

ASEAN STRATEGIC POLICY DIALOGUE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT BUILDING ASEAN'S RESILIENCY TO DISASTER

Event Report
21 August 2019

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BUILDING ASEAN'S RESILIENCY TO DISASTER

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Opening Ceremony	6
High-Level Panel Discussion on “ASEAN’s Resiliency: Forging Partnerships for Future Challenges”	11
Thematic Discussion on “ASEAN, Sustainable Development, and Disaster Impacts”	17
Thematic Discussion on “Adapting to Localisation as a ‘New Norm’ in Humanitarian Response”	22
Open Session	29
Conclusion and Closing Remarks	34
Programme	35
Organisers	39

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Collectively, ASEAN is a region with great potential of economic growth. It is also home to a large and young population. As the region continues to grow, rapid urbanisation is leading to the establishment of new cities and the creation of mega-urban regions. However, ASEAN remains highly vulnerable to natural disasters that can setback the economy and erode economic gains made over the years. Adverse climate change has also increased the severity and unpredictability of the impact of such disasters. ASEAN member states have to take steps collectively to implement disaster risk reduction strategies tailored to their national context.

The theme of this year's ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management (SPDDM) was "Building ASEAN's Resiliency to Disasters", which sought to spark discussion on how ASEAN can continue building on its achievements to enhance resilience of the region. In line with ASEAN's theme of "Partnership for Sustainability" under Thailand's Chairmanship this year, the conference looked at how partnerships contributed towards building ASEAN's resilience in times of disasters. The conference also deliberated on the ongoing efforts to realise the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management, in particular realising the vision for ASEAN to become a global leader in disaster management by the year 2025. The inputs gathered from the speakers and participants would be referenced in the development of the next ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme 2021–2025. This report summarises the key points from the panel discussions and presentations. The High-Level Panel Discussion underlined the importance of

having a longer term strategic outlook in terms of building partnerships for disaster management and addressing climate change concerns. The first Thematic Discussion on “ASEAN, Sustainable Development, and Disaster Impacts” called for increased engagement with local communities so that they can be empowered to look after themselves and be prepared for disasters as well as the effects of climate change. The second Thematic Discussion on “Adapting to Localisation as a ‘New Norm’ in Humanitarian Response” highlighted the urgent need to build up disaster management capacity at the sub-national level. Finally, in the Open Session participants raised a number of ideas focused around gaps, priorities and partnerships.

OPENING CEREMONY

WELCOME SPEECH BY CHAIR OF THE ASEAN COMMITTEE FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT (ACDM)



Dr Ko Ko Naing, Director-General, Department of Disaster Management of Myanmar and Chair of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) delivered the welcome remarks. He shared that this year's SPPDM focused on how to improve the ability of at-risk communities to respond to and recover from a disaster in a timely manner. Partnerships are vital to reduce losses from disasters, and the SPPDM allows stakeholders to exchange views and help each other. He noted that ACDM leadership as well as operationalisation of the "One ASEAN, One Response" are essential to building ASEAN's resilience to disasters. He warned that disasters in the region are becoming increasingly complex and localised, and identified the trend that impacts of natural and human-induced hazards are increasingly overlapping and growing in scale. He also expressed concern that the types of exposure and vulnerabilities of communities are changing. To this end, he highlighted the importance of integrating disaster risk reduction initiatives in development plans and community capacity-building programmes. He further called on regional actors to provide more assistance to community driven disaster management efforts.

OPENING REMARKS BY THE GUEST-OF-HONOUR



The opening remarks were given by Mrs Josephine Teo, Ministry of Manpower and Second Minister for Home Affairs of Singapore. She encouraged governments to be more resilient in the face of climate change and natural disasters, as well as other non-traditional security threats like pandemics and irregular migration. Resilience in this instance refers to the national capacity to deliver public services such as power, water, and public security when disaster strikes. Mrs Teo remarked that government agencies must be given enough resources to deal with crisis situations to effectively recover from it, and return to normalcy in the shortest possible time. She noted that it is critical to inform people of the potential dangers and threats that they might be exposed to and how to deal with them. She said that in Singapore, there are volunteer Community First Responders (CFRs) who are taught first-aid and basic firefighting skills. She shared that the Singaporean Government provides further support by equipping them with the necessary technological hardware and software to carry out the job. Examples of this include the Government's initiative to place automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in public housing units and public transport vehicles, as well as the development of a mobile app called My Responder that provides alerts to CFRs using geo-physical location tagging. She also referenced youth volunteers in the "Lion-Hearters" Club and the Civil Defence Cadet Corps, and the important role they play in sharing knowledge with their peers and the community. She highlighted that Singaporean volunteers mainly assist in building infrastructure and teaching skills to the community such as first-aid during such missions. Mrs Teo also

informed that the SCDF had signed MoUs with the Singapore Red Cross and Mercy Relief in May 2019, thus formalising their partnerships. She said that it is timely to look at the progress made under the AADMER Work Programme 2015–2020 to chart the way forward. As Asia-Pacific is the most disaster-prone region in the world, effective disaster risk management (DRM) requires multi-stakeholder engagements, particularly on technical issues, to ensure an increasing preparedness for regional disasters that tend to have transboundary impacts. Singapore remains fully committed to contribute to regional disaster management efforts. An example of this commitment is the annual Senior Executive Programme in Disaster Management that the SCDF has organised since 2015. She also shared that the SCDF will be organising an inaugural First Responders Safety and Performance Symposium from 20-21 November to cultivate innovation, collaboration, and capacity-building in disaster management.

