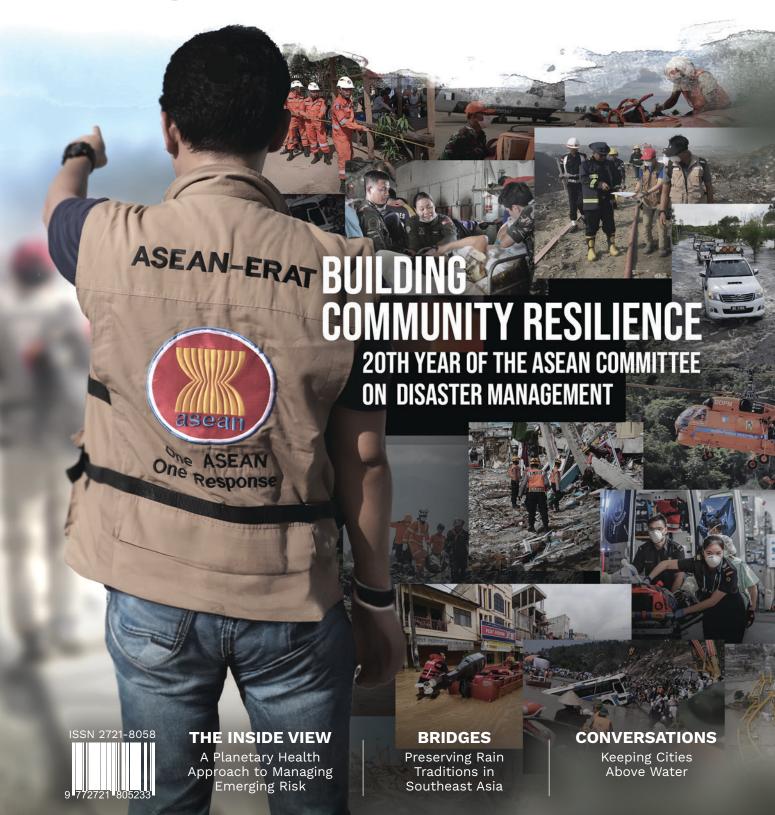
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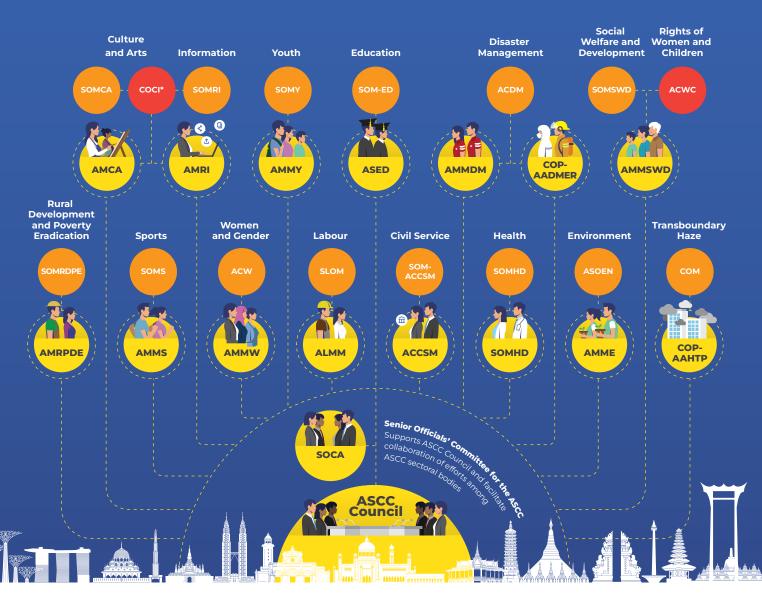
DOUBLE ISSUE 30-31 OCTOBER 2023



ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY

Ministerial Bodies and Senior Officials





AMRI: ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information

AMCA: ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture

AMMY: ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth **ASED:** ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting

AMMS: ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports

AMRDPE: ASEAN Ministers on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication

AMMSWD: ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development

AMMW: ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women ALMM-ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting

ACCSM: The Heads of Civil Service Meeting for ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters

AHMM: ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting

AMMDM: ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management

COP to AADMER: Conference of the Parties to the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response

AMME: ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Environment COP to AATHP-Conference of the Parties to the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution

SOMCA: Senior Officials Meeting on Culture and Arts

COCI: The ASEAN Committee for Culture and Information

SOMRI: Senior Officials Meeting Responsible for Information SOMY-Senior Officials Meeting on Youth

SOMED: Senior Officials Meeting on Education **SOMS:** Senior Officials Meeting on Sports

SOMRDPE: Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication

SOMSWD: Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development

ACWC: ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children

ACW: ASEAN Committee on Women

SLOM: Senior Labour Officials Meeting

SOM-ACCSM: Senior Officials Meeting on ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters

SOMHD: Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development

ASOEN: ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment

COM to AATHP: Committee under the Conference of Parties to the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution

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October 2023

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one identity one community

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Keeping Cities Above
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Anticipatory Action
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Survival Skills Vietnam: Creating First Aid Networks Ixora Tri Devi, The ASEAN Sania Leonardo: Content Creator by Day, Volunteer at Heart Ixoro Tri Devi, The ASEAN

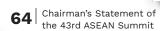
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Preserving Rain Traditions in Southeast Asia

Note from the **Editorial Team**

he Southeast Asian region has endured numerous disasters, resulting in significant economic and human losses.

Recognising this vulnerability, the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) was established two decades ago to bolster the region's ability to respond effectively to disasters. Comprising the national disaster management organisations of the ten ASEAN Member States, the ACDM has been a driving force in this collective effort.

We showcase each member of the ACDM and highlight their individual and collective achievements. As the ACDM marks its 20th year, it takes stock of its accomplishments while acknowledging the formidable challenges ahead. ACDM Chair and Director-General of the Viet Nam Disaster and Dyke Management Authority shares his insights on these milestones.

We are honoured to feature articles contributed by Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF), the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia-Pacific (UNESCAP), and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). These articles delve into the crucial topics of preparedness, effective response, and collaborative efforts that can significantly enhance the region's resilience, as climate change increases the frequency and intensity of disasters.

The ASEAN presents this double issue as the world observes the annual International Day for Disaster Reduction on 13 October. ASEAN actively participates in this global event, which aims to raise awareness and foster a worldwide culture of disaster reduction, encouraging individuals, communities, and governments to reduce their vulnerability to disasters and fortify their resilience proactively.

In this issue, we feature inspiring stories of people and communities working diligently to mitigate threats and support those most affected by disasters.

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National Disaster Management Centre

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National Committee for Disaster Management

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Myanmar

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Viet Nam

Department of Science, Technology and International Cooperation, Viet Nam Disaster and Dyke Management Authority, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development



Greetings from H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary-General of ASEAN

on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the ACDM

n commemorating the 20th anniversary of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), I believe it is worth reflecting that ASEAN has come a long way in terms of enhancing regional and national capacities, particularly in managing and responding to disasters. The work carried out by the ACDM over the last two decades has been instrumental in developing and implementing activities, programmes and initiatives in the disaster management sector, especially in the areas of risk assessment, prevention and mitigation, preparedness and response, as well as recovery and rehabilitation.

This has been evident in the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), a landmark agreement signed by the ASEAN Member States in 2005. As the foundation of ASEAN's disaster resilience efforts, the AADMER has paved the way for the profound transformation of

disaster management strategies in the region. The ASEAN Member States are no longer merely responders to disasters—they have strengthened their foresight and their collective efforts, and have embraced anticipatory actions, early warning systems, and cutting-edge science and technology in protecting our people and the communities, amongst others.

As such, the role of the ACDM in overseeing our endeavours towards fulfilling the goals and objectives of the AADMER has been vital in building a resilient, dynamic and inclusive ASEAN Community. Whether it is coordinating on the issue of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief with the relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies, engaging various stakeholders on strengthening partnerships and resource mobilisation, or supporting the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM) and the Meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP) to the AADMER, I would like to commend their

invaluable efforts and steadfast commitment in strengthening disaster management in our region.

Today, the Southeast Asian region finds itself amidst an increasingly intricate disaster risk landscape. further compounded by factors such as climate change and pandemics. These multifaceted complexities demand a unified and proactive approach, and underscore the importance of regional cooperation more than ever. I am confident that the ACDM will continue to address the complexities of disaster risks in our region, and work towards the realisation of the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management. With the support of our partners and stakeholders, our collective efforts will undoubtedly grow even more robust as we continue our pursuit of a resilient ASEAN Community in the spirit of One ASEAN, One Response.

Dr. Kao Kim Hourn

Secretary-General of ASEAN

The ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management

REFLECTING ON THE PAST AND CHARTING THE FUTURE

MEETING OF THE
ASEAN COMMITTEE
ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT
AND RELATED MEETINGS

FROM RESPONSE TO
AND RELATED MEETINGS

FROM RESPONSE TO
ANTICIPATORY ACTION
AND TO SILIENCE
ASEAN COMMITTEE
OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT
AND RELATED MEETINGS

FROM RESPONSE TO
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AND RELATED MEETINGS

FROM RESPONSE TO
ANTICIPATORY ACTION
AND TO SILIENCE
ASEAN COMMITTEE
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outheast Asia is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world. Situated on the Pacific Ring of Fire between the Indian and Pacific oceans, it is one of the most vulnerable regions to climate change. This dual reality presents significant challenges and a distinctive opportunity for ASEAN to proactively address and mitigate the risks associated with various natural hazards such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, floods, and landslides.

The ASEAN region has experienced numerous catastrophic disasters in recent decades. In 2004, a 9.1-magnitude earthquake triggered a tsunami that caused unparalleled loss of life and inflicted extensive economic damage. Indonesia and Thailand were the two most affected countries in the region. In Aceh, Indonesia alone, over 167,000 people perished, and economic losses reached an estimated 4.5 billion US dollars.

Myanmar was hit by Cyclone Nargis in 2008, resulting in significant loss of life and property. In 2013,

Typhoon Haiyan caused widespread destruction in the Philippines. In 2018, the Central Sulawesi region of Indonesia was subjected to a triple disaster, as an earthquake, tsunami, and liquefaction hit the areas of Palu, Sigi, and Donggala. In 2022, Tropical Cyclone Nalgae hit the Philippines, causing more than 200 million US dollars in damages.

These devastating calamities underscore the urgent need for ASEAN to bolster resilience to disasters and climate change.

History of the ACDM's establishment

Since the early 1970s, ASEAN has consistently recognised the need to build and strengthen its resilience in responding to disasters and readiness to anticipate and manage future disasters.

The 1st Meeting of Experts for the Establishment of ASEAN Combined Operation Against Natural Disasters was held in October 1971 in Indonesia. The Meeting was later renamed the ASEAN Experts Group on Disaster Management or AEGDM in August 1993 to understand the region's needs, covering the entire spectrum of natural-induced disasters.

In 2003, the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) was established to foster regional cooperation to address disaster-related challenges. Its formation aimed to enable individual member states to unlock their developmental potential and promote a collective ASEAN spirit. Comprising the national disaster management organisations (NDMOs) from each ASEAN Member State, the ACDM convenes at least once annually.

The ACDM's vision is to build "a region of disaster-resilient nations, mutually assisting and complementing one another, sharing a common bond in minimising adverse effects of disasters in pursuit of safer communities and sustainable development."

In its early years of establishment, the ACDM took pivotal steps to accelerate ASEAN's joint





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Since its establishment, the ACDM has played several important roles in the region. In implementing the AADMER Work Programme, ACDM provides leadership and guidance to ensure that the work programme is well executed and stays on track. ACDM is also responsible for developing policies, agreements, declarations and other important guiding documents on disaster management and relief activities in the ASEAN region. Additionally, ACDM strengthens the coordination with relevant sectoral bodies, dialogue partners, and other stakeholders to complement the implementation of disaster management activities.

There have been significant achievements in disaster management under the guidance and leadership of the ACDM. With the current capacities of ASEAN Member States in managing disasters and with the support of our partners and stakeholders, I believe we are moving one step closer to making ASEAN a disaster-resilient region.

efforts in building better disaster management. It paved the way for the landmark inaugural gathering of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management on 7 December 2004. The devastating impact of the Indian Ocean Tsunami on 26 December 2004 accelerated the sector's initiatives. At the Special ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on 6 January 2005, ASEAN demonstrated the region's unwavering commitment to ensuring the well-being of its people, working collectively to safeguard lives and property from the devastating impact of calamities, and building and fostering a culture of resilience and preparedness.

This was followed by the finalisation and signing of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response or AADMER, its enforcement in 2009, and the establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management or the AHA Centre in 2011.





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nder the leadership of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), five-year AADMER Work Programmes (AWPS) have been implemented since 2010 to bolster disaster resilience in the region. The third edition of the AADMER Work Programme for the period of 2021 to 2025 focuses on five priority programmes: risk monitoring and analysis, prevention and mitigation, preparedness and response, resilient recovery, and global leadership. Through these AADMER Work Programmes, several flagship initiatives and projects have been implemented to enhance disaster management in the region.

The ACDM promotes forward and outward-looking perspectives on ASEAN disaster management through the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management. The ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management, adopted by the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management in 2015, affirms

ASEAN's aspirations to strengthen disaster resilience in the region.

This vision is pursued through three key strategic elements: institutionalisation and communications, financing and resource mobilisation, and partnership and innovations. The ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management also articulates the region's unwavering commitment to attaining global leadership in disaster management by 2025 and beyond. With strengthened cooperation and a wealth of experience in disaster management, ASEAN is firmly progressing towards becoming a global leader in this field, poised to share its valuable experiences and best practices with the international community.

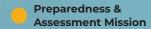
The ACDM's work also contributed to developing the ASEAN Declaration on "One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region."

The Declaration, adopted by ASEAN Leaders during the 28th ASEAN Summit in Vientiane in 2016, is a testament to ASEAN's steadfast dedication to achieving swifter responses, increased resources, and more robust coordination in addressing disasters.

The ACDM also serves as the Governing Board of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) and has guided the AHA Centre to grow its capacity over time and become the main engine of ASEAN in proactively providing humanitarian assistance alongside managing disasters. The centre has become the main engine of ASEAN in proactively identifying potential hazards and risks to ensure ample warning time, minimise potential damage, and provide assistance in responding to major disasters in the region.

42 DISASTER RESPONSES

Recorded in the ASEAN region for the period of November 2012 to August 2023



Emergency
Response Mission

Source: AHA Centre



The Philippines, Dec 2012
Tropical Storm
Bopha



Myanmar, May 2013
Tropical Cyclone
Mahasen

os Indonesia, Jul 2013 Aceh Earthquake 6.1-magnitude



The Lao PDR, Aug 2013 Floods

The Philippines, Oct 2013

Bohol

Earthquake
7.2-magnitude

Cambodia, Oct 2013
Floods

The Philippines, Nov-Dec 2013

Typhoon Haiyan

The Philippines, Jul 2014
Typhoon
Rammasun

Viet Nam, Jul 2014
Typhoon
Rammasun

The Philippines, Dec 2014
Typhoon
Hagupit

Malaysia, Jan 2015 Floods Myanmar, Aug 2015

Floods

The Philippines, Jul 2015
Typhoon Koppu

The Philippines, Oct 2016
Typhoon Haima

Indonesia, Dec 2016
Aceh
Earthquake
6.5-magnitude

The Philippines, Dec 2016

Typhoon Melor

The Philippines, Dec 2016
Typhoon NockTen

1 The Philippines, Jul 2017 Internally-Displaced People in Marawi (IDP) Viet Nam, Aug 2017
Flash floods
and landslides

Myanmar, Oct 2017
IDP in Rakhine
State

Viet Nam, Nov 2017
Typhoon
Damrey

25 Myanmar, Apr 2018
Landill fire in
Yangon

The Lao PDR, Jul 2018
Floods

Myanmar, Aug 2018 Floods

Indonesia, Aug 2018
Lombok
Earthquake

7-magnitude

The Philippines, Sept 2018

Typhoon

Mangkhut

Indonesia, Oct 2018 **Central Sulawesi**

Earthquake

and Tsunami 7.4-magnitude

Tropical Storm Podu

Tropical Storm Podul and Tropical Depression Kajiki

Myanmar, Dec 2019
IDP Rakhine
State

Indonesia, Jan 2020 Floods in Jakarta Cambodia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Jan 2020-2021

pandemic

Viet Nam, Oct 2020
Floods in
Central Viet Nam

The Philippines, Nov 2020 **Typhoon Goni**

The Philippines, Dec 2021

Typhoon Rai

Thailand, Sept 2022

Typhoon Noru

The Philippines, Nov 2022

Tropical

Cyclone Nalgae

Thailand, Jan 2023

Drought

Myanmar, May 2023
Tropical
Cyclone Mocha

The Philippines, Aug 2023

Combined Effects of the Southwest

Monsoon and Tropical Cyclone Doksuri

AHA Centre has established the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA), the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT). ASEAN Disaster Information Network (ADINet), the ASEAN Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), and the ASEAN Disaster Risk Monitoring System (DRMS), among others.

Simultaneously, through localisation and a number of capacity building programmes for ASEAN Member States managed by ACDM, the capacities of ASEAN Member States in monitoring, assessing, preventing and mitigating disaster risk, responding to disasters, and recovering from disasters have been enhanced.

ASEAN has undertaken various capacity-building programmes to enhance disaster management expertise. These programmes encompass initiatives like the AHA Centre Executive Capacity Building Programme, the Disaster Risk Management Capacity Building Programme for ASEAN Member States, the Senior

Executive Programme on Disaster Management, and the ASEAN Standardisation and Certification for Experts in Disaster Management (ASCEND).

In addition to capacity building, ASEAN is actively engaged in raising public awareness about the significance of disaster risk reduction. These include the observance of the ASEAN Day for Disaster Management and the International Day of Disaster Risk Reduction on October 13th each year. Recognising the pivotal role of youth, ASEAN commemorates the ASEAN Youth in Climate Action and Disaster Resilience Day on November 25th annually.

Moreover, ASEAN has developed comprehensive frameworks and operational guidelines to strengthen disaster management in the region. These include the Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP), the ASEAN Joint Disaster Response Plan

(AJDRP), the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action for Adaptation to Drought (ARPA-AD), the ASEAN Framework on Anticipatory Action in Disaster Management, and the ASEAN Regional Framework on Protection, Gender, and Inclusion in Disaster Management.

Aligned with the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management, the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management actively participates in global forums to share best practices and experiences in disaster management. These forums encompass events like the Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week, the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Under the guidance of the ACDM, cooperation with external partners, United Nations (UN) agencies, and multilateral financial institutions like the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (IRCRC), has been expanded. The UN continues to collaborate with ASEAN through the ASEAN-UN Joint Strategic Action Plan on Disaster Management.

Furthermore, partnerships with external countries and organisations, such as Australia, China, Canada, the European Union, Japan, the US, France, Germany, Switzerland, the ADB, and the IRCRC Movement are actively promoted through the AADMER Partnership Group. These endeavours underscore ACDM's commitment to fostering collaboration and enhancing disaster resilience across the region.

