

## Chairman's Summary INSARAG Steering Group Meeting 2020, Geneva Switzerland

### ***Introduction***

The INSARAG Steering Group meeting of the Global and Regional Chairs was held on Wednesday 5 February 2020, and chaired by Ambassador Manuel Bessler, the INSARAG Global Chair and Deputy Director General, Head of the Humanitarian Aid Department and Head of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit. Participants included Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham, Director of the Coordination Division; Mr. Rudolf Müller, Chief of the Response Support Branch in OCHA Geneva; Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, Chief of the Emergency Response Section and Secretary of INSARAG. Regional and Troika Chair Members and Working Group Chairs counted amongst the attendees as well. This gathering ensured a more effective approach to consultations and empowered the Regional Chairs to take greater ownership and share the feedback from their regions. Working Group Chairs provided the ISG with technical advice and inputs when needed.

The recommendations from the meeting of INSARAG Global and Regional Chairs were then presented for consultations during the ISG meeting, held the following day – Thursday 6 February 2020. The Agenda of the ISG meeting 2020 is in **Annex A**.

The ISG meeting was attended by 169 participants from 65 Member States and Organizations, including the INSARAG Global, Regional and Working Group Chairs, as well as Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week's participants. The event was facilitated by the INSARAG Secretariat. The list of participants is in **Annex B**.

The PowerPoint presentations, documents and products for the respective sessions are available at: <http://www.insarag.org/global-structures/steering-group>.

### ***INSARAG Steering Group Meeting***

#### ***Session 1 – Opening Statements, Adoption of Agenda and Global Updates***

On Thursday 6 February, the INSARAG Steering Group meeting was opened by Mr. Rudolf Müller.

Amb Bessler, Global Chair, and Mr Rhodes Stampa, Secretary of INSARAG, summarised the INSARAG achievements of 2019, with a focus on the strengthening of national and regional capacity. (Please find the INSARAG Annual Snapshot 2019 in **Annex C**). The Global Chair welcomed the participants to the 11<sup>th</sup> ISG meeting and encouraged animated and constructive discussions. Ambassador Bessler gave a warm

welcome to the one new team and two new IEC countries: China Team 2, Indonesia and Pakistan. The Global Chair also reflected on the Network's activities and priorities for the upcoming year, focusing on high quality preparedness, flexible response, inclusiveness and quality assurance to fulfil INSARAG's mandate. Moreover, he stressed that 2020 is an important year for the INSARAG Network, who will turn 30, and the Global Meeting later in Warsaw in October, commemorating INSARAG 30 years.

Mr. Rhodes Stampa highlighted the three fundamental questions which must be considered in the activities of INSARAG in 2020 and beyond:

1. What do the people we serve need from us?
2. What are we doing to meet these needs?
3. Are we acting efficiently and cost-effectively?

These questions are all the more relevant in the key discussion on "Flexible Response", recognising that 43% of natural disasters are caused by hydrometeorological events, compared to 8% for earthquakes<sup>1</sup>. The Secretary of INSARAG noted the existence of a wide range of options falling under the concept of Flexible Response and invited all Members to contribute to the discussions before gaining consensus for action at the Global Meeting.

### ***Session 2 – INSARAG Regional Work-Plan Report 2019 and 2020***

- i) Mr. Eduardo José González Angulo of Colombia, Director General of the National Disaster Risk Management Unit (UNGRD) of Colombia (Americas Regional Chair) thanked the Global Chair and the Secretariat for the support provided. Mr. González Angulo presented the highlights of the past year, including the successful organisation of the regional SIMEX in Cuba, the reference to INSARAG as a good example in the promoting quality standards and coordination in the region, the hosting of the global Team Leader's meeting by Chile, the partnership with the OBA and the organisation by Argentina as regional chair of the first fully integrated regional meeting on UNDAC and INSARAG. In 2020, the Americas Region looks forward to contributing to the development of the INSARAG global strategy and priorities, strengthening the regional support to the INSARAG Recognised National Accreditation Process (IRNAP); enhance USAR coordination capacities in the region and strengthen partnerships with "sister" response networks and other partners, in order to increase the efficiency of emergency preparedness and response. Finally, Brazil and Colombia offered to translate the new version of guidelines to Portuguese and Spanish respectively.
- ii) Mr. Eric Yap, Commissioner in the Singapore Civil Defense Force (Asia-Pacific Regional Chair) highlighted the Asia-Pacific Region's achievements in 2019: The Earthquake Response

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<sup>1</sup> According to a UNISDR report: <https://www.undrr.org/>

Exercise in Thailand, the Regional Meeting in Australia and strengthening of national capacity, a UCC course in New Zealand and an INSARAG capacity assessment of India. Moreover, the Regional Chair emphasised the active engagement in IEC/Rs processes, noting that the 3 teams that classified in 2019 were from the region. In 2020, the Asia-Pacific Region will focus on enhancing multi-level capacity building and protection in humanitarian responses, as well as strengthening effective national and regional response during a disaster. Another objective is to strengthen the engagement with partners in disaster planning and management.

