

CHAIRMAN SUMMARY
INSARAG Technical Meeting of Working Groups (WG) and Team Leaders (TL)
Remote meeting in reason of the COVID-19 pandemic
14 September 2021

Overview

On 14 September the 2021 INSARAG Technical Meeting of Working Groups (WG) and Team Leaders (TL) took place virtually, due to COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting organized by the INSARAG Secretariat discussed about the Working Groups and Team Leaders updates, the Warsaw Declaration with the participation of a Polish Representative, and the Global Updates preceding the 3rd INSARAG Global Meeting .

The Regional Meeting was facilitated by Roberto Colangelo, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, INSARAG Secretariat.

The presentations, resource materials and products from the meeting sessions are available on the INSARAG website: <http://insarag.org>.

Session 1: Opening statements and Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting was opened by Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, Chief Emergency Response Section and INSARAG Secretary.

He acknowledged that the technical expertise is being challenged to respond to increasingly complex humanitarian emergencies due to the combined effects of COVID-19, climate change and conflict. He acknowledged the efforts by the 8 Working Groups for their work in sharing their technical expertise while supporting national COVID-19 response efforts. INSARAG has organised and took part in many online meetings, trainings, virtual ERISIMEX and virtual conferences on the non-clinical aspects of COVID-19 response.

He highlighted key achievements made since the last TWG and TL meeting:

1. A Flexible Response Working Group was established to operationalise a global flexible response approach, which is crucial to ensure INSARAG remains flexible considering the operations complexities exacerbated by an exponential increase in hazards.
2. Despite being postponed, teams continued to prepare for IEC and IER. The upcoming IEC in November on 20-24th in Russia is integral for showing stakeholders coming together in support of network events by providing many suitable classifiers for the unique peer to peer process. Also, the first light team will undergo classification in the IECRS in November in Geneva.
3. ICMS welcomed the role of member states in contributing to the multiyear system and licencing arrangements, which will make the systems financially effective for the future. Reiterates the importance of continuing to improve the ICMS based on lessons learnt, for instance during the deployment to Lebanon and Haiti.

The Secretary also highlighted the importance of the localization agenda to enhance frontline response coordination and bring INSARAG's methodologies closer to people we serve. Over the years, the network has enhanced the capabilities of local communities through the First Response Programme (FRP) and National Accreditation Process (NAP).

He informed that the Technical Working Groups supported the virtual USAR coordination first responders training which is essential to ensure INSARAG remains efficient while being unable to train on the ground. He reiterated his gratitude to the Medical Working Group for their ongoing collaboration with WHO ENT network for streamlining INSARAG's methodologies and response coordination. The Joint Statement and Technical Field Guidance for teams has been invaluable resources for the network to keep its members safe for operating in the pandemic environment.

He reminded that, in commemoration of the past 30 years, INSARAG has been developing guidelines which will serve as a universal language across all teams. The guidelines strategic objectives are key instruments that have helped INSARAG evolve over the decades and will help the network adapt to future challenges. The Secretary addressed the upcoming INSARAG Global Meeting on 6 October in Poland and expressed the importance of the endorsement and signing of the Warsaw Declaration which is a fundamental step towards reinforcing the mandate of saving lives where it matters most. The Secretary expressed his sincere gratitude to all Working Groups and Team Leaders for their hard work during these challenging times and wished participants an engaging meeting.

Session 2 – Working Groups and INSARAG Secretariat Updates

The Master of Ceremony, Mr. Roberto Colangelo, Humanitarian Affairs Officer at the INSARAG Secretariat, introduced Session 2 and the Co-Chairs of the eight Working Groups (Flexible Response WG, IEC/R WG, Information Management WG, Light Team WG, Medical WG, National Accreditation WG, Training WG, Transitional Guidelines Review WG) for them to provide an update on their progress and workplans for 2021/2022.