Throughout its two-decade journey, the ACDM has achieved remarkable progress in advancing of disaster management in the region. However, with an evolving disaster risk landscape, challenges remain ahead. ASEAN believes that by working together, we can effectively address the challenges and further strengthen disaster resilience in the region, guided by the spirit of "One ASEAN, One Response" and reach ASEAN's vision of becoming a global leader in disaster management.





"Disaster Resilience in ASEAN—Now and Beyond" was the theme of the ASEAN Disaster Management Week (ADMW) held on 21-24 August 2023 in Singapore.

The ADMW gathered over 250 participants from the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management, members of the ASEAN Disaster Resilience Platform, ASEAN external partners, regional organisations, UN agencies, multilateral financial institutions, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, international NGOs, academia, philanthropic organisations, and the private sector.

A series of events were held during the ADMW: (i) One ASEAN, One Response Roadshow, for Singapore stakeholders only, (ii) ASEAN Interregional Dialogue on Disaster Resilience (AIDDR), (iii) 1st ASEAN Disaster Resilience Forum (ADRF), (iv) Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the ACDM, and (v) ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management (SPDDM).

The ADMW was co-organised by the Singapore Civil Defence Force, Viet Nam Disaster and Dyke Management Agency (VDDMA), as the Chair of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre).

ASEAN Disaster Management Week, themed "Disaster Resilience in ASEAN—Now and Beyond," took place in Singapore, 21-24 August 2023

The week-long event received crucial support from the European Union through the Integrated Programme in Enhancing the Capacity of AHA Centre and ASEAN Emergency Response Mechanisms (EU-SAHA), the Government of Switzerland through the AHA Centre and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) Project Phase II, the Asian Development Bank through the Knowledge and Support Technical Assistance (KSTA) Project, and Temasek Foundation.



One ASEAN, One Response Roadshow, 21 August 2023

The roadshow familiarised the participants with ASEAN disaster regional mechanisms, including the vision, "One ASEAN, One Response," and built a better understanding on their expected contribution in the ASEAN disaster management and ASEAN joint response to disasters in and outside the region.

At the roadshow, SCDF delivered a presentation on Singapore's National Disaster Management Response Mechanism, which explained Singapore's preparedness against the hazards and threats, available capacities, agencies responsible in

providing resources and assistance, and SCDF's roles in disaster management mechanism at regional and international level.

The ASEAN Secretariat presented the institutional structure of the ASEAN disaster management sector, including the role of the Secretary-General of ASEAN as the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator (SG-AHAC); the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management, key declarations and other guiding documents relevant to disaster

management; and the AADMER Work Programme 2021-2025.

The AHA Centre briefed the participants on various operational tools and mechanisms of ASEAN response mechanism, including the Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP), the ASEAN Joint Disaster Response Plan, the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA), and

some examples of AHA Centre's past responses.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) briefed the participants on cooperation and activities between the AHA Centre and UN agencies during emergency response through the joint interoperability mechanism, including collaboration between the ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) and United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC).

1st ASEAN Disaster Resilience Forum (ADRF), 22-23 August 2023

The ADRF is a newly established forum, which serves as a biennial forum for ASEAN and ASEAN partners and friends to increase awareness and sharing of multisectoral and transdisciplinary scientific findings, technologies, innovation and experiences; expedite science-policy dialogue for promoting scientific and technical research programmes and other initiatives; and enhance the profile of ASEAN as a regional thought-leader in natural disaster management.

The inaugural ADRF was held with the theme, "Mobilising ASEAN and Its Partners on the Journey towards



Building a Disaster Resilient ASEAN Community."

The first ADRF aims to invoke discussion on a "whole of ASEAN" approach towards a disaster-

resilient ASEAN Community and the importance of ASEAN partners in this endeavour.



Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the ACDM, 24 August 2023

The commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the ACDM was opened by the congratulatory remarks by Pham Duc Luan, Director-General of VDDMA, the ACDM Chair, followed a video showcasing the ACDM's contribution to the significant progress and achievement in the two-decade journey of disaster management in the region, and the launching of the commemoration. Former Secretary-Generals of ASEAN, Ambassador Ong Keng Yong and Dato Lim Jock Hoi, along with the ACDM champions, attended the commemoration.

ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management (SPDDM), 24 August 2023

The SPDDM 2023, was held under the theme "Disaster Resilience: Investing Today for a Sustainable Region," to discuss forward-looking ideas to enhance disaster resilience in the future with an emphasis on the importance of acting and investing now.

In session 1, a keynote discussion centred around the theme of "Building Resilience to Climate-Induced Disasters." Professor Winston Chow from Singapore Management University and Mr. Tiziana Bonapace of UNESCAP shared their perspectives and views on challenges to align climate change adaptation and disaster risk management, strategic priorities in the region to invest in disaster resilience, and experiences from other regions.

During session 2 of the High-Level Panel Discussion on Bridging the Gap: Enhancing Communication and Early Action for Proactive Disaster Management, the speakers from the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) of Thailand, Japan Bosai Forum, and Singapore Red Cross shared their respective organisation's experience in implementing anticipatory action and disaster risk communication. They also exchanged views on the role ASEAN can play to strengthen disaster resilience and efforts to build back better. There were discussions on how to forge new partnerships in adopting early warning systems and other anticipatory actions.

Session 3 featured a Thematic Session on Risk Governance and Innovative Technology in Disaster Management, the speakers from the Philippines Disaster Resilience Foundation, ESRI Malaysia, Atma Connect, and Disaster Analytics for Society Lab highlighted new technological advances that will impact disaster resilience, including Artificial Intelligence and big data; the role of partnerships in the development or adoption of new technologies in disaster





management; the barriers to adopting new technologies in disaster management; ways to address the challenges regarding a significant digital divide and insufficient attention given to the negative implications of new technologies; and how to promote 'Technology for Good'.

The conduct of the ASEAN Disaster Management Week marks an important milestone in ASEAN's efforts in promoting a whole-of-ASEAN approach as well as further engaging ASEAN partners, friends and wider stakeholders to exchange views and deliberate

on ways and means and explore their potential contributions to further building disaster resilience in the region. The event showcased ASEAN's keen interest in championing the exchange of knowledge and experience among regional organisations in Asia Pacific and promoting inter-regional collaboration to enhance capacities in addressing transboundary risks, in line with ASEAN's aspiration to be a global leader in disaster management based on the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management.

ASEAN PUBLICATIONS ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

Weathering the Perfect Storm (2014)

This publication records the insights gained from ASEAN's combined efforts in responding to Typhoon Haiyan, one of the most powerful typhoons to strike the region, with the Philippines experiencing the greatest impact. These insights were gathered through interviews with 25 key stakeholders and group discussions and workshops involving 60 respondents.



https://asean.org/wpcontent/uploads/2021/08/ Weathering-the-Perfect-Storm.pdf

The ASEAN magazine (2020) "Before Disaster Strikes: **Building Resilience**"

The issue focuses on ASEAN mechanisms that are in place to prepare for and effectively respond to natural disasters that regularly ravage the region. It includes an interview with former Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dato Lim Jock Hoi, on the challenges of responding to disasters amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and ASEAN's vision to become a global leader in disaster management. An article from UN Under-Secretary-General Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana highlights the threat of drought and UNESCAP's partnership with ASEAN to address this slow-onset disaster. Conversations with individuals who have witnessed or have been affected by disasters are also included in the issue.



https://theaseanmagazine. asean.org/edition/beforedisaster-strikes/

ASEAN Disaster Resilience Outlook (2021)

The publication provides essential insights for realising ASEAN's resilience beyond 2025. It assesses progress, identifies emerging risks. and offers innovative solutions and recommendations for ASFAN Member States to become global leaders in disaster management. Through surveys and consultations, contributions were gathered from a diverse range of stakeholders, including ASEAN bodies, UN agencies, NGOs, academia, and the private sector.



https://asean.org/book/ asean-disaster-resilienceoutlook-preparing-for-afuture-beyond-2025/



Ensuring Gender Responsive Disaster Risk Reduction– Good Practices from ASEAN

The book presents eight cases of good practices from ASEAN Member States in mitigating disaster risk and bolstering resilience. The case studies are organised according to the four priorities for action outlined in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030: (i) understanding disaster risk); (ii) strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk; (iii) investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience; and (iv) enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to "build back better" in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.



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Guideline on Integrating Climate Change Projection Into Flood Risk Assessment and Mapping/Guideline on Integrating Climate Change Projection Into Landslide Risk Assessments and Mapping (2021)

Climate change necessitates overhauling flood risk management systems in ASEAN to enhance disaster resilience. Effective decision-making in disaster risk reduction requires reliable knowledge of risk levels and factors contributing to hazards and damage, considering climate change's potential impact. The ASEAN community acknowledges the rising frequency of extreme disasters. It addresses them through the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response, emphasising risk assessment and awareness enhancement. Practical guidelines for assessing flood and landslide risks, incorporating climate change impacts at the river basin scale, have been developed to support this effort.



https://asean.org/book/ ensuring-gender-responsivedisaster-risk-reductiongood-practices-from-asean/



https://asean.org/book/ guideline-on-integratingclimate-change-projectioninto-landslide-riskassessments-and-mappingat-the-river-basin-level/

Training Module on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Responsive Anticipatory Action (2023)

The module is designed to help humanitarian and disaster management professionals incorporate gender equality and social inclusion in their disaster risk reduction training and anticipatory action activities. The module contains five chapters and 12 topics encompassing the three building blocks of the ASEAN Framework on Anticipatory Action in Disaster Management: (i) risk information, forecast, and early warning systems; (ii) planning, operation, and delivery; and (iii) pre-arranged financing.



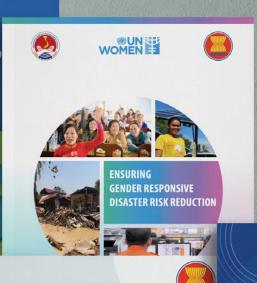
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Strengthening Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Disaster Responsive Social Protection and Anticipatory Action in ASEAN (2023)

The policy brief assesses the current situation, highlighting factors that facilitate or hinder gender equality and social inclusion in disaster response and anticipatory action in the region. Drawing on practical examples from the ASEAN Member States, including policy innovations and lessons, this policy brief pinpoints areas needing urgent attention and provides essential recommendations. The brief aims to help ASEAN Member States stakeholders implement both the ASEAN Guidelines on Disaster Responsive Social Protection for Resilience and the ASEAN Framework on Anticipatory Action in Disaster Management.



https://asean.org/wpcontent/uploads/2023/04/ Policy-Brief_ACDM_GESIin-DRSP-and-AA-in-ASEAN_2023.pdf

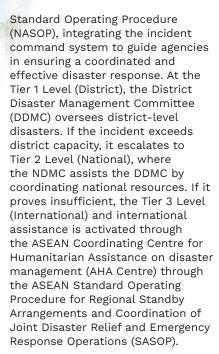


BRUNEI DARUSS



National Disaster Management Centre

The ASEAN region is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world. Brunei Darussalam faces a spectrum of hazards with differing frequencies and intensities, notably frequent flooding due to heavy monsoons and coastal vulnerabilities. In 2022, 207 flood incidents were reported, the highest since 2016. Landslides are also an annual occurrence, peaking with 77 cases in 2021. During dry periods, the nation is also at risk of forest fires, with 1,655 reported cases in 2019.



Brunei Darussalam's collaborative approach is incorporated through its multi-agency resources and NGOs' cooperation. Government bodies such as the Fire Rescue Department, Royal Brunei Armed Forces, Emergency Medical Ambulance Services, and the Public Works Department contribute resources and expertise to boost preparedness and response. NGOs such as Sukarelawan Belia (youth volunteers), Persatuan Kereta Tahan Lasak Brunei (4x4 Vehicles Association), the private sector, civil society organisations like Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent, and grassroots communities unite, pooling resources and expertise, and enhancing cooperation among responding agencies and partners at all levels.

Since 2010, in an effort to bolster community resilience, the NDMC has initiated community awareness programmes such as the Community-Based Disaster Risk Management engaging 1,642 people, whilst the School-Based Disaster Risk Management involved 1,178

teachers and students. Furthermore, the Disaster Preparedness Coordinator Course, launched in 2019, has trained 118 individuals to assist the authorities in disaster preparedness. These programs cultivate community involvement and preparedness in alignment with the national vision "Wawasan 2035" by including disaster risk reduction to improve overall quality of life.

ASEAN excels in emergency responses through the SASOP and the ASEAN Joint Disaster Response Plan, enhancing the speed, scale, and solidarity of ASEAN's response. Furthermore, Brunei Darussalam's commitment to disaster response is evident in deploying ASEAN-ERAT members to assist in rapid needs assessment and humanitarian assistance in six missions, including Typhoon Haiyan (2013) and the Central Sulawesi Earthquake and Tsunami (2018), and most recently, Tropical Cyclone Mocha—providing invaluable lessons learned which can be applied domestically to enhancing the country's own disaster preparedness and response strategies.

Meanwhile, hosting the 11th ASEAN-ERAT Induction Course in 2019 and continuous participation in the ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercises (ARDEX) showcases Brunei Darussalam's active engagement in refining regional response capacities. Additionally, when the Central Sulawesi Earthquake and Tsunami struck in 2018, Brunei Darussalam's contributions towards the ASEAN Village, solely from public donations, underscores the sense of solidarity the people of Brunei Darussalam have for those affected by disasters.

Reflecting on the past 20 years, ASEAN has taken significant strides in the pursuit of becoming a global leader of disaster management, notably through the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), signed in 2005 and enforced in 2009. AADMER solidifies Member States' commitment to disaster preparedness, outlining responsibilities during crises. In 2016, the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response further

Given the country's unique disaster landscape and location, it is vulnerable to climate change impacts, including severe natural disasters. In light of these challenges, Brunei Darussalam's proactive approach towards addressing these issues underscores its commitment to regional progress within ASEAN and sets a precedent for collective action on climate resilience.

Central to the nation's disaster management mechanism is the Disaster Management Order of 2006 mandating the establishment of the National Disaster Council (NDC) and the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC), allowing the Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam to institutionalise national disaster management and disaster risk reduction initiatives. At the strategic level, the NDC, chaired by the Minister of Home Affairs, provides policy and strategic direction in line with national aspirations on disaster management. Meanwhile, at the operational level, the NDMC, the national focal agency on matters pertaining to disaster management, coordinates all phases of disaster management through a whole-of-nation approach with close cooperation across government bodies.

Brunei Darussalam employs a tiered disaster management system with the utilisation of the National

Photo Credit: © National Disaster Management Centre, Brunei Darussalam

strengthened ASEAN Member States' unity in disaster response. It signifies a borderless, collective effort to provide aid and support during disasters. Aligned with the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management, the region aims for elevated disaster preparedness and recovery reflecting ASEAN's commitment to a safer, more resilient environment through continuous improvement and innovation.

The crucial lessons from ASEAN-led disaster management mechanisms have impacted Brunei Darussalam, including the importance of sharing resources and expertise, capacity-building initiatives, ongoing professional training, and continuous disaster response plan refinement. The nation has localised the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) mechanism by establishing five DELSA storage facilities in disaster-prone areas to facilitate rapid response. Meanwhile, the integration

of the ASEAN Disaster Monitoring and Response System showcases the commitment to real-time global hazard monitoring and fostering a robust regional response network.

Through its involvement with the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), Brunei Darussalam's NDMC has bolstered its disaster response capabilities while also contributing to the capacity building of various agencies. Alongside active engagement in all three ACDM Working Groups under the AADMER Work Programme 2021-2025, Brunei Darussalam also co-chairs the Taskforce to Review the Financial Rules of the ASEAN Disaster Management and Emergency Relief (ADMER) Fund. Having hosted the 5th Meeting of the ACDM Working Group on Preparedness, Response and Recovery and the inaugural One ASEAN, One Response Roadshow this year, Brunei Darussalam will continue to build upon this momentum.

The ACDM's resolute dedication to safeguarding the region's prosperity during adversity is evident. Continuous collaboration with ASEAN Member States, government agencies, private sectors, ASEAN dialogue and development partners and international organisations is vital for integrated disaster management. The NDMC takes pride in ACDM's remarkable progress to become a global leader in disaster management. Brunei Darussalam reaffirms its commitment to engage actively in ASEAN initiatives, particularly as it assumes the chairmanship of AMMDM and ACDM in 2024. This role underscores Brunei Darussalam's determination to advance regional disaster management, promote solidarity, and ensure ASEAN nations' wellbeing amidst evolving challenges.

Authored by the National Disaster

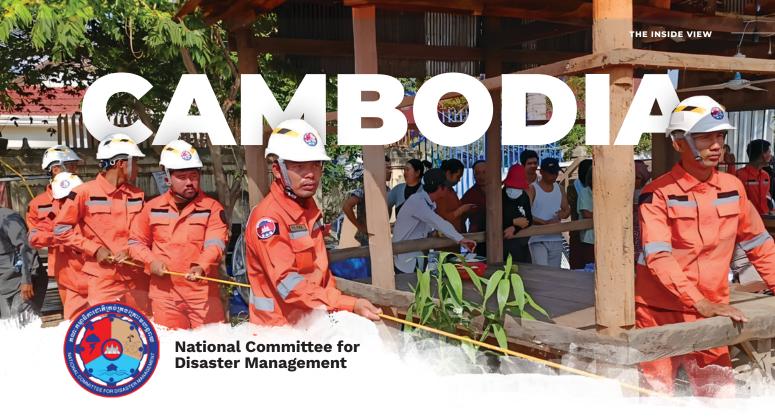
Management Centre, Brunei Darussalam











ambodia's response to climate change and disaster risk management is comprehensive and forward-looking. By collaborating with international partners, conducting studies, and implementing community-focused initiatives, Cambodia is taking significant steps to safeguard its people and infrastructure in the face of a changing climate.

Cambodia's geographical location exposes it to various natural disasters, primarily floods and droughts. These events have become increasingly frequent and severe due to climate change. In 2009, Cambodia experienced the devastating effects of Typhoon Ketsana, which caused extensive damage, affecting 11 provinces and resulting in losses totalling 39 million US dollars.

In 2011, the nation faced severe floods and droughts that impacted 18 provinces. These water-related disasters damaged critical infrastructure, resulting in the loss of 250 lives and causing losses of 625 million US dollars, affecting 1.5 million individuals. In 2013, flooding once again struck Cambodia, affecting 20 provinces and more than 1.7 million people. The disaster caused severe damage, incurring losses exceeding 356 million US dollars, and a death toll of 168.

Recognising the need to address climate change and enhance disaster resilience, Cambodia has taken proactive measures to mitigate the impact of these events. The government of Cambodia has collaborated with international organisations to conduct comprehensive studies on climate resilience and disaster risk management.

This study concluded in March 2013, yielding invaluable insights into the nation's vulnerabilities and areas in need of improvement. Cambodia has since initiated a comprehensive assistance programme designed to tackle the challenges identified in the study. This programme encompasses various components with a strong emphasis on community resilience.

