

Background Information

The Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Weeks (HNPW) is the largest event of its kind which in 2020 brought together 2,300 experts in crisis preparedness and response from over 450 organizations and countries. Well-established Networks and Partnerships, such as the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), but also newly created networks, hold their annual meetings and consultations, and meet to discuss and solve common challenges in humanitarian affairs.

The event offers a space where Leading Edge Programme (LEP) stakeholders meet annually to take stock, become inspired and build new coalitions. HNPW is open to all professionals working in humanitarian crisis preparedness and response (e.g., NGOs, UN agencies, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, Member States, civil protection, military, the private sector, academia). Some of the week's meetings are by invitation only, others are public or open for observers.

INSARAG will be leveraging the HNPW in actively reaching out and engaging with all our partners and meet new partners and opportunities for cooperation. INSARAG will participate in the events organized by related networks and map out a series of virtual engagements, activities, and consultations, amongst the network members.

This includes:

- i) The INSARAG Steering Group (ISG) Annual Meeting,
- ii) The Virtual Corridor Bilateral Meetings,
- iii) Virtual Exhibition Booths and,
- iv) Participating in a panel discussion and sharing operational lessons from the Beirut Port Explosions -international response during a pandemic.

The sessions' times and dates can be found in Annex B2. Participants can register through the following link: <https://www.insarag.org/hnpw/>

Session Details

1) INSARAG Steering Group (ISG) Meeting, 4 May/1200-1500 (CET)

The Steering Group meets annually for the Regional Chairs to report on regional specific workplans and determine the strategic direction and policies of INSARAG. Working Group Chairs provide the ISG with technical advice and inputs as needed. The deliberations will be based on the key policy and technical issues that have been consulted upon in all the three regions' meetings of 2020 and the New Year Teleconference in February 2021.

Participants

Participants include Ambassador Manuel Bessler, the INSARAG Global Chair, Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, INSARAG Secretary, Regional and Troika Chair members, Working Group Chairs, national focal points of INSARAG External Classification (IEC) classified countries (Policy, Operational, Team Focal Points), and the INSARAG Secretariat.

Objectives of ISG 2021

1. To ensure that the INSARAG Network is fit for the future and address challenges faced in preparedness and response, particularly in a pandemic environment.
2. Determine how the INSARAG strategy 2021-26 can be tailored for regional implementation and support the delivery our work during the pandemic.
3. To follow-up on issues arising from the New Year Teleconference and make collective decisions to improve and strengthen our preparedness for effective response.

Virtual ISG Meeting in Two Parts

Part I – Opening Statements and Progress Reports from the Regional and Technical Working Group’s Workplans and exchange of good practices – by Regional and Working Group Co-Chairs Chairs respectively.

Part II – Discussions and Decisions on Issues by the ISG and INSARAG 30 Anniversary, Global Meeting Plans - led by the Global and Regional Chairs, facilitated by the INSARAG Secretary.

2) Series of Virtual Corridor Bilateral Meetings led by Regional Focal Points (RFPs)

For a more effective approach to consultations and outreach, participants are invited to participate in Virtual “Corridors Bilateral Meetings” to discuss and consult with specific member countries for advice and assistance, and with the Secretariat in Geneva and/or regional focal points participating and facilitating.

RFPs are invited to propose meetings with our policy and operations and team focal points of member countries, and with the Secretary participating and rallying for key asks and/or to listen to and offer advice and suggestions to requests coming from these countries. Where possible, and should these focal points also oversee UNDAC, then issues from both networks can be raised here.

Due to COVID19 restrictions and the virtual nature of this year’s meeting, face-to-face bilateral meetings that usually take place during the HNPW will not be possible. Considering these circumstances, the INSARAG Secretariat has decided to facilitate bilateral meetings, led by Regional Focal Points.

The following meetings are proposed:

i) Discussion with INSARAG Partners on Sustaining Virtual Platforms

INSARAG partners will be contacted to discuss possible support to the ICMS licensing costs from 2022, and their views on investing in VR technologies for more effective virtual trainings to at this time, take the place of face-to-face Earthquake Response Exercises.

ii) Regional Chairs meeting with the Chief of ERS and INSARAG Secretary

The INSARAG Secretary will meet with all 3 Regional Chairs – South Africa/Poland, Peru and Indonesia. Key points include to discuss the rollout of respective regional workplans, taking guidance from the endorsed INSARAG Global Strategy 2021-26. The Secretariat will discuss tailored regional initiatives and if they have any requests for wider consultations. Promoting localisation and flexible response will also be key items on the table to seek their views and support.

iii) Working Groups (WG) “Technical Bilaterals”

The Secretariat, led by Roberto Colangelo, will coordinate the 7 WG bilateral meetings based on a voluntary basis, to encourage and facilitate cross-fertilization of ideas and synergies of the work of these technical groups. The Secretariat will organize a joint session with all WGs to discuss cross-cutting issues.