- 1. Flexible Response Working Group (Paul Baxter and Paolo Vaccari):** The 2 Co-Chairs introduced the recently constituted WG and its structure. The FRWG is divided in 3 Sub-WGs: Global Position (Sub-WG Co-Chairs Thomas Zeiter and Otty Rusinarsetyo), Disaster Assessment Coordination Centre (DACC) (Sub-WG Co-Chairs Solveig Thorvaldsdottir and Joshua Macabuag) and Cultural Heritage (Sub-WG Co-Chairs Jing Wang and Aparna Tandon). The FRWG will be composed of 53 members total, with a proportion of 17% of women.
- 2. INSARAG External Classification and Reclassification (IEC/R) (Annika Coll and Dewey Perks):** Dewey Perks (IEC/R WG Co-Chair) stated the complexity of working due to the global pandemic caused by COVID 19. He expressed his concern with the issues regarding the list of 2021 roster of classifiers, together with the necessity to receive clarification of the IEC & IER WG Terms of Reference (ToRs)

Marie Mure, from the INSARAG Secretariat, reviewed the challenges that the IEC/Rs has faced with COVID 19 pandemic since March 2020, which forced IEC/R postponement of 2 years. INSARAG Secretariat with the approval of the ISG extended for two years the classification validity. Given these challenges, the selection of classifiers will be wider for each classification to ensure its progress. The INSARAG Secretariat will aim to complete 12 classifications/reclassifications per year, giving priority to classifications from last year that have been postponed. She sincerely thanked the network for the strong support to the call for application for roster of classifiers per region sent at the beginning of 2021 and encouraged the teams waiting to be classified to reconfirm their participation.

3. **Information Management Working Group (Peter Wolff and Jeff Maunder):** Jeff Maunder (IMWG Co-Chair) informed the participants about the completion of the ESRI USAR licenses which have been already delivered to all classified teams together with the regional training (virtual) sessions. Regarding ICMS, it was presented at the ESRI GIS conference by IMWG. The IMWG is working together with the Training WG in a subgroup to update the UCC manual and to incorporate ICMS into UCC training. Moreover, ICMS 2.0 was delivered to 2 of our 3 zones and will have ICMS 2.0 (Systems) delivered to all classified teams by the end of September. He highlighted the attention received from UN partners by ICMS in Beirut and Haiti, where it was activated. The workplan for 2021/2022 presented by Jeff Maunder will continue to review and update the ICMS training material, explore the possibilities to work with UN partners around information sharing and integration coming from ICMS and progress in the integration of UAS imagery into the INSARAG information systems environments. He highlighted how once ICMS is implemented on all classified teams they will be working on a Mentor concept for NAP teams. Peter Wolff encouraged the network to work together to progress on the financing of ICMS, due to the high value of the system, and thanked the Netherlands for sponsoring ICMS for the past two years.
4. **Light Team Quality Assurance Working Group (Brad Commens and Rob Davis):** Rob Davis underlined how COVID 19 has affected the progress of the WG on the planned IECs. They informed the participants on the completion of the Classified Light USAR IEC assurance process approved by INSARAG. Regarding the first classification, Rob Davis highlighted the importance of the first light team classification for the quality assurance process, the @Fire team from Germany will undergo the process in November 2021.
5. **Medical Working Group (Anthony Macintyre):** Antony Macintyre informed that the WG continues working in the engagements with WHO-EMT (joint statement, operational field guidelines for Covid-19 response, Haiti EQ information sharing) and in the ongoing revision of Medical Guidelines. Regarding the workplan for 2021/2022, the WG will continue to monitor the progress of the COVID 19 pandemic and incorporating the relevant emerging scientific evidence into MWG technical reference notes.
6. **National Accreditation Working Group (Chen Hong and Sebastian Mocarquer):** Sebastian Mocarquer analyzed the results from the Global IRNAP Survey (December 2020), the key findings from the survey were the great interest in the IRNAP process, with high demand to the INSARAG network soon, and the disparity in national USAR and NAP systems as a challenging factor for a global approach. The WG will continue to

work on updating the Technical Note on the IRNAP, checklist and relevant documents, as well as in the training development for the TSG/TRG. He underlined the challenges faced, given that the WG has never met face to face, and informed the participants of the NAWG Technical Workshop planned for late November 2021.