REMARKS BY ASEAN DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL



Mr Kung Phoak, Deputy Secretary General of ASEAN of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Pillar delivered remarks on behalf of the ASEAN Secretariat. Mr Phoak noted that while ASEAN has successfully created a solid platform—the SPDDM—that gave birth to ASEAN Vision 2025, it still needs to strengthen its partnership with other stakeholders such as CSOs, private sector, and local communities to realise its vision. He pointed out that the increasing intensity of disasters in the region has prompted ASEAN to actively seek out

platforms for multi-sectoral policy dialogue. Mr Phoak also shared that adopting an approach of localisation is key to ensuring policies are appropriate and applicable to communities at-risk. Localisation means empowering communities, recognising their local capacities, and seeking the inclusion of everyone's needs in policymaking. Disaster management policies must target local communities and solutions need to consider the local context. Mr Phoak pointed out that transboundary disasters need to be managed by multinational teams using transboundary solutions, and that continuous knowledge-sharing is essential to building stronger relations among DRM stakeholders. Finally, Mr Phoak reaffirmed that ASEAN stands in solidarity with the wider community in commemorating the World Humanitarian Day.

REMARKS BY DEPUTY HEAD OF MISSION, EMBASSY OF SWITZERLAND IN SINGAPORE



Mrs Barbara Gonzenbach delivered remarks on behalf of the Embassy of Switzerland in Singapore. She acknowledged that ASEAN is leading the efforts in regional disaster management. She reminded the participants that AADMER is still the only legally binding regional document on disaster management to this day, and that this legal framework has facilitated closer ties between ASEAN member states in the area of disaster management. Mrs Gonzenbach shared that Switzerland and ASEAN have been dialogue partners since 2006 and have several active MoUs. She mentioned that Switzerland works with ASEAN by providing financial aid, developing expertise to respond to

emergencies in countries such as Cambodia and Laos, and ensuring the sustainability of disaster management projects through disaster risk financing and insurance. The Swiss Government is also the co-organiser of a localisation-themed conference as it believes that local participation is important in the overall disaster management effort. She closed by affirming the Swiss Government's commitment to working together with ASEAN, specifically in terms of the provision of financial assistance and expert advice.

HIGH-LEVEL PANEL DISCUSSION ON “ASEAN RESILIENCY: FORGING PARTNERSHIPS FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES”



From left to right: Amb. Ong Keng Yong, Ms Cristelle Pratt, Dr Jemilah Mahmood, Mr Olabisi Dare

Panellists

Ms Cristelle Pratt

Deputy Secretary-General, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

Dr Jemilah Mahmood

Under Secretary General for Partnership, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

Mr Olabisi Dare

Head of Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons Division, The African Union

Moderator

Ambassador Ong Keng Yong

Executive Deputy Chairman of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and Former Secretary-General of ASEAN

This session shared views on (i) pressing challenges that ASEAN should focus on; (ii) potential solutions that could be adopted; and (iii) what ASEAN could work on to achieve its declaration on “One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region”. There was a particular focus on learning from other regions’ capabilities and reflections, and developing and sustaining partnerships with others. Through these reflections, it provided an assessment of ASEAN’s progress in responding to disasters within the region through the years, what ASEAN could do to meet the challenges ahead, and how ASEAN could work towards responding outside the region. The speakers were asked to reflect on the effects of climate change and how they showed leadership in developing potential solutions. The session also identified key takeaways for developing and sustaining partnerships, and what could be drawn from other contexts and regions that could inform and contribute to achieving the ASEAN Vision 2025 on disaster management, and the ASEAN Declaration on “One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region”.



