

### Overview

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The meeting was opened by Ambassador Toni Frisch, the Global Chairman of INSARAG and Mr. Rashid Khalikov, Director of OCHA Geneva. Mr. Jesper Lund, Chief of FCSS and Secretary of INSARAG summarised the key issues, which were discussed at the INSARAG Steering Group Meeting 2014, and elaborated the issues to be discussed in the upcoming sessions.

The meeting was attended by 148 participants and observers from 44 countries and organisations (see Annex A), including Regional Chairs and Vice-Chairs, Working Group Chairs, National Focal Points and representatives from classified teams, and observers. OCHA's Regional Offices and Emergency Services Branch (ESB) also attended.

The ISG adopted the 2015 meeting agenda (see Annex B).

### Summary of presentations and discussions

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#### **Regional Work Plans and Strategies Report:**

The Global Chair recalled the INSARAG Global Strategy 2014-2017, which was endorsed at the ISG in 2014.

The Regional Chairs 2015 (Ms. Davene Vroon of New Zealand - Regional Chair of Asia-Pacific, Mr. Mohamed Al-Ansari of UAE - Regional Chair of Africa, Europe and Middle-East, Mr. Cristóbal Góñi of Chile - Regional Chair of the Americas) presented their respective regional work plans for 2015, which were tailored based on the INSARAG Strategy 2014-2017. These included plans for INSARAG External Classification/Reclassifications (IEC/R), capacity building projects, and exploring new communication systems for improving disaster management and networking between focal points.

The Regional Chairs agreed to support the 2<sup>nd</sup> INSARAG Global Meeting in Abu Dhabi in October, and will coordinate regional consultations and provide necessary inputs to the draft INSARAG Abu Dhabi Declaration. The Regional Chairs also supported the implementation of the new INSARAG Guidelines, including translation and printing of the guidelines into the languages of their respective regions in 2015.

Mr. Mohamed Al-Ansari of UAE officially announced that in consultations with the INSARAG Secretariat, UAE would host the INSARAG Team Leaders Meeting 2015, back-to-back with the Global Meeting (16-17 Oct: Team Leaders Meeting, 18-19 Oct: Global Meeting, 20 Oct: Regional Meetings).

Ukraine thanked the INSARAG network and Poland the 2014 AEME Regional Chair, and OCHA for their support towards their successful IEC in 2014, despite the situation that they were in at that time.

#### **Global Updates & Key Developments in 2014:**

Mr. Lund from the INSARAG Secretariat provided an update on global INSARAG activities highlighting the Guidelines review process and IEC/Rs in 2014.

Dr. Ian Norton, World Health Organization (WHO), briefed on the Ebola response by Foreign Medical Teams (FMTs) in the West African region. FMTs must be prepared to respond for Ebola and other types of disasters, such as earthquakes, as well. In these cases, the close coordination with INSARAG and its USAR teams is crucial in order to provide adequate care to patients/victims.

Representatives of each region (Ms. Davene Vroon, NZ - Regional Chair of Asia-Pacific Region 2015, Mr. Mariusz Feltynowski, Poland - Regional Chair of Africa, Europe and Middle-East Region 2014, Mr. Cristóbal Góñi, Chile - Regional Chair of Americas Region 2015) briefed on INSARAG activities conducted in their respective regions in 2014.

The Chairs of the Medical Working Group (MWG), Dr. Anthony Macintyre, and the Training Working Group (TWG), Mr. Dewey Perks, reported on work accomplished in 2014 and future plans. The ISG welcomed their support and agreed to extend their work to support the GRG until the Global Meeting in October 2015. The TWG will work on development of USAR Coordination Cell (UCC) training and the INSARAG Exercise Review workshop, and e-learning on the First Responders Training Package. The MWG will develop Medical Guidance Notes and collaborate with WHO on FMTs, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) on the First Responders Training Package.

In the absence of a Chair for the MWG, Dr. Macintyre had been working as interim Chair of MWG. The ISG officially agreed for Dr. Macintyre to be appointed Chair of the MWG, considering his notable contributions.

