

**INSARAG Asia-Pacific
Regional Meeting
01-02 September 2021
Chairman Summary**



INSARAG | 30
Preparedness Response YEARS

Overview

The 2021 INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting took place virtually on 01-02 September, due to the travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting discussed INSARAG's strategic and operational issues for the region preceding the 3rd INSARAG Global Meeting and was organized by the Government of Indonesia, with the support of the INSARAG Secretariat, United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) as well as the Government of Singapore and South Korea as Vice-Regional Chairs.

The presentations, resource materials and products from the meeting sessions are available on the INSARAG website: <https://www.insarag.org/global-structures/global-meeting/global-meeting-2021/>

The meeting brought together 77 officials from diplomatic authorities and national disaster management agencies from 21 countries and organizations, as well as UN INSARAG representatives¹.

Inputs from the meeting will be consolidated together with those from the other two regional meetings and will be shared during the 3rd INSARAG Global Meeting 2021. Under Indonesia's leadership, the meeting sought to advance INSARAG strategic and operational priorities in the region, as well as to account preliminary observations on the regional plan of activities.

Session 1 – Opening Statements, Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting was opened by the INSARAG Regional Focal Point for Asia-Pacific, Ms. Haruka Ezaki, who welcomed all participants as MC. Ms. Ezaki then introduced Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, INSARAG Secretary and Chief of OCHA Emergency Response Section, and the AP Regional Chair from Indonesia, Air Marshal Henri Alfandi, who delivered the opening remarks

Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa welcomed all participants and thanked Indonesia, Singapore and Korea for the preparation of the meeting. He reminded participants that the 3rd INSARAG Global Meeting will commemorate 30 years of life-saving work by the INSARAG network under the theme "Strengthen Quality, Predictability, Speed, and Flexibility in support of National and Local Capacities. The future direction will be captured through the endorsement of the Warsaw Declaration which, together with the INSARAG Strategic Plan 2021-2026, will guide the network for the next five years. The INSARAG Secretary also encouraged regional members to actively engage in the regional meeting as it is important platform to discuss regional workplans and provide the recommendations to ensure the INSARAG network remains flexible in view of the current pandemic situation. The INSARAG Secretary also welcomed Sri Lanka to the network.

Air Marshal Henri Alfandi, AP Regional Chair, welcomed all participants to the meeting. The AP Chair emphasized that the Region has postponed some activities under AP Workplan 2021 due to the

¹ The figures are based on the participants' declaration of their attendance in the chat box.

pandemic. However, he remarked that the AP Region can accelerate the postponed activities in the remaining months and achieve the AP Strategic Plan 2021 with the support from AP member states.

Session 2 - Regional and Global Updates

The Global updates were given by Ms. Haruka Ezaki, INSARAG AP Regional Focal Point, who highlighted the key achievements of the past year. Ms. Ezaki acknowledged how well the network is adapting to the new challenges, mostly represented by the COVID-19 pandemic. As the network used this time to reflect and recalibrate its work, the Flexible Response Working Group was formed, and focus was given to the different response missions of the past year (including Beirut in 2020, the forest fires in Europe and the earthquake in Haiti). Due to the on-going restrictions caused by the pandemic, the INSARAG External Classifications and Reclassification (IEC/R) have been postponed with an extension of 2 years, and the IEC/R Review Working Group was formed in 2020. With the ongoing pandemic, the role of INSARAG became crucial in supporting the countries' frontline responses to COVID-19, helping the vulnerable communities. To achieve this, the Joint Statement between the Medical Working Group of INSARAG and the Emergency Medical Team (EMT) Initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO) was endorsed. The statement calls the teams to respect the pandemic regulations of the affected country and encourages vaccination of international responders. Adapting to the new challenges meant also to change the modalities of most of the work carried out by the network – for this reason, most of the meetings, trainings, and exercises were and will be carried out online (Americas Peru SIMEX in June 2021 and Asia-Pacific ERE in November 2021). In terms of Partnerships, Ms. Ezaki highlighted the adoption of the IERs in the EU MODEX Guidelines and the ongoing collaboration with the World Health Organization Medical Team Initiative (WHO EMT). Lastly, she mentioned the future face-to-face activities: the next IEC of the SAR Team of EMERCOM of Russia in September, the IER of Swiss Rescue, the IEC of @Fire Germany, and the IER of PUI, all in November this year.

Session 3 – Technical Working Groups Updates

Ms. Haruka Ezaki, INSARAG AP Regional Focal Point, provided updates of Technical Working Groups:

- **Flexible Response Working Group (FRWG)** has been recently constituted and started its work. It is divided in 3 Sub-WGs: Global Position, Disaster Assessment Coordination Centre (DACC) and Cultural Heritage.
- **IEC/R Working Group** is working on renewing the work on the guidelines, working on quality assurance and revising the classifiers list and the IEC Roster 2022.
- **Information Management Working Group** has launched the new ICMS v2.0. Martin Evers encouraged the member countries to respond to the Secretariat's call to support the ICMS multi-year licensing.
- **Light Team Working Group** is working on the Classified Light USAR IEC assurance process which was completed and approved by INSARAG. The first classification for the @Fire team from Germany will take place in November.
- **Medical Working Group** continues working in the engagements with the WHO-EMT (joint statement, operational field guidelines for Covid-19 response, Haiti EQ information sharing) and in the ongoing revision of the Medical Guidelines.

