of national legislation, refinement of medical requirements based on Medical Working Group recommendations, reduced crane and rope-work requirements to lower barriers and costs for teams, and greater flexibility in the duration of IEC/R exercises. Participants were invited to continue providing comments before the revised checklist is submitted to the INSARAG Steering Group for endorsement during the ISG 2027.

vi. Medical Working Group (WG)

Mr. Martijn Viersma, INSARAG Global Lead, presented the expected outcomes of the Medical Working Group on behalf of Mr. Hector Fuentes. These include ongoing efforts to strengthen and clarify the medical dimension of INSARAG operations and classifications.

He reported that the Working Group had finalized documentation clarifying host nation acceptance of all components of deployed USAR teams and had contributed updates to INSARAG guidelines, manuals and

checklists. The WG continues to emphasize the importance of medical support throughout the rescue process, from victim identification through to extrication and immediate care.

Additional work includes clarifying the distinction between victim assessment and patient treatment documentation, promoting recognition of USAR medicine as an essential humanitarian activity, and improving operational awareness of crush syndrome management. Progress was also reported on a range of technical reference notes covering topics such as particulate exposure, impalement injuries, infection prevention and control, immunization, mental health and wellbeing, post-mission health monitoring, pre-deployment health screening, medical reporting requirements, and oxygen transport and ventilation during deployments.

During the discussion, it was noted that some proposed medical scenarios had been simplified within the classification process to ensure exercises remain realistic and manageable, while retaining critical capabilities such as crush syndrome management, amputations, and impalement scenarios.

vii. Search and Rescue in Flood Response Working Group (WG)

Mr. Martijn Viersma, INSARAG Global Lead, presented the expected outcomes of the Search and Rescue in Flood Response Working Group on behalf of Mr. Jeremy Stubbs. These include advancing INSARAG's work on flexible response capabilities, and strengthening the network's preparedness for flood and other hydrometeorological emergencies.

Mr. Viersma presented the Working Group's work plan, which aligns with INSARAG strategic priorities relating to quality standards, localization, operational flexibility and enhanced coordination. The Working Group will continue developing guidance, best practices and operational approaches that apply INSARAG principles to flood response contexts, while maintaining consistency with established INSARAG standards and structures.

The Working Group also aims to strengthen communication, support knowledge exchange among member states, and promote the integration of flood response considerations into broader INSARAG preparedness and response activities. No additional comments were raised during the discussion.

Session 7 – INSARAG Africa USAR Conference 2026

Mr. Vasily Evseev presented plans for the INSARAG Africa USAR Conference 2026, an initiative being developed in cooperation with OCHA and the INSARAG Secretariat to strengthen search and rescue capacities across the African region. The conference is tentatively scheduled for November 2026 and is expected to be held over four days in either a hybrid or in-person format.

The presenter highlighted the growing impact of natural and human-induced disasters across Africa, including floods, cyclones, landslides, building collapses, major fires, and transport accidents. While recognizing the progress made by many countries, it was noted that significant differences remain in operational capabilities, technical resources, training, coordination mechanisms, and the application of international standards. In this context, strengthening preparedness, enhancing interoperability, and promoting regional and international cooperation were identified as key priorities.

The conference aims to provide a platform for dialogue between African countries, international organizations, and technical experts to assess existing search and rescue capacities, identify priority development needs, and exchange operational experience and best practices. It is also expected to support discussions on national policies, legal frameworks, organizational structures, logistics, equipment, training, and coordination arrangements for emergency response.

Participants were informed that the conference is intended to produce practical recommendations for strengthening USAR capabilities across the region, identify areas where international support may be required, and establish a foundation for long-term regional cooperation. Representatives from African USAR services,

governments, OCHA, the INSARAG Secretariat, international organizations and technical experts are expected to participate.

Concluding the presentation, African member states were encouraged to actively engage in the conference and contribute to shaping the future development of search and rescue capabilities across the continent. The presenter expressed confidence that the event would represent an important step in advancing INSARAG principles, strengthening partnerships, and improving the effectiveness of humanitarian response throughout the African region.

Mr. Samuel Mwenda Mutunga, speaking on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Kenya, formally announced that Kenya will host the Africa Urban Search and Rescue Conference in Mombasa in November 2026, and extended an invitation to all INSARAG members, USAR teams, partners, and technical experts to participate. He emphasized that the event would provide an important opportunity to strengthen USAR capacities across Africa and further promote cooperation within the INSARAG community.

He welcomed the support being provided by the Russian Federation and OCHA in the planning and organization of the conference and encouraged all INSARAG members and partners to contribute their expertise and experience to ensure its success. He also requested that participating delegations provide details of their attendance, and any equipment they intend to bring, in order to facilitate host nation arrangements and logistical support.