- 7. Training Working Group (Dewey Perks and Kira Chebakova):** Kira Chebakova informed that they have been working on the USAR Coordination Manual update, National USAR Coordination Course supporting WGs Support Virtually and in the Revision of the INSARAG 1st Responder Group. The planned route for the TWG is to achieve the endorsement of the USAR Coordination Manual revision by USAR teams and the ISG, continue to update the USAR Coordination Course Package and deliver INSARAG IEC/IER Leadership training for Secretariat Representatives, Team Leaders and Mentors. Dewey Perks (TWG Co-Chair) mentioned his concern with the lack of face-to-face meetings and the importance of them for WGs to support each other.
- 8. Transitional Guidelines Review Group (Martin Evers and David Lewis):** David Lewis informed the participants about the work of the WG on the revision of the Draft UC manual, the presentation of the Senior Executive Program in Disaster Management and the presentation of the Organization de Bomberos Americanos (OBA). Regarding the workplan for 2021/2022, it will proceed backwards planning from the IGM on October 6 until 2025 and will continue to work closely with other WGs and TLs.
- 9. Update on First Responders Program:** Peter Goxharaj (THW Germany) confirmed that the pandemic has brought the opportunity to do the First Responders Program virtually, nonetheless the program will hybrid, the theoretical module will be virtual but with a face-to-face closing exercise. The FRP 2.0 by the TWG will be done with a tri-partite approach: "Classic" First Responders (fire fighters) with more specific techniques, "Normal" First Responders (Citizens) more assistance and details and the Virtual First Responders. The final testing of the FRP v2.0 will be completed by the TWG between Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022, and it will take place in Cyprus and Georgia.

Session 3: Warsaw Declaration: Technical Consultations for Endorsement

Lt. Col. Michał Langner, Deputy Director, National Center for Rescue Coordination and Civil Protection, National Headquarters of the State Fire Service, led the discussions on the technical consultations for the endorsement of the Warsaw Declaration (WD) during the 3rd INSARAG Global Meeting (IGM) that will be virtually hosted by Poland on the 6th of October 2021.

During the first two IGM in 2010 (Japan) and 2015 (United Arab Emirates), the Hyogo and Abu Dhabi Declarations were endorsed, therefore the WD is under regional and technical consultations leading to its endorsement in the 3rd IGM. The content of the WD has been discussed throughout the year and there are currently 13 points established. Ongoing discussions are taking place from certain regions on some of the Declaration's points, regarding the obligation for rescuers to be vaccinated and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Lt. Col. Michał Langner presented the 5 Pillars of the WD:

1. **Quality Standards:** The WD is a guide for the Strategic Plan for 2021-2026 and all regions were asked to submit 2-3 talking points to be included in the WD to understand which pillars are crucial for each region. Internal consultations with Asia-Pacific and Africa, Europe and Middle East (AEME) region were conducted and are still currently addressing some comments and feedback from the Asia Pacific region. The most relevant clauses for Quality Standards are 4,5.
2. **Localization:** This pillar focuses on localising response in disaster prone countries and the development of the idea of National Accreditation Process (NAP).
3. **Flexible Response:** It is most described in clause 7. Despite the Civil Union Mechanism, Europe region need to start this discussion in all regions.
4. **Partnerships:** This pillar highlights the importance for inviting new members to share their ideas they have developed in the last 30 years and to be open for new members to promote partnership for different platforms.
5. **Pandemic Response:** One crucial element in this pillar is the calls for support of the government around the world in fighting crisis by all INSARAG field response teams and medical teams.

The Americas Regional meeting will be held in the following days (14 to 16 September) and will include a regional discussion on the WD to ensure its endorsement in the upcoming IGM.

Session 4: INSARAG Global Updates

Ms. Haruka Ezaki, INSARAG Regional Focal Point, delivered 5 key INSARAG Global Updates from the Secretariat.

1. **The Network Adapts:**
 - The establishment of the Flexible Response Working Group was formed very recently and represents all regions.
 - INSARAG has been responding in the pandemic, starting with the Beirut explosion in 2020 and in August 2021 with two deployments. The first deployment included the forest fires in Europe, and second deployment to Haiti, where the ICMS was also operationalized.
 - IEC/R two-year extension is still valid and the IEC/R working group was formed.
 - The MWG developed a guide of field responses in the pandemic and the Joint Statement was made together with WHO EMT. The guide is still being updated by the WG.
 - ICMS was operationalized and currently the INSARAG Secretariat is having consultations with member states to fund this system for the next few years.
2. **Going Virtual:**
 - In Americas region, Peru hosted a successful virtual SIMEX in June 2021 with many participants.

