

Welcome Remarks

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Your excellency, Ambassador Marie-Louise Hannan, Ambassador of Canada to ASEAN

My colleague and friend Deborah Cote, Canadian Red Cross and the accompanying delegation from Canada,

Ambassador Thongphachanh Sonnasinh, Vice-president Lao Red Cross

Khun Chamnong Sangmahachai, Assistant Secretary General, Thai Red Cross

Mr. Raja Dato Nazrin bin Raja Tan Sri Aznam, Member of the Board and Chairman of the Malaysian Red Crescent International Relations Committee,

LT. Gen. Dr Amnat Barlee, Chair of the Southeast Asia Community Safety and Resilience Forum and Director of Relief and Community Health Bureau, Thai Red Cross

And I recognise my good friend, Mr. Vilaypong Sisomvang, Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Lao PDR,

Excellencies, colleagues and friends,

We are proud to have here with us representatives from government partners, especially the NDMOs and the representatives of the national institutions responsible for women's affairs, we have also our member NS from Southeast Asia region, our partners from the UN family and the INGOs. Thank you all for joining us and for making the time and effort to come together and share lessons learned from our partnerships and working together over the past years with the support from the Regional Resilience Initiative (RRI).

As you know RRI program activities covered all the ASEAN countries plus Timor Leste. But most of all our achievements would not have had this dynamic influence and reach without the contribution of the volunteers and staff of the 11 red cross and red crescent national societies. Together with these NS we established new partnerships and strengthened existing ones, especially with the government agencies and the local authorities, with ASEAN Secretariat and the AHA Centre, with UN Women, UNISDR, UNFPA, OCHA and the rest of the UN family. I'm also very proud of the partnership with our INGO colleagues especially through the ASEAN School Safety Initiative and the important work we did together in co-hosting the 2nd ASSI Conference and the mobilization of our youth network to do the mapping of the school safety activities in the region.

Forgive me for boring you with some statistics, but I'd like to share with you some numbers:

Under the RRI Initiative, we managed to:

- Train 1181 persons (52% female) from the region, on important life-saving skills, including 612 people on gender and diversity; 146 people on climate change; 57 people trained as part of the ASEAN ACE program in partnership with AHA Centre; 366 people trained on communications and advocacy, including 99 in management positions.
- We have scaled up our engagement with ASEAN bodies including the Secretariat, the AHA Centre and the ACDM, with 13 initiatives with ASEAN Secretariat (10 on DM and 3 on health), 10 initiatives with AHA Centre and 6 events with ACDM.
- We managed qualitative interventions on gender and diversity with 56 interventions, including 32 trainings, 26 technical support to NSs and 8 technical support to external partners.
- 6 NS have developed gender and diversity institutional policies and/or strategies.
- 7 NS have revised, contextualized or translated gender and diversity tools for inclusive programming based on our inclusive VCA and Minimum Standard Commitments tools.
- 3 NS have conducted institutional gender and diversity self-assessments.

Some of the qualitative contribution of RRI to the strengthening of the resilience of the ASEAN community and the institutional development at local, national and regional levels include the technical support to government authorities and community engagement on the development of disaster law. AS you know IFRC has been developing unique expertise in disaster law over the past two decades and have worked with governments to develop important international guidance tools and model legislations among others. In ASEAN region, thanks to RRI support, we have managed to work with governments to establish new legislative instruments, review and strengthen existing ones and help support a peer to peer learning. Last year with the endorsement of ACDM and in partnership with ASEAN Secretariat we completed the first mapping of disaster law and the institutionalization of AADMER into national laws. Thanks to the unwavering support of Mr. Vilaypong and the Thai DDPM who co-chair the ACDM Working Group on Mitigation and Prevention. We intend to build on this work and continue with local partnerships to support the establishment of strong inclusive and gender sensitive disaster laws in the ASEAN region.

In this context, our research on SGBV which has been completed in three countries (Indonesia, Laos, and Philippines) will feed into policy development and the strengthening of preparedness and prevention tools, in order to prevent violence against the most vulnerable and protect children, adolescents, women and men from being exploited, abused or violated during disasters, when the most vulnerable face the greatest risks. Our research outcomes will be shared with you in this workshop and we do intend to continue this important work into the rest of the ASEAN countries as was endorsed by the ACDM.

I'm also very proud of another significant initiative that supports the red cross red crescent national societies' own initiatives to support each other. The Thai-Lao cross border collaboration is a great initiative by both societies and a great example. Building on the first conference of the Thai-Lao red cross collaboration, RRI supported the cross-border contingency planning with 100 participants from 20 red cross chapters from across the Mekong River coming together to prepare and plan for scenarios that included drought, flood and health epidemics. IN follow up to this exercise, Thai and Lao Red Cross societies have just finalized an MoU whereby Thai RC will support the capacity of Lao RC in a number of areas; and in turn we have utilized our IFRC Capacity Building Fund to support Lao RC capacity in disaster preparedness and institutional development.

Last week I met with Dr Amnat Barlee who just returned from visiting Myanmar with a Thai RC delegation, where they provided generous support to Myanmar Red Cross to address needs in the Rakhine State. During this visit, Myanmar and Thai red cross societies discussed the cross-border collaboration and agreed to instantiate the Myanmar-Thai cross border collaboration. IFRC will be ready to support such an excellent initiative.

The regional cooperation, peer to peer support and the sharing of knowledge, learning and technical skills have also been a core RRI component. The RRI supported 4 regional networks in Southeast Asia, the annual Southeast Asia Leadership meeting, the Community Safety and Resilience Forum (bringing together heads of DM, Health and OD from all 11 NSs), the Gender and Diversity Network, and the Southeast Asia Youth Network (through whom we did the school safety mapping). As part of this cross learning and sharing of knowledge we have produced with the support from RRI case studies, public awareness and public education materials, shared community voices in videos and other formats, and continue to support the online resilience library as an excellent knowledge sharing platform for all Southeast Asia partners.

There is a lot of red cross and red crescent achievements in Southeast Asia that we have been able to support thanks to the Regional Resilience Initiative.

And to conclude, I want to recognize and share with you that behind this excellent initiative is a unique strategic partnership between the Canadian Red Cross and the Canadian Government that made all of this possible. This partnership and the generous support of the Canadian Government and people, have made it possible to achieve all what we have been able to achieve throughout the past 4 years.

And of course, our member national societies with their committed staff and volunteers are the ones leading the implementation and building the resilience of their communities, in partnership with their government authorities and the affected communities.

Thank you and I wish you a very successful workshop.