Ms Cristelle Pratt speaks about disaster management and climate change adaptation in the Pacific

Ms Cristelle Pratt highlighted that adapting to adverse effects of climate change is of highest priority to the Pacific Islands at the moment. Countries such as Vanuatu and Tonga are especially exposed and vulnerable since they are atoll islands. She mentioned that the Pacific Islands are currently working on a framework that seeks to include climate change issues in policy decision-

making. This framework is also intended to close the development gap by including measures that assist in achieving low carbon outputs and contribute to the strengthening of DRM. She pointed out that improving disaster management requires addressing prevailing attitudes and behaviour surrounding it. Political will is necessary to enhance regional collective efforts in disaster management. She noted that transformations can only occur when partners commit to changes they want to see and underlined the importance of having a long term strategic outlook. There is a need to adopt more positive mind sets and to perceive the scale of the Pacific Islands not as a weakness, but as a strength, and to see the ocean as a binding force instead of a water body that separates them. Finally, Ms Pratt shared that Pacific Islanders are aware that the survival of their islands are largely dependent on their relationship with nature.



Dr Jemilah Mahmood speaks about strengthening ASEAN's resiliency to disasters

Dr Jemilah Mahmood focused her presentation on the four Ts that are necessary to strengthen ASEAN's resiliency. The first "T" she mentioned refers to *trust* deficits that need to be identified and collectively addressed by disaster management stakeholders. She said that trust can be cultivated through localisation because aid effectiveness on the ground often leads to acceptance. The second "T" refers to colliding *threats* (e.g., earthquake and conflict simultaneously occurring) – and the necessity to understand and mitigate them. She pointed out that there is no clear regional framework that enables us to address the intersection of natural and human-induced disasters. The third "T"

is *technology* and the need to harness it responsibly to positively influence thoughts and provide effective humanitarian assistance. She explained that people are no longer content to be just beneficiaries, they want a say. The fourth “T” pertains to “*too little*” funding allocated to disaster management efforts. She stated that traditional donors are over-stretched and the humanitarian financing gap is constantly widening. She shared that innovative funding solutions are needed such as IFRC’s forecast-based financing model. Dr Mahmood encouraged participants to revisit how they develop strategies (e.g., do we plan by assessing where we are now towards an ideal state in 2030? Or do we start with our goal in 2030 and reflect back on steps we need to take to get there? Which would be more effective?). She explained that IFRC uses a method called horizon scanning to get around this challenge. She complimented ASEAN for its strength in planning but also emphasised the need for the organisation to put its numerous plans into action. Dr Mahmood mentioned that partnerships are important in disaster management, and must be built before disasters hit. She recommended to begin by mapping or creating a formalised database of successful disaster management partnerships in ASEAN for reference.



Mr Olabisi Dare talks about the challenges faced by the African Union

Mr Olabisi Dare noted that the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Centre) is seen as a leader in this area and that the African Union (AU) is setting up a similar agency. He identified three main disaster

challenges in Africa. The first challenge is violent conflict – 90 per cent of forced displacement in Africa is due to violent conflict, and only 10 per cent is due to natural disaster. The second challenge is the adverse effects of climate change such as drought and forced displacement which also tend to be drivers of violent conflict. The third challenge is the gap in humanitarian funding. He urged the disaster management community to start pursuing non-traditional sources of financing in consultation with the private sector. He noted that cash-based funding is still the most effective in their region because it empowers beneficiaries to choose the type of assistance or help they need. Finally, Mr Dare stressed that there is a need to seriously start considering human-induced threats such as violent conflicts in the region because they can worsen humanitarian crises around the world.

Amb Ong Keng Yong suggested that a key indicator of policy support is the appropriation of funds. He recommended that policymakers consider including DRM as a distinct and separate line item in the portfolio of the Ministry of Finance to ensure funding is allocated for that specific purpose. He suggested inviting Ministries of Finance to the next SPDDM in 2020.



Amb. Ong Keng Yong moderates the session

DISCUSSION, QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

A participant raised the argument that close to 60 per cent of internal displacements come from Southeast Asia and called for steps to address this issue before it gets worse. Dr Jemilah Mahmood highlighted the cross-cutting issues affecting internal displacement. She explained that a key challenge faced by governments is that the budget allocation for disaster management and risk reduction is usually in a silo. She pointed out that this limits the capacity to use DRM funds to address other drivers of disasters.

Another participant asked whether greater regional engagement could be a step towards localisation. Mr Dare mentioned that while regional engagement is important, individual states also need to be more resourceful. He said that money is everywhere, many people have money, but they are not putting it back into their own communities. Dr Mahmood also reiterated that individual governments are primarily responsible for investing in disaster management but it seems that there is some time lag in this area. She pointed out that the regional economy of ASEAN is growing but ASEAN member states are still not providing adequate funding towards DRM in their own countries.

One participant asked how ASEAN disaster management mechanisms can maintain relevance as member states increase internal capacity. Ms Pratt emphasised that each country has a different risk profile but each country in the region can learn about the different DRM approaches taken by other countries. She underlined that disaster impacts in the region can cross borders, and hence a collective approach is important.

THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON “ASEAN, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, AND DISASTER IMPACTS”



From left to right: Mr Kung Phoak, Dr Kaveh Zahedi, Ms Lesley Jeanne Y. Cordero, Mr Darren Klemm, Mr Teong How Hwa

Panellists

Dr Kaveh Zahedi

Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

Ms Lesley Jeanne Y. Cordero

Senior Disaster Risk Management Specialist, World Bank Group

Mr Darren Klemm

Commissioner of Department of Fire and Emergency Services,
Western Australia

Mr Teong How Hwa

Deputy Commissioner (Future Technology and Public Safety), Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF)

Moderator

Mr Kung Phoak

Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community

This session explored the impacts by the onset of disasters upon ASEAN's socio-economic progress and the sustainability of its development. The speakers in this panel discussed the challenges and opportunities the region faces at the intersection of DRM, sustainable development, and climate change adaptation. The session tackled the impacts of climate change and disasters through cross-cutting issues such as communications and information management, risk financing, and land and forest fires. The panellists spoke on how to further improve and strengthen cooperation in managing shared risks and transboundary disasters in the region.



Dr Kaveh Zahedi speaks about the importance of improving social protection policies in the region

Mr Kaveh Zahedi explained that building resilience across ASEAN is not straightforward. He noted that the ability to bounce back varies greatly because socio-economic development within the region is very uneven. He also pointed out that the region is not on-track to meet targets to reduce poverty and inequality. Mr Zahedi mentioned that most of the attention is on large-scale rapid on-set disasters instead of slow on-set recurring disasters that have larger regional impacts. Damages and losses from large-scale rapid on-set disasters amount to roughly US\$35 billion compared to approximately US\$80 billion from slow on-set recurring disasters, and the agricultural sector is the most affected segment of society. Mr Zahedi called for the need to invest in improving social policy to enhance DRM. He argued that most of the issues that limit our capacity to reduce risks and manage disasters are linked to social matters such as health, education, infrastructure, and transportation. For instance, according to UNESCAP studies, people who are less educated are less likely to be able to

access resources to cope with disasters and adapt to the changing climate. He shared that the Asia-Pacific region invests only around 3 per cent of its GDP into social protection, compared to the world average of 11 per cent, and OECD country average of 20 per cent.



Ms Lesley Jeanne Y. Cordero talks about regional financing initiatives

Ms Lesley Jeanne Y. Cordero stated in her presentation that the means to strengthen a community's resilience depends on the ability to clearly quantify what exactly it means to "bounce back better". She said that disasters are windows of opportunity to push for new policies or revisit existing policies, but it is necessary to first know how one is progressing and where one is advancing. Ms Cordero shared three means of involving communities in different stages of disaster management: technical assistance, financial instruments, and a convening platform. She highlighted the importance of peer-to-peer knowledge sharing as well as the need to gain the support of the Department of Finance in disaster management efforts. Ms Cordero hinted, based on her experience in the Typhoon Haiyan recovery and rehabilitation efforts, that multi-stakeholder engagement increases the likelihood of getting access to funds for disaster management. She also spoke about the Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Insurance Facility (SEADRIF) and how such regional initiatives can address gaps at the national-level.

Mr Darren Klemm clarified that the biggest threat to Western Australia is not bushfires and cyclones, but bio-security that could negatively affect the

agriculture sector — a key driver of the state's economy. From his experience, Mr Klemm noted that rural areas seem to be more resilient than urban centres due to their lack of access to resources and services. This incentivises the rural people to look after themselves better and be more self-sufficient. He shared that a good practice in preparing communities to respond to disasters is to go to the lowest level — the community. He mentioned that the best way to build community resilience is by knowing the people, engaging with them, and empowering them to look after themselves.



Mr Darren Klemm speaks about building community resilience

Mr Teong How Hwa shared that the greatest challenge SCDF faces is building risk consciousness and sensitising people about infrequent dangers and threats, especially in “peace time”. Mr Teong mentioned that the goal of the SCDF is to build a “Nation of Life-Savers”. He raised the point that climate change and terrorism are Singapore's main security concerns, and that the main challenge faced by the country is preparing its citizens to cope with impacts that are not usually felt in everyday life directly. Finally, Mr Teong also spoke about the need to collaborate with the private sector to develop innovative solutions to address these security concerns and issues.



Mr Teong How Hwa speaks about challenges faced by the SCDF in terms of building risk consciousness

DISCUSSION, QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

A participant quizzed the panellists on some of the key ingredients necessary to strengthen a community's capacity to bounce back. Mr Zahedi raised the issue of accountability. He said that the biggest challenge with social policy is that it belongs to everyone and therefore it is owned by no one. He also indicated that there is no shared understanding about what it means to build resilience among stakeholders in the region. Ms Cordero suggested to scale-up social protection nets in disaster management by including reconstruction arrangements and livelihood protection in insurance coverage. She stated that we must continue to find ways to effectively utilise existing financial risk facilities like SEADRIF. She also highlighted the need to promote a culture of creativity and innovation as a vehicle for co-creation and collaboration in disaster management. Mr Klemm reiterated that effectively managing and retaining volunteers embedded in the community for disaster situations is the first step in building and strengthening local partnerships and in promoting community-based solutions.

