

# 2018 ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM STATEMENT ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT COOPERATION

*Adopted in Singapore on 4 August 2018*

**Expressing** sadness over the significant loss of life and property caused by natural and man-made disasters in ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Participants and other countries in recent years; honoring the victims and the affected people and showing appreciation to all first responders and rescuers involved and expressing deep concern over the catastrophic consequences of disasters and their negative impact on sustainable development of the economy, society and the environment in affected countries;

**Recalling** the principles of the various disaster management documents of the ARF and other regional and international organizations, including the 2006 ARF Statement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response, 2007 ARF General Guidelines for Disaster Relief Cooperation, 2010 ARF Strategic Guidance for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management, 2016 ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region; 2017 ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Disaster Health Management, and the recommendations made therein, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals;

**Recognising** the humanitarian assistance provided by the international community, including ARF Participants, in response to major disasters in the region in recent years as well as the spirit of solidarity and humanity reflected therein;

**Reaffirming** active support for disaster management and risk reduction efforts by the UN and its relevant agencies, donors, the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, and stressing importance of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and the value added by ASEAN-centered mechanisms including the ARF, the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus, the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management, the East Asia Summit, and the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre);

**Reiterating** that disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery and rehabilitation are priority areas of cooperation for the ARF, and that ARF Participants should better leverage the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief and strengthen disaster risk management;

**Recognizing** the primary role of governments of ARF Participants in enhancing and coordinating disaster management capabilities in their countries and safeguarding the safety and welfare of their peoples, and commending their efforts in recent years to establish and improve disaster management mechanisms and institutions, including National Disaster Management Organizations as well as their progress in capacity building and development;

**Acknowledging** the importance of addressing gaps and weaknesses in ARF Participants' capacity to reduce disaster risks, manage major disasters, make coordinated responses, and providing timely, effective and needs-based humanitarian assistance in line with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality as set out in United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/182;

**Realizing** the importance of improving the disaster response capacity of ARF Participants, promoting bilateral and multilateral cooperation in international assistance, information and experience sharing, voluntary technology exchange on mutually understood terms, personnel training, joint training and exercises, and enhancing communication and coordination among regional mechanisms;

**Recognizing** that the effects of climate change may exacerbate natural disasters in the region, and the need to encourage the formulation of policies to mitigate its negative impact;

**Acknowledging** that environmental factors can either exacerbate or reduce impacts of natural disasters and must therefore be managed for disaster risk reduction;

**Recognizing** the disproportionate impact of disasters on vulnerable groups, including women, boys and girls, persons with disability, older persons, indigenous people, poor people and migrants, and emphasizing the importance of their equal, full and effective participation at all stages of disaster prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery and rehabilitation;

**Encouraging**, in this regard, the integration of age, gender and other vulnerable sectors' perspective in all disaster risk reduction initiatives and strategies, and ensuring the full participation of women in disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and rehabilitation;

**Emphasizing** the importance of civil-military coordination and cooperation in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief;

**THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM HEREBY ENDEAVOR TO:**

1. Support the development, or improvement, of comprehensive and integrated national strategies covering contemporary best practice including disaster management, disaster risk prevention, monitoring and early warning, preparedness, emergency response, protection of civilians, recovery and reconstruction, and assist in incorporating these elements into countries' national disaster plans, as appropriate.
2. Address causal reasons of vulnerability and promote adequate risk monitoring and assessment systems.
3. Promote synergies and coherence with climate change adaptation strategies, including those in line with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, its Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement for those countries determined to implement it.
4. Step up efforts to protect the environment and promote sustainable development.
5. Integrate climate change adaptation strategies, as appropriate, into relevant legislation and policies on disaster management.
6. Foster the implementation of recommended disaster risk reduction measures in key regional and international documents on disaster management, according to national priorities.
7. Support ASEAN Centrality and ASEAN-led mechanisms in regional disaster relief cooperation, in partnership with relevant regional and international agencies and centers on disaster management, and the strengthening of coordination with them to promote rapid regional disaster response.

8. Pay special attention to capacity building for disaster risk reduction and management of developing and least-developed countries, and provide them, as appropriate and relevant, with support in funding, technology, personnel training and other aspects.
9. Support efforts to build the knowledge and capacity of local and national government officials, civil society, communities and volunteers to monitor hazards, exposure and social vulnerabilities.
10. Enhance national and regional capacities on disaster risk reduction and management, including through joint exercises and other initiatives to increase the capacities of humanitarian personnel.
11. Support and reinforce the active participation of local communities and promote adequate access to information and the opportunity to contribute to disaster risk reduction and management efforts.
12. Promote the development and implementation of innovative strategies for disaster risk awareness-raising involving the whole of the society, including vulnerable groups, research communities, governments, emergency managers and other stakeholders.
13. Promote sharing of knowledge, experience and technology pertaining to disaster monitoring and early warning, preparedness, emergency response, disaster relief, disaster damage and loss assessment, post-disaster recovery and reconstruction, environment protection, preparedness for trans-boundary disaster, and other aspects in order to encourage sustainable development.
14. Improve civil-military coordination and cooperation in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief capability through training and exercises, and the engagement and inputs into the ARF Disaster Relief Exercise, including by enhancing its coordination with other disaster relief exercises in the region.
15. Explore the possibility of establishing regional risk information systems and early warning mechanisms.
16. Develop among ARF Participants the capacity for resilient and efficient communication in disaster management and response.
17. Enhance the capacity of existing Track 1.5 and Track 2 mechanisms, including the ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) and the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), in the field of disaster management.
18. Encourage concerned ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and external partners, including the UN and other relevant inter-governmental and regional organizations, to support the implementation of this Statement.