

## OVERVIEW

The 2022 INSARAG Africa-Europe-Middle East Regional Meeting took place from 13-14 October in Ankara, Türkiye, and discussed the INSARAG strategic and operational priorities for the region. The meeting was generously hosted by AFAD, and co-organized by the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The Regional Meeting was co-facilitated by the AFAD and OCHA's Emergency Response Section in its capacity as the INSARAG Secretariat. The presentations, resource materials and products from the meeting sessions are available on the INSARAG website: <http://insarag.org>. The meeting agenda adopted by the participants can be found in Annex A.

The meeting brought together 76 senior heads and officials from diplomatic authorities and national disaster management agencies from 34 countries and organizations, plus UN INSARAG representatives (Please see the participant list in Annex B).

This annual meeting served as a platform to harness ideas on ways to operationalize the key outcomes and endorsements formulated during the INSARAG Steering Group (ISG) Meeting that took place on 10 May 2022, and to assimilate relevant information from participating countries into the upcoming regional workplans. Areas of focus during the 2022 ISG Meeting included: the endorsements of the INSARAG Recognized National Accreditation Process (IRNAP) Technical Guidance Note, the USAR Coordination Manual V2.0, the development of the First Responders Programme V2.0, and the eight Working Group workplans.

## SESSION 1- OPENING STATEMENTS, ADOPTION OF AGENDA, INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Ahmet Tayfun Oksin, master of ceremony, moderated session 1 which invited participants to deliver their remarks after viewing of a short video focused on the International Earthquake Response Exercise (IERE) which was held prior that week.

Governor Yunus Sezer, Governor and head of AFAD, welcomed the participants and gave special thanks to the countries that participated in the ERE SIMEX and the regional meeting. He noted the impact of disasters has exponentially increased due to climate change, and hence there is

pertinent need for international cooperation. AFAD is working towards increasing its response capacities, risk mitigation, and disaster planning. However, in the wake of climate change, there is a strong need to expand the scope to include forest fires and floods. He highlighted that AFAD supported the response to the Pakistan floods, and recalled that “disasters have no language, race or religions,” and people and animals all suffer during such crises. He stressed that all countries have a joint responsibility to cooperate and aid in such crises. He mentioned that the ERE and the SIMEX were successful as they allowed member countries to work together. He further added that 2022 is the Disaster Year for AFAD with an aim to carry out 70000 exercises. He thanked all member countries for their assistance and the INSARAG Secretariat for supporting the exercise and the regional meeting.

Mr. Young Jin Kim, representative of the INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Group, thanked the host and the INSARAG Secretariat for this opportunity and recalled that disasters can happen anywhere and anytime, whilst reflecting on a recent apartment building collapse in South Korea. He emphasized the importance of being always prepared.

Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, INSARAG Secretary, gave a special thanks to AFAD for the extraordinary work during his chairmanship. He noted that the last ERE meeting to be held in person was in 2019. He further thanked all those involved in the preparation of the exercise. He stressed that the meeting's objective was to gather policy makers and operational managers to discuss the improvement of INSARAG work. Mr. Rhodes Stampa further mentioned that this year's regional meeting for Asia Pacific will be held in South Korea, and the Americas regional meeting will be held in Argentina, and both events will contribute towards strengthening INSARAG. He remarked that this meeting would allow the endorsement of the regional AEME workplan and recalled the General Assembly resolution 57/150 that commemorated its 20-year anniversary this year. Mr. Rhodes Stampa finally wished a fruitful meeting to all members and thanks AFAD and the Government of Türkiye for their support.

