**Annex B MWG Terms of Reference**

**Background**

The concept of the INSARAG Medical Working Group (MWG) was proposed at the March 2007 USAR Team Leaders meeting in New Delhi, India. The proposal enjoyed unanimous support and was submitted by the INSARAG Secretariat to the INSARAG Steering Committee where it was approved during its annual meeting in May 2007. The MWG was convened in September 2007.

The MWG is an inter-regional working group comprising representatives from all three INSARAG Regional groups with country representatives from the following:

* Australia
* China
* Finland
* Germany
* Greece
* Israel
* Japan
* Netherlands
* Switzerland
* United Arab Emirates
* United Kingdom
* United States of America

Since its inception, the MWG has met on three occasions:

* 8 – 10 May 2008, UK;
* 13 – 16 January 2009, UAE;
* 15 – 17 April 2009, Australia.

The MWG was tasked to deliver a medical supplement to augment the INSARAG Guidelines and to review the medical evaluation criteria for the INSARAG External Classification (IEC) Checklist. The MWG has completed both tasks.

The INSARAG Guidelines Medical Supplement is currently in a draft format awaiting approval from the INSARAG Steering Committee (Annex A). The amendment to the medical criteria are included in Annex B which is an excerpt from the updated IEC Checklist (IEC checklist 2010 26082009).

**Need for the Continuation of the MWG**

Although the initial MWG assignments have been completed, the existing outputs provide only broad guidelines. The Members are of the opinion that MWG can contribute significant additional value to USAR medical operations.

Ongoing medical research results in frequent changes to medical practice guidelines which will have a continuing impact on USAR medical operations. It is therefore recommended that, and in keeping with internationally accepted practice, the medical components of the INSARAG Guidelines should be reviewed at least annually or by exception when major clinical guidelines changes are published.

The practice of USAR medical care, like other USAR operations, occurs in a multicultural environment. It is therefore important to obtain input from a broad spectrum of countries when developing USAR medical procedures and processes. The MWG consists of emergency medical care professionals who deal with these relevant issues as part of their daily responsibilities and are also regularly engaged in disaster response operations. The MWG should therefore be viewed as a focal point for medical issues relating to all aspects of USAR including; planning, preparedness, response and recovery.

The proposal for the MWG to continue was supported by the Annual Africa-Europe- Middle East INSARAG Regional Meeting held in Budapest, Hungary in October 2009.

Other critical activities that the MWG should continue to address are listed below.

**Ongoing MWG Activities**

* Recommended USAR clinical practices (evaluation and treatment), related to injuries and illnesses likely to be encountered in the collapsed structure environment. These clinical practices would cover ailments of both rescuer and victim alike.
* Develop suggested procedures for the extrication of the deceased from collapsed structures (for use only when USAR teams are requested by the LEMA to assist with this activity). Procedures would necessarily need to incorporate local cultural sensitivities and protective measures for individuals conducting the activity.
* Provide recommendations for USAR medical operations if they may be impacted by new medical threats;
* Develop a guidance training package for local responders at the community level dealing with medical assistance for trapped victims in conjunction with the TWG first responder training;
* Develop and propose a minimum competency framework for medical personnel on INSARAG USAR teams;
* Develop operational procedures for USAR medical personnel that facilitate their ability to interact with the OSOCC and to provide support, where possible, to its health and medical missions.
* Conduct periodic reviews of medical experiences from actual responses with specific emphasis on improving the ability of USAR medical teams to meet their stated mission.
* Initiate and contribute to research efforts examining issues such as survivability in collapsed structures and how the findings potentially influence operational tactics.

The Steering Committee reiterated that the MWG should confine its focus to USAR medical related issues only.