- **National Accreditation Working Group** is reviewing the Generic TOR of TSG/TRG roster, and planning for virtual/physical training for the roster, updating documents (checklists, technical guidance note) and supporting regional efforts.
- **Training Working Group** has been working on the USAR Coordination Manual v2.0 revision, National USAR Coordination Course, supporting WGs Support Virtually, and looking now for 2022 USAR Coordination Manual Revision by USAR Teams for future endorsement, and working on updating the USAR Coordination Course Package.

Transitional Guidelines Review Working Group is revising the Draft UC manual, and continuously collecting feedback from the network.

Session 4 - INSARAG Strategic Plan 2021-2026 and update of AP Strategic Plan 2021-2026

INSARAG has developed the INSARAG Strategic Plan 2021 – 2026. The strategic plan comprises four strategic objectives:

1. Strengthen global standards for a high quality of national and international USAR response;
2. Enhance frontline response coordination by localising INSARAG methodology and concepts;
3. Advance flexible assistance for more comprehensive and adaptable humanitarian response; and
4. Boost and develop partnerships for sustainable participation, ownership and governance.

In February 2021, Indonesia introduced the updated draft of INSARAG AP Regional Strategy 2021-2026. The new strategy is composed of four aspects following the global strategy, which are:

1. Enhancing multi-level capacity building and protection in humanitarian responses;
2. Strengthening effective national and regional response during a disaster;
3. Flexible response and deployment of USAR capacity; and
4. Strengthening engagement with partners in disaster planning and management.

The objectives for the AP Region are aligned to the INSARAG Strategic Plan 2021 – 2026 and incorporate priority areas set by the previous AP Chairs.

The annual workplan has been developed by the Regional Chair, supported by the Vice-Chairs and INSARAG Secretariat. The annual workplan will include priorities for the year, as well as an indicative workplan for the subsequent year to provide visibility and timely notice of the likely resources that will be required and committed across the region in the short-term. Indonesia has set 4 priorities in line with the INSARAG Strategic Objectives 2021 as well as AP Regional Strategy.

Therefore, in this session Indonesia proposed to establish 4 breakout rooms and each breakout session discussed each pillar of the strategic objectives: Quality standards, Localization, Flexible Response and Partnerships. Participants joined the breakout rooms based on their interest to discuss the particular topic and provided feedback on the AP workplan 2021, as well as the activities in the period 2021-2026.

Quality Standards

- Some activities under this objective have been conducted, however online activities will be conducted in the end of 2021;
- Virtual webinars/events are still the best way to run the program in 2021 during the pandemic, and one of its benefit is that it can reach a wider audience;

- the AP Region may differentiate programmes that need to be done physically and hybrid, or fully online.

Localization

- NAP is very important program for countries who want to standardize the emergency response methodology based on the INSARAG Guidelines;
- Fiji is interested in capacity building program for a light team;
- Develop online course training for trainers, so the material can be shared locally.

Flexible Response

- AP activities related to flexible response strategic objectives need to be in line with the Flexible Response Working Group workplan.

Partnerships

- Online platform is still the best way to engage/maintain partnerships within the network, nonetheless there were also difficulties encountered in using the online platform; in order to maintain the communication particularly for classification/re-classification process;
- Adaptation on changing operational environment with climate change and different hazard;
- The needs of sharing lessons learned and experience from multiple agencies or multiple countries.

Broadly each pillar emphasizes to conduct the activities with the adaptation on the new operating environment and continue conducting online events during the pandemic.

Session 5: Warsaw Declaration: consultations for endorsement

INSARAG network has reach three decades in 2021, (postponed from 2020) the 3rd INSARAG Global Meeting will launch Warsaw Declaration on “Strengthening Quality, Predictability, Speed, and Flexibility in support of National and Local Capacities”. The member states were widely consulted on the Warsaw Declaration in October 2021. In January 2021, the INSARAG Strategic Plan 2021-2026 was endorsed. The Warsaw Declaration incorporates the main pillars of the plan and the feedback from the three regions.

Session 6: AOB

The meeting was adjourned.

Session 7: Welcoming participants, Recap of Day 1 and reviewing agenda for day 2

The second day of the AP Regional Meeting started with the recap of Day 1 which was delivered by Ms. Haruka Ezaki and followed with welcoming remarks by Mr. Markus Werne, Head of Asia Pacific Regional Office (ROAP). He emphasized the importance of the disaster response readiness in the AP Region, and because of the pandemic and several restrictions in 2020, there were no international deployments in the region. However, the region still remains ready and well-prepared for emergency response. He also highlighted and expressed appreciation for the on-going and continuous dialogue within the INSARAG network despite the difficulties in the last two years.

