

INSARAG USAR Team Leaders Meeting

Abu Dhabi, UAE, 23-25 March 2010

Chairman Summary

The annual meeting of INSARAG USAR team leaders was held in Abu Dhabi, UAE from 23 to 25 March 2010. The meeting was hosted by the Government of the United Arab Emirates (Abu Dhabi Police) and co-organised by the Abu Dhabi Police and the Field Coordination Support Section (INSARAG Secretariat), OCHA-Geneva. Opening remarks were made by Major General Ahmed Nasar, General Director of Central Operation Directorate, Abu Dhabi Police and Mr. Abdul Haq Amiri, Head of OCHA Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa. The meeting was attended by 90 participants from 34 countries and organisations. The list of participants is attached.

The meeting covered the following topics/issues:

- Lessons Learned from recent responses: Haiti and Indonesia
- INSARAG Global Meeting planned for 14-16 September 2010
- A brief on INSARAG activities since the last INSARAG USAR Team Leaders meeting in 2009
- Update on the INSARAG External Classification (IEC) process, including Reclassification
- Update of the INSARAG Medical and Training Working Groups
- Discussion on Classification and Capacity Building of National (Domestic) USAR Teams including Light Teams
- USAR Hazmat Operations
- Geo-locating and documenting USAR activities
- Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome affects on USAR team members
- Scientific and technological USAR developments
- USAR Capacity Building Initiatives

The meeting also included the following technical workshops:

- Lessons Learned from recent responses: Haiti and Indonesia
- Site visit of the UAE USAR Training Base and Equipment Warehouse
- Geo-locating and documenting USAR activities

The discussions during the meeting resulted in the following recommendations:

Lessons Learned from recent responses: Haiti and Indonesia

As a result of the discussions held during the meeting as well as the associated workshop, the USAR Team Leaders developed a list of recommendations that emerged primarily from the USAR response to the Haiti earthquake; these are intended to improve international USAR response to major earthquakes as well as other sudden onset disasters. These lessons learned are attached as Annex A.

The USAR Team Leaders strongly recommend that this annex and issues contained within be discussed in detail during the forthcoming Haiti Review meeting planned to be held in Geneva on 2-3 June 2010. Decisions made are to be reported back to the USAR Team Leaders at the conclusion of that meeting.

INSARAG External Classification (IEC) including Reclassification

The USAR Team Leaders were briefed on the results of an IEC Classifiers meeting that was held on the 22nd of March. The Chairman Summary of that meeting is attached as Annex B. Considering the large number of lesser known teams now volunteering for classification as well as the pressure on the INSARAG Secretariat, there is a need to pre-screen USAR teams prior to allocating them a slot for IEC in order to ensure that only teams with demonstrated capacity and international deployment capability are scheduled for an IEC.

The INSARAG USAR Team Leaders recommend that this issue be discussed in detail during the forthcoming INSARAG Steering Group meeting.

INSARAG Global Meeting planned for 14-16 September 2010

A briefing by the INSARAG Secretariat and the Government of Japan was given regards the forthcoming INSARAG Global Meeting scheduled to be held at Kobe, Japan from 14-16 Sept 2010. An initial email alerting all INSARAG members to the meeting will be sent by the INSARAG Secretariat in the near future followed by a formal invitation in June 2010.

Discussion on Classification and Capacity Building of National (Domestic) USAR Teams including Light Teams

A briefing was given on the current status of development of recommended minimum operational standards for national USAR teams. The next steps were:

- USAR team leaders to review the current IEC checklist and suggest items to be either removed or modified to make it compatible with the operational requirements of a USAR team operating within national boundaries. These suggestions to be given to the INSARAG Secretariat by 30 April 2010.
- The issue to be discussed at an inter-Regional INSARAG meeting scheduled to be held in Geneva on 31 May – 1 June 2010 for which the INSARAG Secretariat will issue invitations to all focal points shortly.
- Once a checklist relevant to national Medium/ Heavy teams is agreed at the Geneva meeting, this would be made available to Member States for their guidance.

Update of the INSARAG Medical and Training Working Groups

The Medical Working Group worked in conjunction with the INSARAG Team Leaders Meeting. Its report will be forwarded to the INSARAG Secretariat and INSARAG Steering Group.

The Training Working Group met in Singapore in January 2010. Its report will be forwarded to the INSARAG Secretariat and INSARAG Steering Group. The group reported that a successful first responder training programme has been implemented in the Peoples Republic of China; the training materials used for this programme are available on the Virtual OSOCC. The working group received a request from the INSARAG Team Leaders to develop a training program for IEC Team Leaders.

Any Other Business

The issue of the absence of some USAR Team Leaders from classified teams as well as those awaiting classification came up for discussions. The meeting recommends that this issue be discussed by the INSARAG Steering Group and suggests that attendance at the annual USAR Team Leaders Meeting of USAR Team Leaders from already classified teams and those awaiting classification be made mandatory in order for INSARAG methodology to continue to develop.

Next Meeting

The next INSARAG USAR Team Leaders Meeting will be hosted by the Americas region in 2011. The date and venue of the meeting will be confirmed with the INSARAG Secretariat later.

Some suggestions for agenda items for that meeting are seen below. It was also suggested by the participants that the background documents for the workshops should be posted on Virtual OSOCC before the INSARAG USAR Team Leaders Meeting.

- USAR related capacity building projects
- USAR First Responder training package developed by INSARAG Training Working Group
- USAR Team Leaders Coordination Meeting workshop