



**Meeting of the INSARAG Regional Group
Africa/Europe/Middle East
Tunis, Tunisia
25-26 October 2011**

Chairman's Summary and Work-Plan

The meeting of the INSARAG Regional Group Africa/Europe/Middle East was held in Tunis, Tunisia on 25-26 October 2011. The meeting was hosted by the Government of Sweden, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, the INSARAG Africa/Europe/Middle East Regional Group Chair and was supported by the INSARAG Africa/Europe/Middle East Regional Antenna in Tunisia and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA Geneva), the INSARAG Secretariat.

The meeting was opened by Minister Habib Essid, the Ministry of Interior of Tunisia. It was chaired by Mr. Kjell Larsson, Chairperson of the INSARAG Africa/Europe/Middle East Regional Group. The meeting was attended by 86 participants from 34 countries and 12 organizations. A list of participants is attached as Annex A.

The meeting included the following agenda items:

1. Review of Action Points from the INSARAG Africa Europe Middle East Regional Group Meeting of 2010
2. Reports of INSARAG Activities Worldwide since the last Regional Meeting and Overview of Upcoming Events
 - INSARAG Steering Group
 - INSARAG USAR Team Leaders Meeting
 - INSARAG Regional Group Asia Pacific
 - INSARAG Africa/Europe/Middle East Regional Antenna
 - INSARAG External Classification (IEC) Classifiers Workshop
3. INSARAG Working Group Updates: Training, Operations and Medical Working Group
4. INSARAG External Classification (IEC) Updates and IEC Planning
5. Response to the Earthquakes in New Zealand and Japan
6. Development of 'Beyond the Rubble' Concept
7. European Union (EU) Civil Protection Modules and Flood Rescue Project
8. Building National USAR Capacity and INSARAG Capacity Development Assessment Missions
9. Proposal on the USAR Capacity Development
10. Discussion on the Implementation of the INSARAG Hyogo Declaration including partnerships and projects in the INSARAG Africa/Europe/Middle East Region
11. Proposal for the way forward towards INSARAG Guidelines 2015
12. Update on the INSARAG Web Page
13. Any Other Business
14. Election of the Regional Chairperson for 2012

At the opening of the meeting, the participants expressed their solidarity with colleagues in Turkey and expressed their condolences and heartfelt sympathies to the Government and the people of Turkey at this time of loss and suffering following the earthquake in the Eastern part of the country.

The discussions during the meeting resulted in recommendations for follow-up activities, as described in the work-plan of the INSARAG Africa/Europe/Middle East Regional Group for 2011/2012 given below.

1) Reports of INSARAG Activities Worldwide since the Last Regional Meeting and Overview of Upcoming Events

-The INSARAG Secretariat provided an update on INSARAG activities worldwide; and the INSARAG Regional Chairman and INSARAG Regional Antenna on the regional activities since the last Regional Meeting of 2010. The Regional Group appreciated the progress made in the region in line with the work plan of 2010/2011.
For Information: ALL

2) INSARAG Working Groups

INSARAG Training Working Group (TWG):

- Mr. Terje Skavdal provided an overview of the progress of TWG's activities. The group met twice in 2011 (March/April in Costa Rica and October in UAE). The TWG has 11 members from 3 regions. The TWG was requested by the July 2011 IEC Workshop participants to finalise the revision of the IEC/IER Handbook including the IEC Checklist. Mr. Pete Crook on behalf of the TWG Chairman presented an update of the revised IEC/IER handbook products. These products are expected to be ready by mid-November 2011 and circulated amongst INSARAG members for feedback. The Regional Group agreed these revised products should be tabled at the INSARAG Steering Group Meeting in 2012. The Regional Group will continue to participate in and support the activities of TWG in 2012.

Action: INSARAG Training Working Group / Member States / INSARAG Secretariat.