Cambodia is strengthening its disaster risk management capacity, and "Support for Technology Transfer for Climate Resilience" project is designed to enhance the country's ability to respond to climate-related disasters effectively. With a budget of 2 million US dollars, it is making a significant impact on the ground.

Another crucial aspect of Cambodia's response is capacity building. The project, "Support for Enhanced Disaster Risk Management and Community Resilience," was launched in October 2014 with a budget of 2.5 million US dollars. This project aimed to empower local communities to manage and respond to climate-related disasters. By strengthening the capacity of communities at the commune and district levels, Cambodia is better prepared to face the challenges posed by climate change.

Cambodia's unwavering commitment to enhancing climate resilience and disaster risk management is paramount in safeguarding its citizens' well-being and protecting critical infrastructure. Given the escalating threats posed by climate change, these initiatives will continue to play a pivotal role in mitigating the impact of natural disasters and ensuring a more secure future for Cambodia.

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Reference: https://bit.ly/Issue30_Ref



Disasters possess inherent uniqueness. The scale of a disaster impacts the number of fatalities, the damage to infrastructure and the environment, the response time, and the recovery phase. Furthermore, the community's socio-cultural context shapes responses to emergencies. However, even with these distinct circumstances, disasters offer valuable lessons for the community to build sustainable resilience.



esilience, according to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) website, is "the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management." The concept was also emphasised at the 7th Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) in May 2022 in Bali, Indonesia.

Speaking of Indonesian disasters, the agency responsible for disaster management in the country, the Indonesia National Disaster Management Authority (BNPB), recorded 2,392 disasters from 1 January to 7 August 2023.

The figure was dominated by hydrometeorological disasters, such as floods, which occurred 781 times; extreme weather and landslides, which occurred 778 and 411 times, respectively. In addition, there were 339 forest and land fire events, 38 droughts, 22 tidal waves and abrasion, 21 earthquakes, and two volcano eruptions. According to the decade-long data, the most common disasters in Indonesia were hydrometeorological disasters, such as floods, landslides, and extreme weather, which severely affected communities.

These disasters resulted in 194 deaths, 5,546 injuries, and more than 3.7 million people affected and displaced. The disasters also destroyed 23,268 houses (light, medium, and heavily damaged).

Sustainable resilience is a challenge for Indonesia in dealing with disasters, not to mention the combination of natural and nonnatural disasters, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and global climate change, which pose another set of challenges. However, despite its challenges, Indonesia is still

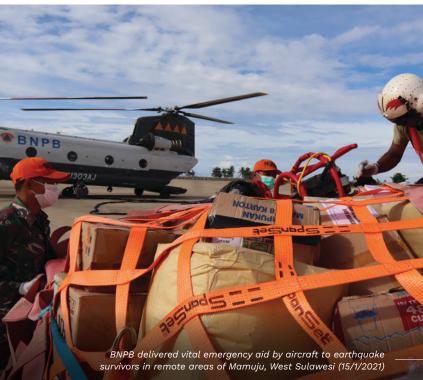
2020-2044 is to sustain Indonesia's resilience to emergencies.

Indonesia, an archipelagic country has often been referred to as the world's lungs. During the 7th GPDRR, the country introduced, encouraged, and supported the region and the world in developing sustainable resilience.

In the meantime, the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) reported that there were 6,135 fatalities in the Southeast Asian region as a result of natural disasters between 2015 and 2020, out of 79,834 casualties worldwide, with a total economic loss of 11.1 billion US dollars. Approximately 104.5 million people were impacted, and more than 10.8 million individuals were forcibly displaced between 2015 and 2021 due to emergencies. The figure demonstrates that the area was in the disaster zone, which also required the development of sustainable resilience.

President Joko Widodo, at the 7th GPDRR's opening session in Bali, Indonesia, 25 May 2022, conveyed that community resilience and preparedness affect the emergency response and the impacts (the number of losses and damage resulting from disasters).





"The more unprepared the community, the greater loss might be encountered. Moreover, the globe is currently dealing with climate change," stated President Joko Widodo.

In his remarks, the President also stressed that "we must strengthen the culture and institutions of disaster preparedness that are anticipatory, responsive and adaptive in dealing with disasters." Further, Indonesia aspires to invest in science, technology, and innovation, including ensuring financial access and technology transfer. Additionally, it hopes to take into account resilience to climate change and building codes while planning infrastructure.

To support the idea, the Indonesian government emphasises the local and national commitment to implement global agreements, such as the Sendai Framework, the Paris Agreement on climate change, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

On the other hand, Indonesia introduced the common good practice to establish and maintain Indonesia's disaster resilience. BNPB, utilises the five elements, or the

so-called peta-helix approach, in disaster management. Penta-helix coordination includes government, experts/academicians, communities, the private sector, and the media. Each element has a specific role in improving community resilience and managing disaster, depending on its capacities, capabilities, and resources.

Undeniably, the involvement of the community and the private sectors adds significant value to disaster management. Experiences from the past demonstrate that during the response and recovery phases, the community's collective efforts to support one another reflect the community's resilience in an emergency.

As in the aftermath of a 5.6-magnitude earthquake in Cianjur Regency, West Java Province, on 21 November 2022, more than 7,000 volunteers from various organisations were on the scene to support the emergency response. Meanwhile, during the COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of volunteers across Indonesia assisted the COVID-19 Task Force in controlling the spread of the virus. On the other hand, non-governmental

organisations and the private sector provided shelter and economic assistance to the affected people in the aftermath of the Semeru volcanic eruption in East Java Province in 2021.

Disaster management is everybody's business. Thus, the Indonesian government could only manage it with assistance from others. Other than multi-sector involvement. Indonesia strongly emphasises inclusive and participatory disaster management. Building community resilience in disaster management requires multiple actions and consistency (time management); hence, mutual cooperation among parties is absolute. In the meantime, adhering to the One ASEAN, One Response spirit can help the region build sustained resilience. Finally, as Indonesia's nationwide disaster resilience strengthens, it can support regional and global efforts towards the same goal.

Authored by Theophilus Yanuarto and Merina Sofiati and translated by Henrikus Adi Hernanto, National Disaster Management Authority, Indonesia



THE VACO PDIE



The Lao PDR is a country that faces the recurring risk of natural hazards every year. These natural hazards include floods, droughts, typhoons, landslides and earthquakes. Among these, annual flooding occurs yearly, with severe flooding occurring every 2-4 years based on historical records.





Assessment Report in 2010, areas at risk in the Lao PDR are mainly associated with floodprone areas, particularly areas along key rivers such as Nam Ou, Nam Ngiep, Nam Xan, Xe Bangfai, Xe Don, and Sekong. From the assessment report, many cities located along these rivers are vulnerable to flooding at different levels of severity.

Landslides are another concern, often triggered by heavy rainfall, particularly in areas with 10 to 25 per cent slope. Storms also vary in intensity, ranging from tropical storms to typhoons or cyclones. Tropical storms bring strong winds, heavy rainfall and even hailstones that can endanger lives, property, and infrastructure.

Droughts have a direct impact on the agriculture sector, food security, and people's living conditions. They also affect the availability of drinking water, water for household use, hygiene, and sanitation. Earthquakes present varying risks to the population, depending on the intensity, Level VII, Level VI and Level I-V.

According to flood information, in 2022, the Lao PDR was affected by Mulan, Ma-on and Noru storms. These floods had widespread

impacts, affecting 25 districts, 312 villages, 5,831 families, 19,905 people (of whom 10,045 were female). The floods resulted in injuries to three individuals and claimed the lives of two people. In addition, these floods damaged infrastructure, economy, society, and the environment, with a total estimated damage cost of 552,548,277,447 kip (approx. 27 million US dollars).

In 2018, the Lao PDR was also affected by severe tropical storms such as Son-Tinh and Bebinca, which heavily flooded Attapeu and other provinces. The years 2010 to 2013 brought a series of storms and typhoons as well. For example, the 2011 Typhoon Haima and Typhoon Nok Ten made their way into the Lao PDR, resulting in persistent heavy rains and strong winds across its northern, central and southern provinces. In 2013, Typhoon Jebi and Mangkhut caused heavy rainfall, leading to widespread floods in several areas including Oudomxay province and other provinces of the Lao PDR.

Key elements of the Lao PDR's disaster response

The Lao PDR has established disaster management committees

at all levels—central, provincial, district and village level— and allocated potential resources at both national and regional levels to respond effectively to emergencies.

The committees have defined structures and roles for personnel involved in disaster preparedness, emergency response and postdisaster recovery. Since 1999, these committees have held meetings 1-2 times a year to discuss disaster preparedness and response. The frequency of meetings held per year depends on the specific situation and workload, particularly during emergency and preparedness phases (Decree on the Organization and Implementation of the Central Disaster Management Committee No. 199/PM, dated 8th May 2023). The Ten-Year Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy and Sectoral Action Plan aims to ensure that all sectors are engaged and contribute to the priorities and objectives set for mitigating the impacts of disasters at national level.

For emergency response activities, the disaster management committee at each level draws up plans and identifies activities for emergency response every year. This helps ensure the timely response to emergencies and minimises the damages caused by disasters. For





disaster recovery, the committee collaborates with development partners to prepare related handbooks, guidelines and strategies for post-disaster recovery. The emergency response is co-chaired by Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), which is a committee that prepares and organises annual meetings before the rainy season to prepare for flood responses in the country.

In addition, at regional level, we collaborate with ASEAN and actively participate in implementing activities under AADMER; implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030; and coordinate with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other regional partners in disaster management within the Asia-Pacific region and other friendly countries.

Participation in key activities within ASEAN includes: (i) being a member of the ASEAN Disaster Management Committee; (ii) participating in many activities and meetings such as the annual meeting of ACDM and AMMDM; (iii) carrying out the role of coordinating disaster management efforts within the country and in the region; (iv) participating in activities and implementing ASEAN Disaster Management Day and the

International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction; (v) encouraging officials and employees to contribute to disaster management activities; (vi) taking part in emergency response efforts within ASEAN and capacity strengthening activities on disaster management and resilience based on ASEAN Framework 2021-2025, particularly contributing to the One ASEAN, One Response initiative; (vii) participating in training programmes and courses aligned with ASEAN standards on disaster management; (viii) exchanging lessons and experiences with countries that have valuable lessons into effective disaster management; and (ix) learning lessons on disaster risk reduction from other countries, such as the Republic of Korea, China, and Japan.

The Lao PDR's response to and lessons learned from disasters

Over the past years, we have seen the successful implementation of comprehensive disaster management mechanisms at various levels, including central, provincial, and district levels. Numerous legal documents have been developed to support these efforts, such as the Law on Disaster Management, the National Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Decree on Disaster Management Fund, etc. These legislations serve as the basis for disaster management committees at all levels to carry out disaster preparedness and reduction measures, encompassing prevention, control and recovery.

Drawing from lessons learned from past disaster response efforts, it is evident that a proper mechanism has been established. However, there is still work to be done. For example, we need to continue developing village disaster risk reduction plans, identifying potential for disaster risk reduction and response, and establishing emergency escape points at the community level. This is because some rural communities in the Lao PDR still have limited emergency escape areas or points. In addition, the development of disaster risk reduction plans at village or community level should be a sustained effort.

Authored by the National Disaster

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n December 2014, Malaysia experienced its worst monsoon flooding. The East Coast region was the hardest hit, particularly Kelantan. The flood affected more than 500,000 people and resulted in more than 700 million US dollars in losses and damage to the infrastructure.

With its tropical climate, Malaysia often faces floods and landslides as the monsoon season brings heavy rains. According to Malaysia's National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA), nine per cent of Malaysia's territory is prone to flooding where about 4.8 million people live. An estimated 29,800 square kilometres of the country is inundated annually, and heavy rain increases the likelihood of landslide incidents. Flooding also led to over 60 million US dollars in annual economic damages, heavily impacting the agriculture and mining sectors.

The 2014 Kelantan flooding led to the establishment of NADMA in 2015 with the mandate to become the national focal point for Malaysia's disaster management. It is responsible for planning, coordinating, and implementing holistic disaster management

activities nationwide. The establishment of NADMA further enhanced Malaysia's disaster management framework, which was governed by National Security Council Directive No. 20. Entering into force in 1997, this directive came after the collapse of the Highland Towers in 1993, adopting the total disaster risk management approach covering disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

NADMA consolidated the efforts of various government agencies, such as the Disaster Management Division of the National Security Council, the Post-Flood Recovery Unit of the Prime Minister's Department, and the Special Malaysia Disaster Assistance and Rescue Agency (SMART), while also emphasising community-based education and awareness for reducing the impact of disasters. It also developed various web-based portals for early warning systems on floods, weather forecasts, shelters, and landslides.

Actively contributing to international and regional disaster relief efforts, Malaysia houses the World Food Programme (WFP)–United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) warehouse in Subang. The facility also serves as the warehouse for the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) regional emergency stockpile, and it supports the logistics capacity of the ASEAN Coordination Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management and other ASEAN Member States. Malaysia has also adopted the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response. It is committed to working hand in hand with other ASEAN Member States on disaster management activities through sharing expertise, resources, and best practices in responding to transboundary challenges.

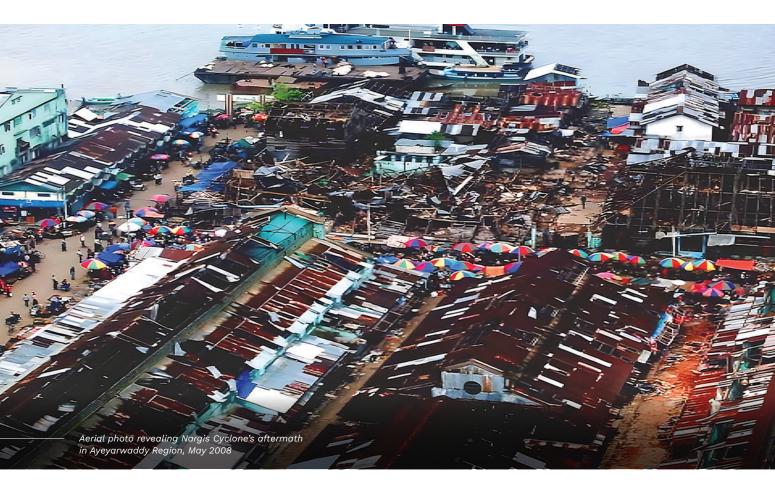
Malaysia's experience with disaster management demonstrates its dedication to safeguarding its citizens and the environment. Malaysia has demonstrated resilience against natural disasters owing to its effective preparedness measures, early warning systems, and international cooperation.

Compiled by Pricilia Putri Sari, ASCC Analysis Division Officer



References: https://bit.ly/Issue30_Ref

The words "disaster" and "climate change" have become well-known because of the intensive and extensive disasters that are happening everywhere. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar is the second largest country in Southeast Asia and it shares borders with several countries such as India, Bangladesh, China, the Lao PDR, and Thailand. Myanmar has a diverse and complex geographical landscape that plays a significant role in its susceptibility to a range of natural disasters. Its location, topography, and geological features contribute to its exposure to natural disasters such as cyclones, floods, and landslides. Additionally, earthquakes occur along the Sagaing Fault Zone, a substantial transform fault zone in the central region. These factors lead to the occurrence of devastating natural disasters throughout the region.



yanmar has experienced several major disasters. One of them, Cyclone Nargis, was a historical event in Myanmar that happened in May 2008. The destructive Cyclone Nargis claimed approximately 139,000 lives, damaged physical and infrastructure valued at 4.1 billion US dollars, threatened the livelihoods of 2.4 million people, and caused physical and mental health hazards.

In the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis, the government of Myanmar, ASEAN and UN formed the Tripartite Core Group (TCG) and carried out the village tract assessment and damage and loss assessment with remarkable speed and competence, which facilitated relief assistance and long-term recovery. Although Nargis was the most destructive disaster in the history of Myanmar, it demonstrated the significance of disaster management, leading to improvements in the early warning system and underscoring the importance of cooperation in disaster management at the national level. The public also became more cooperative: more people accepted the significance of early warning, the dos and don'ts of disasters, and children's involvement in disaster risk reduction. To highlight these milestones, the Post Nargis Joint Assessment (PNJA) was undertaken in Nargis-battered areas in Ayeyarwaddy under the TCG agreement. The assessment team completed their work in less than five weeks.

This post-disaster initiative became part of the journey of the ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT). In 2009, the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) came into force, largely influenced by the devastating Cyclone Nargis. To ensure the AADMER's effectiveness, ASEAN has implemented many flagship activities, including the ASEAN-ERAT programme. ASEAN-ERAT, first formed by the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), is mobilised

by the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) under the direction of ACDM and Member States. ASEAN-ERAT ensures a coordinated response and deployment under the supervision of the national disaster management organisation of the affected country when a disaster occurs within the region.

Enhancement of the national disaster management mechanism

In the aftermath of Cyclone
Nargis, the government of
Myanmar continuously promoted
disaster management strategies
and disaster risk reduction
programmes. Additionally, the
Disaster Management Law (2013)
and its Rules (2015) were enacted
to govern disaster management
activities. According to the Disaster
Management Law, the National









Disaster Management Committee (NDMC) and its working committee were reformed and sub-national level disaster management bodies were systematically formed at the respective states and regions, extending down to the township level. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MSWRR) serves as the secretariat office of NDMC and is the focal point for the whole disaster management system in Myanmar. National level disaster management interventions, meanwhile, are aligned with and implement the frameworks and commitments adopted at the regional and global levels. To build the capacity and skills of disaster managers and raise awareness of the disaster management landscape, the Disaster Management Training Center was set up in December 2015.

As previously mentioned, Myanmar faces damages and losses from all types of hazards almost every year. Whenever it encounters such challenges, ASEAN-ERAT provides

dedicated support. Some notable actions of ASEAN-ERAT include responding to the Thabeikkyin earthquake (2012), nation-wide flooding (2015), landfill fire in Yangon (2018), preliminary needs assessment (2019), and Cyclone Mocha (2023).

The Department of Disaster Management (DDM) under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, actively supports ASEAN-ERAT members by attending the ASEAN-ERAT induction courses. Inspired by the practices of ASEAN-ERAT in the region and recognising ASEAN-ERAT's guidelines including its tools and methodologies, DDM has established an in-country team in Myanmar. DDM has developed a customised training curriculum based on the ASEAN-ERAT methodology, along with training materials in local language, in collaboration with ASEAN Secretariat and AHA Centre and funded by Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF). Using this curriculum, DDM delivers training to the

Myanmar Disaster Response Team (MDRT) and helps capacitate the MDRT members. To date, six batches of MDRT have opened, comprising a total of 188 members. That is a substantive achievement for DDM and the initiatives in the region.

In summary, disasters do not respect boundaries and are not bound by social and economic considerations. No one is exempt from the potential impact of disasters. Thus, we emphasise that disaster management is everyone's business, requiring our collective efforts to improve our situation. It is undeniable that preparedness and readiness are the most important tools for effective emergency response to disasters.

