International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Red Cross Red Crescent engagement with ASEAN: a focus on the ASEAN Agreement for Disaster Management and Emergency Response

**RCRC overview / ACDM meeting, Brunei Darussalam / October 2014**

# Background

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Southeast Asia regional delegation serves as a coordinating body among National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which are present in each country that is part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The following document outlines key areas of collaboration between ASEAN, the IFRC as well as National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies, in their joint effort to operationalize the ASEAN Agreement for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER).

## Cooperation Framework: ASEAN and the IFRC

In 2008, with strong momentum from the National Societies in Southeast Asia, the IFRC Southeast Asia regional delegation initiated a Cooperation Framework between ASEAN and the IFRC and National Societies[[1]](#footnote-1), in order to solidify the relationship, strengthen and formalize coordination between both the IFRC and ASEAN. This Cooperation Framework is still being discussed with the ASEAN secretariat and under review by ASEAN Committee for Disaster Management members.

The Framework itself recognizes not only the similar mandate and vision of both organizations, but as well the need for both parties to work more closely and in a more coordinated manner; particularly in light of ASEAN’s Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response, which outlines the need for ASEAN member States to undertake cooperation activities to increase preparedness and mitigate disasters. This also includes areas of collaboration on humanitarian issues such as gender, migration, and more.

## Technical cooperation with AHA Centre

The technical cooperation between National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the IFRC and ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance is gaining momentum in 2014. This is preceded by a visit by the Director of the AHA Centre Director at the recent Community Safety and Resilience Forum in Bangkok (Sept 2014), which brought together directors from disaster management, health and organizational development of 11 Southeast Asian National Societies. A draft joint action plan was drafted subsequently and further discussed on 8 October 2014 at the AHA Centre. Key areas of cooperation identified by all partners include: information sharing, formulation of operational frameworks, and common leaning and capacity-building activities.

## AADMER Report

The IFRC is presently compiling financial and narrative data from the past 3 years, in order to document the contribution of the Red Cross Red Crescent on the implementation of AADMER. At the country level, the contribution of National Societies is being documented against the Hyogo Framework of Action. This will be further combined into an overall Red Cross Red Crescent AADMER report, against the workplan agreed upon in 2010 by ASEAN member states.

## Joint simulation exercise

The IFRC is technically and financially supporting National Societies’ participation in ASEAN’s regional civil military simulation exercises including:

***DiREx 2013 in Thailand*** – Co-hosted by the Royal Thai Government, the South Korean Government and the Thai Red Cross. IFRC provided technical support with the table topic exercise on disaster law and the mobilization of volunteers.

***ARDEX 2013* in Vietnam** – participation of Viet Nam RC alongside Vietnamese government

***MMDIReX 2014* Indonesia** – Indonesian RC (PMI) worked closely with Indonesian Government (BNPB) ensuring PMI participation in all aspects of the exercise.

***AHeX 14 Thailand*** – participation of Thai RC and IFRC.

***DREE/LMI***- A technical presentation was also delivered on Community Safety and Resilience (CSR) and IDRL/DL at the Disaster Response Exercise and Exchange (DREE) under the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI), which was held in Bangkok in July 2014.

***ASEAN Disaster Preparedness and Response Simulation Exercise:*** The Myanmar Red Cross Society and IFRC were present in the simulation in September 2014, which included a strong focus on international disaster response law issues.

## Regional School Safety initiative in SEA

As a founding member of the Asian Coalition on School Safety[[2]](#footnote-2), the IFRC is currently supporting an initiative to develop a Comprehensive School Safety Model. The model will harmonize existing tools, focusing on Pillar 2 (*School Disaster Management*) & Pillar 3 *(Risk Reduction and resilience Education)* from the Comprehensive Framework on School Safety. The IFRC would like to contribute to an aligned approach to school safety, also defining the role of National Societies’ youth and volunteers. The National Societies - as auxiliary to their respective governments - have great potential to play a key role in schools.

## ASEAN Day on Disaster Management (ADDM)

As part of regional and national level advocacy between ASEAN, national authorities and the Red Cross Red Crescent, the IFRC and National Societies are conducting joint celebrations for ASEAN Day for Disaster Management and the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction.

## Disaster Law

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have been working together with the IFRC to support their governments in developing and/or strengthening national legal frameworks for disaster management and response across the region.  Developing laws that can facilitate incoming international assistance in an emergency (IDRL), and which address key aspects of disaster risk reduction, are an important part of implementing the AADMER.  National Societies are contributing to this process though the conduct of research, provision of technical assistance, and undertaking advocacy initiatives in Lao PDR, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Myanmar and Cambodia. They are also working alongside governments and other humanitarian partners (such as the UN) to test and enhance the implementation of existing laws and procedures, for example through ASEAN/government-led simulation exercises during 2013/14 in Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar.

## Regional DRR Conferences leading to the WCDRR in 2015

RCRC, as one of the key stakeholder in Disaster Risk Reduction is being very actively engaged in various forums, platforms, and conferences in the process of consultation for the HFA2 not only regionally but worldwide – providing significant contribution by sharing its experiences, key lessons learnt and recommendations. For the 6th Asian Ministerial Conference, the IFRC has been playing a key role as the coordinator of various events including the development of key background documents on Building Community Resilience and together with ADRRN, the preparation of the Technical Session on Community Resilience. IFRC supported not only participation of National Red Cross Societies from Southeast Asia but also some support was reserved for participation of NDMA representatives. As for the World Conference on DRR, ongoing discussions are happening to ensure adequate representatives from RCRC alongside governments.

## Joint capacity building

The IFRC is promoting stronger partnerships between National Societies their host governments, through joint capacity-building activities focusing on reducing risks in communities. Thematic areas include: early warning, urban resilience, national disaster response teams, pandemic preparedness, climate change adaptation, gender, disaster law etc.

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1. The Framework covers all National Societies in the ASEAN States in addition to Timor-Leste. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Founding members of the Asian Coalition for School Safety include: *UNICEF, UNESCO, Save the Children, Plan International, ADPC, Child Fund and ADRRN* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)