

snapshot

Overview: Red Cross Red Crescent Engagement with ASEAN

Background

As a coordinating body for 189 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) promotes and fosters relationships between the Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) and external stakeholders at the global and regional level, including with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The following document outlines a few key areas of collaboration between the RCRC and ASEAN, with a specific focus on joint efforts to operationalize the ASEAN Agreement for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) and its 21 priority projects.

The IFRC – ASEAN Cooperation Framework

In 2008, with strong momentum from the National Societies in the region, the IFRC Southeast Asia regional delegation commenced the process of developing a Memorandum of Understanding between ASEAN and the IFRC. The overall objective of this is to solidify the relationship, and to strengthen and formalise coordination between both the IFRC and ASEAN. Through a subsequent consultation process with the ASEAN secretariat, the Memorandum was developed into a Cooperation Framework in 2012. The Framework recognises not only the similar mandate and vision of both organisations, but also the need for both parties to work more closely and in a more coordinated manner at the technical level in the areas of emergency health and disaster management.



Visit of the National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies to AHA Centre
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ASEAN humanitarian diplomacy brief

The IFRC has commissioned the development of an ASEAN humanitarian diplomacy brief in 2015 for National Societies in Southeast Asia. The brief will provide an overview on ASEAN, while also serving as a guidance document for the RCRC in order to enhance engagement and dialogue with ASEAN Country Permanent Representatives at the national and regional level. This should also aim to support broader efforts to institutionalize technical cooperation, and solidify the Cooperation Framework.

HFA and AADMER reporting

The IFRC is presently compiling data from the past 3 years in order to document the contribution of National Societies to the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA). The process is ongoing in Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand, with Philippines and potentially other countries following in the coming weeks. This will be further combined into an overall Red Cross Red Crescent AADMER report, against the work plan agreed upon in 2010 by ASEAN member states. Both mappings will help to identify area of cooperation and the contribution of the Red Cross Red Crescent, profiling National Societies and their respective areas of expertise.

Disaster Law

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have been working together with the IFRC and other key partners such as UN OCHA and UNDP to support 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. In fact, the AADMER work programme 2010-2015 refers to the [IDRL Guidelines](#) as a key tool for states to use when developing national legal frameworks for disaster management and response. National Societies are contributing to this process through the conduct of research, provision of technical assistance, and undertaking advocacy and training initiatives in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, [Myanmar](#), the Philippines, [Thailand](#), [Viet Nam](#). They are also working alongside governments and humanitarian partners to test and enhance the implementation of existing laws and procedures, for example through ASEAN or government-led simulation exercises.

Technical Cooperation with AHA Centre

The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance and IFRC have been working on increasing technical cooperation in line with projects 1 and 4 of the AADMER work programme. Exchange visits between National Societies and the Executive Director of AHA have led to the drafting of a joint action plan in October 2014 at the AHA Centre in Jakarta. Key areas of cooperation include: information sharing, formulation of operational frameworks, and common learning and capacity-building activities including RCRC facilitation and participation in the AHA Centre Executive

Representation and events

- **ASEAN Day on Disaster Management:** 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. [Click here](#) to read about Thai Red Cross Society's activities in 2014.
- **6th Asian Ministerial Conference:** the IFRC played a key role as the coordinator of various events including the development of key background documents on Building Community Resilience together with ADRRN, the preparation of the Technical Session on Community Resilience and a side event of the role of law in enhancing disaster risk reduction and making communities more resilient. IFRC supported participation of National Red Cross Societies from Southeast Asia as well as national disaster management authorities. [Click here](#) to read the press release.

programme. There is also a strong willingness to align institutional preparedness between the RCRC regional disaster response teams and ASEAN emergency rapid assessment teams.

The Health and Communicable Diseases Division (HCDD) of ASEAN

Representatives of the Communicable Diseases Division of the ASEAN Secretariat attended the Southeast Asia Pandemic and Public Health in Emergencies Workshop in Singapore in November 2014. Together they outlined areas of expected cooperation for pandemics and public health in emergencies, along with government representatives. The year 2015 is critical year for ASEAN since member states are discussing a new health strategy. The ASEAN health representative presented the main strategic directions of health in ASEAN, emphasizing that 2015-2016 are important for planning between joint initiatives with the RCRC. Participants included the ASEAN Secretariat, ADB, ICRC, and academia. [Click here](#) to read more.

Promoting School Safety

National Societies can play an important role in engaging and influencing youth through their volunteer and youth networks, complemented by their auxiliary status with the Ministry of Education. In order to maximize these opportunities, the IFRC is currently supporting an initiative to develop a Comprehensive School Safety Model for National Societies. As a founding member of the Asia-Pacific Coalition on School Safety, the RCRC has pledged to harmonize existing tools for school safety at the national and regional level – also contributing to project 15 of the AADMER work programme.



The Regional Resilience Workshop, hosted by IFRC and Thai Red Cross in Bangkok, brought together the National Societies in the region with the government counterparts and other key stakeholders, including ASEAN.

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- **The 3rd ASEAN Task Force on Non-communicable Diseases Meeting in November 2014** in Singapore provided an opportunity for the RCRC to strengthen commitment to the task force's work plan, reinforcing the contributions that National Societies can bring at the community level while also exploring further opportunities for collaboration.

- **A Regional Resilience Workshop** in February 2015 hosted 8 National Societies (including their disaster management, disaster law, communications and health focal points) and several national disaster management organization counterparts in Bangkok. The focus was on conducting humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy for disaster risk reduction and disaster law. Contributions from UN-ISDR, Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, ASEAN Secretariat, Oxfam and RCRC Climate Centre gave an external perspective, while also highlighting the areas for engagement in Sendai, the 25 RCRC International Conference, and disaster law opportunities in the region.

Civil and Military Relations and Joint Simulation exercises

With military engagement as responders in natural disasters and complex emergencies on the rise, coordination is essential. As part of the Project 5 of the AADMER Work Programme, 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. The outcome statement from the exercise included a commitment to developing, adhering to and operationalizing national disaster response management legislation with clear point of contact, structure and process to coordinate and facilitate incoming assistance – based on recommendations from IFRC.

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. Recommendations were also made by IFRC to further test the legal framework for international assistance, and we discussed as part of the After Action Review.

AHeX 14 Thailand

Included the participation of Thai RC and IFRC.

ASEAN Disaster Preparedness and Response Simulation Exercise in Myanmar 2013:

The Myanmar Red Cross Society was a key partner in the organization and conduct of this event, with IFRC as part

of the facilitation team. MRCS successfully advocated for the inclusion of a presentation on IDRL and IDRL-related injects during the exercise, as provided by the IFRC regional disaster law delegate.

Upcoming ARF DiREx 2015

To be co-hosted by the Government of Malaysia and China and involving the Malaysian Red Crescent Society and IFRC (May 2015).



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