

# DRAFT Concept Note:

## South East Asia Disaster Law Advisory Group / Committee

Disaster Law Advisory Group / Committee / **South East Asia** / DRAFT February 2015

### Background

National Societies in South East Asia are among the most active in the world when it comes to disaster law. They play an important role, as a voice for the most vulnerable, to support and participate in the development of national legal, policy and institutional frameworks for disaster management, risk reduction and emergency response. Given the scale and frequency of disasters in South East Asia, it is crucial that strong legal frameworks are in place to reduce the risks, minimize the impact, and ensure effective response to disasters. As a bridge between communities and national/local authorities, National Societies are also in a unique position to promote understanding, awareness and effective implementation of these frameworks, and ensure the community voice is heard. Since the adoption of the IDRL Guidelines in 2007, most of the National Societies in this region have been involved in research, advocacy and technical assistance initiatives to support their governments and other key partners in disaster law work. Building upon their successes and the experience, knowledge and capacity they have developed, they are in a significant position to continue to promote and foster ongoing disaster law developments in the region, with technical support from the IFRC's Disaster Law Programme.

### Purpose and objectives of Disaster Law Advisory Group / Committee

While some National Societies in the region are still building their capacity and knowledge of disaster law, others are well advanced and are key interlocutors with their national authorities on disaster law issues. Establishing a regional disaster law advisory group / committee can serve as platform to foster increased engagement and learning among the National Societies. The key purpose and objectives of the proposed Disaster Law Advisory Group / Committee are as follows:

1. To increase and share knowledge / capacity in disaster law and legislative advocacy through peer-to-peer learning.
2. Identify and discuss opportunities / entry points to engage and collaborate with governments and relative stakeholders e.g. regional bodies (ASEAN), NGOs, CBOs, UN etc. on disaster law issues.
3. Highlight and discuss any challenges which National Societies face in promoting and pursuing disaster law work, and seek technical advice and inputs from other National Societies and the IFRC Disaster Law Programme.
4. Foster a regional, strategic approach to working on disaster law, and contribute (where relevant) to key international and regional forums on behalf of South East Asia National Societies.

### Membership

There are two options for the composition of the Disaster Law Advisory group/ committee:

1. It can be comprised of a disaster law focal point from each of the 11 National Societies in South East Asia

2. It can be comprised of 5 - 6 disaster law focal points from those National Societies already active in Disaster law in South East Asia (and subject to an increase in members as National Societies build their capacity).

Technical advice and oversight of the committee will be provided by the IFRC Regional Disaster Law Delegate for South East Asia. The advisory group / committee shall meet at least once per year, either in person or via skype/teleconference. Members will be responsible for keeping their National Society Leaders updated on disaster law developments at the global, regional and national levels (as discussed during the advisory group / committee meetings) and how their NS is / can be engaged. The discussions and outcomes of this group can also feed into other relevant regional networks, such as the Asia Pacific Legal Advisors Network and the South East Asia Community Safety and Resilience Forum.

### **Engaging with government and other partners**

One possibility for the advisory group / committee is to expand its scope to include representatives from the National Disaster Management Organizations (NDMOs). Given that National Societies play a key role as auxiliaries to their national authorities in the humanitarian sector, it is important that they regularly engage with their NDMOs to align their efforts to strengthen national laws and procedures for disaster management and response. Many National Societies have already been doing this – and do so regularly. However, the NDMOs could also be invited to join the advisory group / committee meetings on an ad hoc or regular basis.

Another option, as proposed during an ongoing research project examining the engagement between ASEAN and RCRC National Societies, is to formulate a joint NS/ASEAN Member State disaster law advisory group. This is another possibility that can be further explored in order to maximize collaboration in this area, and ensure a cohesive, productive, regional approach between states and National Societies. They can also help to position South East Asia as one of the world's leading regions in disaster law.

### **Contact information**

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