Technical experts of WGs representing all the regions discuss solutions to common disaster-response challenges that are identified and implemented by working across network boundaries and through joint cooperation. Two or more WGs can meet at a mutually suitable time in a Technical Network Meeting to discuss and share their expertise on a specific technical issue/s of concern and harness their collective synergies moving forward. The Secretariat and RFP supporting the specific WG will facilitate and support the meetings as requested.

3) Global Partners Meetings

(a) WHO EMT and INSARAG Medical Working Group Joint Consultations

The annual WHO EMT and INSARAG MWG meeting has been agreed by both leads and the Secretariat to take place on 30 April 1500hrs-1600hrs (CET) in the margins of the HNPW. The meeting will be discussing amongst others, Covid-19 guidance note for field operations, classification challenges and approaches, and other medical related operational experiences and issues. Other WG Chairs will be invited to observe the meeting. The details and agenda will be announced ahead of the meeting. Ana-Maria will support this meeting.

(b) Meeting with other Technical partners such as INTERPOL and UNESCO

The INSARAG Secretariat in ERS will arrange for meetings with our key partners to reaffirm our continued cooperation, share updates and exchange ideas. Details after consulting with our partners will follow. Relevant Regional and WG Chairs will be invited to participate.

(c) Joint session of INSARAG Asia-Pacific regional group and RCG (Technical session)

The AP RFP together with the support from OCHA Regional Office in the Asia Pacific (ROAP) will organize a joint INSARAG – RCG session, the Regional Consultative Group on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination for Asia and the Pacific (RCG), to discuss CMCoord in SAR operations. The issue has been discussed at RCG, including the lessons learned from the Nepal EQ response. This will be an opportunity for INSARAG to understand the operational coordination challenges of military responders in search and rescue and will promote mutual dialogue and stronger field coordination among those two parties. The session will be led and presented by the INSARAG AP regional group, participated by RCG.

(d) Joint session of ASEAN-OCHA Partnership Roadmap

This joint session will introduce ASEAN-OCHA Roadmap to a wider audience of humanitarian organizations, including National Disaster Management Agencies. The objective of the session is to gain a shared understanding on the basic parameters and strategic and operational implications of the ASEAN-OCHA Partnership Roadmap. By sharing the background and parameters of the Roadmap, participants will gain a common understanding of: 1) the basic principles of the ASEAN-OCHA partnership for disaster preparedness and response; 2) the complimentary functions and respective roles of OCHA and ASEAN in the region; 3) the operational arrangements and envisioned way forward in the partnership.

4) The Virtual Exhibition Area

The Virtual Exhibition Area has as objective to display a variety of “informative booths” to showcase humanitarian preparedness and response technologies. This initiative enables engagements with experts in parallel to the sessions¹.

In the Virtual Exhibition Area, participants can learn about new tools and techniques promising long-term improvements in the humanitarian sector.

The Virtual Exhibition Area will cover two aspects:

1. Static information on a dedicated “Virtual Exhibition Area” tab on the website, and
2. Q&A Sessions can be organized throughout the Core Event (Recommended: 30-60 min)

The INSARAG Network is keen to engage in this area and the IM WG has already confirmed their interest to showcase the ICMS applications* to the HNPW audience.

*IM WG Booth: To showcase new ideas in the field of Data collection and data visualization after major disasters.

1. Data collection for Rapid Assessment Phase
2. Supporting UNESCO and UNEP in Beyond the rubble phase.
3. VOST (Virtual Operations Support Teams)
4. Virtual RDC

5) Contribution to the Pandemic Priority Topic: "Beirut Port Explosions: lessons learnt for providing international frontline emergency response in a pandemic"

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted the work of humanitarian response. International response teams have adapted and adopted new approaches and guidance to ensure the continuation of an effective and safe response to support the people in need.

The session will be hosted under the priority topic "emergency response in a pandemic" which will be facilitated by OCHA's Peer-to-Peer project lead. It will provide participants a perspective through the lens of international front-liners and experts mobilized as part of the international response to Beirut port explosions on 4 August 2020.

Conclusion

The HNPW scheduled from 19 April to 7 May will offer an invaluable opportunity for everyone involved in humanitarian action to share and learn from one another. INSARAG will seize this opportunity to engage and exchange good practices and experiences with our established network members, partners, and new potential partners in order to respond more effectively to the people in need.