A participant reminded everyone in the room that the issue of gender equality needs to be a part of the disaster management agenda. Mr Klemm echoed his concern and shared that there was a 53 per cent increase in domestic violence after the Christchurch earthquake and a 98 per cent increase in domestic violence after Hurricane Katrina. He observed that recovery efforts tend to focus on infrastructure rather than social aspects. The panellists also agreed on the need to place more emphasis on anticipating slow onset disasters, and to improve disaster risk financing in the region.

THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON “ADAPTING TO LOCALISATION AS A ‘NEW NORM’ IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE”



From left to right: Ms Adelina Kamal, Dr Rahmawati Husein, Dr Ahmad Faizal Mohd Perdaus, Mr Tecson John S Lim, Mr Benjamin William

Panellists

Dr Rahmawati Husein

Vice Chair, Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Centre (MDMC), Indonesia

Dr Ahmad Faizal Mohd Perdaus

President, Mercy Malaysia

Mr Benjamin William

Secretary General / Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Red Cross

Mr Tecson John S Lim

Director of the Policy Development and Planning Service of the Office of Civil Defense, Philippines

Moderator

Ms Adelina Kamal

Executive Director, ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre)

This session reflected on the changing humanitarian landscape and how regional blocs such as ASEAN, as well as other humanitarian actors, can adapt to locally-led responses. Drawing from their own experiences, the speakers discussed the trend towards “nationally-led, regionally-supported, and international as necessary” responses in humanitarian crises. They talked about the need to forge new models of partnership before disasters strike. They also reflected on how regional organisations and other humanitarian actors can facilitate this changing humanitarian landscape, and how they can modify their approach to support the localisation agenda and local responses.



Ms Adelina Kamal moderates the session

Ms Adelina Kamal moderated the second thematic discussion. She noted that localisation can mean different things to different people. As such, she asked the panellists to share their thoughts on what localisation meant to them, as well as some of the challenges their respective organisations faced while attempting to advance a localisation agenda. She also requested panellists to provide some examples of localisation efforts that other stakeholders can learn from.

Dr Rahmawati Husein stated that Muhammadiyah is already local. In her opinion, “localisation”, as a concept, should not be understood from an international perspective but rather from a national perspective. Localisation efforts should be at the sub-national level involving local governments and NGOs. Drawing attention to the “nationally-led response with regional and international support as needed” model, she highlighted its potential as a means

to operationalise localisation. However, she also shared some challenges of this approach, which includes the lack of coordination as well as limited time for capacity building at the sub-national level. Dr Rahmawati stated that within the Muhammadiyah network, the various entities and organisations are all willing to coordinate and play out their respective roles. She shared that her organisation engages with the community through education programmes that raise awareness about the potential impact of disasters and importance of reducing disaster risk.



Dr Rahmawati Husein speaks about local community engagement in Indonesia

Dr Ahmad Faizal Mohd Perdaus highlighted that localisation has two overarching principles. The first principle is that the strategising and planning process must be inclusive. He emphasised that civil societies and local communities should have the space to actively participate in platforms such as the SPDDM. The second principle refers to the empowering of civil societies and communities. He explained that they must also be part of the decision-making process if localisation in disaster management is expected to work. Dr Perdaus cited the lack of capacity of local actors as an impediment to successful localisation. He likened it to a chicken and egg situation. An organisation with limited experience in handling larger-scale projects cannot be expected to suddenly handle a multimillion-dollar project. However, he also noted that these are exactly the funding opportunities and types of projects which can help an organisation develop its capacity. Dr Perdaus mentioned that Mercy Malaysia endeavours to engage with local contractors, workers, and suppliers when conducting their relief operations. He also shared that Mercy Malaysia is willing to share funding with other smaller NGOs.



Dr Ahmad Faizal Mohd Perdaus speaks about the principles underpinning localisation

Mr Benjamin William stated that localisation initiatives should be pragmatic, practical, and achievable. He said that localisation means being able to work with local leaders and through existing structures. He challenged humanitarian actors in the region to actively seek local solutions that enhance the local economy and local capacity, rather than just importing ideas and products. He also echoed Dr Perdaus's sentiments regarding the need to include local actors in national and regional platforms. Mr William emphasised that localisation efforts should involve the capacity building of local leaders for local NGOs, and not just local leaders for international NGOs. Mr William also mentioned that larger humanitarian organisations should strive to set aside a pool of funds that can be made available to local actors. He suggested including the localisation agenda as part of post-disaster response reports of humanitarian organisations. He recommended that humanitarian organisations explicitly lay out how they engaged with local actors during the whole response and how they contributed to localisation. Mr William raised the issue of whether or not localisation is really being adopted on the ground. He was concerned that everyone is using it but not everyone practises it. He used the following quote from a local NGO worker to highlight his point: "In good times, they train us to be managers, but when disasters happen, they turn up and take over the show, so how do we learn?" Mr William also raised the point that humanitarian organisations should judge their success based on not needing to respond, rather than on the ability to respond. Mr William emphasised the need for larger humanitarian organisations to help local humanitarian actors build credibility. He highlighted the Singapore Red Cross' efforts in the aftermath of the Nepal earthquake when it worked with

15 local NGOs that had an established presence in the area of response. He said that they allowed the organisations to take credit for all the work done, which in turn helped them build their credibility.