Authored by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Myanmar





Office of Civil Defense-National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council

Situated along the Pacific Ring of Fire and the Pacific Typhoon Belt, the Philippines is prone to various hazards due to its geographical location. Floods, storm surges, landslides, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and drought are the common hazards that the country deals with constantly.

n 2013, one of the most powerful tropical cyclones in the world, Typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan) made landfall in the southern part of the country. It caused a total of 6,300 deaths and 95.5 billion Philippine pesos (approx. 1.6 billion US dollars) worth of damage and losses to infrastructure, agriculture, private property, and other sectors. The massive destruction prompted the declaration of a state of national calamity and the country had to seek international assistance.

In the same year, a magnitude 7.2 earthquake shook the provinces of Bohol, Cebu, and other nearby areas. A total of 227 people perished and 976 people sustained injuries from

collapsed structures and debris. In addition, houses, roads, bridges, seaports, airports, churches, public buildings, schools, and hospitals suffered total or partial damage amounting to 2.25 billion Philippine pesos (approx. 39.5 million US dollars).

In the past five years (2018-2022), other disasters and incidents caused by natural hazards resulted in 3,265 deaths, affected 67 million people and caused 226 billion Philippine pesos (close to 4 billion US dollars) worth of damage and losses.

In addition to disasters caused by natural hazards, the country also faces different forms of human-induced hazards, such as fires, aviation accidents, civil disturbances, maritime incidents, and armed conflicts.

In 2013 and 2017, the country grappled with two major armed conflicts that necessitated national-level intervention to address the needs of the affected communities. The Zamboanga Siege of 2013, for example, resulted in 140 fatalities and 268 persons injured.

Meanwhile, the Marawi City armed conflict in 2017 led to 128 deaths and left 336 persons missing. During the Marawi City conflict, an on-site National Emergency Operations Center was established near Marawi City. Task Force Bangon Marawi was also established to oversee the recovery, reconstruction, and rehabilitation efforts in Marawi City.

The Philippines emergency and disaster response system

Depending on the type of emergency or disaster, resources tapped from national or regional agencies may vary. These resources include transportation assets for relief distribution or aerial survey, search and rescue assets, water filtration systems, generator sets, additional food and non-food items, and cadaver bags.

Emergency response and disaster management is not new in the Philippines. The country has been actively working towards strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) since the enactment of Republic Act 10121, also known as the Philippine DRRM Act of 2010.

To ensure systematic operations, the government identified courses of action and coordination systems that are appropriate to specific emergencies. For instance, it has three National Disaster Response Plans (NDRP), namely: NDRP for hydrometeorological hazards; NDRP for earthquakes and tsunamis; and NDRP for consequence management for terrorism-related incidents. These plans enable relevant agencies to implement a wellcoordinated response when there is an emergency and dealing with a disaster

Another example is the mechanism activated by the country's National DRRM Council (NDRRMC) when weather disturbance is looming. This mechanism is called predisaster risk assessment or PDRA, which identifies the imminent threats posed by a weather disturbance. This assessment helps the government determine the preparedness measures that must be implemented to ensure the safety of communities.

In PDRA meetings, the NDRRMC identifies and prescribes Emergency Preparedness Response (EPR) protocols to Regional DRRMCs that may be affected by a weather disturbance. EPR protocols consist of actions that must be undertaken by various government agencies and

the local government units before the onslaught of the storm and during response operations. They are categorised based on the level of risk present in specific areas.

Response clusters of the government are also activated during emergencies. Various government agencies ensure availability of resources; readiness of warehouses, evacuation centres and other facilities; equipment for rescue activities; standby funds; and other food and non-food items across various key locations to ensure speedy deployment of support during emergencies.

The country continues to implement systems, mechanisms, protocols, and policies that were developed with an appreciation of lessons learned from domestic and international disaster experiences. It has also adopted strategies that have been proven effective and helpful in emergency response or disaster management. Alongside these efforts, the Philippines continues to work to make improvements and pursue innovations, especially those interventions that promise positive, long-term impacts. In this line of work, collaboration with international organisations has proven highly beneficial to the country.

Participation in regional disaster management initiatives

At the ASEAN level, the Philippines has been actively involved in various endeavours that strengthen disaster response including:

 Deployment of ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ERAT)

The Philippines, through NDRRMC-Office of Civil Defense, participated in humanitarian aid to disaster-affected communities within the ASEAN region during the following disasters: (a) ASEAN-ERAT humanitarian needs assessment in connection to the repatriation of displaced persons in Rakhine, Myanmar, January 2018; (b)

ASEAN-ERAT deployment and deployment of NDRRMC relief items during the Magnitude 7.5 Sulawesi Earthquake response operations; (c) ASEAN joint needs assessment in connection to the civil unrest in Myanmar, June 2022; (d) ASEAN-ERAT deployment to Tropical Cyclone Mocha in Myanmar, 19-29 May 2023.

From 6 to 16 November 2022, a 10-member ERAT was also immediately deployed in the Philippines to conduct rapid damage and needs analysis due to the impact of Tropical Storm Paeng (International Name: Nalgae).

ii. Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA)

Launched on 7 December 2021, the DELSA was established to develop a regional stockpile and pursue capacity enhancement of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) and ASEAN Member States in emergency logistics operations. The DELSA has three (3) main established facilities, one in Subang, Malaysia; one in Chainat, Thailand; and one in Quezon City, Philippines.

The Office of Civil Defense, the executive arm of the NDRRMC, inaugurated the DELSA satellite warehouse in Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City on 1 July 2019. The warehouse houses the stockpile of relief goods and equipment set aside in preparation for disaster response.

DELSA serves as the ASEAN region's main mechanism to swiftly increase the availability of relief items for Member States affected by disasters. Using the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) and the Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP), the AHA Centre coordinates the deployment of relief items to disaster-affected Member States. These relief items are

delivered directly to the NDMO and the subsequent distribution of goods to disaster-affected communities occurs under the NDMO's authority. This approach ensures that DELSA relief items become NDMO resources that can be distributed quickly during emergencies and support ongoing operations in affected areas.

In the most recent Typhoon Egay (International name: Doksuri), the AHA Centre, through DELSA, promptly released 103 family packs, 150 shelter repair kits, 200 hygiene kits, and 30 tarpaulins to the affected population in Ifugao.

iii. AHA Centre Information
Management Network (AIM-Net)

The Philippines is also an active member of AIM-Net, a regional forum where ASEAN **Emergency Operation Centre** (EOC) practitioners coordinate and cooperate in strengthening EOC capacities, capabilities, and practices when it comes to Disaster Information Management and Information Systems Interoperability. The Philippines co-chaired the network along with Indonesia during the 2nd AIM-Net Meeting conducted in September 2022, in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Partnerships play a significant role in DRRM, as they enable collaborations that can help pool together financial, technical, and necessary human resources in times of disaster.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan

Moreover, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP) fulfils the requirements of RA No. 10121 of 2010, which provides the legal basis for policies, plans and programmes to deal with disasters. The NDRRMP covers four thematic areas, namely, (i) disaster prevention and mitigation; (ii) disaster preparedness; (iii) disaster response; and (iv) disaster rehabilitation and recovery. These areas correspond to the structure



of the NDRRMC. By law, the Office of Civil Defense formulates and implements the NDRRMP and ensures that the physical framework, social, economic, and environmental plans of communities, cities, municipalities, and provinces are consistent with the plan.

The NDRRMP establishes the linkages between disaster risk reduction and management, climate change adaptation, and human security by focusing on climate and disaster risks. NDRRMP is aligned with global frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Paris Agreement, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030, the International Health Regulations, and the new urban agenda.

At the regional level, the NDRRMP aligns with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Disaster Risk Reduction Framework, the AADMER, and the Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

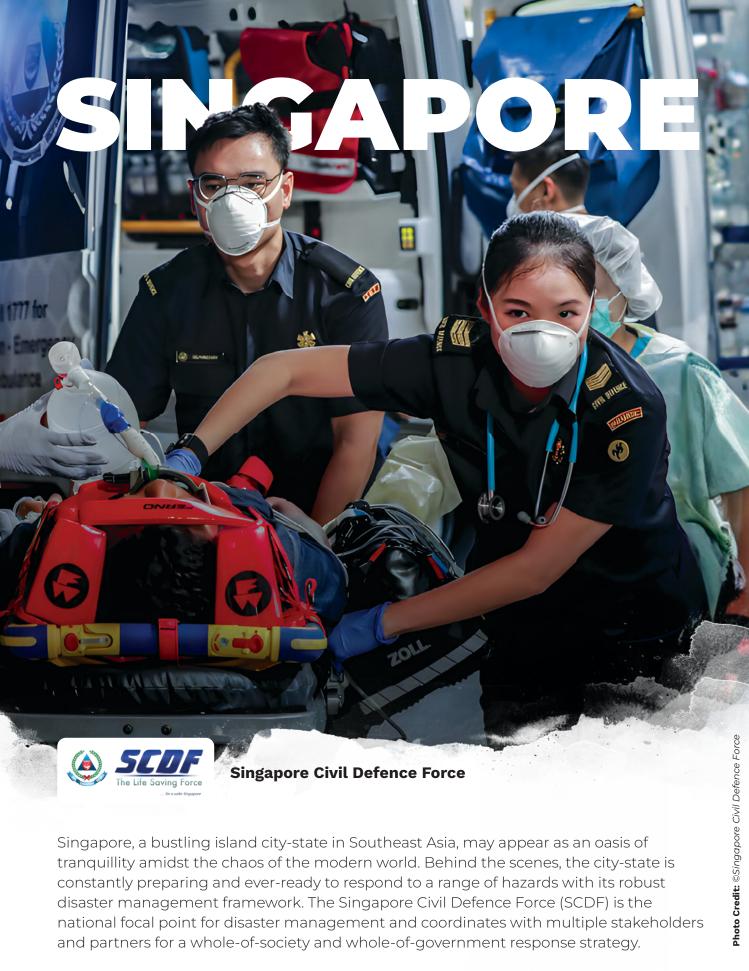
And at the national level, the NDRRMP aligns with key development agendas, such as Ambisyon Natin 2040, Philippine Development Plan 2017–2022, National Framework Strategy on Climate Change, National Climate Change Action Plan 2011–2028, and NSS.

The Philippines' NDRRMP 2020-2030

ensures that the principles behind the vision are reflections of the changes, priorities, and commitment of the country, including regional and international frameworks. Some of the identified new directions include: risk-informed investments, advancing digital transformation, ensuring a multi-sectoral approach, ensuring gender-responsiveness, promoting locally led ecosystembased DRRM and climate change adaptation, ensuring inclusion and meaningful participation, assuring public-private partnerships, establishing a functional RBMES, investing in public health.

With the updated NDRRMP, along with all relevant response plans, policies, and protocols and the optimal use of science and technology in emergency management, agencies and organisations involved in humanitarian assistance, disaster response, and early recovery. That goal is to provide risk-based. timely and anticipatory response actions to address the basic, lifepreservation, and immediate needs of communities and government. Ultimately, we have been able to assist the affected communities and populations in continuing life with dignity and preventing or minimising the exacerbation of emergency situations.

Authored by the Office of Civil Defense-National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, the Philippines



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singapore recognises that changes in climatic impact drivers could result in more frequent and/or severe extreme weather events.

The threat of rising sea levels due to climate change presents a significant and escalating danger to Singapore, a low-lying coastal city-state. With a large portion of its population, economic activities, and critical infrastructure situated along its coastline, Singapore is highly vulnerable to the impacts of sea level rise, emphasising the need for comprehensive and proactive adaptation strategies to safeguard its long-term sustainability and resilience.

Singapore also places emphasis on preparedness in the face of public health crises. Though not frequent, these health crises demand preparedness and a coordinated response across multiple agencies.

Singapore's substantial industrial and petrochemical complexes also bring about risks of fires, chemical leaks, and explosions. While stringent regulations keep the probability of such incidents low, their potential consequences are grave and can have far-reaching effects on human lives, the economy, and the environment.

Key elements and assessment of Singapore's disaster response

Singapore's disaster response strategy is built upon a multi-tiered framework that involves government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and the community. The SCDF plays a central role in this framework, orchestrating response efforts with other agencies to ensure a well-coordinated approach.

The key elements of Singapore's disaster response include:

i. Early detection and warning systems: The SCDF maintains





and operates the Public Warning System (PWS), a network of sirens across the island, to warn the public of imminent threats that could endanger lives and property. Other broadcast systems, such as the SMS Public Alert System and the SGSecure mobile application, are also available for use during emergencies. These warning systems complement the future nationwide sensor network, which will continuously detect anomalies in the atmosphere that may affect the health and safety of the public.

- ii. Emergency response: The SCDF's all-hazards responses to disasters include firefighting and rescue operations, emergency medical services, and Hazardous Materials (HazMat) management. SCDF is equipped with specialised teams for different types of emergencies, such as the Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team for Urban Search and Rescue and the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Explosive teams for HazMat incidents.
- iii. Community engagement and education: Strengthening community resilience is also integral to Singapore's disaster mitigation efforts. Since 2016, the SCDF has been pursuing a Transformation 2025 vision of creating A Nation of Lifesavers. To achieve this goal, the SCDF actively engages the community through a wide range of public education programmes to enhance our collective resilience and emergency preparedness.

iv. Multi-agency and international collaboration: The SCDF collaborates with other agencies, such as the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Defence, and the Singapore Police Force to ensure a cohesive and efficient response to complex emergencies. Interagency communication and coordination are vital to managing complex crises. In addition, recognising the interconnectedness of disaster impacts, Singapore engages in regional and international collaborations.

Singapore's response to disaster is assessed through various lenses, including timeliness, efficiency, and the impact on public safety. Thorough reviews are conducted after incidents to identify strengths and areas for improvement. National-level emergency exercises are also conducted to ensure the preparedness of related agencies in responding to various scenarios. First launched in 1997, Exercise Northstar aims to validate the whole-of-government response framework and improve emergency response and coordination among national agencies in Singapore. The most recent Exercise Northstar, conducted in March 2023, simulated a terrorist attack on various oil tanks and petrochemical pipelines. The exercise involved more than 300 personnel from various agencies, including the SCDF, SPF, Singapore Armed Forces, Ministry of Health, Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, and private companies.

Singapore's commitment to disaster management extends beyond its borders. As a member of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), Singapore collaborates with fellow ASFAN Member States to achieve an effective and efficient approach to disaster management ranging from prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and global leadership. This includes resource sharing, knowledge exchange, and joint exercises to enhance disaster management capabilities. This cooperation facilitates the exchange of expertise and resources with our ASEAN partners, builds capacities, and promotes regional stability and resilience. It also strengthens the region's collective ability to respond to large-scale disasters, which can often transcend national boundaries.

As we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the ACDM, let us reflect on and renew our commitment to safeguard the region. In the face of climate change and evolving threats, ACDM has continued to integrate technology, foster regional collaboration, and learn from past experiences to continually refine its disaster management framework to minimise the impact of disasters on the communities.

SCDF stands ready to protect its nation and assist its neighbours in times of crisis.

Authored by the Singapore Civil Defense Force



hailand's diverse geography contributes to its multifaceted disaster risk profile. The country experiences annual monsoon rains, resulting in flooding, especially in the central plains and northern regions. Thailand is also prone to tropical storms and cyclones during the monsoon season, which can bring destructive winds and heavy rainfall.

The southern and coastal areas face an elevated risk of tsunamis, while the northern regions contend with landslides during the rainy season. Additionally, Thailand lies within a seismically active zone, making it susceptible to earthquakes.

Thailand's worst calamities included the 2004 Tsunami, which claimed 5,395 lives, affected close to 60,000 people, and led to losses valued at 399.78 million US dollars; 2011 monsoon season floods, which caused 813 deaths, affected 9.5 million people, and brought economic damage of about 40 billion US dollars; and more recently, Typhoon Noru in 2022, which led to three casualties and the displacement of 4,000 people.

The country has adopted a comprehensive disaster risk management approach encompassing preparedness, response, recovery, and risk reduction. Its main disaster management framework is contained in the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Act 2007.

The law establishes a National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation

Committee, an inter-ministerial body headed by the Prime Minister or designated Deputy Prime Minister, which sets the policy direction for disaster risk reduction and management.

It also designates the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, under the Ministry of Interior, as the Committee's secretariat and the government department responsible for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. It is tasked to work in collaboration with provincial and local authorities.

At the provincial level, Disaster Management Committees coordinate disaster risk reduction activities and response plans tailored to local conditions. The law authorises local governments to take responsibility for disaster management initiatives in their respective areas, in line with their provincial plan.

Thailand's disaster management strategy is based on the National Disaster Risk Management Plan, which was updated in 2019 to align with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. The plan emphasises a four-pronged strategy. The first is to enhance disaster risk reduction and resilience of all sectors and communities through risk assessment, risk reduction measures, early warning systems, public awareness, education, and capacity building.

The second is to strengthen and enhance the efficiency of sustainable disaster recovery or

build back better and safer by developing recovery plans, allocating resources, restoring livelihoods, and addressing the needs of vulnerable groups. The third is to apply an integrated emergency management system by strengthening the roles and coordination of disaster management agencies at all levels and improving emergency response and relief operations.

Finally, the plan promotes international cooperation on disaster risk reduction by participating in regional and global platforms, sharing knowledge and best practices, supporting disasteraffected countries, and enhancing mutual assistance and partnership.

While Thailand has made significant progress in implementing this comprehensive disaster management strategy, challenges and gaps still need to be addressed. These include enhancing policy coherence among different sectors and levels of government, increasing funding for disaster risk reduction, collection and use of data for evidence-based decision-making, and promoting community participation in disaster risk reduction and management initiatives.

Compiled by Joanne B. Agbisit, Associate Editor, The ASEAN



References: https://bit.ly/Issue30_Ref



let Nam, with its extensive coastline, is highly susceptible to various hydrometeorological hazards, including severe storms, cyclones, typhoons, floods, landslides, and coastal erosion. Approximately 70 per cent of the country's population residing in coastal areas are exposed to these risks.

Some of the recent hydrometeorological disasters in Viet Nam are as follows:

- Flooding in August 2023 affected around 215,000 people across 10 provinces: Lai Chau, Yen Bai, Son La, Lao Cai, Dien Bien, Thai Nguyen, Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Dak Nong, and Lam Dong.
- Tropical storm Noru in September 2022 resulted in two fatalities, 62 injuries, and extensive damage to agricultural crops and private property across 12 provinces.
- Tropical depression and floods in October 2021 impacted northern and central Viet Nam, displacing 7,000 people and causing infrastructure and property damage.

In addition to these challenges, Viet Nam faces moderate risks of droughts, earthquakes, tsunamis, forest fires, and cold and heat waves.

The 2022 INFORM Risk Index ranked Viet Nam 91st out of 191 countries in terms of risk from humanitarian crises and disasters. Viet Nam exhibits exceptionally high exposure to flooding, including riverine, flash, and coastal flooding (ranked 1st), as well as to tropical cyclones and their associated hazards (ranked 8th).

Climate change will likely worsen the flooding threat, affecting the country's population and economy. The World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB), in their 2021 Climate Risk Country Profile for Viet Nam, estimate that climate change could reduce national income by up to 3.5 per cent by 2050.