INSARAG Operations Working Group (OWG):

-The Chairman of the OWG, Mr. David Norlin, provided an overview of the progress of its activities. The OWG was endorsed by the INSARAG Steering Group in February 2011 to pursue the lessons learned from Haiti Earthquake of 2010. The OWG has met twice (March/April in Costa Rica and July in Turkey) since its establishment. The TWG has 7 members from 3 regions. The Terms of Reference of the OWG focuses on developing the methodology of operational planning, USAR assessment and search, communication in USAR operations and roles and responsibilities of USAR operations staff. The Regional Group will continue to participate in and support the activities of OWG in 2012.

Action: INSARAG Operations Working Group / Member States / INSARAG Secretariat.

INSARAG Medical Working Group (MWG):

- In the absence of MWG members, Ms. Nihan Erdogan provided an overview of the progress of MWG's activities on behalf of the MWG Chairman. The group met once (March/April in Costa Rica) in 2011. The TWG has 18 members from 3 regions and WHO. The MWG produced six medical guidance notes that were approved by the INSARAG Steering Group in February 2011. The group produced two more medical guidance notes that will be put forward for the endorsement of the INSARAG Steering Group in 2012. The MWG also focuses on developing a basic medical rescue training package and some medical guidance notes on USAR medical

personnel. The Regional Group will continue to participate in and support the activities of MWG in 2012.

Action: INSARAG Medical Working Group / Member States / INSARAG Secretariat.

3) INSARAG External Classification (IEC) and Reclassification (IER)

The INSARAG Secretariat provided an overview of the IEC and IER processes of this year and the plan for the coming years. This was followed by the IEC experience of EMERCOM of Russia and IER experience from the Dutch USAR Team. An IEC forum had been convened by Kjell Larsson (Regional Chairman), Terje Skavdal (INSARAG Secretary), Peter Bos (the Netherlands) and Pete Crook (UK, IEC Team Leader), it was facilitated by Ted Pearn (IEC Team Leader and mentor). The following issues were discussed:

- The increasing number of teams requesting for an IEC date – bookings through to 2015 (Should the Africa/Europe/Middle East Region do more with IEC teams or focus on building domestic capacity?)
- The increasing number of Reclassifications (IER) (How to manage the IERs, should they be managed by the Regional Groups?)
- The need for robust preparatory programme and mentoring
- The obligations of the IEC Classified teams (the need of approximately 70 classifiers annually)

The following were the discussion outcomes:

a) There are some countries in the region that need national capacity building while some countries may want to go through the IEC process as they deploy internationally. However, domestic capacity building is the foundation of IECs. The IEC process is used by INSARAG to classify teams that have been clearly identified by their sponsoring organization to deploy internationally. Therefore IECs are targeted at internationally deployable USAR teams and therefore only USAR teams that deploy internationally may apply to the IEC.

Action: Member States / INSARAG Secretariat

b) The Regional Group was of the opinion that IER process should be simplified in order to decrease the IER workload on the system and classifiers. Some participants however felt that the IERs should not be managed regionally in order to maintain the global standards and respect for classification as a global system. It was pointed out that managing the IERs at the regional level may require the allocation of human resources from each team going through the IER. In general, the Regional Group was of the opinion that the IERs should be managed globally and that global standards should be maintained, however clearer procedures on the assessment of the reclassification process was recommended. Fewer classifiers with preference for classifiers from the initial IEC might be deployed with a focus based on the areas of improvement at the original IEC report.

Action: IEC Classified Member Countries / INSARAG Secretariat

c) The Regional Group discussed the role of mentor at IECs and IERs. It was agreed that a good mentor providing a long term support to the USAR team make a difference for the IECs. For the IERs, although it was not mandatory to have a mentor, it was recommended. The USAR team might also have an internal mentor. A potential way forward for the mentorship in the IEC/IER system might be to have mandatory mentors for the IECs and to have partnership with another classified team for the IERs. There had been indications from USAR teams providing mentors.

Action: IEC Classified Member Countries / INSARAG Secretariat

d) The current demand for classifications exceeds the supply of classifiers. This was attributed to donor fatigue and unbalanced provision of classifiers from IEC classified teams. It was strongly reiterated and appealed for support of a pool of minimum 70 suitable classifiers on a roster, with full endorsement by the respective Governments and agencies to make themselves available for classifications and reclassifications. Overall the IEC classified USAR teams in the regional group were in support of providing classifiers.