Dr Benjamin William shares some best practices to advance the localisation agenda

Mr Tecson John S. Lim indicated that localisation in the Philippines is tied to the idea of devolution of power and responsibility. He emphasised that it is about strengthening the disaster management capabilities of local governments and teaching them to take care of their communities. He also noted that it is about empowering local and indigenous communities to take care of themselves, and to prepare for and respond to disasters. Mr Lim highlighted that localisation efforts are gradually being incorporated into the country's legal framework. He disclosed that the law requires local governments to set aside 5 per cent of their budget for disaster management, of which 30 per cent is to be set aside for quick response, and 70 per cent is to be allocated to preparedness efforts. Mr Lim also spoke about the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), a working group of various government, non-government, civil sector, and private sector organisations in the Philippines. The Council adopts the UN Cluster Approach and is responsible for protecting people during disasters. He explained that the different ministries are encouraged to work together with other agencies and develop more robust partnerships through the Council. Mr Lim warned that localised aid can create problems as well, especially when international and multilateral stakeholders go directly to local governments without the right know-how, expertise, and capacity.



Mr Tecson John S Lim talks about the Filipino government's experience with localisation

DISCUSSION, QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

The question of how to strengthen ASEAN's role in global localisation efforts was raised. Dr Perdaus suggested that specific clauses regarding local actors across the spectrum — local governments, local NGOs, and communities — should be mentioned and included in the next AADMER work programme. He recommended considering the allocation of resources to these actors. He called for increased support for initiatives such as the Regional Alliance for Collective Emergency Response (RACER). Mr William suggested that regional organisations could help bring local actors into the conversation, as well as help them gain credibility. He cited the “One Billion Coalition for Resilience” as a good rallying call for achieving localisation because it can bring together government, international and local humanitarian workers, and local businesses.

A participant raised the question about how to link localisation with resilience at the community level. Dr Husein argued that a focus on the humanitarian-development nexus is needed to further the localisation agenda. She suggested including hazard mitigation and contingency plans in developmental planning at the sub-national and village level.

SUMMARY OF OPEN SESSION



Ms Adelina Kamal and Prof. Mely Caballero-Anthony moderate the Open Session

Co-Moderators

Ms Adelina Kamal

Executive Director, ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre)

Professor Mely Caballero-Anthony

Head, Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

The suggestions made by participants in the dialogue will feed into the AADMER Work Programme 2021–2025. The session was organised into three core areas: gaps, priorities, and future partnerships.

Gaps



One participant highlighted that the SPDDM focused on localisation from the perspective of governments and NGOs only. It was noted that the discussion did not include perspectives from local or international private sector companies who interact regularly with affected communities.

Another participant pointed out that it is particularly important to look beyond multinational corporations towards small and medium sized businesses with different systems (e.g., caucus system of business entities in India). It was suggested that if a caucus-like system is not developed then the private sector will be akin to a “fish out of water” if they are brought into the disaster management conversation without knowledge of it. The participant referred to the ASEAN Business Council, which has specific resources available in disaster response as a potential knowledge and financial source to tap into and further develop the disaster management conversation with the private sector.

Another participant drew attention to the three major disaster scenarios in the ASEAN Joint Disaster Response Plan (AJDRP). The AJDRP asked member states to consider what ASEAN would do in these scenarios. Five ASEAN member states have already identified their available assets for such emergency responses. It was suggested to extend this exercise to the remaining member states by 2025.

Priorities



One participant highlighted that Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) could play a role in the next AADMER Work Programme. It was noted that FBOs can help strengthen disaster management capacity in a country. One suggestion was to consider how this important actor will fit into the next AADMER Work Programme. An example cited was the Humanitarian Forum Indonesia which is an interfaith forum and an example of the good work FBOs undertake. There was a recommendation to scale up the working model for FBOs across Indonesia and ASEAN. The value of FBOs was evident during the height of the H5N1 pandemic, when FBOs were instrumental in raising awareness about pandemic preparedness and prevention initiatives.

Another participant recognised that there is a lot of knowledge in the region on disaster management. The suggestion was to focus on formally developing this knowledge and making it available through a regional knowledge hub. A need for ACDM to have a shared definition of localisation was also discussed.

