

Remarks by Giorgio Ferrario

Head of CCST and Representative to ASEAN

Dear members of the ASEAN Disaster Management Committee, the ASEAN Committee for Women and the ASEAN Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Women's and Children's Rights, welcome to the ASEAN CONSULTATION MEETING on the RESEARCH RESULTS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER DISASTERS IN ASEAN COUNTRIES.

A warm welcome also to leadership and members of Philippines Red Cross, Palang Merah Indonesia and Lao Red Cross, as well as colleagues from

ICRC,

UNOCHA,

UN Women,

Thank you also to the Partner National Societies and external partners as well as the staff of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Secretariat from Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok and Manila who are here with us today.

I would especially like to thank the Government of Canada and the Canadian Red Cross and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian Red Cross for their generous support to this research project and for joining us at this important consultation today and tomorrow.

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a vital humanitarian protection concern, emerging from gender inequality and an abuse of power. Considering that SGBV is the leading cause of death among women aged 18-44¹ (in some countries), that at least one-third of women experience some type of physical, sexual or emotional violence in their lifetime (WHO, 2016)² and that Asia Pacific is the most disaster-prone region in the world (UNNC, 2016)³, it is crucial to assist both

¹ Women on the frontlines of Peace and Security, p.180:

https://books.google.com.my/books?id=iX4jalSyYpEC&pg=PA180&lpg=PA180&dq=SGBV+leading+cause+of+death+for+women&source=bl&ots=ar1TgAFhml&sig=JjGVmjrSrTs9O7R2nje7I8-LHMs&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=SGBVper cent20leadingper cent20causeper cent20ofper cent20deathper cent20forper cent20women&f=false

² <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/>

³ <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53407#.WW1x28lLdZo>

female and male SGBV survivors with stronger support mechanisms during disasters and other emergencies.

Past research illustrates that risks to SGBV increase during disasters.

Why does this increase occur? Women, girls, men and boys lose their homes and livelihoods.

The destruction of homes forces families to relocate to temporary shelters, which can be crowded, badly designed and can exclude important safety measures such as proper lighting, separate toilets for men and women with locks and police patrols who secure the area.

Such conditions can lead to an increase in different types of SGBV, such as sexual harassment and trafficking.

The loss of livelihoods forces some women and girls into giving sexual favours for access to basic services. And sometimes the perpetrators are the aid workers themselves. Displacement coupled with economic hardship often initiates increased tension in families and communities, often resulting in heightened domestic and interpersonal violence.

And it is not only women and girls who suffer. Men, boys, lesbian, gay, transgender and intersex (LGTI) individuals also

experience violence during and after disasters, however, awareness on the issue is low and a lot of the data is anecdotal.

The report that we will be discussing during the next two days: **THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN DISASTERS AND CRISES** contributes new evidence on why and how sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)⁴ risks increase during humanitarian disasters.

It details how humanitarian actors can better prevent and respond to such escalation of SGBV, and better meet the needs of affected women, girls, men and boys.

This research is based on community views of disaster-affected women, adolescent girls, men and adolescent boys in three ASEAN countries: Indonesia, Lao PDR and the Philippines.

This research has been a successful collaboration between IFRC and the ASEAN Committee for Disaster Management Working Group on Prevention and Mitigation.

It directly contributes to Priority Programme 4: PROTECT⁵ of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and

⁴ Sexual and Gender-based violence is defined as an umbrella term for any harmful act that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to a woman, man, girl or boy on the basis of their gender. Sexual and Gender-based violence is a result of gender inequality and abuse of power. (International Conference Resolution 3)

⁵ Component 6

Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme 2016-2020⁶.

While only three ASEAN countries were included in this phase: Philippines, Indonesia and Lao PDR, ranging from the most disaster affected to more mid-range disaster affected, we hope to, however, continue the research in all disaster affected ASEAN countries.

Data for this report was collected in two disaster affected sites in each of the three participating country locations⁷, to:

- 1) Understand how SGBV affects women, girls, men and boys differently in all disaster affected ASEAN countries during and after disasters;
- 2) Map essential SGBV response services in the health, legal, security and psychosocial sectors, that remain functioning during a disaster;
- 3) Document how public authorities (including ASEAN coordinated response) and humanitarian actors (especially the Movement⁸ actors) have responded to disaster affected communities in the areas of SGBV prevention and response. Collect and document good practices but also recommend what could be done better.

⁶ Component 6.

⁷ Please see ANNEX 1 for more information on data collection sites.

⁸ "The Movement" refers to International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which is composed of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee for the Red Cross and the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies. It is a network of 80 million people that helps those facing disaster, conflict and health and social problems (<https://www.icrc.org/en/who-we-are/movement>)

Results show that in each of the countries the risks to early marriage and domestic violence increase. Most respondents expressed that adolescent girls, followed by adolescent boys and elderly women, are the most vulnerable to SGBV both during disaster and non-disaster time. Some of the key factors that increase the risk to SGBV, shared married respondents in all three countries, are:

- the lack of employment
- lack of security
- children becoming lost or being abandoned during disaster time

There are simple interventions that can aid in preventing SGBV during disasters.

Humanitarian actors should collect sex, age and disability disaggregated data during their assessments, which give crucial information for more accurate beneficiary registration, safe shelter design and more equitable relief distribution.

Both governmental and non-governmental actors should have a list of essential services that remain functioning during disaster time, in case survivors need to access them.

Humanitarian aid actors should have an internal code of conduct on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, which expects a standard of ethical behavior during all interventions.

This research report also touches upon how current national laws and policies address *(1) protection and response to SGBV in disasters and (2) Gender equality in disaster risk management systems* and how well the distinctive needs of women and girls affected by disasters are met.

ASEAN bodies, such as ACDM, ACW and ACWC have a key role to play in preventing and responding to SGBV during disasters – by advocating stronger Disaster Law Frameworks which take into consideration the needs of male and female survivors – by ensuring that the Regional Guidelines on Social Protection integrate differential gendered requirements in designing and implementing social protection measures for the most vulnerable – and by further operationalising the Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

I look forward to interesting and productive discussion over the next two days and hope that we can, together, reach some effective recommendations to better prevent and respond to SGBV during future disasters in the region.