- iii) Mr. Mariusz Feltynowski, Head of the National Centre for Rescue Coordination and Civil Protection of Poland (representing the Africa-Europe-Middle East Regional Chair), presented the achievements of the region in 2019. Mr. Feltynowski reiterated the priority of promoting and supporting the building of effective national USAR response 'Think global, act local' and updated the ISG on the ongoing preparations for the INSARAG Global Meeting.

The workplans of the Regional groups are available at: <http://www.insarag.org/regional-groups/regional-groups>.

### **Session 3 – Working Groups and IEC/R Review Updates**

The INSARAG Working Group Chairs from Training, Medical, International Light Teams, Information Management and Guidelines Review, summarised their work and future plans.

- i) Training Working Group (TWG) – The Chair of the TWG, Mr. Dewey Perks, from the United States, affirmed that the TWG will deliver the new training package for IEC/R Team Leaders, Mentors and Secretariat in Oman and The Netherlands. The Chair reiterated the importance of collaborating with the Information Management WG to harmonise the work on strengthening USAR Coordination processes.
- ii) Medical Working Group (MWG) – The Chair of the MWG, Dr. Anthony Macintyre, from the United States, provided an update on their activities and stressed the importance of the ongoing collaboration with the WHO EMT network, reiterating that the major driving force for 2020 is to support the Guidelines Review Group in its task. Team Leaders are strongly encouraged to review the Guidance Note on crush syndrome. Guidance notes, including the patient treatment form, will be updated throughout the year.
- iii) Light Teams Working Group (LTWG) – The Chair of the LTWG Mr. Arjan Stam from the Netherlands, updated on the milestones of the Light Team process. He referred to the endorsement by the ISG of the checklist for the IEC of Light Teams. The first IEC of a Light Team (@Fire of Germany) will be taking place in June 2020. Suitable Light Teams may apply

for IEC with the endorsement from their respective national INSARAG Focal Points.

- iv) Information Management WG (IMWG) – The Chair of the group Mr. Peter Wolff from THW Germany, provided an update on the work of the IMWG and the various trainings and exercises, where the IM system has been practiced and tested. ICMS has gone live as of 1 January 2020, at no additional cost for the Network and its Members. Teams are expected to implement the new system during IEC/R processes from 1 July 2020. The IMWG welcomes feedback on the new system.

**Action Point:** A survey will be sent out in March by the Secretariat to the Regional Chairs and Working Groups on the Governance of Working Groups – the outcomes will be shared in the Mid-year conference call.

The products and meeting summaries for the Working Groups are available at: <http://www.insarag.org/global-structures/working-group>

- v) Mr. Sean Moore from the UK and lead on the IEC/R review processes, provided an update on the ongoing analysis of the IEC/R system. Emerging themes are the color coding on checklists, and the consistency of the IEC/R exercises. Mr. John Denny from Australia and supporting the review, will participate in the upcoming training course in Muscat to further the conversation on this topic. All INSARAG stakeholders are invited to contribute to the review by providing feedback to the review group.

**Action Point:** Feedback can be sent to Sean Moore at [smoore6022@gmail.com](mailto:smoore6022@gmail.com).

#### ***Session 4 – Flexible Response: Fit for the Future***

INSARAG teams have primarily specialized in providing Urban Search and Rescue services, in response to earthquakes, and collapse structure emergencies. In the backdrop of increasingly more frequent extreme weather-related disasters requiring assistance beyond more than conventional Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) operations, Mr. Rhodes Stampa encouraged the ISG to explore and discuss ways of staying relevant to the evolving operating environment.

A panel composed of Iceland, the United States and Training Working Group (TWG) Chair, Hungary, DACHL Representative (Switzerland) and the INSARAG Secretary was moderated by Ms. Haruka Ezaki (INSARAG-UNDAC Focal Point Asia Pacific).

- i) Ms. Solveig Thorvaldsdottir from Iceland and UNDAC member, and Mr. Dewey Perks from the United States and Chair of the TWG, focused on the application of INSARAG coordination arrangements and INSARAG teams' deployment of technical structural engineers for assessments in response to the Albania earthquake 2019. The good practices of INSARAG

and UNDAC methodologies were used to set up a Damage Assessment Coordination Cell during the response, which contributed to coordinate the activities of over 180 engineers by adopting INSARAG coordination methodologies, supported by USAR coordination experts.