Separately, it was suggested that efforts to develop the next AADMER Work Programme could tie in with the Coalition for Resilience established by the IFRC. Part of the AADMER Work Programme focuses on overlaying these efforts and linking them. One participant called for integrating efforts across the whole of the ASEAN Community pillars and addressing slow on-set recurring disasters in the region.

Another participant recalled the words of former Executive Director of AHA Centre, Pak Said Faisal, that “vision without action is hallucination” and highlighted the need to take stock of what has been achieved in the AADMER Work Programme. A recommendation is to draw on the experience of the ASCC Score Card initiative (developed in collaboration with RSIS), which was implemented for the environment sector and adapt it for AADMER.

The importance of measuring effectiveness was raised. It was suggested that monitoring should return as a core element of the AADMER Work Programme, particularly to evaluate the progress of localisation efforts. A mid-term review to assess what was and wasn't achieved could be implemented. It was also noted that monitoring needs to be robust at the regional, national, and local levels and appropriate criteria developed. It was recognised that sometimes such efforts can be more impactful at the national level than at the regional level.

One participant suggested incorporating fundraising strategies in the AADMER Work Programme to address the constant need for humanitarian financing in the region.

There was a call from a participant to develop a formal framework for civil society engagement at the regional level and implement it. With existing frameworks, it is important to see whether they are effective or in need of re-evaluation.

Partnerships

One participant recalled comments by Amb Ong earlier in the dialogue when he suggested it was important to engage the correct agency with the right mandate. In line with this, another participant suggested that the ACDM should re-evaluate the way they identify partners and work towards convincing them to enter into partnerships without necessarily offering tangible benefits each time.

Another participant suggested that the ASEAN Secretariat and AHA Centre should develop formal mechanisms to engage faith-based forums like Humanitarian Forum Indonesia (HFI). It was noted that HFI and similar organisations already work with individual ASEAN member states, but it is now important for linkages to be established at the regional level.

One participant highlighted the need to develop a process for sharing disaster management-related data and information among regional stakeholders. The Work Programme can be instrumental in establishing a systematic procedure for data management.

Another participant raised the link between biodiversity and disaster risk reduction (e.g., natural barriers such as mangroves that can limit the impacts of disasters). Identifying and formalising such partnerships across sectors should be included in the next Work Plan. There should be a cross-sectoral action framework under the AADMER Work Programme to facilitate integration of various interlinked sectors.

One participant also encouraged the ASEAN Centre for Energy to formally engage with the AHA Centre and find common ground to work together.

Another participant highlighted the role of the ASEAN Commission on Women and Children, and questions were asked about how this body and its mandate could be integrated into the agenda for the AADMER Work Programme. It was noted that the ASEAN Secretariat, in collaboration with IFRC, will publish a report on sexual and gender-based violence in disaster zones focused on five ASEAN Member States. The participant hoped to expand the study to all member states and take the findings into consideration in the next AADMER Work Programme.



CLOSING REMARKS

Mr Kung Phoak, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Pillar delivered the closing remarks. He believed that the dialogue was very productive and that steps were being taken in the right direction to develop resiliency as part of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint. Mr Phoak acknowledged that there are many things on the agenda and that it is incumbent upon everyone to turn these ideas into action. He also reflected upon some insights from his meeting with the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR), specifically on how to link cross-cutting issues like building resilience and multi-sectoral cooperation. Mr Phoak urged participants to look at some of the national level practices that can be replicated at the regional level. He highlighted the need for the Socio-Cultural, Economic, and the Political-Security Pillars of ASEAN to work together in a more cohesive manner. Finally, he identified some key regional disaster management priorities:

- i. Address the impacts of climate change, and slow on-set and recurring disasters.
- ii. Explore innovative humanitarian financing.
- iii. Harness technologies to implement the ASCC blueprint.
- iv. Leverage “start-ups” to help achieve the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management.
- v. Integrate social policy with disaster risk reduction efforts.
- vi. Build cross-sectoral partnerships at all levels.
- vii. Strengthen community preparedness during “peace-time”.
- viii. Encourage academic institutions to play a more active role in the implementation of the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management.
- ix. Reaffirm partnerships within ACDM Focal Points and agencies responsible for first responders, and other agencies in charge of disaster management.