Mr. Lund, the Secretary of INSARAG, proposed that a new IER approach with greater ownership for the team and the Regional Groups be explored for future reclassifications. He welcomed discussions and suggestions in view of the heavy but necessary commitment of the FCSS-INSARAG team in managing IERs, and welcomed feedback on this proposal. Singapore welcomed the idea of greater flexibility for IERs, and appreciated the incorporation of its recommendation made at the AP regional meeting held in Singapore in September 2013 for a calibrated approach to IER, which would afford better system sustainability and recognition of the competency level of each team.

#### **INSARAG Guidelines 2015:**

The Chair of the Guidelines Review Group (GRG), Ambassador Manuel Bessler (Switzerland), and GRG members reported on progress made in the past two years leading to the completion of the INSARAG Guidelines 2015. The updated Guidelines consist of three volumes: *Volume I: Policy*, *Volume II: Preparedness and Response (Manual A: Capacity Building, Manual B: Operations, and Manual C: IEC/Rs Guide)*, and *Volume III: Operational Field Guide*.

The ISG acknowledged and commended the GRG and the Regional Groups for the extensive global consultations that took place over this time which produced over 425 comments; the feedback received was deliberated at length, and then added to the finalised documents.

The ISG unanimously endorsed the new INSARAG Guidelines 2015, and its implementation plan, while aware that it remains a living document that will be updated once every five years. The ISG also welcomed the extension of the GRG until the end of the Global Meeting in October 2015, to support the agreed guidelines implementation phase.

The new Guidelines are put into effect as of 11 February 2015. As for the IEC/R Checklist, the IEC/Rs in March (Japan and New Zealand) will use the existing Checklist while classifiers will test the 2015 Checklist in parallel. All IEC/Rs after 1 April 2015 are required to adopt the Checklist 2015 found in INSARAG Guidelines Manual C – IEC/R Process. The electronic version of the 2015 guidelines can be found in the Virtual OSOCC (VO) and the INSARAG website, as well as on the following link here:

<https://owncloud.unog.ch/public.php?service=files&t=cbc5f06551bb6218e397354ddc9e2bd2>

Mr. Chang, from the INSARAG Secretariat, discussed the various dissemination platforms for the new Guidelines; ranging from conventional hard copies to making them electronically available in various media platforms, and as an application for computers and smart telecommunication devices. The GRG team will explore making the guidelines available in E-Pub, PDF, OCHA Humanitarian Kiosk (App) and through the information management portal “KOBO” where rescue teams can upload and share interactive INSARAG forms during field operations. The Secretariat welcomes additional suggestions for disseminating the new Guidelines.

In summary, Member States welcomed the new Guidelines, and take full ownership of its dissemination internally and regionally. A total of nine Member States indicated their support to translate the guidelines. They are: UAE

(Arabic), China (Chinese), France (French), Germany (German), Israel (Hebrew), Japan (Japanese), Russia and Belarus (Russian), Peru (Spanish), and Turkey AKUT (Turkish). The INSARAG Secretariat requested that the OSOCC Guidelines 2014 and INSARAG First Responders Package that are related and mentioned in the guidelines, be included for translation.

The recommended size and format of the various volumes for printing have to take into account the inputs from the regional group, teams and donors; also considering appropriateness and practicability in accordance to printing facilities available.

On request of Mr. Bos, focal point for the Netherlands, Ambassador Bessler explained the content of Volume C to be guiding in the way the goals of classified teams are to be achieved. In this respect the guidelines never can replace, nor be in competition with sovereign country's rules and legislation, e.g. regarding medical services.

### **First Responders Training Package:**

Ms. Margareta Wahlstrom, Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for the UN International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (ISDR), gave a keynote speech on *the "Post Hyogo Framework for Action and INSARAG's Relevance"*, and welcomed the First Responders Training Package - an initiative taken by INSARAG and the IFRC. She presented the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which will be held in Sendai, Japan in March 2015, and reiterated the importance of readiness for response and strengthening local communities. She cited the contribution from INSARAG in preparedness activities, as an example in this endeavour. Japan, Mr. Shigenobu Kobayashi, welcomed participants from all the Member States from INSARAG to the upcoming WCDRR conference.