Viet Nam has made notable strides in disaster management. In 2013, it enacted the Law on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control in groundbreaking legislation that delineates Viet Nam's institutional arrangements, functions, and mandates for disaster management. It also represents the first law to cover all natural hazards in the country. Subsequent legal and policy developments have further reinforced disaster prevention, mitigation, and climate change adaptation efforts.

Under this law, the government orchestrates disaster management policies and interventions at the national level through interministerial committees replicated at the provincial, district, and commune levels. The Viet Nam Disaster and Dyke Management Authority, under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, is the lead coordinator for natural disaster mitigation and response activities. Bilateral and multilateral partners and international and local NGOs provide critical support to the government's disaster management

National and local budgets constitute the primary funding sources for Viet Nam's disaster risk management endeavours. These resources are bolstered by the national government's reserve funds and provincial-level funds designated for natural disaster prevention and control.

Disaster warning is one of the pivotal strategies employed by Viet Nam. The country has elevated its hazard monitoring, forecasting, and early warning systems through radar technology with multitransmission capability, enabling data harmonisation and exchange among regional, provincial, and local stations. Still, investment in specialised monitoring systems is required to address localised hazards such as flash floods. Moreover, there is a need to prioritise crucial early warnings to effectively reach vulnerable communities through avenues like community radio broadcasts and mobile phone alerts.

Moving forward, Viet Nam aims to ensure the effective integration of disaster risk management in local government plans; enhance monitoring, forecasting, and warning capabilities; raise and provide efficient use of disaster funds; apply science and technology to various aspects of disaster management; and promote cooperation, exchange, and information-sharing with countries within and outside ASEAN.

Compiled by Joanne B. Agbisit, Associate Editor, The ASEAN



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Many disasters may be inevitable as the forces of nature are increasingly becoming unpredictable and destructive. However, their adverse impacts can be reduced through effective collaboration, preparedness, and response. The value of such cooperation cannot be overstated. ASEAN, a region that is vulnerable to various natural and humaninduced disasters, has been working together with various partners to enhance its capacity and cooperation. One of the key partners in this endeavour is Japan, which has established the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF). JAIF stands out as a pioneer development cooperation instrument contributing significantly to the ASEAN region in its quest for effective disaster management, response, risk reduction and mitigation, and the creation of resilient communities.

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One of the key pillars of JAIF's support has been enhancing ASEAN's capacity and readiness to respond to disaster emergencies and reduce disaster risks in the region.



s ASEAN and Japan celebrate their 50th anniversary of friendship and cooperation this year, it is timely to reflect on the achievements of disaster management cooperation between these two disaster-prone regions and countries. It is also opportune to delve into the long-standing collaborative efforts of ASEAN and Japan through JAIF, focusing on the assistance rendered, especially but not limited to, the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) since the onset of its establishment, the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programmes, as well as Japan's unwavering commitment to furthering disaster risk reduction and resilience building in the ASEAN

JAIF: A catalyst for positive change and progress

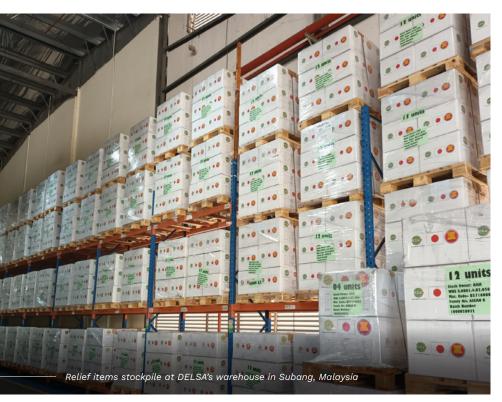
The Government of Japan established JAIF in 2006, following a pledge of then-Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro at the 9th ASEAN-Japan Summit held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in December 2005. A primary purpose of JAIF is to support the efforts of the ASEAN Member States to pursue the comprehensive integration of ASEAN towards the realisation of an open, dynamic, and resilient ASEAN Community as envisaged in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II). While promoting greater cooperation between ASEAN and Japan and addressing emerging regional challenges, JAIF is also intended to assist in the implementation of the ASEAN 2025 Blueprints of the ASEAN Political Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community, and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community with particular emphasis on narrowing development gaps among the ASEAN Member States.

In this context, since 2026, JAIF has funded more than 570 projects across various domains, including responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, which all together topped 767 million US dollars. And one of the key pillars of JAIF's support has been enhancing ASEAN's capacity and readiness to respond to disaster

emergencies and reduce disaster risks in the region, which are anchored in the Vision Statement on ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation adopted in December 2013 and its Revised Implementation Plan in August 2017, as well as in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) adopted in June 2019. Japan's interventions have also been guided by the ASEAN-Japan Work Plan on Disaster Management 2021-2025, the progress of which is followed up through the framework of the ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM Plus Japan) on a regular basis, apart from being reviewed by the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) Plus Japan.

Empowering ASEAN communities through capacity building

The first concrete action taken by JAIF in this endeavour dates back to January 2008 when the project "Utilization of Satellite Image on Disaster Management" commenced with the Asian Disaster Reduction Center acting as both the proponent





and the implementing agency. The project brought together disaster management and satellite imagery experts, created the impetus for closer collaboration between both parties, and promoted better and practical use of satellite imagery for disaster mitigation and response, which was relatively new to the stakeholders of disaster management communities in the region at that time.

To date, ASEAN and Japan have collaborated and delivered more than 40 projects in disaster management cooperation in the amount of nearly 80 million US dollars. Some of the notable achievements of the JAIF-funded projects include the establishment and operationalisation of the AHA Centre. Built on the first ever project of this kind in the region, "Setting Up and Operationalisation of the AHA Centre" enhanced ASEAN's capacity to monitor, assess, and respond to disasters in a timely and effective manner. JAIF has since partnered with the AHA Centre to enhance its main functions for emergency preparedness and response by mainstreaming in the

Centre's actions, such initiatives as the development of an integrated information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure and system, the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA), the transformation of ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT), and the AHA Centre Executive (ACE) Programme.

And through a series of DELSA projects, the relief items stockpiled in the regional warehouse in Malavsia and the satellite warehouses in Thailand and the Philippines were rapidly deployed to affected countries to cope with challenging, imminent situations on the ground during major disasters, such as the Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013 and a devastating flood that hit Kelantan, Malaysia in 2015. Between 2012 and 2022 alone, 31 disaster emergency operations were undertaken in eight ASEAN countries-Indonesia, the Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Viet Nam, Thailand, and Cambodia.

Furthermore, JAIF facilitated forging a cadre of qualified disaster

management professionals and leaders by supporting their participation in the intensive ACE and ERAT programmes. These professionals are attached to the AHA Centre and the national disaster management offices of respective ASEAN Member States. The programmes cover various topics, such as disaster risk management, humanitarian coordination, leadership, and communication skills, complemented by field visits and simulation exercises. Since 2014, 741 participants from 10 Member States have been fostered by 37 JAIF-funded ACE, ERAT and DELSA training programmes to become national and regional disaster management professionals of strong confidence and responsibility. Ms. Hih Nora binti Hi Md Yusof, Head of Emergency Medical Ambulance Services, Brunei Darussalam, recalled her experience in ERAT training, "The most important thing is to maintain regional standardisation. ... To have standardisation, we must unite and that's what JAIF is doing through ERAT programmes. JAIF unites all ASEAN Member States and creates







first responders who are certified and able to work in other countries."

A shared vision for resilient communities: Building a robust policy framework

The collaborative efforts between ASEAN and Japan over the years have reinforced and ushered in significant advancements in disaster management coordination and cooperation. At the heart of the partnership lies AADMER, a comprehensive framework designed to respond collectively to emergencies, mobilise and invest effectively, and ultimately enhance disaster resilience and coordination in the region. JAIF has been privileged to translate the AADMER into concrete actions by formulating the AADMER Work Programme (AWP) 2021-2025, which was endorsed at the 8th AMMDM in November 2020. The new five-year work programme is a strategic roadmap aiming to further enhance ASEAN's resilience and adaptive capacity to disasters by covering five strategic

components: risk assessment and monitoring; prevention and mitigation; preparedness and response; resilient recovery; and global leadership. Currently, a mid-term review of the AWP 2021-2025, funded by JAIF, is underway and expected to help gauge the effectiveness and impact of the AADMER at the mid-point.

Sustaining momentum for a resilient future and Japan's unwavering commitment

In his policy speech delivered at the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) in March 2023, which rolled out Japan's New Plan for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio reaffirmed Japan's strong commitment to the region, putting forth a new contribution of 100 million US dollars to JAIF. He also expressed his intention to support the disaster management efforts in the region, "To help countries build resilient societies, both in terms of disaster prevention and recovery, Japan will

harness its expertise and technology to provide support including for improving disaster prevention and response capacity."

As we look ahead, the partnership between ASEAN and Japan continues to hold immense possibilities. The successes achieved to date serve as the foundation for future endeavours in disaster management. Japan's unwavering commitment will not end just with building stronger communities but shall consolidate bonds, strengthen solidarity, and ensure that the ASEAN region is better situated to cope with whatever new threats lie ahead. Guided by the AWP 2021-2025 and other related initiatives, JAIF is poised to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of millions across the region. Together, ASEAN and Japan will navigate the challenging path towards a safer, more resilient, and sustainable future.

The information contained in this article represents the views and opinions of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the Government of Japan.



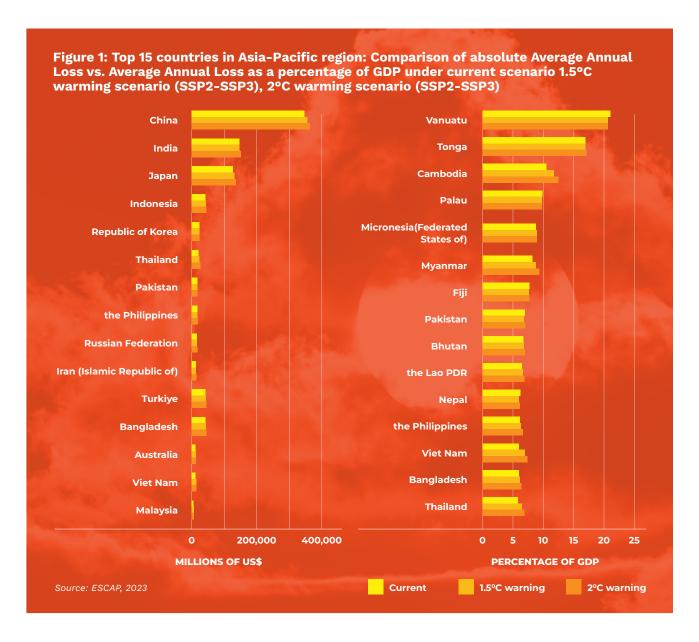
The climate landscapes of ASEAN nations are experiencing significant changes as the levels of disaster risk continue to surge

The Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2023, a flagship publication of ESCAP, reveals startling figures regarding the Average Annual Loss (AAL) due to disasters in the ASEAN region. The intersection of disaster risks, income inequality, and poverty drives persistent inequality, affecting least-developed countries in Southeast Asia. ESCAP estimates that investments needed for transformative adaptation in the Asia-Pacific region stand at 144.74 billion US dollars and is expected

to increase to 150.50 billion US dollars and 155 billion US dollars for 1.5°C and 2°C climate scenarios, respectively. The Southeast Asia subregion accounts for 24 per cent of the total absolute adaptation

Figure 1 showcases the 15 countries that are expected to encounter the most substantial disaster losses, measured as a percentage of their GDP. Notably, within Southeast Asia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines,

Viet Nam, and Malaysia rank highest in terms of absolute losses. On the other hand, Cambodia, Myanmar, the Lao PDR, the Philippines, Viet Nam, and Thailand exhibit the greatest losses as a percentage of their respective GDP.



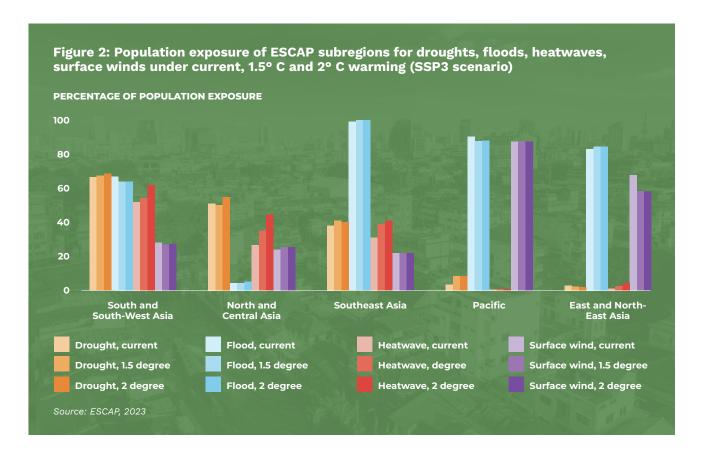
Downscaling climate data offers benefits to adapting in a changing riskscape

In the face of ever-evolving climate patterns, the significance of climate data downscaling cannot be overstated. Downscaling delivers a more accurate and detailed picture of future climate scenarios by refining global-scale climate models to localised scales. This level of granularity is essential for making informed disaster management decisions. Climate projections derived from downscaling techniques allow stakeholders to anticipate not only the timing but

also the specific impacts of climate events.

Consider a coastal city that is vulnerable to rising sea levels, such as Singapore. While global climate models may predict overall sea level rise, downscaling can elucidate local variations, enabling precise assessments of increased flood or storm surge risks, thus informing urban planning for the future. Figure 2 reveals the highest population exposure to multiple climate hazards, including droughts,

and floods. For the Southeast Asian region, close to 100 per cent of the population are exposed to flood risk, and 40 per cent are further exposed to drought risk. This vulnerability remains consistent across varying global warming scenarios, encompassing present conditions as well as the projected 1.5°C and 2°C warming scenarios, emphasising the need for proactive strategies to comprehensively address and mitigate the implications of such scenarios in an evolving climate landscape.



The efficacy of climate data lies not just in its generation but in its translation into actionable insights

Recent assessment reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) underscore the critical role of localised projections in shaping adaptive strategies. These are more than simply numbers; they serve as a guide for communities, governments, and organisations as they tailor their responses to the unique problems of their surroundings.

Adapting data to the needs of various stakeholders is one of

the keys to this translation; this is especially important to ensure the resilience of critical sectors. By tailoring climate data to localised contexts, stakeholders can gain invaluable insights into the availability and distribution of essential services, such as water resources, energy, health infrastructure and telecommunications, to name a few. This, in turn, empowers authorities to make informed decisions,

mitigating the risks to their critical infrastructure.

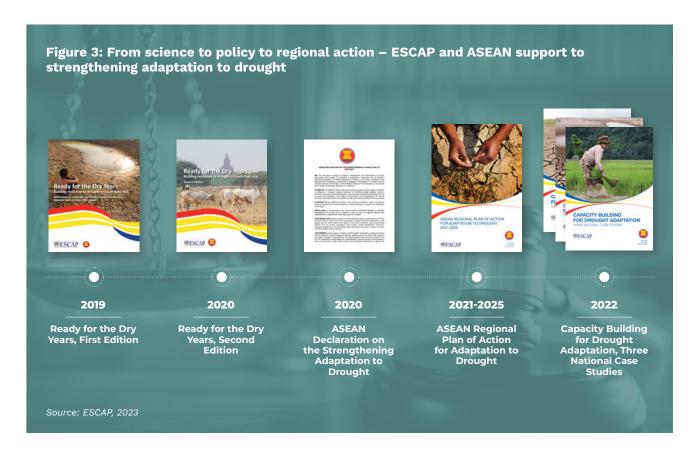
ESCAP's commitment to continuing support to the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management, through bringing global models to the regional, subregional, and national levels, has been demonstrated through various initiatives. Realworld success demonstrates the value of localised data.

Climate data offers a gateway to risk-informed policy and adaptation action

Working together with ASEAN, ESCAP supported forward-thinking initiatives that use climate data to manage drought risk proactively. Namely, the analytical, *Ready for the Dry Years* (2020) publication highlighted the intensifying

drought risk across Southeast Asia.
Acknowledging the importance
of collective action, the ASEAN
Declaration on Strengthening
Adaptation to Drought was adopted
in 2020 and followed by the
ASEAN Regional Plan of Action

for Adaptation to Drought 2021–2025. These initiatives provide a roadmap for translating data-driven insights into tangible policies, and subregional and national action that build resilience in the face of slow-onset climate hazards (Figure 3).



A multi-hazard, multi-stakeholder approach to climate and disaster risk foresight is needed

ESCAP has also been working to support ASEAN Climate Outlook Forum (ASEANCOF) on seasonal impact-based forecasting (IBF). Establishing a shared understanding of the sectoral impacts of seasonal weather events across the subregion is a core goal of climate outlook forums, which at the national level are commonly referred to as "Monsoon Forums." By downscaling global models to the subregional and sub-seasonal level and then integrating with vulnerability and exposure data, ASEAN Member States can gauge potential seasonal climate impacts on populations and livelihoods collectively and thus actively prepare for the incoming conditions.

ESCAP's Trust Fund for Tsunami Disaster and Climate Preparedness further supports ASEAN member states through the Regional Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) to hold national level monsoon forums. Supporting national hydrological and meteorological services to contextualise seasonal climate forecasts and communicate these forecasts across a wide array of weather information users has supported local governments to cultivate cultures of preparedness

and ultimately reduce the loss of lives and livelihoods due to climate hazards.

This collaborative endeavour is an illustration of how data-driven methodologies may improve seasonal readiness across important sectors.



Disaster and climate knowledge emerges as an instrument of empowerment in the age of digitalisation

The ESCAP's Risk and Resilience Portal serves to ensure that climate knowledge is accessible to all. This online tool supports ASEAN Member States by contextualising climate data by integrating exposure and vulnerability specificities. This innovative platform amalgamates data, tools, and interactive maps, presenting an invaluable repository

of resources to those at the forefront of disaster management. From visualising disaster hotspots to conducting meticulous assessments of infrastructure vulnerabilities, the portal empowers users to make informed decisions firmly rooted in data-driven insights. Figure 5 explains the ecosystem of the portal, including both its ability to

analyse multiple datasets and data interoperability.

The journey from global models to localised insights illustrates ESCAP's unwavering dedication to creating a culture of resilience and preparedness throughout the ASEAN region.



Figure 5: Eco-System Methodology of the Risk and Resilience Portal

Looking forward

Resilience is a shared responsibility as Southeast Asia navigates the complicated landscape of climate change-related disasters. The urgency of the situation necessitates sustained collaboration, innovative solutions, and data-driven decision-making. The foundation of ASEAN's disaster resilience is stakeholder involvement, downscaling of climatic data, and catastrophe

management. The benefits of downscaling techniques and climate projections are undeniable, offering a pathway to precision in preparedness. By customising data for specific purposes and fostering collaboration, stakeholders can harness the true potential of data. ESCAP's unwavering dedication to disaster resilience through the risk and resilience portal, flagship

publication, subregional report, and multiple other projects serves as a beacon of hope in an era marked by climate uncertainties. By seamlessly blending data-driven insights with practical applications, ESCAP propels ASEAN toward a future where disasters are met with resilience and resolve.