Mr. Ismail Catakli, Türkiye Deputy Minister for Interior, welcomed the participants and noted it was a great honor to host all the participants in Türkiye. He noted that 2023 is the “Year of Exercises” in Türkiye and that the INSARAG ERE was especially important for AFAD and an opportunity to share experiences. He stressed that disasters are increasing in the country with fires, droughts, and avalanches occurring more often than before. These disasters, alongside wars and displacement, affect millions of people globally. He reiterated that countries cannot cope with those situations alone and called for international cooperation in disaster response and preparedness. Mr. Catakli informed the audience that AFAD is already cooperating and coordinating with numerous partners, including foresters, the police, public schools, teachers, trade unions, and other public institutions. He also emphasized on the need to engage NGO's and volunteers. He highlighted “voluntarisms” as a third pillar of AFAD engagement, with a specific department dedicated to this pillar which currently has over 5000 volunteers. Mr. Catakli further noted that risk mitigation was a particularly crucial element of preparedness and that Türkiye has provincial and national plans and was working towards disaster risk reduction.

### ***Global Updates and 2022 Regional Workplan***

Clement Kalonga, from the INSARAG secretariat, moderated this sub session. He explained key global events conducted from January 2022 to September 2022. 27 events took place during this period: 17 in-person events, four remote events, and five hybrid events. The regional events included:

- AEME Earthquake Response Exercise (ERE)
- Regional Meeting AEME
- AEME IECs: Cyprus, Tunisia, UK SARAID, GEA (Turkey)
- AEME IERs: Armenia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Saudi Arabia
- IRNAP: Cyprus

Key Trainings included:

- First Responders Trainings: 6-12 February, Somalia, and 3-7 October, Zimbabwe
- USAR Coordination Courses: 14-17 February, Germany, and 17-21 October, Italy
- USAR Coordination Training of Trainers: 19-23 September, Iceland
- ICMS: further dissemination of ICMS tool, by organizing workshops

### ***Workplan 2023 –Plans for 2023 by Troika member and Incoming AEME Chair – Qatar***

The incoming chair shared a video expressing his gratitude in taking over the chairmanship of AEME, and commended INSARAG activities as having direct impact on the lives of the world's most vulnerable populations. The Representative of Qatar made a brief speech and emphasized the need for collaboration between national disaster management teams and NGOs, and further strengthening of regional experts. He also requested the translation of documents into Arabic.

### ***Work Plan Highlights***

Clement Kalonga, from the INSARAG Secretariat, moderated this sub session where he highlighted two policy meetings: New Year Call in January 2022 and HNPW- ISG in May 2022, and three regional meetings: AEME in Ankara, AP in Seoul, South Korea, 26-28 October 2022, and Americas in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 7-9 November 2022, in addition to 35 technical Meetings (EREs, UC Trainings and IEC/Rs). He further gave updates on the current situation on the IEC/R Quality Assurance.

The ISG welcomed the HNPW 2022 hybrid format and encouraged the use of it. During ISG 2022, all three INSARAG regional workplans in 2022 were endorsed and the INSARAG Recognized National Accreditation Process (IRNAP) Technical Guidance Note, the USAR Coordination (UC) Manual V2.0, and the First Responders Program V2.0 process and its development for consultations at the Regional and WG meetings, were endorsed.

### ***Recalling the Provisions of INSARAG's Strategic Plan 2021-26***

This sub session was moderated by Clement Kalonga, from the Secretariat, who led group discussions on the four INSARAG strategic pillars:

1. Quality standards (Guidelines, Revised IEC System) – Facilitated by Belit Tasdemir
2. Localization (IRNAP, First Responders) – Facilitated by Peter Goxharaj
3. Regional position on Flexible Response (FRWG) – Facilitated by Paolo Vaccari
4. Partnerships – Facilitated by Peter Wolff

The four groups produced their outcomes and recommendations which are shared in the annex.

### ***Aligning INSARAG's Strategic Plan with OCHA's Strategic Plan 2023-26***

The session was moderated by Clement Kalonga who highlighted the need for a coherent humanitarian response, systematic and predictable leadership on access, and facilitating durable solutions to protracted internal displacement. He further stressed catalytic humanitarian financing and a strategic foresight to adapt to an evolving landscape, while ensuring humanitarian responses leaves no-one behind.