Action: IEC Classified Member Countries / INSARAG Secretariat

e) The Regional Group noted that there were some classifiers whose organisations do not have the financial resources to support them as classifiers. In an effort to ensure the sustainable availability of suitable classifiers on a roster, a call was made to consider creating of a financial pool to which each IEC classified team contributed, that might be used to cover the expenses of under-resourced classifiers. Regional Group members were encouraged to consider this option of providing a certain sum to support up to two classifiers in their 2012 budgets.

Action: IEC Classified Member Teams / INSARAG Secretariat

f) The Secretariat informed the Regional Group that significant work had been done to develop a Terms of Reference for the classifiers to ensure the minimum performance criteria was met and a training programme of trainers had been scheduled for 2012 in UK. IEC teams are strongly encouraged to nominate suitable classifiers for the aforementioned training by referencing the IEC/IER classifiers Terms of Reference.

Action: IEC Classified Member Teams / INSARAG Secretariat

4) Response to the Earthquakes in New Zealand and Japan in 2011

- The Secretariat provided an overview of the response to the earthquakes in New Zealand in February 2011 and Japan in 2011. Representatives of Russia and UK presented their USAR teams' response to the earthquakes in Japan and New Zealand.

- The Regional Group noticed that there seemed to be a trend to allow USAR teams by invitation only and challenges arising when a government is not officially requesting international assistance, but at the same time accepting individual USAR teams based on a case by case decision. The meeting did appreciate the right of individual countries to take the lead in their disaster response; however, there was a concern that the effectiveness of the response and the value of the INSARAG system might be negatively affected if IEC teams willing to deploy were not prioritised. It could also have a negative impact of individual countries ability to maintain a readiness for USAR deployment. The meeting stressed the importance of continuous awareness building and advocacy, thereby ensuring the most appropriate use of USAR capabilities in support of victims of earthquakes.

Action: INSARAG Regional Chairman / INSARAG Secretariat

- Russia suggested considering to add an extension of the suggested USAR team equipment list at the INSARAG Guidelines in order to add minimum suggested hazardous materials detection equipment based on the lessons learned from the earthquake in Japan. This issue may be included at the next revision of the INSARAG Guidelines.

Action: INSARAG Secretariat

5) Development of 'Beyond the Rubble' Concept

- The DACH group (Austria, Germany, Luxemburg and Switzerland) presented the concept paper on 'beyond the rubble' which aims to explain the work of the USAR teams beyond the pure rubble search and rescue work. DACH announced that they had developed job descriptions for transition officers and would be happy to share with any countries interested.

For Information: ALL

6) European Civil Protection Modules and Flood Rescue Project

- The representative of the European Commission presented the European Civil Protection modules and how INSARAG Guidelines were used in relation to these modules.

- The representative of the Flood Rescue Project presented their flood rescue module to establish a search and rescue team within the European Union framework to respond to the floods.

For Information: ALL

7) Approach to the USAR Capacity Development in Africa/Europe/Middle East Region

-The Secretariat presented two different types of capacity assessment missions that could be facilitated within the INSARAG network. The first one was 'USAR Capacity Assessment Mission' that could be requested by countries willing to enhance or further develop existing USAR capacity for domestic response or to develop new USAR capacity for national response. The second one was the 'USAR Assessment Mission' with the benchmark of IEC. These missions could be requested by countries with international USAR capacity and willing to undergo an IEC process. Both types of missions could be requested through the INSARAG Secretariat. It should be noted that the INSARAG Secretariat is not the implementer of such capacity building projects; it is the broker to facilitate the missions.

Action: Member States / INSARAG Secretariat

- The meeting was introduced to the USAR capacity building directory currently being developed and countries with past or current capacity building projects were encouraged to share their project information in this directory. The directory would be available on the INSARAG web page publicly.

Action: Member States / INSARAG Secretariat.

- The Steering Group, at its 2011 meeting, endorsed the INSARAG Organisational and Operational Guidelines for Capacity Building of National USAR Teams and this was included in the 2011 version of the INSARAG Guidelines. The Regional Group was introduced to these guidelines and countries willing to develop their national capacity were strongly encouraged to follow them, they can contact the INSARAG Secretariat or INSARAG Regional Group for further advice. IEC classified countries and teams were strongly encouraged to support this process and provide guidance.