Mr. Walter Cotte, Under Secretary General (USG) of the IFRC, stressed the renewed collaboration by IFRC and the INSARAG network, recalling the MoU signed on 1 November 2013, and the first responders' medical training provided by IFRC. He highlighted that IFRC's capacity building focuses and starts at the community level, and IFRC's network and partnership outreach are expanding globally. The IFRC is proud to collaborate with INSARAG in this initiative and its roll-out so that more communities can be better prepared and respond during disasters, which translates into more lives saved.

Mr. Dewey Perks, Chair of the TWG, briefed on the framework of the INSARAG First Responders Training Package, which was developed by the TWG in collaboration with the IFRC. The target audience of the First Responders Training is the local communities, as they will be the first to respond during disasters, and need to be well trained and prepared. Mr. Albrecht Broemme (Germany) and Zhao Ming (China) shared their positive experiences of the implementation of First Responders courses conducted in China. The First Responders Training Package will be available at the INSARAG website - [Http://insarag.org](http://insarag.org).

The ISG welcomed the INSARAG First Responders Training Package for global sharing, and fully supports the implementation of the Package, especially in disaster-prone countries. UAE announced its support to develop an e-learning platform of the First Responders Training Package.

### **Bolstering Partnerships:**

Mr. Pekka Tiainen, representing the European Union (EU), updated on INSARAG's relevance to the annual EU MODEX Exercise and made reference to the 2014 IER for ICE-SAR team that was conducted successfully as part of this large scale exercise.

Mr. Michael Pernsteiner from the International Rescue Dog Organisation (IRO) briefed on their contributions to INSARAG and their role in training search dogs, including previous contributions to the technical search topic in the guidelines. The IRO and the INSARAG Secretariat signed a Letter of Exchange on 11 February 2015, further strengthening the partnership at the technical level.

## **INSARAG Global Meeting in 2015:**

Mr. Mohamed Al-Ansari, UAE, welcomed Member States to participate and contribute in the 2<sup>nd</sup> INSARAG Global Meeting to be hosted by the UAE in Abu Dhabi from 18-19 October 2015. The INSARAG Team Leaders (TL) Meeting (16-17 October) and the Regional Meetings (20 October) will be held back to back with the Global Meeting, and the participants are also welcomed to attend the TL Meeting and Regional Meetings. Official invitations will be sent out six months before the Global Meeting.

Mr. Jesper Lund discussed how outcomes of the INSARAG Global Meeting will contribute toward the World Humanitarian Summit 2016. In addition, an INSARAG 25<sup>th</sup> Commemorative Book will be launched to celebrate 25 years of INSARAG.

Mr. Shigenobu Kobayashi, Japan, summarised the Hyogo Declaration, which was announced at the first Global Meeting in Kobe, Japan, in 2010. Japan, as the host country of the first Global Meeting, promised to support UAE, and, taking this opportunity, thanked all the countries that responded to the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami in 2011. Mr. Kobayashi also highlighted the importance of capacity building.

Mr. Yosuke Okita, INSARAG Secretariat, introduced the main points of the draft INSARAG Abu Dhabi Declaration (see Annex C). Members States are requested to provide their feedback to the Regional Chairs (Chile, New Zealand and UAE), and the Regional Chairs will work together to finalize the INSARAG Abu Dhabi Declaration through regional consultations from now until the meeting in October. Ambassador Frisch reiterated the respect for the sovereignty of affected country, and the importance of working with local governments.