## **SESSION 2 - REVIEW OF 2022 REGIONAL WORKPLAN BY AFAD, AEME REGIONAL CHAIR 2022**

Clement Kalonga from the Secretariat took members through the achievement for 2022 and highlighted the following progress.

### Strategic Objective 1: Quality Standards

- ISG during the HNPW, 10 May, Geneva, Switzerland, global event.
- Regional event highlighted included: AEME Earthquake Response Exercise (ERE), 10-12 October in Turkey, AEME, 13-14 October in Turkey, AEME IECs: Cyprus, Tunisia, UK SARAID, GEA (Turkey)
- AEME IERs: Armenia, Estonia, Saudi Arabia, ICMS: further dissemination of ICMS tool, by organizing workshops, SAR Coordination Training of Trainers, September, Iceland, IRNAP: Cyprus
- Under INSARAG Membership: Egypt – IEC in 2023/24 (Mentorship) Turkey (IHH) is under discussions, and discussions are ongoing on Iran and Syria.

### Strategic Objective 2: Localization

- First Responders Trainings were planned for Somalia and Zimbabwe but both countries were not ready due to financial constraints to carry out the trainings
- Implementation of Africa Outreach plans for capacity building were undertaken in South Africa

### Strategic Objective 3: Flexible Response

- South Africa SADC USAR Support Preparation and Flexible Response Partnership Support in March
- SAR SA team response to KwaZulu-Natal Floods in April
- Participation in the global Flexible Response WG
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Strategic Objective 4: Partnerships

- Regional partnership in Africa with Rescue SA on response and capacity development is ongoing
- Strengthening of European partnership through the integration of IER in the EU MODEX Cycles European Commission and UN UCC Course, Italy, 17-22 October

<b>Summary Recommendation Africa-Europe-Middle East</b>	
<b>Troikas for 2023</b>	<i>Regional Chair:</i> Qatar; <i>Incoming Chair:</i> tbc; <i>Outgoing chair:</i> Turkey
<b>20 Years of the GA 57.150</b>	Member States re-affirmed the continued relevance of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 57/150 (2002)
<b>Quality Standards</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reds earned vs reds given: Limit number of yellows</li> <li>2. Reds should be constructive: Teams with red “on probation”</li> <li>3. Ongoing remote/hybrid checkpoints: Install mid-term deadlines for administrative checks, vs all in on IER</li> <li>4. Mentor training and exchange: Add “intern” mentors / observers, and formal training</li> <li>5. Pause IEC/Rs for mentors/trainers: Extend all IEC/Rs for 1 year, focus on training</li> <li>6. IER checklist to depend on contingent categories: Some IER checklist items may be skipped, e.g., lateral breach</li> <li>7. Observers should NOT be deployed at live disasters: Observers would add to burden of affected country and team, do not endorse</li> <li>8. Joint IERs are welcome: Exchange of mentors, some classifier roles can be overlapped</li> </ol>

<p><b>Flexible Response</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. FR should be under INSARAG but with a new mandate</li> <li>2. Many classified teams already have these capabilities (Flood etc.)</li> <li>3. There is a crossover between USAR and flood. i.e., floods leading to a collapse</li> <li>4. There are successful examples of parallel groups i.e., INSARAG/WHO</li> <li>5. Example - SAR team is already multi-disciplined (as are other classified teams)</li> <li>6. INSARAG took a long time and expense to develop to this point. Do not start again</li> <li>7. We should recognize existing standards, but build towards common standards</li> </ol>
<p><b>Bolstering Partnerships</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On use of large-scale Drones for ASR1, approach and partner with manufacturers and their insurance providers to support</li> <li>2. App based communication: A WhatsApp or Facebook equivalent that can be used</li> <li>3. Air Transport Partnerships, work with suppliers and negotiate an MoU on behalf of the USAR community</li> <li>4. Regional Collaboration - Promote existing partnerships and facilitate introductions;</li> <li>5. Host Nation Training, staff to provide awareness of the INSARAG network, capability and offer;</li> <li>6. Faster Mobilization -Expand existing OCHA MoU's to include Classified Teams</li> </ol>