PROGRAMME

AM Session		
08:30 - 09:00	Registration at InterContinental Singapore	
09:00 - 09:10	Welcome Speech by Chair of the ASEAN Committee for Disaster Management (ACDM)	Dr Ko Ko Naing Director-General Department of Disaster Management, Myanmar
09:10 - 09:25	Opening Remarks by the Guest-of Honour	Mrs Josephine Teo Minister for Manpower and 2 nd Minister for Home Affairs, Singapore
09:25 - 09:35	Remarks by ASEAN Secretary-General	Mr Kung Phoak Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for Socio-Cultural Community
09:35 - 09:45	Remarks by Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Switzerland in Singapore	Mrs Barbara Gonzenbach Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Switzerland in Singapore
09:45 - 10:15	Refreshments and Group Photo	
10:15 - 11:30	High-Level Panel Discussion on “ ASEAN’s Resiliency: Forging Partnerships for Future Challenges ”	<p>Panellists</p> <p>Ms Cristelle Pratt Deputy Secretary-General, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat</p> <p>Dr Jemilah Mahmood Under Secretary-General for Partnership, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)</p> <p>Mr Olabisi Dare Head of Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons Division, The African Union</p>

		<p><u>Moderator</u> Mr Ong Keng Yong Executive Deputy Chairman of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and Former Secretary-General of ASEAN</p>
11:30 - 13:00	<p>Thematic Discussion: “ASEAN, Sustainable Development and Disaster Impacts”</p>	<p><u>Panellists</u> Mr Darren Klemm Commissioner of Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Western Australia</p> <p>Dr Kaveh Zahedi Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)</p> <p>Ms Lesley Jeanne Y. Cordero Senior Disaster Risk Management Specialist, World Bank Group</p> <p>Mr Teong How Hwa Deputy Commissioner (Future Technology and Public Safety), Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF)</p> <p><u>Moderator</u> Mr Kung Phoak Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, <i>NTU, Singapore</i></p>
13:00 - 14:30	Lunch	

PM Session		
14:30 - 16:00	Thematic Discussion: “Adapting to Localisation as a ‘New Norm’ in Humanitarian Response”	<p><u>Panellists</u></p> <p>Dr Ahmad Faizal Mohd Perdaus President, Mercy Malaysia</p> <p>Mr Benjamin William Secretary General / Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Red Cross</p> <p>Dr Rahmawati Husein Vice Chair, Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Centre (MDMC), Indonesia</p> <p>Mr Tecson John S Lim Director of the Policy Development and Planning Service of the Office of Civil Defense, Philippines</p> <p><u>Moderator</u></p> <p>Ms Adelina Kamal Executive Director, ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre)</p>
16:00 - 16:15	Tea Break	
16:15 - 17:15	Open Session	<p><u>Co-Moderators</u></p> <p>Ms Adelina Kamal Executive Director, ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre)</p> <p>Prof Mely Caballero-Anthony Head, Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore</p>

17:15 - 17:30	Conclusion and Closing Remarks	Mr Kung Phoak Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community
Official Dinner		
18:30 - 20:00	SPDDM 2019 Official Dinner	<u>Guest-of-Honour</u> Ms Sun Xueling Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Home Affairs and National Development, Singapore

ORGANISERS

ASEAN Secretariat

The ASEAN Secretariat was set up on 24 February 1976 by the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN. Its function is to provide for greater efficiency in the coordination of ASEAN organs and for more effective implementation of ASEAN projects and activities. While building a people-centred, people-oriented ASEAN Community that is globally respected, the ASEAN Secretariat's mission includes, among others, facilitation and coordination with ASEAN stakeholders in realising the purposes and principles of ASEAN as reflected in its Charter. The ASEAN Secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre)

The AHA Centre was established on 17 November 2011 by the ASEAN member states through the signing of the ASEAN Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre. It was established following the mandate of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) in order to facilitate cooperation and coordination among ASEAN member states and with international organisations such as the United Nations for disaster management and emergency response. The AHA Centre facilitates joint emergency preparedness and response. It also operationalises the regional coordination mechanism for emergency preparedness and response. The Centre is based in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF)

The Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) is the national authority that provides fire-fighting, rescue, and emergency ambulance services in Singapore. SCDF is also responsible for mitigating hazardous materials incidents, as well as formulate, implement, and enforce regulation on fire safety and civil defence shelter matters. SCDF's Ops Lionheart contingent is classified as a Heavy Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team by INSARAG since 2008. SCDF is also the national focal point for ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM).

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

The Swiss Humanitarian Aid is one of the four departments of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and part of the Swiss Confederation. In Southeast Asia, Switzerland contributes to the implementation of the AADMER in the context of the ASEAN-Switzerland Sectoral Dialogue Partnership. In support of AADMER's Practical Cooperation Area on Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance, the Swiss Humanitarian Aid provides technical and financial support for the ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue in Disaster Management (SPDDM) from 2018–2020.

About the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

The **S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)** is a professional graduate school of international affairs at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. RSIS' mission is to develop a community of scholars and policy analysts at the forefront of security studies and international affairs. Its core functions are research, graduate education and networking. It produces cutting-edge research on Asia Pacific Security, Multilateralism and Regionalism, Conflict Studies, Non-Traditional Security, International Political Economy, and Country and Region Studies. RSIS' activities are aimed at assisting policymakers to develop comprehensive approaches to strategic thinking on issues related to security and stability in the Asia Pacific.

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