Action: Member States / INSARAG Secretariat.

- The Regional Chair presented a background paper on the decision of 'the guiding principles for capacity development of urban search and rescue'. The paper offered principles and a suggested framework as to how to conduct USAR capacity development projects. The paper is attached at Annex B. Feedback was received regarding the background paper on the decision of 'the guiding principles for capacity development of urban search and rescue'. CADRI requested addition of conditions for starting capacity building projects in order to ensure the commitment of donors. The Netherlands highlighted that this paper offered a paradigm shift from capacity

building to capacity development with a wider perspective. Switzerland stressed that the paper had a donor focused perspective and the perspective of assistance receiving countries should be included. Poland underlined that beyond the rubble work required more resources to be allocated by the USAR teams. Poland also raised the question of who the target audience of the INSARAG Guidelines was as the Guidelines were becoming more comprehensive with a wider area of issues including capacity building. The paper was welcomed in principle by the Regional Group and Sweden was requested to include feedback provided by the Regional Group members.

Action: Sweden / INSARAG Secretariat.

8) Implementation of the INSARAG Hyogo Declaration in Africa/Europe/Middle East Region and Partnerships and Projects in the Region

- The representative of UNDP/CADRI informed the meeting of a project proposal to develop capacities in USAR as part of a wider Disaster Risk Reduction framework. This would be done in full cooperation with INSARAG in order to ensure that USAR technical aspects, effectiveness and coordination were fully taken into consideration. The Regional Group welcomed this initiative as a good example of cooperation.

- The Regional Group discussed how to operationalise the INSARAG Hyogo Declaration's relevant items in the Africa/Europe/Middle East Region and the following points were raised:

-Item 5: Italy requested the development of an INSARAG world fact book. This fact book could include the information about existing USAR capabilities, National Disaster Management authority structures and contacts in country. This would be useful at the time of response and also as planning for capacity building projects.

-Item 8: Denmark suggested finding ways to further strengthen the already existing cooperation platforms between the organisations mentioned in item number 8.

-Item 5: Switzerland and Oman suggested finding a better approach to give more prestige to the national USAR capacity building.

-Item 9: The Regional Chair suggested closer cooperation between the three INSARAG Regional Groups. He suggested the INSARAG web page to be actively used and INSARAG Regional Chairs to have regular teleconferences with the Secretariat.

-CADRI suggested INSARAG to develop a list of stakeholders and entry points for USAR capacity development. This would ensure that USAR was well integrated in the overall disaster risk reduction and response plans.

-Italy suggested advocacy for INSARAG methodology through diplomatic channels to ensure that staff at Embassies/Consulates were aware of international USAR capabilities and response mechanisms.

-Item 2: Poland suggested a large scale field exercise to be organised to practice all aspects of INSARAG methodology.

-Item 3: Russia suggested inviting representatives from disaster prone countries as observers to IEC exercises and to include IEC awareness sessions to all relevant INSARAG and UNDAC events.

-Sweden suggested the establishment of a network with voluntary participation from donor and assistance receiving countries to further develop the background paper on the decision of 'the guiding principles for capacity development of urban search and rescue'.

-The Netherlands suggested INSARAG reach out countries that were not members of INSARAG. Russia supported this suggestion and added that the newly developing INSARAG web page, translated into different languages, could be a good platform to reach out more countries.

- The Secretariat highlighted that mapping the INSARAG members work and activities could be shared through the INSARAG web page. This called for Member States to actively and willing share information.

9) Proposal for the Way Ahead Towards INSARAG Guidelines 2015

- The representative of DACH presented a proposal for the planning of INSARAG Guidelines' revision process until 2015. The Regional Chair highlighted that the timeframe and process to revise the INSARAG Guidelines should have a more open and flexible approach encouraging all countries to provide their input. The Regional Vice Chair stressed that changes to the INSARAG Guidelines were traditionally being dealt with by the existing working groups rather than creating a new working group. The Secretariat suggested allowing more time to structure the proposed revision process and reminded the meeting of the 'options paper' currently being prepared, which might provide some guidance as to how to better approach the revision process of the INSARAG Guidelines.