Dr. Jemilah Mahmood

Executive Director, Sunway Centre for Planetary Health, Sunway University, Malaysia

I had the honour to be invited to attend the first ASEAN Forum on Disaster Resilience, hosted by the Singapore Civil Defence Force in mid-August this year. As we emerge from the shadow of the pandemic, it felt wonderful to be able to connect with many friends that I have worked with over the years on disaster preparedness and response in our region and beyond. We've come a long way in the 20 years since the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) was formed, in the 12 years since the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) was born, and through several massive and difficult crises.

he forum took stock of all of this and started a more robust discussion on how to better insulate ourselves from future disaster threats. But, if I am honest, I came away feeling that we are barely touching the edges of what needs to be done. Any attempts we make to strengthen resilience to disasters need to start by looking at causes and effects. Burying our heads in the sand and only discussing how to protect ourselves strikes me as, quite frankly, reckless.

I did not arrive at this conclusion at this forum—it is something that struck me most acutely when I came home after almost a decade working overseas on humanitarian crises—where the same problem applied. Sticking plasters on wounds don't work in the humanitarian world any better than they do when it comes to disaster risk management in this second decade of the 21st century, where the UN Secretary-General talks no more of global warming but rather global boiling.

Disasters are no longer singular "independent" events but instead are compounding to produce major cascading consequences to

societies. The COVID-19 pandemic shows us what our future may look like if we don't take threats to our well-being seriously. Human-led destruction of the environment through widespread deforestation, wildlife trafficking, unsustainable and unethical food production and other myopic practices is bringing humans into ever closer proximity with stressed wild animals that shed viruses, causing a zoonotic spill-over to humans, the consequent rise of infectious diseases, and the potential of such events expanding into epidemics and pandemics. An all-hazards approach towards building resilience against disasters needs to reconcile the anthropogenic (that is "humaninduced") nature of future disasters, the interconnectedness between this planet that we live on and us. and a rapid and deep rethink of disaster risk governance so that it fully recognises and addresses rising ecological threats and underlying planetary health drivers alongside the ones we immediately think of-tsunamis, volcanos, storms and earthquakes.

Rethinking our approach is most easily achieved by placing human health and planetary health at the centre of our policy deliberations;

an emerging discourse named "planetary health," which recognises that human development that disregards Earth's limits leads to detrimental trade-offs that hinder sustainable development. It also is a primary cause of what we see now-planetary destabilisation that heralds more and larger disasters and, in the worst case, a threat to human survival. The science contends that we are now dangerously close to the "no turning back" point, and it is this contention which makes me truly alarmed that ASEAN's otherwise excellent disaster management apparatus is dramatically underestimating what we are up against.

What we need to do is also becoming clear, but to piece it together is a challenge since the required actions are articulated across a number of globally agreed frameworks—Sendai, Paris, the SDGs. The go-manual to understand what needs to happen is the "Ten Must Haves" Report which lays out that humanity must act very quickly.

These ten "must haves" all have links to how we manage and decrease our exposure to risk. They are:



Of course, the default response to such a list is one of disbelief that we must-and can-do all of these things. But these are all commitments that have been made, either directly or implicitly through various global agreements and frameworks. As we consider the next steps for ASEAN, twenty years on from those brave steps taken by the ACDM towards the framing of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response and its eventual implementation, now is the moment for us to get a grip on these ten existential challenges.

Paving a planetary healthy path forward for disaster management relies heavily on political will and courage to tell our leaders that our current frameworks are not adequate to the cascading risks that are now upon us. The focus by the AHA Centre on climate change adaptation in its Work Plan 2025 combined with a focus on sustainable resilience in its upcoming ASEAN Risk Monitor and Disaster Management Review 2023 are steps in the right direction but need to be matched with more courage by our political leadersand that will only come if we, the citizens of this region, demand it. So that is what I am doing.

As ASEAN has observed, but not yet implemented, there is a need to break down silos and move from a "need-to-know" to a "need-toshare" culture; one that promotes transparency and engages everyone. Better cross-sectoral collaboration, which was seen as a key priority coming out of the ASEAN Forum on Disaster Resilience, must lead to cross-societal collaboration. Humanitarian actors and the disaster management community can play a potentially significant role here: helping to steer the discourse through capturing real-world crisis response case studies with a focus on trust built between communities in the heat of these crises.

With many Southeast Asian countries at the centre of this climate and humanitarian hotspot, all eyes are on ASEAN, its leaders, institutions and, most importantly, people, to have the courage to face up to the fact that human behaviour is the main driver of present and future disaster risks. We must all play our part in building resilience to disasters and crises that are grounded in planetary health, recognising that the root drivers of disaster risk are not natural phenomena but rather how we mitigate their potential risks,

prepare for them, react to them, and build back better from them. Inevitably, disrupting long-standing and deeply embedded systems and ways of doing things is difficult but not impossible. The bottom line is that there is still hope but it relies on our ability to act now. The alternative, glimpses of which we have seen in Canada, China, South Asia, and Europe this year, is very frightening.

And so my message, as we celebrate 20 years of the ACDM, is that now is NOT the time to rest on our well-earned laurels. Now is the time to sound the alarm, to engage our best policy thinkers and decide—quite rapidly—whether "One ASEAN, One Response" and our stated desire to be global leaders in disaster management means that we are willing to show the planet how to navigate our way out of this crisis, or not.

Dr Jemilah Mahmood is a physician and experienced crisis leader. She is the founder of MERCY Malaysia and has served in leadership roles internationally with the United Nations and Red Cross for the last decade. Dr. Mahmood was the recipient of the 2019 ASEAN Prize.

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Rethinking our approach is most easily achieved by placing human health and planetary health at the centre of our policy deliberations.



STRATEGIES TO AVOID FORMIDABLE COSTS



Sanny Jegillos

Senior Advisor on Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangkok Regional Hub

As extreme heatwaves and wildfires burn across the world, scientists predict that the worst of the weather is yet to come.

fficials from the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced that an El Niño weather event, which began in June this year, will continue into early 2024 and give rise to even more extreme weather. The World Meteorological Organization also reported a 98 per cent likelihood that at least one year of the next five years, and the five-year period as a whole, will be the warmest on record, beating the record set in 2016 when there was an exceptionally strong El Niño combined with human-induced warming from greenhouse gases.

On average, El Niño, like La Niña, is a natural climate event that occurs every two to seven years. It originates in the Pacific Ocean along the equator, causing waters to become much warmer than usual. Its onset this year comes when the past eight years have already been the warmest ever recorded, impacted by the effects of anthropogenic climate change. Scientists believe that this year's record-high temperatures combined with El Niño will produce even more severe weather across the globe. A warmer land and ocean will add to El Niño's "natural" biophysical

impacts and may bring anomalous weather patterns not experienced before. It is expected to cause drought across Asia and the Pacific, result in even more intense tropical cyclones triggering flooding and landslides, and impact the oceans, causing coral bleaching and loss of biodiversity.

The Asia-Pacific region, one of the most prone to disasters and climate change, is expected to bear a significant brunt of this weather event.

However, the economic damages those disasters cause could exacerbate existing debt crises, disrupt supply chains, fuel food insecurity, and even cause political instability. The socioeconomic impacts of El Niño could ripple across the region, causing immense hardship to millions of people, claiming lives and livelihoods, and worsening human insecurity. The agriculture sector and food production could be hit hard, as well as energy sources dependent on water. Disasters triggered by El Niño, such as storms, floods, and droughts, could easily upset the subsistence livelihood security of impoverished and vulnerable populations.

The most marginalised populations of the region will, of course, suffer more than others. These include subsistence farmers and pastoral communities who are dependent on rainfed agriculture and livestock and artisanal fisherfolks who will suffer from reduced fish catches. In urban populations and industries that rely heavily on water resources, children, women, older adults, and people with disabilities who lack access to health services could be severely affected, and consumers and economically vulnerable populations will be impacted by shortages and increases in food prices and commodities.

Navigating the impacts of El Niño while it is underway adds chaos and uncertainty and makes policy-making complex. Thus, it is important to undertake preparedness and mitigation strategies proactively. Taking no action and simply being reactive would be far more costly.

So how do we protect people, ecosystem, and infrastructure from these expected extreme weather events?

The El Niño phenomenon in 2015-2016 brought floods, droughts, storms, wildfires, frosts, and



diseases, affecting 60 million people in at least 40 countries worldwide. Since each El Niño event is different from the other, it is essential to improve forecasts to anticipate the type and severity of hazards at the regional, national, and subnational levels.

Forecasting can benefit from recent improvements in high-performance computing to run complex climate models at higher resolutions. The process can use advanced monitoring technologies such as remote sensing and satellite imagery to collect real-time information in hard-toreach areas. The forecasts on the potential societal impacts of El Niño are equally important and are needed more urgently as this allows countries to prepare better solutions. When available, impact-based forecasting can enhance political awareness, communication, and education.

It is also fundamental to identify the root causes—inequality, socio-economic, political—of vulnerabilities to El Niño and to address them so that we can improve the resilience of communities to weather-related risks.

By anticipating the impact of El Niño and how it might affect those who are vulnerable, governments and key partners can set up national and regional mechanisms that enable joint action, prepare appropriate plans such as anticipatory early action, emergency response, strengthening health systems, water management, drought management, livelihoods, shock-responsive social protection, business continuity plans, and strengthen local government capacity in addressing loss and damage through resilient recovery.

The public plays a dual role both as the stakeholders affected by El Niño and as the vanguard of solutions to address many of its impacts. Sharing information and educating the public on the challenges, responses, and resources needed to handle extreme weather can empower key actors to act and complement government efforts.

The effects of El Niño are national as well as transboundary and it will affect multiple countries, provinces, and cities simultaneously. It is important for countries as well as national, provincial, and city/municipal governments to work together to prepare and address its impacts.

The many severe hazards and impacts of El Niño necessitate building the capacities of various stakeholders, including national and local governments, businesses, especially MSMEs and their workforce, and at-risk affected populations.

Finally, the effective use of technology can help increase the timeliness of forecasts and early warning information, better assess risk reduction and damages, enhance planning processes, target the most vulnerable, improve and increase the reach of capacity-building programmes, and optimise response and recovery efforts.

The record-high temperatures combined with the confluence of extreme El Niño impacts will likely push us into an uncharted climate crisis. Given the multi-country and multi-sectoral impact of El Niño, ASEAN can play a central role in steering regional and transboundary risk reduction, preparedness, and response and recovery actions among ASEAN Member states.

ASEAN, with its stakeholders, including the United Nations Development Programme and Dialogue Partners, can share expertise, pool funding, and provide integrated solutions that can target the most vulnerable. Integrated solutions encompass the different development sectors that can be impacted. It is an opportunity to bring development, humanitarian aid, planning, and the finance sectors together towards the common goal of building a resilient ASEAN. We can still act now to reduce its impacts, and even if a full-blown El Niño does not happen, these capabilities to anticipate, minimise, and address loss and damage in a rapidly warming earth are imperative in the near future.

CONVERSATIONS

Communities and individuals are the backbone of effective disaster response and management. They serve as the first line of defence when disasters strike, mobilising resources, providing immediate assistance, and offering vital support to those in need. Their local knowledge, resilience, and ability to coordinate efforts are essential in minimising the impact of disasters and aiding in recovery. Engaging and empowering communities and individuals is not only a practical necessity but also a key principle in building resilient societies that can withstand and bounce back from the most challenging of circumstances.



Leeping Cities Above Water RESILIENCE-BUILDING THROUGH ANTICIPATORY ACTION



Joanne B. Agbisit
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estled along the Philippines' typhoon-prone corridor, Naga City faces heightened vulnerability to torrential rains, landslides, and heavy flooding. Just this past April, the city felt the impact of Tropical Depression Amang. Though a relatively weak system, it inundated several of the city's villages.

It is precisely bustling urban centres like Naga City that the Coastal Cities at Risk in the Philippines: Investing in Climate and Disaster Resilience (CCARPH) project seeks to help as they navigate the persistent and intensifying effects of climate impact drivers, such as typhoons, floods, drought, and sea level rise.

Dr. Emma Porio, who heads the CCARPH initiative, says that building resilience in (and with) these communities must be the ultimate goal for national and local governments, civil society, and the private sector. She explains, "Resilience, to us, is the capacity to absorb, resist the effects of the climate shocks, and to transform our ways of doing things so that we can proactively tackle the impacts of flooding, typhoons, and all other natural hazards."

A key component in building resilience is convincing communities and their local governance systems to embrace anticipatory thinking, planning, and action. Dr. Porio notes, "The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management law has been around for a long time, but why is

it that authorities are still reactive?
Our aim is to shift our paradigm
of thinking and doing, from being
reactive to proactive in our planning,
implementation, monitoring, and
evaluation of our interventions."

Pursuing transdisciplinary action research

An anticipatory approach necessitates reliable, precise, and easily accessible science and technologies for people to respond proactively on the ground. Dr. Porio underscores the role of CCARPH, which operates under the Ateneo de Manila University, Manila Observatory, and its implementing partner, the National Resilience Council, in bridging the chasm between science and policy and practice. "Actionable science means knowing how to translate those numbers, how to contextualise them, and how these shall be operationalised in their application with the communities of practice."

Ensuring that the data are interpreted or utilised correctly is essential, says Dr. Porio. Typhoon signal warnings are a case in point. Joy Rocamora, CCARPH researcher, recalls that people were puzzled when Tropical Storm Ketsana in 2009 did so much damage when it was only a tropical storm. "Many did not understand that signal numbers are based on wind speed, not on precipitation. We can have a storm

signal number 2 that dumps a lot of rain and a signal number 5 that has very little rain."

Dr. Porio notes that CCARPH initially prioritised transdisciplinary action research because scientific data on climate and disaster risk, especially at the local level, were not readily available. She particularly highlights the importance of generating a risk profile for communities. "If you have a risk profile, it will tell you about the community's hazard and risk distribution; it also identifies who will be affected and weakened, and guides how you can build their capacity," she says.

Using the city's risk profile, a local government can update its local climate adaptation plan, Dr. Porio explains. In turn, the plan can inform the local government's land use plans, executive and legislative agenda, annual investment plan, and local programmes and activities.

Partnership with urban centres

CCARPH has so far formed partnerships with the local governments of Naga City, Iloilo City, and Metro Manila.

In the case of Iloilo City, CCARPH, with the University of the Philippines–Visayas scientists, produced maps for sea level rise and flooding, among others, and aided the completion of the city's climate and disaster risk assessment. Dr. Porio says that the city's climate

and disaster risk assessment was then presented to and adopted by the local government. It became the basis for identifying priority programmes under the city's local development plan, and activities funded through the local disaster risk reduction and management

In Metro Manila, CCARPH led participatory community risk assessments in Navotas and Muntinlupa, as well as in Loyola, Quezon City. Dr. Porio underscores the value of engaging community stakeholders, as they know where the highly exposed and vulnerable areas are and they can demand accountability when local governments do not invest in ecosystem protection, environmental security, and basic infrastructure and services.

CCARPH hopes to expand its collaboration with more local governments in the future. To this end, it has developed a Resilience Toolkit (https://resiliencetoolkit. ph/), an online repository of studies, data, models, discussions, and other resources on climate, social vulnerability, geospatial information, city resilience, and capacity building. It is designed specifically for local governments, disaster risk reduction and management offices, and other community stakeholders.

Anticipatory technologies

CCARPH also works with the Ateneo Innovation Center to develop and deploy technologies that enhance the disaster resilience of cities.

In the recent CCARPH forum on anticipatory technologies, Dr. Greg Tangonan, Emeritus Research Director of the Ateneo Innovation Center, stressed the need to complement anticipatory action with anticipatory technologies. "Let's say you have a community of 50 to 100 families; you can keep them going during normal times and after a disaster, using these kinds of anticipatory technologies," he says.

Dr. Tangonan says that the Ateneo Innovation Center focuses on developing technologies in four areas deemed critical during disaster operations: food, energy, water, and information technology.



Examples of these technologies include solar panels, solar-powered water systems, and Near Cloud.

The solar-powered water system collects rainwater, which goes through a triple filtration system, making it potable. "The system pumps out around four gallons a minute, so it gives you a lot of water in a short period," says Rocamora. "So far, that is one of our most deployed technologies. There are 181 installations as of our last count."

The Near Cloud technology, on the other hand, serves as a mobile cloud storage system that can contain digital education resources to ensure uninterrupted learning for children during disasters. Dr. Tangonan says it can even potentially be used to create an information system about residents so that their identities and location can be verified during disasters. He explains, "In some countries, people had to recover their identity; they had to prove that they were from a particular place. With Near Cloud. we can identify who they are, where they're from, facilitate relief efforts, and help reunite families."

Dr. Tangonan calls the nexus of all four systems—food, energy, water, and information technology—a "smart design." He advocates turning local community centres, even schools, into resilience hubs equipped with smart design even before calamity strikes.

"These technologies enable smooth operations everyday, but become crucial in disasters because they can morph community centres into shelters that can accommodate many families," Dr. Tangonan notes. He mentions the possibility

of this design being adopted if the Philippine Congress passes the pending bill to establish evacuation centres in every city and municipality of the country.

Hope in the midst of adversity

Although climate doomsday scenarios may cast a dark shadow, CCARPH has reasons for optimism. Dr. Porio says resilience-building is gaining traction among city governments and the private sector, and more collaborations are in the offing. More people are also increasingly involved in naturebased solutions, such as mangrove rehabilitation, reflecting a growing awareness of sustainable practices to mitigate disaster impacts. At the same time, investment in cuttingedge technological innovations augments the toolbox for resiliencebuilding.

Dr. Porio notes, "We just do what we can do. We cannot solve century-old problems or problems of the world, but we can make a meaningful difference by focusing on what we can do with our talents and knowledge products." This pragmatic approach embodies the spirit of the CCARPH initiative, demonstrating that while current challenges may be daunting, anticipatory thinking and collective action can pave the way towards a more resilient and hopeful future.



Read more about the Coastal Cities at Risk in the Philippines (CCARPH) project at https:// ccar2.wordpress.com/ and https://resiliencetoolkit.ph/



Dể Cứu Minh & Cứu Người! & Cứu Người! FB: Survival Skills Vietnam@m survivalskills.vietnam@m



Ixora Tri Devi Staff Writer, The ASEAN ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Department

Nine years after its inception, Survival Skills Vietnam has provided vital first aid education to over 100,000 Vietnamese

ike any ordinary person,
40-year-old Trang Jena Nguyen
initially believed that first
aid skills and knowledge were
exclusively for doctors and medical
professionals. However, it only took
one workshop to change her mind.

"I was shocked to learn that someone's brain can die in just 3-4 minutes without proper first aid. It was a wake-up call for me. Many Vietnamese people, like myself, are unaware of this information. This is something we should be learning in high school."

The workshop was held in 2014. After the event, Trang Jena crossed paths with Tony Coffey, an Australian emergency responder leading the session. Following a fruitful conversation, they committed to conducting their own first-aid workshop. Little did they know this initial session would lay the foundation for Survival Skills Vietnam (SSVN).