In closing, he thanked Brazil and the organizers of the Global Meeting for their hospitality and excellent arrangements, and invited all participants to join the INSARAG Africa Conference in Kenya in November 2026.

Session 8 – Africa in Focus: USAR Cooperation and Development Projects

i. South Africa

Mr. Elias Bongani Sithole, South Africa's Policy Focal Point, highlighted South Africa's commitment to working with Kenya in organizing the USAR Conference. He also expressed South Africa's appreciation to INSARAG for its support during the 2017 IEC. Furthermore, he emphasized South Africa's continued commitment to the IEC/R process and its dedication to continuously strengthening and improving its USAR capabilities.

ii. Kenya

Mr. Amos Onchiri Anyieni, representative of Kenya, highlighted Kenya's experience in developing a sustainable Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capability through strong national commitment and strategic partnerships. He noted that Kenya has 47 county fire brigades and that two national USAR teams are working collaboratively towards achieving INSARAG Medium Team classification. He also stated that Kenya is currently finalizing the IRNAP process as part of its efforts to strengthen national preparedness and advance towards classification.

He further emphasized the importance of Kenya's strategic partnerships, particularly with UK ISAR and the Polish Centre for International Aid (PCPM). Looking ahead, Kenya plans to strengthen and expand regional interoperability to enhance emergency response capabilities and cooperation across the region.

Session 9 – AEME Regional Workplan 2027 Consultations

The AEME Meeting was divided into three groups and conducted as a round-robin exercise, with participants rotating to a different discussion group every 15 minutes. The three groups focused on the following strategic objectives:

- **Strategic Objective 1: Quality Standards**, facilitated by **Mr. David Sochor**;
- **Strategic Objective 2: Flexible Response**, facilitated by **Mr. Grigory Korolkov**;
- **Strategic Objective 3: Strengthening Localization**, facilitated by **Mr. Paul Courtney**.

This format allowed all participants to contribute to discussions on each strategic objective and provide input across the full scope of the AEME workplan.

Session 10 – Finalization of the AEME Regional Workplan 2027

iii. Strategic Objective 1: Quality Standards

Mr. Sochor reported that participants emphasized the importance of recognizing and respecting the different quality standards and quality assurance processes that exist across the three INSARAG regions. While maintaining common INSARAG standards, participants noted the need to better understand regional approaches and practices.

Mr. Sochor further reported the following recommendations and observations from the discussions:

- Consideration should be given to establishing a quality or compliance management function within teams. (To be discussed in next Team Leaders Meeting)
- The evaluation process for classifiers and Team Leader Classifiers should be strengthened.
- Feedback mechanisms involving classifiers performance should be improved and shared with Team Focal Points Operational Focal Points and INSARAG Secretariat.
- Classifiers-in-Training who do not yet meet the required standards should undergo additional training and mentoring.
- Qualified classifiers should play a stronger mentoring and coaching role for Classifiers-in-Training.
- The possibility of quality assurance observations during response operations was discussed; however, participants acknowledged potential challenges related to feasibility and implementation.
- Continuous engagement and sustained commitment from key stakeholders were identified as essential to maintaining and improving quality standards over the long term.

iv. Strategic Objective 2: Flexible Response

Mr. Korolkov reported that discussions focused on improving INSARAG's ability to respond flexibly to a broader range of disasters beyond earthquakes. Participants highlighted that many recent emergencies affecting large populations, such as floods, may not require traditional USAR capabilities, but can nevertheless benefit from capacities available across the INSARAG network.

Participants emphasized that INSARAG should make greater use of the diverse resources and expertise available across its network and continue promoting the concept of flexible response.

Key points reported by Mr. Korolkov included:

- Increasing awareness of how INSARAG capacities can support a wider variety of emergency situations.
- Recognizing that many teams possess additional capabilities, including boats, specialized vehicles, trained drivers, medical assets, and logistics expertise that could be utilized during different types of disasters.
- Encouraging teams to document and share their capacities through INSARAG mechanisms and directories to facilitate coordination and resource identification.
- Strengthening preparedness and planning for non-earthquake emergencies, particularly floods and other large-scale disasters.
- Continuing discussions through future meetings such as the INSARAG Steering Group (ISG), regional and Team Leaders meetings, to further develop and operationalize the concept of flexible response.

v. Strategic Objective 3: Strengthening Localization

Mr. Courtney reported that discussions on strengthening localization were highly positive, with participants strongly supporting the objective and recognizing its importance in improving disaster preparedness and response. Well-trained local responders are often the first on the scene and play a critical role in lifesaving operations during the initial stages of an emergency.