The Regional Group agreed that the Secretariat facilitate the process to prepare a proposal for the INSARAG Guidelines revision process, taking into consideration the already proposed approaches and allowing more time to consolidate wider group of Member states.

Action: INSARAG Secretariat

10) INSARAG Web Page

-The INSARAG Secretariat and Regional Chairman presented the newly developed INSARAG web page. The regional group members were encouraged to actively use the web page. It was emphasised that this facility would develop in time and become a useful tool, but in order for it to be a success INSARAG members were strongly encouraged to use it. The new INSARAG web page will be on line at www.insarag.org before the INSARAG Steering Group meeting of 2012.

Action: Regional Group members / INSARAG Secretariat

11) Any Other Business

- The representative of IRO presented its offer of assistance to the INSARAG community covering the capacity building training of search dogs and the supply of trained rescue dog teams for disaster response.

- Hungary announced an outreach meeting recently co-organised with OCHA focusing on Central and Eastern European as well as Balkan countries and countries of the Eastern Partnership programme. The issues discussed included INSARAG and UNDAC membership as well as capacity building and capacity development.

Announcements of International Events and Hosting Events by the Member States in Africa/Europe/Middle East Regional Group

- Belarus announced hosting an INSARAG UNDAC awareness course for Russian speaking countries in 2012 in cooperation with Russia.
- Hungary announced that it took over the chairmanship of one of the working groups at the Good Humanitarian Donorship forum. As the chair of the working group, it would convene a series of outreach and awareness raising meetings focusing on disaster management issues including INSARAG and UNDAC.
- Poland announced provision of more IEC and IER classifiers in 2012. Poland offered to host an INSARAG field exercise in 2013.
- Russia offered to host the meeting of the INSARAG TWG in conjunction with the Regional Meeting in September 2012.
- Russia invited the participants of the regional meeting to visit the exam of the rescuers in September 2012.

Africa/Europe/Middle East Regional Group INSARAG Activities 2011/12

All INSARAG Africa/Europe/Middle East member countries were strongly encouraged to participate in these activities:

1. Annual INSARAG USAR Team Leaders Meeting in Australia in 2012 (March-to be confirmed).
Action: Member Countries / INSARAG Secretariat
2. INSARAG Earthquake Response Exercise in Kazakhstan in 2012 (dates to be confirmed).
Action: Member Countries / INSARAG Secretariat / Kazakhstan
3. INSARAG IEC/IER exercises schedule of Africa/Europe/Middle East Regional Group for 2012:
 - Oman (National USAR Team), 23-28 March 2012
 - Finland (Finn Rescue); 16-20 April 2012
 - Germany (THW); 2-6 September 2012 (reclassification)
 - Germany (ISAR Germany); 2-6 September 2012 (reclassification)
 - Germany (AFDRU); 24-29 September 2011
 - UK (Rapid UK); 26-30 November 2012
 - Hungary (Central Rescue Services of Budapest and Hungarian Association of Professional Fire-fighters); dates to be confirmed*Action: Member Countries / INSARAG Secretariat*

Rotation of Regional Chairman

- As customary in the INSARAG Africa/Europe/Middle East Regional Group, the present Vice Chairman of the Regional Group, Russia, would take over the duties of Chairman of the Regional Group on 01 January 2012 for the year 2012.
- Germany was elected as the Vice Chairman of the Regional Group for 2012.
- Poland expressed its interest to take up the Vice Chairmanship of the Regional Group in 2013.

Action: Russia / Germany / INSARAG Secretariat

Next Regional Meeting

- The next INSARAG Africa/Europe/Middle East Regional Group meeting will be held in Russia (dates to be confirmed).

Action: Russia / INSARAG Secretariat

Acknowledgement

The INSARAG Secretariat and participants from the INSARAG Regional Group Africa/Europe/Middle East would like to express its deepest appreciation and thanks to the Government of Sweden and the Government of Tunisia, for hosting and organising the meeting.

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