"In our early years, we mainly offered free classes. However, we soon realised that we needed a more sustainable approach. The number of accidents in Viet Nam is alarmingly high, and awareness of first aid is extremely low. We both thought this journey required a full commitment and various resources," said Trang Jena.

Fast forward to 2018, SSVN faced growth challenges as it relied heavily on its founders' time and financial support. The founders yearned to transform the organisation from a personal project into a solid, well-established entity. Then, an unexpected solution emerged from one of the training participants.

"During one of our classes, a participant named Ho Thai Binh expressed interest in helping develop a free first aid app. He enthusiastically volunteered to build an app that provides step-by-

step first aid instructions. Seeing his enthusiasm and dedication, we invited him to join our team as another co-founder," explained Trang

In 2018, Mr. Binh assumed the role of SSVN's director. The decision was made to register SSVN as a social enterprise, a relatively novel concept in Viet Nam. This transformation enabled SSVN to generate its finances and at the same time still have the flexibility to implement social community free programs.

Over nine years, SSVN diversified its educational offerings, using various teaching methods supported by commercial revenue. The result: it delivered crucial first aid education to over 100,000 Vietnamese. The training includes recognising hazards in school, drowning first-aid, stroke first-aid, and most recently, first-aid training for mental illness emergencies.



From raising awareness to igniting action

Beyond merely raising awareness, SSVN's primary goal is to establish sustainable local instructors capable of disseminating knowledge within their communities. To achieve this, SSVN collaborates closely with local doctors and nurses to provide firstaid training courses for teachers nationwide.

One of SSVN's success stories emerged from Cu M'gar district, Dak Lak province. "At the end of 2022, led by teacher Mai Văn Chuyền, this group implemented regular first aid awareness and drowning prevention activities in multiple schools once or twice a month."

SSVN's impact extends further as it has inspired others to take action. A notable example is the birth of the First Aid Support (FAS) Angel group in Hanoi.

"In 2019, Grab invited us to provide first aid training in both Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. Pham Quoc Viet, a Grabbiker from Hanoi, attended our training sessions. Motivated by our mission and drawing from his personal experience, he founded the FAS Angel group. To date, this group has aided over 8,000 people, earning recognition for their effectiveness and speed," Trang Jena shared.

"What sets them apart is their unwavering dedication—all members are passionate volunteers. Mr. Viet's personal experience was pivotal; he once was in an accident without assistance. He didn't want others to feel that helplessness," she added.

Trang Jena and SSVN admire the work of FAS Angel. In its early days, SSVN also provided technical support and connected Mr. Viet to larger networks. "Over three years, it managed to get three ambulances donated by the people."

The importance of first aid in an emergency

Despite global health crises, SSVN perseveres in providing free and private lessons. Over the past two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, SSVN transitioned most of their activities online. To the group's surprise, its efforts to condense essential information into accessible e-learning resources have proven to be an effective tool for raising awareness.

"We conducted workshops virtually and reached schools in remote northern areas through platforms like Zoom. With e-learning, we can reach even more people, and we've made everything readily available and easy to access," she added.

Trang Jena acknowledges that SSVN's assistance indirectly impacts disaster situations, as many casualties require immediate first aid

"By promoting the correct first aid practices, we aim to prevent well-intentioned but potentially harmful interventions by untrained individuals. We aim to ensure everyone knows what to do and what not to do in such situations."

Still, Trang Jena and her peer's efforts have been challenging. One of these challenges is combatting misinformation spread by the media.

"We provide free workshops for the media, offering accurate information. Recently, we collaborated with a national TV station to broadcast a series of first-aid steps. They committed to continuing this for 2-3 months. This represents significant progress, and we've noticed increased attention and care from local media."

In addition, Trang Jena emphasises the need for regulations that protect first aid responders, a crucial challenge for leaders in Viet Nam and the ASEAN region to address.

"Another challenge is the absence of legal protections for first-aiders, especially in Viet Nam. When individuals help in emergencies, they can sometimes be attacked by the victims' family members, who may mistakenly blame them for the accident."

As the road to raising awareness on the importance of first aid education is still long ahead, SSVN is now expanding its focus to household hazards, identifying potential risks at home to avoid preventable accidents.

"We're working on an AI-based project to address this challenge, following our successful work on school hazard awareness. I often discuss this with my colleagues: We must persist as long as first aid education isn't made mandatory in schools. Our ultimate wish and dream are for every family in Viet Nam to have at least one person who knows how to administer first aid," Trang Jena concluded.



t is neither fame nor her three million followers on social media that brings Sania Leonardo the greatest happiness. Instead, it is the warm embrace of her students at emergency schools and their excitement to see her whenever she arrives.

The 23-year-old refers to herself as a full-time volunteer, a title she rightfully earned by dedicating most of her time to providing traumahealing support for children in disaster-prone areas in Indonesia since 2021.

Sania extended a helping hand during the Banten flood (2022), the Cianjur earthquake (2022), and her longest-running project yet is collaborating with the nongovernment organisation, Cakra Abhipraya Responsif, to help build a school in Lembata, East Nusa Tenggara, which was struck by tropical cyclone Seroja in 2021.

Between 2021 and 2023, Sania embarked on multiple journeys,

via air, sea, and land travel, going on long road trips from the capital Jakarta to Kupang, Larantuka, and finally to Lembata, where she was considered part of a big family.

"I take great pleasure in bringing happiness to others because their joy becomes my own. Whenever I succeed in making someone smile, I feel a profound sense of purpose," Sania said to *The ASEAN*.

A promise to fulfil

Reflecting on her life as a humanitarian volunteer, Sania reminisced about her junior high school days when her aunt invited her to teach students in impoverished areas. She didn't fully grasp it back then, but she strongly desired to do more.

"When my aunt, Tante Yuliana Kale Supratikno, passed away, I whispered to her, 'I made a promise that you would see me following your path and make you proud.' This promise has driven me ever since," Sania said.

With a deep passion for humanitarian issues, she pursued a bachelor's degree in journalism at the London School of Public Relations in Jakarta, graduating in 2020. During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic that same year, she created a TikTok account @panggilakubambang (Just Call Me Bambang) to combat lockdown boredom. To her surprise, her humorous persona resonated with many, and she gradually gained millions of followers.

Nevertheless, Sania maintains a clear boundary between her work as a content creator and her volunteerism. "I create all my content at home, never on-site," she explained. "If you check my social media stories, you'll notice that whenever I post something related to Lembata, it's usually for crowdfunding. There's no opportunity for me to create content during rescue operations. No one

would have their cell phone with them!"

Sania also adheres to a firm principle of not exploiting others' misery for content creation. "Yes, they are in agony, living in unfortunate circumstances," she stated, "but that's not something we should exploit. They are not objects of pity. Let's not be those who give with one hand while their other hand is ready to record."

Helping others heal

As a volunteer, Sania is primarily involved in providing psychosocial and nutritional support for traumatised children. "I'm not a psychologist, but we do our best. We try to heal children's trauma by encouraging them to play, to write. In Lembata, many children lost their families during the storm, and many even lost limbs. We can't replace their parents, but we can help them heal and improve their situation."

While her followers may treat her like a celebrity, that is not the case when she wears her volunteer hat. She shared a humorous anecdote about someone searching for her to take a picture together but being directed to the back, where she was washing dishes. "That's the reality. My role is the same as other volunteers. I'm not a celebrity. In Lembata, we cooked for 300 people, and we washed dishes together."

Working in the remote island for nearly three years deepened her love for the local community. "It's like my second home. When I visit other places, I need to think about my accommodation, where I'll stay. But in Lembata, I have no worries at all. Everyone would open their homes to me. I can ask anybody, and they would welcome me with open arms."

She emphasised the need to shed urban perspectives, explaining that when she refers to "home," it's not luxurious city houses. Many Lembata's survivors now live in shacks amidst corn farms, having abandoned their homes due to red zone designations. She emphasised, "Since 2021, they've lived in these conditions. The same applies to



their schools; they haven't had functioning schools for two years. We make do with what we have left from the disaster."

Contemplating her own school years, Sania mentioned she was not the brightest student but emphasised the potential of these children with the proper education. "That is why, for me and Cakra Abhipraya Responsif, building schools is essential. We want to provide them something lasting, even after we're gone."

A call to action

The 2021 Cyclone Seroja triggered flash floods and landslides, resulting in over 150 deaths and dozens missing. Despite years of interaction with the people of Lembata, Sania still feels the emotional toll.

"Every time I ask them what they have for lunch, they say 'nasi kosong,' just rice. I feel sad sometimes. But I remind myself not to judge them by my standards. What do I know about their happiness? They might be content with what they have and their lives, and it's not our place to pity them. That probably irritates them."

"My experiences have changed my perspective. My children, my students here, may never get to play in fancy playgrounds in Jakarta's malls; they're stuck in this disasterprone area. But they're happy! What I've learned is that you can create your own happiness. It's a blessing for me to meet them and watch them grow. Previously, I thought witnessing their struggles made me count my blessings. But that's not correct. Their condition is not our reason to be grateful."

Looking back at her journey, Sania recounts one of her most significant accomplishments was helping to raise 1.8 billion rupiah (approx. 117,000 US dollars) to build a school, Sekolah Negeri Bakti Toleransi, in Lembata. "Two years ago, I was at my lowest. I thought it was mission impossible. But now that we're here, I'm proud of what we've achieved. We are 80 per cent finished. The students ask us to slow down the process so we can still visit them. Their comment brings me to tears."

Much like the commitment she made to her late aunt, Sania has embraced volunteerism as her lifelong calling, with no intentions of slowing down. Meanwhile, to her followers and all youth across the ASEAN region who aspire to tread a similar path, Sania's message is clear: seize the opportunity to engage in any humanitarian project closest to you. "Don't wait. Just do it now; do what you can. Your best is enough," she said.

Animal Rescuers IN THE SHADOW OF DISASTERS



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ain Nabil Haiqal's love for wildlife and animals stems from childhood. The 25-year-old college student vividly remembers a visit to a West Java zoo where he encountered a forlorn-looking orangutan. The primate's sorrowful expression moved him to tears and left a mark on his young life. This emotional connection ignited a passion for animal welfare that would shape his life.

In 2019, Zain embarked on a transformative journey by participating in a conservation school organised by the Centre for Orangutan Protection (COP). This marked the beginning of his mission to rescue animals in distress during disasters.

"Many would ask, what does an orangutan have to do with disasters

and rescuing animals? Well, we do not only care about orangutans but also their habitat and wildlife as a whole," explained Zain in an interview with *The ASEAN*.

Zain is currently pursuing a degree in Environmental Engineering at the Universitas Islam Indonesia in Yogyakarta, Central Java, and he resides in close proximity to Mount Merapi, one of the world's most active volcanoes. For him, it is a natural response to lend a helping hand during emergencies in this disaster-prone area.

"We need to understand that for the local community near Mount Merapi, their livestock is like their life-saving treasure. Rightfully so, because their cattle are what we call 'the limousine' of cows. They would not be willing to leave them behind, even during an emergency. Thus, we need to consider livestock in times of emergency. During past eruptions in 2006 and 2010, human and livestock losses were significant, emphasising the need to safeguard these cherished animals," Zain argued.

In November 2019, days after Mount Merapi spewed pyroclastic flows, Zain found himself working alongside local farmers, tirelessly chopping grass for their livestock. This laborious and risky effort continued for five months, with daily deliveries of two tons of vital livestock feed.

"Whenever Merapi experiences pyroclastic flows, local farmers struggle to feed their livestock due to ash coverage. Livestock consuming ash-covered feed fall ill and eventually perish. That's why we toiled from dawn till afternoon to ensure all these animals received nourishment. Our collaboration with Indonesia's National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) was pivotal to encouraging local farmers to evacuate the cattle together with us."

In 2023, Mount Merapi erupted again, and Zain set out on another dangerous assessment mission with only a single companion. Darkness enveloped him as the avalanche-like scene unfolded before his eyes. It resembled a catastrophic event he thought only happened in movies. After surviving this harrowing incident, and later facing resistance from local communities, Zain remained undeterred.

"For example, in one of our missions in Semeru (an active volcano in East Java) in 2022, residents hesitated to collaborate with us. Despite their homes having turned to ashes and their goats perishing due to cold lava, they resisted our assistance and tried to salvage what remained."

Nevertheless, Zain and his team had to swiftly dispose of the animal carcasses to prevent potential diseases from spreading among humans and other creatures. "So, even when threatened with machetes, we had to carry out what was necessary," he admitted.

Opposition from local communities is a predictable challenge, as the concept of animal rescue remains unfamiliar to many, even within rescue teams.

"We were trained to prioritise our safety during emergencies, followed by rescuing fellow humans. Lastly, if possible, then we should also save the animals."

Zain emphasises that while Indonesia is a vast nation with numerous disaster-prone areas, awareness of animal rescue efforts remains low. He believes that human rescuers can expand their roles to include animal rescue. Moreover, the youth in disaster-prone regions can play a crucial role during emergencies.

"Youth are strong and capable. They can join a campaign to raise awareness of the importance of thinking about animals in crisis. Youth should also actively learn about standard operating procedures during disaster time. You need to know what you need to prepare, what you need to protect," he said.

Zain has just finished his waterrescue training to prepare himself
for more hydrological emergencies in
the future. He also hopes for a more
inclusive approach from Indonesia's
National Disaster Management
Agency and Search and Rescue
teams within the ASEAN region to
include animals in disaster response
efforts.

"With the looming climate crisis, our nation will face more disasters. We may not be able to prevent them, but we must do what we can to mitigate their impact. We need more caring individuals."







WHY HISTORICAL AND ECOSEMIOTIC INSIGHTS ARE IMPORTANT IN STUDYING AND MITIGATING DISASTERS

The Case of Mount Merapi



Luthfi Adam, PhD *Monash University Indonesia*



Muzayin Nazaruddin Universitas Islam Indonesia and Tartu University

o other country in the Asia-Pacific region has more volcanoes than Indonesia. The country is home to at least 127 active volcanoes; thus, volcanic eruptions are a major threat to the archipelago.

Over the last 200 years, more than 100,000 lives have been lost to volcanic disasters. Two major eruptions are stark reminders of our losses: Tambora in 1815, resulting in 71,000 fatalities (Oppenheimer, 2003), and Krakatau in 1883 resulting in 36,000 fatalities (Self & Rampino, 1981).

While volcanoes lay dormant for extended periods, they inevitably become active again. For example, Mount Sinabung erupted in July 2019 after lying dormant for 400 years (Cummins, 2017). Meanwhile, Mount Merapi is much more active, regularly experiencing minor eruptions every 4-6 years and significantly explosive eruptions roughly every one hundred years (Surono et al., 2012).

Volcanoes and their eruptions, viewed in the context of modern disaster risk and mitigation, pose a significant threat to human wellbeing and development progress (de Boer & Sanders, 2002). They are also classified as natural events that cause significant damage

to humans, including loss of life, economic disadvantages, and social disruptions (Perry, 2018). This perception of volcanic eruptions as "disasters" is a relatively recent development, emerging in the 18th century in Europe and the early 20th century in Indonesia, coinciding with the establishment of volcanology by colonial scientists (Triyoga, 2010).

This perception was not universal. In fact, it took the communities around Mount Merapi, especially the village's young members, until the 1990s to accept this idea and only after the major eruption in 2010 (Nazaruddin, 2022). Before that, many locals, especially the elders, believed that eruptions were a kind of mystical ceremony held by the spirit kingdom in the unseen world in Merapi. Others believed that volcanic eruptions were an event to bring back the ecosystem into balance, which would bring a lot of advantages for local people (Nazaruddin, 2015).

The Merapi region has a long history of human-volcano relationships that is deeply rooted in this traditional paradigm. Scholars have described this as a magical-sensorial sign system, a set of knowledge and practices for sensing and interpreting nature's signs related to volcanic activities (Nazaruddin, 2022).

We have initiated a research project, titled "Reimagining Disaster: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of Local Knowledge, Vulnerability, and Inclusivity in Merapi Region," which aims to investigate the history of local disaster mitigation knowledge and practices within the Merapi area. We will be using a multidisciplinary approach that combines environmental history and ecosemiotics. This approach will allow us to understand what the magical and sensorial sign systems are and how the locals have practised those sign systems for centuries to sustain and develop civilisation in the landscape of volcanic eruptions.

Historicising the relationship between Mount Merapi and the surrounding community

Current disaster mitigation efforts in Indonesia mainly employ top-down, bureaucratic, and scientific approaches, often overlooking the valuable knowledge and experiences of local communities in disaster management. The recent trend in disaster studies emphasises the

importance of integrating traditional, indigenous, and local knowledge and practices alongside scientific knowledge in assessing disaster risks (UNISDR, 2015). This trend gained momentum following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, which drew attention to how traditional knowledge played a role in saving some local communities. United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction(UNISDR advocates for the inclusion of local communities, especially their older members, who possess valuable traditional knowledge, in disaster preparedness and mitigation, including early warning systems (UNISDR, 2015).

Merapi has been extremely catastrophic from a modern disaster mitigation perspective. Yet, for centuries, a large number of Javanese have lived in close proximity to Mount Merapi's summit. A major Javanese polity, the Mataram Sultanate (present-day Ngayogyakarta Sultanate), established an economic and political centre just 30 kilometres from Mount Merapi in the early 16th century (Christie, 2015).

From a historical and anthropological perspective, the long history of the connection between Javanese people and Mount Merapi raises thought-provoking questions about the knowledge and practices that Javanese people developed to thrive as a civilisation in the presence of an extremely active volcano (Schenk, 2017).

Our research will inquire into the disaster mitigation knowledge and practices they have developed to reduce the losses from Mount Merapi's eruptions. We will draw insights from Robert Hefner's work on political economic changes in the Tengger Volcano area (Hefner, 1990) to understand the social, religious, and political economic changes in the Merapi region and the structural foundation of human interactions with the volcano and its eruptions.

Our long-term historical research project aims to delve into the concept of a civilisation establishing its centre around a highly active volcano, uncover cultural symbolisms and palimpsest that this created, and explore how this civilisation developed certain cultural ideas about the volcano and its eruptions.

The ecosemiotic approach—signs from nature

Through an ecosemiotics approach (Maran, 2020; Nazaruddin, 2020), we intend to examine the long-standing practice of interpreting magical and sensorial signs as a means of predicting volcanic eruptions, explaining events, and guiding actions.

Before scientific and technological innovations intervened in the 1990s, communities around Merapi relied heavily on their ability to decipher wisik—signs from nature. Wisik is manifested in different forms, such as of dreams, animal behaviours, or environmental cues, all interpreted as mystical insights. Special members of the communities, the juru kunci (caretaker) or the elders, possessed special skills for interpreting these magical signs (Nazaruddin, 2015). From an ecosemiotics perspective, the ability of the juru kunci to sense and decode various signs sent by nature and their communication with the population played a crucial role in traditional mitigation practices.