**SESSION 3 – BREAKOUT DISCUSSION PART I: INSARAG STRATEGIC PLAN 2021- 2026 AND TAILOR IT TO THE REGIONAL WORKPLAN AND PRIORITIES FOR 2023**

The session was moderated by Clement Kalonga, from the INSARAG Secretariat, who commenced with a description of the session which laid out the groupings and facilitators (WG leaders) who nominated respective notetaker amongst the group members. The group facilitators later made presentations on their recommendations.

***Quality Standards: Guidelines and Revised IER System led by IEC/R WG and T-GRG Co-Chairs***

Discussions were facilitated Belit Tasdemir, with Professor Sarah Parkison as the notetaker. Key recommendations to the ISG by the group included: limiting number of yellows, teams in red to be on “probation,” installing mid-term deadlines for administrative checks, add “intern” mentors /

observers and formal training, and extend all IEC/Rs for one year, focusing on training among other recommendations. The team did not endorse proposed observers as they would add to the burden of affected countries.

### ***Localization: IRNAP and First Responders Training (FRT) led by NAP WG***

This session was facilitated by Peter Goxharaj, with Esra Ustunkaya as the notetaker. The team determined that they were not able to provide effective recommendations on either IRNAP or FRT as they did not possess the required knowledge, and therefore proposed these subjects necessitated increased engagement in Regional Meetings and Team Leader meetings to increase awareness. Additional action is warranted on the rosters of Technical Support Groups (TSGs) and Training Working Groups (TRGs), and USAR members should be encouraged to join these rosters.

### ***Regional Position on Flexible Response led by SRS and FRWG***

The session was facilitated by Paolo Vaccari, and the notetakers were David O'Neill and Domen Torkar. The team recommended the following: flexible response should be under the purview of INSARAG but with a new mandate. The group noted that many classified teams already possess these capabilities such as response to floods. There is an overlap between USAR and flood response. i.e., floods leading to collapsed buildings. It is pertinent to note that there are successful examples of parallel groups i.e., INSARAG /WHO SAR teams are already multi-disciplined (as are other classified teams). As to whether INSARAG should incorporate additional new capabilities such as flood and fire responses or a separate advisory group dealing with flood and/or fire, the response was split in 50 percent support for each. There was a unanimous agreement on the INSARAG teams responding in capacity adherence to already available, recognized and developed standards.

### ***Boosting Partnerships: Regional Opportunities led by IMWG and CK/ AFAD***

Peter Wolff acted as the facilitator and notetaker for this session. The recommendations were as follows: partner with manufacturers and their insurance providers to gain their support for the use of large-scale drones for ASR1 and explore working with manufacturers to collate a professional disaster network of public/private drones. For app-based communication, the team recommended the use of WhatsApp, Facebook, or a similar application as seen in the annex.

## **SESSION 4: SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES FROM DAY 1**

This session was moderated by Clement Kalonga. He summarized the proceedings of the first day for the participants.

## **SESSION 5: PRESENTATION OF THE REGIONAL WORKPLAN AND CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2023**

This session was moderated by Lucien Jaggi. He introduced the participants to the regional workplan and a calendar of events.

### ***Reflection of the concluded ERE***

Solveig Thorvaldsdottir, lead facilitator of the recently conducted Ankara ERE, guided participants through a reflection of the ERE. Lessons from this ERE were noted, including an evaluation of the ability of nations to respond to an earthquake.