Dr. Jemilah Mahmood, Chief of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) Secretariat, via Skype from New York, welcomed INSARAG's commitment and engagements in humanitarian response to sudden onset disasters and preparedness activities. She welcomed the work of INSARAG as being directly relevant to the four focus themes of the WHS and qualified the INSARAG Abu Dhabi Declaration as a valued and relevant contribution to the WHS in 2016. She is looking forward to further discussing with INSARAG how to best to integrate the INSARAG Abu Dhabi Declaration into the WHS process, including at the Summit itself in Istanbul in May 2016.

The INSARAG Secretariat recalled the 2014 Regional Meeting discussions on the nomination and designation of a Global Chair, following Ambassador Toni Frisch's wish to step down after the Global Meeting. Ambassador Bessler, the Chair of GRG, and Head of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid, was proposed as candidate meeting all the requirements and criteria of the Global Chair of INSARAG in accordance with the governance decisions of 2011. Unless there are objections to the nomination of Ambassador Bessler as INSARAG Global Chair, it is expected that he will take over this function from Ambassador Frisch on the occasion of the Global Meeting.

Member States supported the concept and preparatory plans for the Global Meeting 2015, including the key outcome – the INSARAG Abu Dhabi Declaration, and will make plans to participate in the event.

## **Announcements from Member States and Closing statements**

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The following announcements were made by Member States and Organisations:

- Saudi Arabia reported a USD 250,000 earmarked funding for FCSS-INSARAG activities for 2015, and welcomed observers to their upcoming IEC in 1-5 April 2015.
- Singapore announced they will host an OSOCC course for Asia-Pacific in November.
- Israel confirmed their support for search dog capacity building training.
- IRO supports search dog capacity building to ensure a common approach for future and welcomed INSARAG to its training events worldwide.

Ambassador Frisch summarised the 25-year history and developments of INSARAG and its flexibility and adaptability to strive for excellence in an ever changing environment. The notable milestones include the support to the establishment of GA 57/150 in 2002, IEC in 2005 and Global Meeting in Japan in 2010. He thanked the global

INSARAG community that has become a family for their support and commitment to improving standards and saving lives. Mr. Lund thanked Ambassador Frisch for his sterling work as the Global Chair of INSARAG. Under his leadership, INSARAG has developed into a brand name associated with clear globally accepted standards.

## Notable points going forward

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The Steering Group meeting:

- i. Endorsed the new INSARAG Guidelines 2015. The ISG also approved the Implementation and Dissemination plan proposed by the GRG, and welcomed the translation of the Guidelines into several languages. Translations of relevant documents connected to the guidelines i.e. OSOCC Guidelines 2014 and the INSARAG First Responders Package are strongly encouraged.
- ii. Supported the continuation of the Training, Medical and Guidelines Review Training Working Groups through 2015 to work in support of ongoing technical INSARAG work and the implementation of the new Guidelines
- iii. Expects Ambassador Bessler to take over the function as INSARAG Global Chair from Ambassador Frisch at the INSARAG Global Meeting 2015, unless there are any objections to the nomination.
- iv. Welcomed the First Training Responders Package, and its roll-out plans. Commended the collaboration of INSARAG and IFRC for capacity building at the first responders- i.e. community-level, and encourage more of such collaboration. UAE announced its support to develop an e-learning platform of the First Responders Training Package.
- v. Congratulated the successful implementation of IEC/R exercises as part of the EU MODEX Exercise and welcome future INSARAG teams to leverage on this initiative.
- vi. Noted that a new IER approach with greater ownership for the team and the regional group is needed for future reclassifications. The ISG welcomed discussions and suggestions in view of the heavy but necessary commitment of the FCSS-INSARAG team in managing IERs and welcome feedback on this proposal.
- vii. Appreciated the contribution from IRO's contributions and commitment to INSARAG.
- viii. Supported the framework and preparatory plans for the Global Meeting 2015, this includes ongoing regional consultations on the INSARAG Abu Dhabi Declaration – to be shared at the WHS 2016, and plans for participation in the Exhibition and meetings. The ISG further welcomed the back-to back events of the Team Leaders meeting and Regional Meetings together with the Global Meeting from 16-20 October 2015.