Mr. Courtney reported that participants identified several key takeaways, including:

- Expanding knowledge-sharing nationally and internationally through training and capacity-building initiatives.
- Building long-term relationships between international and local responders, facilitating future cooperation during emergencies.
- Improving access to local resources and support through established networks and partnerships.
- Reducing delays and decreasing operational challenges during the early stages of response.
- Minimizing confusion and improving coordination during the immediate post-disaster phase.
- Strengthening Host Nation Support arrangements through existing relationships and familiarity between stakeholders.
- Promoting a common operational language and shared understanding of INSARAG methodologies and standards.
- Supporting greater standardization of training, practices, and equipment.
- Creating opportunities for mutual learning, allowing experiences gained internationally to strengthen national response systems.

Mr. Courtney further reported that participants highlighted the value of involving a wider range of national stakeholders in localized training activities, including customs authorities, airport personnel, and other agencies that play important roles during international deployments. Establishing relationships with these actors before a disaster occurs can help remove barriers and facilitate more efficient international assistance when required.

Session 11 – USAR Response Experience Exchange

Mr. Evseev opened the session by presenting a video message from the Myanmar Fire Service Department expressing gratitude to the countries that provided humanitarian assistance following the 2025 earthquake. The video also highlighted Myanmar's commitment to strengthening its USAR capabilities and enhancing preparedness for future emergencies.

i. BLR-01 deployment to Myanmar Earthquake 2025

Mr. Aleksander Romanouski, BLR-01 team representative, briefly presented their experience responding to the 2025 Myanmar earthquake. The presentation also highlighted the challenges the team faced related to the region's climate and remote location. Following the mission, the team drew relevant conclusions and identified further ways to improve emergency response processes.

ii. ITA-02 deployment to Venezuela Earthquakes 2026

Mr. Andrea Marino, Team Leader of the ITA 01 Medium USAR Team, and Mr. Federico Passari (Italy), Team Leader of the ITA 02 Light USAR Team, presented reflections and lessons identified from the recent INSARAG deployment to Venezuela. Mr. Passari provided an overview of the mission, team structure, and coordination arrangements, while highlighting the strong support received from the Venezuelan authorities and communities.

The presentation focused on lessons identified during the response, including challenges related to the timely establishment of coordination structures, worksite marking and tracking, information management, and interoperability between responding teams. Mr. Passari emphasized the importance of effective communication, adherence to INSARAG standards, and strong cooperation among international teams to enhance operational efficiency and coordination.

Following the deployment, Mr. Passari shared key observations and recommendations aimed at strengthening future international USAR operations and promoting collective learning across the INSARAG network. During the discussion, participants exchanged views on coordination, information management, and interoperability, while also highlighting positive examples of collaboration and joint operations during the response.

iii. GER-03 deployment to Venezuela Earthquakes 2026

Mr. Irakli West, representing the GER-03 (@fire) Light USAR Team, presented observations and lessons identified from the team's recent deployment to Venezuela. Drawing on his operational field experience, he provided an overview of the deployment, highlighting the strong cooperation between German USAR organizations and the support received from Swiss partners in facilitating the mission.

The presentation covered key operational findings, including the challenges associated with deploying more than 48 hours after a major earthquake, information management, worksite tracking, and coordination with international response structures. Mr. West also emphasized the important contribution of search dogs in assessing large and complex worksites and noted that repeated assessments were sometimes necessary due to changing site conditions and information-sharing delays.

While acknowledging that few live rescues were achieved during the response, he stressed that the value of international USAR operations extends beyond lives saved, and includes providing certainty to affected communities, supporting local authorities, and contributing to informed decision-making. He also highlighted the hospitality and support provided by the Venezuelan authorities and population, as well as the strong cooperation and solidarity demonstrated across the INSARAG network.

During the discussion, participants reflected on the broader objectives of USAR deployments, emphasizing the importance of community support, systematic assessments, international cooperation, and knowledge-sharing. Participants also noted the value of integrating lessons identified from deployments into future Team Leaders Meetings to further strengthen collective learning across the INSARAG network.

Session 12 – INSARAG Guidelines 2026, Key Amendments and Recommendations for Effective Implementation at National/Team Level

Mr. Martijn Pavek and Ms. Yvonne Gutmann, representing the Guidelines Review Group (GRG), presented an overview of the revised INSARAG Guidelines 2026 and the extensive review process undertaken between 2022 and 2025. They explained that the revision cycle was extended by one year to incorporate lessons identified from the Türkiye-Syria earthquake response, and highlighted the broad representation of regions, classifications, and stakeholder groups within the GRG.