- Asia Pacific Regional Group planning a virtual ERE on 24 – 26 November hosted by China and co-lead by Indonesia. The version 2 package will be adapted.
 - First EXCOM meeting held 14 September and next steps and work plans were agreed upon.
 - UNDAC refresher course was extended to USAR starting from July. The next ERSIMEX is held on the 4-5 November.
3. Quality Standards:
- First Responders Program V2.0 is being reviewed and WG is working on its implementation.
4. Partnerships:
- At the ISG 2021 the concept of IER taking place as EU MODEX is being adopted.
 - First Response Guidelines discussed with the WHO EMT and there has been an operational response together in Haiti.
 - IER WG for EMT has been established and INSARAG is supporting this from the network's perspective.
5. Face to Face meetings, trainings and IEC/R:
- The America's IEC take place in September in Russia.
 - The Joint IER IEC is held in Switzerland in November where the first light USAR team, @FIRE Germany, will be classified.
 - Hybrid HNPW will take place in 2022 as a 3-week event on 2-20 May. Week 1 and 3 will be held remotely and Week 2 will take place physically in Geneva. During week 2, there are plans for INSARAG Steering Group meeting to be conducted in Switzerland.

Mr. Clement Pauty, from the INSARAG Secretariat, presented the Draft 2022 Calendar for the INSARAG Secretariat. He informed that 12 IEC/Rs are planned for 2022. The hybrid HNPW/ISG event will be held physically in Geneva in May. Team Leaders meeting will be held in Qatar, in March, following their proposal. Several remote trainings planned for 2022: IRNAP Exercise in Singapore, EADRCC Field Exercise in North Macedonia. Regional Meetings, as there is a new Regional Chairs, Asia Pacific Regional meeting to be held in Seoul, the AEME Regional meeting in Istanbul and the Americas Region in Buenos Aires. The Working Groups meetings are dependent on the frequency chosen by Charis and Co-Chairs of WG.

He underlined that this is a draft calendar for 2022 so new meetings, trainings and events can be added and/or modified. Calendar 2022 will be shared in the incoming weeks.

On behalf of the INSARAG Secretariat, Ms. Noelia Blascovich presented the ongoing 3rd INSARAG Global Meeting preparations. She informed that the IGM is preceded by 3 Regional Meetings and one Technical Meeting of Working Groups and Team Leaders. The Asia-Pacific and AEME Regional Meetings have taken place already with a high number of participants,

105 and 90 respectively. The Americas Regional Meeting started on 14 September with 42 registered participants. Our meeting had 142 registered participants.

She underlined that the Final Briefing to the Global, Regional, and Working Group Chairs will take place on 4 October 1400-1530 CEST. The 3rd IGM is held on 6 October 13h00-16h00 CEST with 204 registered participants, emphasising the importance of the event for the network.

She highlighted the fact that INSARAG has developed an online 3rd IGM portal which includes the Canvas Sheet, Exhibition Area and the Discussion Forums. The Canvas Sheet celebrates the 30 years of INSARAG which allows participants to upload stories, videos and quotes of teams or people important to the network this year. To date, there have been 53 quotes and 60 photos uploaded. The Exhibition Area displays technologies, regional, global and local projects and participants can offer sessions on specific knowledge or expertise of specific organisational groups. There are currently 17 exhibitors. The Discussion Forums include 6 different technical spaces for discussion. Participants were encouraged to engage in the interactive platforms that were developed for the network.

Session 5 – Closing Statements

INSARAG Unit Head and Global Lead Winston Chang agreed with all the participants on the difficulty of these long and hard 18 months of global pandemic and reiterated the need to support each other and to adapt. He congratulated and thanked the network for its resilience commitment and encouraged all participants to join the IGM on October 6 to commemorate 30 years of INSARAG.

To conclude, he mentioned the Italian phrase: “*la speranza è l'ultima a morire*”, in English hope is the last thing to be lost. He thanked the Co-Chairs, participants and Team Leaders for their hard work and hoped to see everyone very soon.