Session 8: AP National Accreditation Process (NAP) Working Group Update

Mr. Anthony Toh, AP IRNAP WG Co-Chair, delivered the AP INSARAG Recognised National Process Working Group update. AP IRNAP WG was officially formed in February 2021 in order to support INSARAG NAWG in promoting NAP and IRNAP in AP Region and the work of AP IRNAP WG would be aligned with INSARAG NAWG.

AP IRNAP WG comprise members from INSARAG NAWG and/or TWG, and it has a minimum of 2 years tenure. WG reports to the AP chair and provides update to INSARAG Regional Focal Point and Regional Group at AP Regional Meeting

AP IRNAP WG will conduct Technical Support Group and Technical Recognition Group (TSG/TRG) training workshop in January 2022, supported by NAWG. It would consist of face to face training (if allowed to do so).

Tentative IRNAP schedule for AP Region: Singapore (2022), China (2022/2023) and Indonesia (2023).

Session 9: Regional inputs to Flexible Response Working Group

Mr. Wahyudi L. Putra, on behalf of the AP Chair 2021, delivered the AP inputs to Flexible Response Working Group (FRWG). He began with recalling the AP Region's position on FR which in 2020, the INSARAG Global Chair asked the regional chairs to discuss possibilities and limitations of INSARAG in Flexible Response.

AP Region was in favour of flexible response with the following recommendations:

- Additional capabilities should indicate their capabilities and capacities to the INSARAG Secretariat, because this would give a catalogue of modular capabilities when needed, however, the deployments would still use INSARAG methodology.
- Additional classification for capacities other than USAR would require extensive resources.
- The AP Region is committed to providing more inputs and recommendations on Flexible Response if required.

Following the recommendations, the AP Regional Chair, with the troika members and INSARAG Secretariat, has developed the survey. This survey will be a regional contribution to the newly established FRWG, as well as to provide the flexibility of USAR Team capacities in the region.

- 9 AP Member countries have participated in the survey
- Survey consisted of 12 questions, but in general the questions concerned:
 - Frequent disaster in AP member countries
 - In-country and overseas USAR operations yearly
 - Additional capabilities beyond USAR
 - Training programs
 - National framework

The survey used a closed-ended or open-ended format to collect answers from the AP Members.

The main insights of the survey are:

1. AP Region is more vulnerable to hydrometeorological disaster.
2. In most countries, USAR operations are still conducted ≥ 10 times in a year.
3. The AP Region is in favour of flexible response since AP member countries have additional capabilities beyond USAR.

4. Supported by trained personnel, equipment, training programs, as well as it has accommodated in their national disaster framework/national SAR System.

Session 10: AP International Earthquake Response Exercise (IERE) 2021

Mr. Lili from National Earthquake Response Support Service (NERSS) of Ministry of Emergency Management (MEM) delivered the concept of “SIMEX China 2021”.

AP IERE 2021 will be held on 24-26 November 2021, hosted by China and supported by troika members and the INSARAG Secretariat/ROAP. The exercise will involve LEMA, USAR, EMT, UNDAC, OCHA, UN Office, AP Regional organizations as well as local Chinese teams.

Simulation video could be used to give a better sense of experience in the exercise.

Session 11: Regional 2022 Workplan

Korea as AP Incoming Chair 2022 led the discussion on the AP Workplan for 2022 onwards. Key activities in 2022 are HNPW in May 2022, TSG/TRG Workshop in January 2022, AP Regional Meeting in October 2022 and AP ERE(tbc). IEC/R activities considering to be conducted in 2022 or 2023 (postponed from 2020).

The AP Regional Meeting 2022 will take place back-to-back with the UNDAC AP Regional Meeting. Korea proposed to conduct a physical meeting on 11-13 October 2022 in Hotel Onoma, Daejeon.

Session 12: AOB and Call for Regional Chair 2023/Incoming Chair 2022

New Zealand proposed to join the troika and be the Regional Chair in 2023, and the meeting welcome and supported New Zealand’s application.

Session 13: Closing Remarks

Air Marshal Henri Alfiandi, AP Regional Chair, expressed his sincere gratitude to AP Member States, as well as INSARAG Secretariat, for the active contribution during the AP Regional Meeting 2021. He encouraged the INSARAG network to strengthen the effectiveness and coordination of international USAR assistance. He also highlighted the importance of strengthening the rescue capability and overall capacity through interoperability amongst responders, system integration and common standards in one national framework as part of national capacity building.

Mr. Eric Yap, Outgoing Regional Chair, thanked all members of the AP Region for their participation in the fruitful discussions. He also highlighted that the AP ERE 2021 hosted by China in November 2021 is a new way of adapting to the new operating and working environment, brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. Mr. Seungchul Choi, Incoming Chair 2021, thanked Indonesia for the developments in the AP Region in 2021 and gave his assurance that Korea will work effectively for the chairmanship in 2022. He emphasized the need to strengthen partnerships in the INSARAG network, and he also expressed he is looking forward to meeting face-to-face in the AP Regional Meeting next year.

Ms. Haruka Ezaki closed the meeting with expressing her appreciation for all AP Meeting participants for their active inputs and discussions and the hospitality of Indonesia as the host country of the AP Regional Meeting