

## Should there be greater recognition of International Light Teams?

### 1. Background

Currently, Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams are organised into Light, Medium and Heavy teams according to their capacity to provide the key components of USAR. Due to their limitations, Light USAR teams do not partake in the INSARAG External Classification (IEC) process and therefore do not normally deploy internationally.

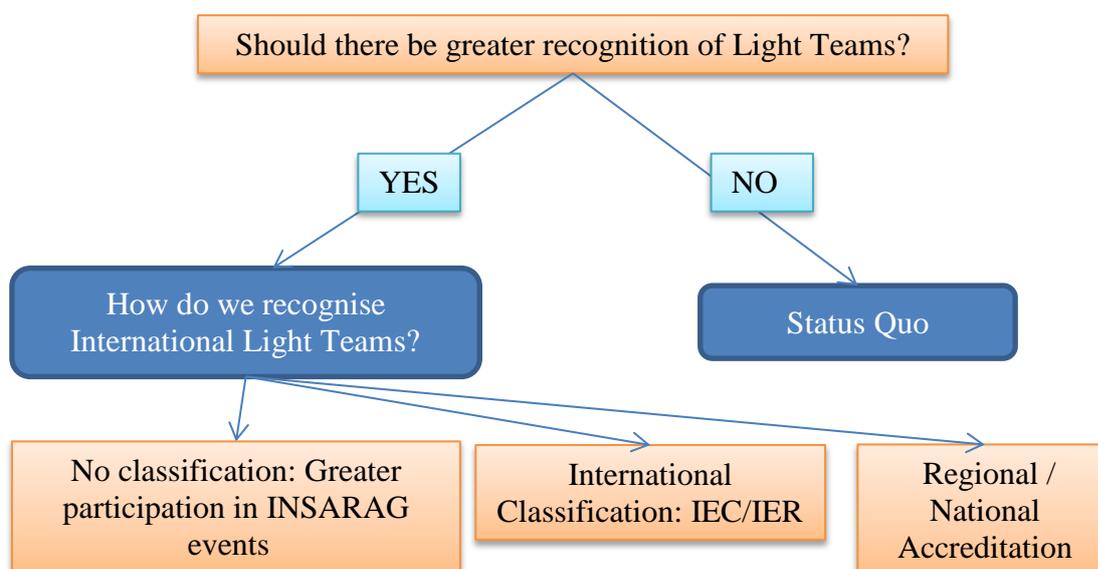
### 2. Analysis

In the Nepal Earthquake crisis in 2015, subsequent feedbacks have indicated that smaller and lighter teams were able to provide a more flexible response to the crisis compared to the Medium and Heavy teams. Lighter teams provided particularly positive contributions in areas where the infrastructure in the affected area did not necessarily allow for a “standard” response of full Medium and Heavy teams within a short timeframe. In addition, mobilisation of international USAR assets should be cognisant of its impact on medium and long term humanitarian aid response, especially Heavy and Medium response and how this could logistically cause pressure on the host government. For example, in the aftermath of the Nepal Earthquake crisis, the competition for space between the USAR teams and other non-USAR teams (such as medical teams) caused strain on the effective provision of humanitarian aid.

Some teams have noted that, in a disaster situation, there will automatically be an international response by the light teams which are, by nature, outside the current INSARAG scope. As such, it has been suggested that a holistic approach to response, including greater recognition of International Light USAR teams, should be included in future planning.

### 3. Possible Discussion Points

Considering the above analysis, INSARAG should consider the value of light teams in disaster situations and consider the following:



# International Light Teams

Concept Paper

Prepared by AEME Group

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## 4. Way forward

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This issue has been raised at the INSARAG Steering Group (ISG) Meeting 2016 in Geneva for consideration, and it was recommended that, in consultation with the regions and relevant stakeholders, it should continue to be discussed in the regional and team leaders' meeting in 2016.

The key discussion points are:

1. It is recognised that these are teams that do not necessarily fall under 'Heavy' or 'Medium' based on the INSARAG Guidelines; they could be 'specialised' teams on their own, or composed of downsized Heavy or Medium teams. Such teams should be deployed to support particular functions, such the running of OSOCC and RDC.
2. Specialised teams should abide by the INSARAG principles and minimum standards, such as the reporting and coordination requirements. Quality assurance of these teams could be achieved through a third party evaluation mechanism (e.g. EU mechanism) and could be done regionally.
3. Specialised teams should not be INSARAG classified so to ensure that no further pressure is placed on the IEC/IER system.