

2018 ASEAN Disaster Risk Governance Academic Seminar
24 – 26 September 2018, Thammasat University, Tha Prachan Campus

Opening Remarks by Ms. Michaela Friberg-Storey
Humanitarian Diplomacy Advisor for Asia-Pacific

Mr. Chainarong Vasanasomsithi, Deputy Director General of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, Thailand, representing ASEAN as co-chair of the Working Group on Prevention and Mitigation of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management Prevention,

Assoc. Prof. Gasinee Witoonchart, Rector of Thammasat University, our host today,

Representatives from Governments, in ASEAN as well as the Global Affairs Canada

Esteemed academe partners, development partners, seminar participants; and guests,

Good morning.

- I'm pleased to be in good company today with our professors, researchers, students and professionals from across Southeast Asia, in particular: Thammasat University, Chulalongkorn University, Ateneo de Manila University, Asian Institute of Management, Bandung Technology Institute, and S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies.
- At the start of our seminar, I would like to acknowledge communities in several ASEAN who are currently facing disasters, in particular in the Philippines following the devastating cyclone as well as in Attapeu, Lao PDR and Lombok, Indonesia. As we speak, our National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies are working hand in hand with governments and partners to provide necessary relief and support at the time they recover from the shocks.

- In each emergency, we see the ASEAN solidarity in action, and the importance of local actors who are first on the scene. As we respond to emergencies, we also come to understand the importance of having strong policies in support of our joint action, not only in the relief phase, but to build strong and resilient communities in the region.
- IFRC recognizes academia as an essential partner in building credible, scientific knowledge about disaster risk and climate change, and in stimulating discourse on the role of institutions, laws and policies towards inclusive and climate-smart disaster risk governance. No one organization, institution or government can manage or resolve the many complex issues related to climate and disaster risk governance alone – that is why a partnership and networked approach is essential to achieve the best outcomes we can. This workshop and our discussion over the next three days is testament to this.
- For Red Cross and Red Crescent, it is essential that our governance discussions are firmly centered around people – women, men, boys and girls. We place high value on the positive impact that human-centered stories and in-depth research have on disaster risk management policies and community resilience actions.
- Since 2007, The IFRC Disaster Law Programme, working together with National Societies across Southeast Asia, has conducted research and has provided technical assistance to Southeast Asia governments in crafting effective disaster laws:
 - This includes country-level research on “Law and Disaster Risk Reduction” in 4 ASEAN Member States, and country-level research on “International Disaster Response Laws, Rules and Principles” (IDRL) in 5 ASEAN Member States. Just this year, the Disaster Law Programme in partnership with the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management launched the ASEAN Disaster Law Mapping Report, a research which maps the institutionalization of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) in domestic disaster laws.
 - The Disaster Law Programme has also supported 7 ASEAN Member States in disaster law review and drafting processes.

- After years of research and technical assistance on this topic, we have learned that is not enough for us to settle with generic “disaster laws” that only look at institutional mechanisms. We at IFRC commit to work with Southeast Asia National Societies and partners to advocate for better integration of protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) measures in disaster law frameworks. Most recently we have scaled up our efforts to ensure better links to prevent and ensure protection from sexual and gender-based violence in disasters and to highlight the important role that disaster law can play in this regard.

This is reflected in the IFRC’s recent collaboration with ASEAN on research that chronicles the negative impact of disasters on sexual and gender-based violence – particularly on at-risk women, girls and boys in Southeast Asia - and includes recommendations on how these considerations could be better integrated into disaster laws.

- With that, I hope that the partnership between IFRC and the academic community will pave the way for a more open and in-depth discourse on these topics and catalyze a sustainable platform for the exchange of knowledge and good examples on effective legal frameworks for inclusive and climate-smart disaster risk governance across Southeast Asia.
- Before ending my remarks, I would like to acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada as well as the Canadian Red Cross, our trusted and long-time partners with regards to Disaster Risk Reduction, Gender Equality as well as engagement with ASEAN on disaster law issues.
- On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, I would like to welcome all of you to the 2018 Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Governance Academic Seminar, and I wish all of our participants and guests a fruitful discussion for the next three days. Thank you very much.