The presenters noted that the revised guidelines were developed based on recommendations from INSARAG working groups, Team Leaders Meetings and the Steering Group, which formally endorsed the final version in March 2026. More than 200 comments from across the network were reviewed and incorporated during the consultation process, reflecting a collaborative and inclusive approach to the revision.

A major change introduced in the 2026 edition is the simplification of the guidelines structure, replacing the previous lettered volumes with a clearer framework consisting of Volumes 1–5. The revision also aims to improve usability through harmonized terminology, enhanced clarity, and greater consistency across all sections. Key updates include revised guidance on national capacity-building, international assistance and host nation support arrangements, operational procedures, the integration of the Virtual OSOCC within the response cycle, updates to the IEC/R and quality assurance framework, and the incorporation of lessons identified from the Türkiye-Syria After Action Review. Developments relating to ICMS 3.0, flood response capabilities, and other specialist technical areas have also been included.

Looking ahead, the presenters highlighted plans to improve accessibility through future web-based and mobile application versions of the guidelines, while retaining downloadable PDF formats. They confirmed that the revised guidelines will enter into force on 1 January 2027, with transitional arrangements allowing teams undergoing IEC/R activities before that date to use either the current or revised edition, as appropriate.

Concluding, Mr. Pavek and Ms. Gutmann emphasized that the publication of the INSARAG Guidelines 2026 marks the beginning of a new cycle of continuous improvement rather than the end of the review process. They encouraged all network members to continue providing feedback from exercises and deployments to support future revisions. Participants expressed appreciation to the Guidelines Review Group and its co-chairs for their significant efforts, and it was noted that the revised guidelines would be officially launched during the Global Meeting ahead of their entry into force in 2027.

Session 13 – Member States Announcements and the AEME Troika 2027

The following statement from Member States was made during this session:

- The Russian Federation confirmed that:
 - RUS-03 will classify in September 2027.
 - Planning to host a USAR Coordination Course in May 2027 in St. Petersburg

The AEME Regional Chair called for future regional chairs and informed them that there was an expression of interest for 2028, by the UAE.

The Russian Federation as the current AEME Regional Chair noted that the AEME Troika in 2027 will be composed of the following upon confirmation:

- Outgoing Chair: Russian Federation
- Active Chair: South Africa
- Incoming Chair: United Arab Emirates (to be confirmed)

Session 14 – Key Regional Meeting Outcomes and Closing Address

i. Colonel-General Anatoly Suprunovskiy, Current AEME Regional Chair

The closing remarks were delivered by Colonel-General Anatoly Suprunovskiy, AEME Regional Chair, who thanked the Government of Brazil, the Paraná State Fire Service, and all Brazilian partners for their excellent organization of the meeting and warm hospitality. He also expressed appreciation to the INSARAG Secretariat, including the OCHA Geneva team, for their continued support and coordination.

Colonel-General Suprunovskiy acknowledged the valuable contributions of all participants and emphasized the importance of sharing operational experiences and lessons learned as a means of strengthening the INSARAG network. He reiterated that, while coordination mechanisms, methodologies and international cooperation continue to evolve, the ultimate objective of INSARAG remains the protection of human life and the strengthening of disaster response capabilities.

Looking ahead, he noted that the work of the network would continue through several activities planned for the remainder of the year. Colonel-General Suprunovskiy also welcomed the upcoming transfer of the AEME Chairmanship to South Africa, expressing confidence in the incoming Chair and reaffirming the outgoing Chair's willingness to support future regional initiatives. He concluded by thanking all participants for their engagement and encouraging members to continue working together in the spirit of partnership and cooperation.

ii. Dr. Elias Bongani Sithole, 2027 AEME Regional Chair

Dr. Elias Bongani Sithole, South Africa's Policy Focal Point and 2027 AEME Regional Chair, informed participants that South Africa will host the next INSARAG meetings in 2027. He reaffirmed the country's commitment to the INSARAG network, noting that preparations are underway and expressing confidence that South Africa will successfully deliver the event. He looked forward to welcoming the INSARAG community and assured participants of South Africa's full support for the meetings.

iii. Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, INSARAG Secretary

Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, INSARAG Secretary, thanked participants for the active and constructive discussions, including reflections on the recent Venezuela response. Participants were encouraged to continue engagement during the forthcoming Global Meeting.

Appreciation was expressed to the Russian Federation for its leadership of the AEME Regional Group and its efforts to strengthen regional cooperation and advance key priorities. Thanks, were also extended to all participants for their contributions, with best wishes conveyed to future regional leadership.