- ii) Mr. Peter Jackovics from the Hungarian National Directorate General for Disaster Management (NDGDM), recalled the various reports highlighting that High Impact / Low Frequency events are the new normal in sudden onset disasters and shared experiences on the multi-use (“secondary use”) of their INSARAG team both nationally and internationally in response to floods and climate induced disasters. He presented how the INSARAG classification was implemented to classify national flood rescue teams in Hungary. An INSARAG Flood Rescue Workshop in 2012 and a Flexible Response Working Group were suggested to support and frame the discussions forward.
- iii) Mr. David Sochor from the SDC in Switzerland, provided an update on the status of the “Beyond the Rubble” concept, developed by the DACHL group. The Guidelines details how INSARAG teams remain relevant and helpful to the affected populations; teams can decide how this applies to them and based on their capacities and current mandates. He clarified that Beyond the Rubble are activities done after the SAR operations are done, using the available resources on voluntary bases, while Flexible Response is a completely different concept where USAR teams are not deploying SAR modules but other support (i.e. Flood rescue, pumping capacities, etc.), which are outside of the scope of INSARAG guidelines, focusing on USAR teams.

**Action Point:** The INSARAG Secretariat will in March, share a Discussion Paper with ISG members to guide discussions lead by the Regional Chairs on “INSARAG and Flexible Response”. The Regional Chairs will lead discussions in their respective regions and the Secretariat will facilitate a mid-year teleconference, and led by the Global Chair, to discuss the recommendations from the regional groups. The objective will be to seek a coherent global position on Flexible Response and bring this forward to the Global meeting in Warsaw.

Brazil announced that they will host a Flexible Response Workshop and invites global participants to participate. Details will be shared well in advance through the Secretariat.

### ***Session 5 – Localization: Strengthening Community Response***

There is a continuous need to improve emergency preparedness and response, which ought to provide a global quality assistance at all levels. This implies the strengthening of national capacities for the coordination of national and international USAR assistance through different initiatives:

- i) Localization of international guidance: Promote the adoption by national governments and USAR teams of the INSARAG methodology for preparedness and response. Countries can translate the guidelines and coordination mechanisms and methodologies and incorporate them into their national disaster response plans and standards for USAR teams.
- ii) National Accreditation Process: The guidance developed by the INSARAG community and now incorporated in the revised Guidelines on setting up National Accreditation Processes (NAP), which allow a country to manage, monitor, officially establish and adhere closely to the INSARAG standards and guidance in developing its USAR national response system.
- iii) National and regional ownership of preparedness efforts and coordination: Regional groups provide bilateral support and guidance to countries in strengthening disaster preparedness for effective response
- iv) Strengthen national capacity building: Support the creation and/or articulation of relevant networks and cross-fertilization of best practices through meetings and exercises to test national response plans and INSARAG and the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team methodologies.

A panel composed of Indonesia, Colombia, and France was moderated by Mr. Christophe Schmachtel (INSARAG-UNDAC Focal Point Americas).

- i) LTCol. Christophe Debray of the General Directorate for Civil Protection and Crisis Management of France, explained the implementation of the National USAR team accreditation process in France. He also suggested some improvements to the process, while noting the benefits of having an established NAP. These include not only the standardisation and quality assurance on national and local response capacities but also the readiness of the national system to receive and coordinate international teams should this be required. Since 2018, the INSARAG standards have been applied at the national level, including a team application, audit, assessment, accreditation and re-accreditation, which includes other Members of the INSARAG regional group. Two teams have been accredited so far and the objective is to have 10 teams in both metropolitan France and the overseas territories in 2020.
- ii) Mr. Bagus Puruhito, Head of BASARNAS of Indonesia, recalled the creation of the National Search and Rescue Agency (BASARNAS) and the journey it undertook until reaching the IEC classification of the national team in 2019. BASARNAS is now planning on setting up a national

accreditation process to improve and standardise the quality of local and national teams, accrediting up to 43 SAR teams across the country. The localised adaptation of the INSARAG guidelines will allow to establish standardized procedures, a better and quicker response and increased networking and cooperation amongst teams. Mr. Puruhito also encouraged USAR support in response to other type of disasters.

- iii) Ms. Silvia Ballen representing Colombia, briefly explained the design of the national accreditation process set up in Colombia which has received INSARAG recognition in 2019 and then briefed on the lessons learnt from the regional group perspective in the implementation of the INSARAG External Support and Recognition Process (IESRP) which is now referred to as the INSARAG recognised National Accreditation Process (IRNAP) in the 2020 INSARAG guidelines. Lessons learnt focused on the need for clarity in the concept and terminology used as it is clearly distinct from the INSARAG External Classification process, the need to improve the quality assurance component by separating the support from the evaluation phase, the focus on constantly improving the guidance and tools, and the decision from the regional group to institutionalise its support to the roster of experts from the Technical Support Group/ Technical Recognition Group. The region also welcomed the increasing global interest in the topic and therefore made the recommendation to create a global level NAP Working Group.