### ***Technical Meetings and Trainings***

Lucien Jaggi took members through planned technical meetings and trainings for 2023 as follows:

- IEC/Rs: one IEC and nine IERs
  - IEC: Azerbaijan
  - IERs: USA, Czech Republic, Morocco, Russia, Hungary, South Korea, Spain (2), United Kingdom (ISAR)
  - EREs: Argentina (Americas), AP (location TBC), AEME (location TBC)
- ERE V2.0 Finalization Workshop (back-to-back with HNPW),
- UCC course in Switzerland (TBC), IEC/R Leadership Course (TBC)
- IRNAP: Ecuador, Panama, Honduras, Argentina
- Regional Meetings: Qatar (AEME), Ecuador (Americas), New Zealand (AP)

The following countries expressed interest to conduct events in 2023

- Russia expressed interest in hosting an **USAR** coordination (UC) course, an UNDAC awareness course, and to conduct flexible response exercise on floods or landscape/fire scenarios
- Switzerland Representative offered to host a training on UC course from 20 to 24 November in Geneva
- France will conduct two UC courses
- Hungary plans to conduct one UC course and INSARAG Coordination Management System (ICMS)
- Netherlands will conduct an IEC/IR Leadership course.
- Germany will conduct a policy awareness online course
- Italy will conduct a structural engineer training in March
- Germany will host a leadership course in February or March
- Türkiye plans to host UC Course, RDC course, ICMS Course and UC Training of Trainers Course

Mr. Fahad Alhajri representing Qatar, the incoming Regional Chair, made a brief presentation which welcomed member states to the 2023 AEME Regional meeting in Qatar.

### ***Presentation of The Kosovo Search and Rescue Training Centre***

Mr. John Doone, Director of the Kosovo Search and Rescue International Training Centre, elaborated on the activities his institution provides to build capacity of USAR teams and invited country teams to make use of the facility.

## **SESSION 6- HOST COUNTRY PRESENTATION**

This session was moderated by Lucien Jaggi, from the INSARAG secretariat. Mr. Tahsin Berkant Ataay, head of Response Plans and Exercises Working Group, made a presentation on 2022 AFAD Disaster Exercises Year. Another presentation on AFAD's Early Warning System was made by Mr. Abdullah Özçelik, Head of Disaster Management Center Department.

## **SESSION 7– REFLECTIONS ON THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF INSARAG'S GA 57/150**

Lucien Jaggi moderated this session which highlighted the 1999 İzmit, a Türkiye earthquake and 1999 Jiji, a Taiwan earthquake, which led to the adoption of the GA 57/150 Resolution on “Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance”, by 51 sponsoring countries. This resolution also recognizes the INSARAG guidelines and methodology as a flexible and helpful reference tool for disaster preparedness and response efforts.

## **SESSION 8 – ANNOUNCEMENTS BY MEMBER STATES, SUMMARY OF MEETING OUTCOMES, ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 2023 TROIKA AND CLOSING STATEMENTS**

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

Lucien Jaggi moderated the session where key announcements by member states were made, including meetings and training exercises highlighted above.

### ***Review the Summary of Meeting Outcomes***

Clement Kalonga listed the key highlights of the two-day meetings and thanked members for their active participation. The 2022 Workplan was reviewed by member states who also endorsed the 2023 Regional Workplan and calendar of activities.

### **Regional Troika for 2023:**

Regional Chair: Qatar thanked member states for the opportunity to serve as chair and welcomed all to the 2023 AEME meeting in Qatar. Outgoing Chair: AFAD made last remarks handed and handed the chairmanship over to Qatar.

### ***Announcement of the 2023 Troika***

Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, Chair of the INSARAG Secretariat, stated that two countries, Russia, and Romania, have expressed interest for the 2024 Regional Chairmanship seat.

Representatives from both countries were given an opportunity to address the gathering and defend their bid. As there was no consensus, the Secretariat Chair referred this matter to the INSARAG Global Chair.

### ***Closing Statements***

Mr. Rhodes Stampa, as the Secretariat Chair of INSARAG, thanked all the participants for their commitment towards this noble course and wished everyone safe travel back to their countries. The meeting was officially closed by the deputy head of AFAD, who thanked all the participants for finding time to attend the meeting.

### **ANNEXES**

Annex A: Meeting Agenda

Annex B: List of Participants