### ***Session 6 (and 7) – Decisions on INSARAG Issues 2019 and Global Meeting Plans***

Issues within the INSARAG Network were discussed earlier in the 2019, during Regional and Team Leaders' meetings. The summarised decisions resulting from these discussions are listed in **Annex D**.

The following decisions were adopted and endorsed by the INSARAG Steering Group:

#### **1. On Localization:**

- Recommendation for countries to adopt and apply the INSARAG Recognised National Accreditation Process (IRNAP).
- The INSARAG National Accreditation Working Group (NAWG) will be formed to work on implementing coherence to the INSARAG system. The Terms of Reference of the INSARAG National Accreditation Working Group will be shared with the Network in March.

#### **2. On Flexible Response:**

- Regional Chairs will lead consultations on this topic and report back at the INSARAG Global Meeting in Warsaw.
- The Secretariat will:
  - Share a Discussion Paper.



- Facilitate a mid-year telecon to discuss Regional inputs.
- Brazil welcomes global participants to a workshop on this topic.

**3. INSARAG Guidelines 2020 Reviewed version:**

- Endorsed.
- Will be launched in Warsaw and fully implemented on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2021.
- Countries are encouraged to translate the documents for broader dissemination.
- A Transitional Guidelines Review Group (GRG) Team will be established.
- The Guidelines Review Group will share a one pager on the Co-Chair system.

**4. INSARAG Earthquake Response Exercise (ERE) Review:**

- A Review of the ERE will take place in 2020 and will be facilitated by the Secretariat, with invitations to the Global Network and relevant agencies to nominate participants.

**5. The Warsaw declaration:**

- Regional Chairs will lead consultations on this topic and provide feedback to the Secretariat by 31 July 2020. Ambassador Bessler proposed a more succinct document, and bring out the key points on announced that the Secretariat will share the revised Draft Warsaw Declaration (WD) and with inputs from account today's discussion. The draft of the Warsaw Declaration is available in **Annex E**.
- The INSARAG Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 will be drafted by the Secretariat based on the WD and shared with the Network in Mid- August. These 2 documents will guide INSARAG forward, in order to be fit for purpose in 2020-25.

**Action Point:** A mid-year teleconference with the regional and working group chairs will take place in mid-June, and feedback on the outstanding issues discussed in the ISG 2020, will be raised.

***Session 8 – Meeting Summary, Directions for 2020 towards the INSARAG Global Meeting in 2020 and Closing Remarks***

Ambassador Bessler once again reiterated the strength of the Network and encouraged participants to continue enhancing bilateral cooperation and engagement in their regions. He also commended Member States for their commitment, contributions and inputs and expressed his support to the Regional Chairs in the execution of their plans. The INSARAG calendar of events 2020 can be found in **Annex F**.

The abovementioned decisions (in session 6 and 7) were adopted. Following this, in Warsaw, the Regional Groups will discuss:

**1. Way forward on INSARAG and Flexible Response**



2. Ways to Strengthen Localisation, Update on the NAP Working Group
3. Decisions on Governance of Working Groups
4. Report back on the ERE Review
5. Sign the Warsaw Declaration and Endorse the INSARAG Strategic Plan 2020-25

#### **Announcements by Member States**

New Zealand invited Member States, and especially those preparing for an upcoming IEC/R to their IER in 4-8 May 2020 (details are on the virtual OSOCC).

The Netherlands enquired on the status of the AP ERE in China and the INSARAG Secretary informed that we are in close contact with the MEM of China and will inform the network in advance should there be any new developments.

#### **Closing Remarks**

The INSARAG Secretary expressed deep appreciation for the strong commitment of the INSARAG Network and encouraged Members to contact the Secretariat, whenever the need arises.

Ambassador Bessler thanked OCHA and acknowledged that the success of the INSARAG Network in the last 30 years was only possible due to the strong commitment and leadership of the Regional Chairs and Troikas, Working Group Chairs and Member Countries, with the Secretariat based in OCHA, supporting. He also thanked all participants for their contributions and active engagement.

All Presentations are available in <http://www.insarag.org/global-structures/steering-group>.

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#### **Annexes:**

- Annex A - Agenda of the ISG Meeting
- Annex B - Participants list from the ISG Open Meeting
- Annex C - INSARAG Annual Snapshot 2019
- Annex D – INSARAG 2019 Decisions Matrix
- Annex E – Draft of the Warsaw Declaration
- Annex F – INSARAG 2020 Calendar of Events