Scholars in disaster management, predominantly from science and engineering backgrounds, have often questioned the validity and effectiveness of indigenous knowledge, sometimes perceiving it as inferior to scientific knowledge (Mercer et al., 2010). Some even consider indigenous knowledge as lacking documentation, backward, and superstitious, as observed by Banda (2008). We take a different perspective, viewing local mitigation practices as a human ability to develop a sensorial-environmental sign system. Instead of dismissing wisik as superstitious, we view it as an intangible cultural heritage linked to Javanese disaster prediction and mitigation.

Our research does not aim to prove the effectiveness of traditional mitigation techniques over modern ones. Rather, we aspire to learn from the successes and failures of past mitigation techniques to help improve future mitigation systems. Furthermore, we encourage the current government agency responsible for disaster management to incorporate some effective traditional techniques into their initiatives.

Converging modern and traditional approaches

Why is converging modern and traditional approaches important for improving future disaster mitigation? First, as Lotman (2019) suggests, no culture can be entirely mythological or scientific. In the context of Mount Merapi, while modern volcanology approaches incorporating seismic observation and geochemistry technology have been developed since the Dutch colonial period, it was only in the 1990s that the local population around Merapi began to understand and accept the government's disaster mitigation plans. Even during the major eruption in 2010, a significant portion of the population still relied on the magical sign system and rejected the government's plans, resulting in some chaotic moments during mitigation efforts. Today, while most of the population has fully embraced modern scientific approaches, they still maintain their belief in wisik.

Second, convergence is already occurring within the Merapi region. In an interview with one of the mitigation practitioners in 2021, there was strong indication that the magical or sensorialenvironmental sign system coexists with the government's scientific and mechanistic system, with the local population following both. The cooperation is so strong that even the government mitigation agency (BPPTKG) often consults with locals. The informant recalled, "when they observe certain signals from the volcano, they often ask us, the locals, whether we have noticed those signals or not" (Nazaruddin, 2022). There is already evidence that authorities and community stakeholders can effectively harness the strengths of both modern scientific techniques and traditional knowledge in disaster management.

The views and opinions expressed in this article belong solely to the authors and do not reflect the official policy or position of ASEAN.



References: https://bit.ly/Issue30_Ref

SNAPSHOTS

ASEAN INDONESIA 2023

OPENING CEREMONY 43 RD ASEAN SUMMIT AND RELATED SUMMITS

5 SEPTEMBER 2023, JAKARTA, INDONESIA

ASEAN leaders pose for a photo opportunity during the 43rd ASEAN Summit and Related Summits opening ceremony in Jakarta (5/9/2023)

Chairman's Statement of the 43rd ASEAN Summit

- e, the Heads of State/Government of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), gathered in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 5 September 2023 for the 43rd ASEAN Summit under the Chairmanship of the Republic of Indonesia, with the theme "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth." The Summit was chaired by H.E. Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia, and convened in accordance with the ASEAN Charter.
- e reviewed ASEAN's progress and reaffirmed our commitment to further strengthen ASEAN as an organisation that is robust and agile, equipped with strengthened capacity and institutional effectiveness to address today's challenges and to remain relevant for its people, the region, and the world while continuing to serve as an epicentre of growth and prosperity for the region and beyond.
- e reaffirmed our commitment to strengthening the ASEAN Community, its unity and Centrality. We also reaffirmed our shared commitment to maintaining and promoting peace, security and stability in the region, as well as to the peaceful resolution of disputes, including full respect for legal and diplomatic processes, without resorting to the threat or use of force, in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

- 4. We reiterated the importance of maintaining an ASEAN-centred, open, inclusive, transparent, resilient regional architecture that upholds international law and rules that strengthen our engagement and cooperation with Dialogue Partners and external partners, including through existing ASEAN-led mechanisms, to promote peace, stability, security, and development.
- e reaffirmed our strong commitment to upholding regionalism and multilateralism and emphasised the importance of adhering to key principles, shared values, and norms enshrined in the United Nations (UN) Charter, the ASEAN Charter, the Declaration on Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), the 1982 UNCLOS, the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear WeaponFree Zone (SEANWFZ), the 2011 Declaration on the East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).
- e are committed to intensifying our work towards a people-oriented, peoplecentred, and ASEAN-rules-based Community, and continued to encourage the meaningful participation of the people, societies and other stakeholders in the ASEAN Community-building process.



The full statement is available in this link: https://asean.org/chairmans-statement-of-the-43rd-asean-summit/







ASEAN Prize 2023 Winner

Nguyen Thi Tuyet Minh Empowering Women Entrepreneurs



Ixora Tri Devi Staff Writer, The ASEAN ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Department

t the opening of the 43rd ASEAN Summit on 5 September 2023, President Joko Widodo of Indonesia and the Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, handed the prestigious ASEAN Prize trophy to two distinguished recipients: 2022 awardee Haji Muhammad Iqbal Fakhri bin Haji Damit, and this year's winner, Nguyen Thi Tuyet Minh.

Bruneian youth advocate and community leader Haji Muhammad Iqbal Fakhri bin Haji Damit was cited for his initiatives in humanitarian relief which have inspired greater participation of the youth. Last year's awarding ceremony was held online due to pandemic restrictions. (Read our feature article on Iqbal in Issue 26 of The ASEAN magazine)

2023 ASEAN Prize awardee Nguyen Thi Tuyet Minh, who hails from Viet Nam, is a passionate advocate for women's socio-economic empowerment. The ASEAN Prize recognition is an acknowledgement of her dedicated efforts to advance women's economic participation in the business sector.

In her introduction video for the ASEAN Prize, Thi Tuyet Minh humbly acknowledged the support she received from her family in her pursuit of success. "I was lucky to grow up in a family that supports my aspirations. However, I recognised this wasn't the case for many women," she stated.

Her journey to empower women began at the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, where she rolled up her sleeves to promote the participation and advance the interest of Vietnamese women entrepreneurs.

"Despite the difficulties of working from scratch, I became the Founding Chair of ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs' Network (AWEN) in 2014, driven by the belief in the network's potential to empower women across ASEAN."

Today, AWEN has representatives from all ASEAN Member States. Thi Tuyet Minh also introduced a rotating chair system to enhance women leaders' engagement in the region. Building on these achievements, she launched several initiatives to boost the capacity of women entrepreneurs within AWEN, including the conduct of the ASEAN Women Entrepreneur Forum and the establishment of the ASEAN Outstanding Women Entrepreneur Award.

"These forums facilitate publicprivate dialogue, enable female CEOs to address common concerns and offer recommendations to ASEAN. I'm proud that AWEN continues to be an important channel of public-private dialogue in ASEAN."

With four decades of experience, Thi Tuyet Minh is well-versed in various fields, including policy advocacy, gender equality promotion, support for trade and entrepreneurship, and the advancement of SMEs and women-led enterprises.

"Empowering women is crucial for

the development of ASEAN and the world. It fosters better economic and political decision-making, promotes equality and peace, and improves well-being for themselves and their families. It breaks the cycle of poverty and opens up a brighter future for generations to come," she said.

In 2022, Thi Tuyet Minh founded WeLead, a network of women leaders working to create a more equal, professional, and sustainable future. For her, both AWEN and WeLead are integral parts of an effort to build a strong and inclusive economic community.

"We all need to collaborate, and we all need equal access to opportunities," she stressed. "I firmly believe that every woman can be an ambassador for change, starting with herself, her family, and her business."

Thi Tuyet Minh expressed her deep gratitude and honour for being feted this award. She saw it as an acknowledgement of her mission and a tribute to the collective efforts of Viet Nam, AWEN, and all her partners.

"This honour further fuels my commitment to propel AWEN and WeLead's mission forward, fostering women's economic empowerment throughout Viet Nam and ASEAN. It reminds us that when we uplift others, we inspire a ripple effect of positive change, creating a brighter future for women and our communities."

ASEAN Youth Social Journalism Contest 2023

Harnessing Social Journalism for Community Resilience



Ixora Tri Devi
Staff Writer, The ASEAN
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Twenty finalists of the ASEAN Youth Social Journalism Contest 2023 attended an immersive in-person journalism training workshop in Yogyakarta, 12-16 June 2023

he 3rd ASEAN Youth Social Journalism Contest (AYSJ), a collaborative effort of the ASEAN Foundation, ASEAN Secretariat, and the ASEAN-USAID PROSPECT project, was successfully held under the theme "Community Resilience." This competition has been a pivotal platform for nurturing young journalists across Southeast Asia over the past five years. As of 2022, the initiative has trained 58 finalists from all 10 ASEAN Member

States, equipping them to tackle diverse societal challenges, from combatting domestic violence to promoting eco-friendly shopping.

This year, 20 finalists engaged in an immersive in-person journalism training workshop in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, refining their skills to craft impactful campaigns that resonate with their communities. Beyond the workshop, these teams implemented their campaigns, vying for the coveted top three positions

and cash prizes of 1,000 US dollars (1st winner), 750 US dollars (2nd winner), and 500 US dollars (3rd winner) based on their campaign performance.

The AYSJ 2023 winners focused on addressing critical issues such as climate justice, food security, indigenous education, sex education, and water, sanitation, and hygiene, demonstrating their dedication to driving positive change within their communities.



Abby Grace Bermejo and Krystel Mae Peñaflor from the Philippines

First Place Winner, ASEAN Youth Social Journalism Contest 2023

The journey of Abby Grace Bermejo and Krystel Mae Peñaflor, both 30 years old, began during their college days at the University of the Philippines Los Baños. Their shared path was destined for greater things beyond the classroom.

While Abby was keen on ecotourism, and Krystel specialised in social forestry and climate change adaptation, they found common ground in volunteering for public speaking engagements at environmental events.

In 2018, they founded the Youth Climate Navigators, a platform dedicated to capacity-building and raising public awareness through education. Their mission centred around catalysing innovative climate adaptation and mitigation mechanisms.

Despite their lack of prior journalism experience, Abby and Krystel saw the competition as an opportunity for growth. For their campaign, they sought to have a better

understanding of the nature of and solutions to the vulnerabilities of remote island communities in the Philippines' Bicol Region, frequently ravaged by intense typhoons.

In an interview with *The ASEAN*, Abby expressed her motivation, saying, "As a young leader, my ability and creativity to initiate youthled collaborations are key factors for youth development. These interventions can empower aspiring youth leaders in Southeast Asia to actively engage in their community and drive positive social change."

Their campaign, "Climate Resilient Islands Philippines," was deeply rooted in personal experience. The devastating super typhoon Ulysses (Vamco) that struck during the COVID-19 era in 2020 laid bare the vulnerability of island communities.

The closure of a major local news network left these communities without vital early warnings and assistance during disasters.

Krystel noted, "remote island communities struggle to survive super typhoons due to a lack of mainstream media coverage and delayed disaster response from the national leaders on the mainland. Ineffective communication between the national government and local island leaders impedes timely emergency response. Without these

systems in place, they face these challenges alone."

This dire situation fueled Abby and Krystel's determination to bridge the information gap. The ASEAN Youth Social Journalism Contest 2023 provided a platform to turn their ideas into reality.

During the competition, they discovered the potential of journalism as a transformative tool. They introduced "Citizen Science Journalism," a system driven by trained youth volunteers to deliver accurate and localised early warnings.

Their campaign aimed to empower communities through information, strengthen political will, and foster collaboration among diverse stakeholders to achieve resilience. Their mission extended to bridging the gap between the privileged and the marginalised, honouring indigenous knowledge, and promoting local adaptation practices.



Po Po Myint Shein and Wai Liam Phyo Kyaw from Myanmar

Second Place Winner, ASEAN Youth Social Journalism Contest 2023

Twenty-six-year-old Po Po Myint Shein was born and raised in Mawlamyine, Mon State. Meanwhile, 23-year-old Wai Liam Phyo Kyaw was born in Meikhtila and raised in Lewie, Mandalay Region. Despite growing up far apart, Po and Wai share a common concern: the inadequate attention to nutritional knowledge within their nation.

This shared concern led them to join forces for the ASEAN Youth Social Journalism Contest 2023, where they campaigned to raise awareness about nutritional challenges within the Myanmar community. Their primary goal was to elevate public awareness of this pressing issue.

"In Myanmar, the topic of food and nutrition has received limited attention. Access to nutritional knowledge and resources is scarce, perpetuating misconceptions and traditional beliefs surrounding everyday meals. Recognising these critical gaps, our team 'Aharyassona' delivered meaningful

nutritional knowledge and engaged in activities that bolster community resilience and understanding of nutritional challenges," the duo stated in an email to *The ASEAN*.

Wai and Po pursued their bachelor's degrees at the University of Yangon. After graduating, Po worked as a community and event coordinator. Meanwhile, Wai is completing his bachelor's degree and works as a freelance photographer. These complementary skills helped them during the competition.

Even with previous experience in digital marketing and content creation, the duo faced several challenges, including conducting offline activities. They decided to host these activities in a local wet market, a choice that turned out to be highly successful. They also worked with a local nutritionist to help make sure their content was factual.

"We are unfamiliar with the healthcare and food safety industry. We spent hours doing desk research. Fortunately, with the help of nutritionist Ma Thu Thu, we were able to publish accurate content. Despite all these challenges, the campaign went well and received positive feedback from the community."

Securing second place in the competition came as a pleasant surprise. The opportunity has motivated them to keep going. "We plan to collaborate with other organisations to solve other social issues not only limited to nutritional challenges," they said.



Soon Ping Wong and Yung Kang Lo from Malaysia Third Stars Wisser ASSAN Youth

Third Place Winner, ASEAN Youth Social Journalism Contest 2023



Bunneam Chhimcanal <mark>and</mark> Nika Chom from Cambodia

Honourable Mentions, ASEAN Youth Social Journalism Contest 2023

Fresh out of college, Bunneam Chhimcanal and Nika Chom, both 24 years old, found themselves working together as programme officers at the Centre for Sustainable Water in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. While their collaboration wasn't initially planned, it didn't take long for these graduates of the Institute of Technology of Cambodia to realise their shared concern for the critical issues of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).

As programme officers, their work sheds light on the challenges rural communities face in Cambodia, particularly the lack of access to vital information regarding WASH. Hence, when they stumbled upon the opportunity to participate in the ASEAN Youth Social Journalism Contest 2023, they leapt at the chance to bring their shared passion for WASH to a broader audience.

Their dedication to this cause stems from a significant realisation. "In 2019, I came across a report by WHO that emphasised the crucial role of water, sanitation, and hygiene in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. This revelation propelled us to take action," explained Bunneam during an interview with *The ASEAN*.

In hindsight, Bunneam and Nika recognised that effective communication and media skills were pivotal in delivering their message and raising awareness about this vital issue. Their excitement soared when they were selected as finalists to attend inperson workshops on journalism in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from June 12 to 16, 2023.

"At first, we anticipated conventional lessons about news and print media. However, to our delight, the workshops exceeded our expectations. They taught us how to create compelling content and utilise various apps for content production. It was an entirely new experience for us, and we are genuinely grateful for the opportunity," Bunneam shared.

Both Bunneam and Nika candidly admitted that they weren't

enthusiastic users of social media platforms initially. Stepping out of their comfort zones, they embarked on a journey to learn the intricacies of these platforms.

"We weren't accustomed to standing in front of cameras and posting videos of ourselves. Therefore, one of the most challenging aspects for us was to actively engage on social media. We try to build our online presence, which is entirely new territory for us," Bunneam confessed.

However, as they persisted in their efforts, the duo began to relish the experience, experimenting with various social media platforms.

Bunneam and Nika's newfound skills and experiences changed their perspective on social media, leading them to consider its potential for future projects.



Pakaimek Sirisouk and Thipphasone Phonphakdy from the Lao PDR

Honourable Mentions, ASEAN Youth Social Journalism Contest 2023

Pakaimek Sirisouk, a 22-yearold graduate from the Faculty of Engineering at the Lao-American Institute, and Thipphasone Phonphakdy, also a 22-year-old, a recent graduate in Environmental Engineering from the University of Lao, shared diverse interests and perspectives, but their enduring friendship prevailed.

"We attended the same primary school, high school, college, and university. Despite our differences in habits, preferences, and ideas, we formed a strong bond. We faced numerous challenges and even had disagreements that tested our friendship. However, we remain friends, and to me, that exemplifies the essence of true friendship," Pakaimek shared in an email with The ASEAN.

The duo's campaign centred on the vital issues of healthcare and the challenges youth face. Specifically, they tackled the sensitive subjects of unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) to raise awareness and educate their peers on responsible reproductive health practices.

Pakaimek and Thipphasone's campaign was inspired by their personal experiences and observations within their society. They witnessed the adverse effects of inadequate sex education and felt compelled to tackle them directly.

"We wanted to explain misunderstandings about sex education and emphasise its importance in supporting healthy relationships, consent, and reproductive health," said Thipphasone.

Their campaign aimed to demystify myths surrounding reproductive health and empower the youth with knowledge that can enable informed decisions and prevent unwanted consequences.

Pakaimek expressed, "The most challenging aspect of the competition for me is effectively communicating our campaign. We need to convey our message clearly while being mindful of our language and tone, ensuring that we do not alienate the youth in the Lao PDR."

"To address this, we studied culture and beliefs and adapted our messaging to be sensitive and inclusive. We also asked for feedback from people from all backgrounds to ensure that the campaign was friendly and appropriate to a wide range of audiences," echoed Thipphasone.

Recognising the power of social media, they harnessed its potential to engage with a broader audience.

"As youth journalists, our advice to others aspiring to make a difference through journalism is to be passionate, curious, and patient. Find a topic that you deeply care about and go for it," said Thipphasone.

"Clear communication is essential. Also, keep doing what you love, as it will eventually lead to something," Pakaimek concluded.



Tampubolon.





ater and rain are essential to sustaining lives and livelihood, and fostering social and economic development throughout Southeast Asia. They are, for example, necessary for the production of rice, a tradition that dates back to thousands of years. Rice has remained an important commodity in the region, both as a staple food and an export product. Almost 30 per cent of the world's rice-growing areas are situated in the region, with Thailand and Viet Nam ranking among the top global rice exporters (International Rice Research Institute, n.d.). This is largely due to the interplay between water resources, land, and the ecosystem.

The region's dependence on water resources has given rise to a variety of practices and rituals that embody narratives about people's relationships with nature and the spiritual world.

One such traditional rainmaking ritual is the *Hae Nang Maew*Ceremony (Cat Parading Ceremony), which is practiced by Thai farmers in both the central and northeast region of the country. Farmers parade the *nang maew* (cat) around their villages or temples when the planting season approaches, hoping for rain when it is most needed. It is believed that cats are animals scared of rain, and if a cat cries out during the ceremony, it means that rain is imminent.

Another important tradition, known as *Bun Bang Fai* (Rocket Festival), is practised in the Lao PDR and north eastern Thailand every June, just before the farming season. During this festival, villagers, and monks gather to make rockets, either from bamboo or iron pipes, with some weighing 100 to 120 kilograms each. The festivities include a procession around the temple or other nearby areas, before people launch rockets into the sky. This act serves as an

offering to the god called "Phraya Thaen," who is believed to be responsible for ensuring that the rain falls according to the season.

Indonesia, meanwhile, has the Kebo-Keboan Traditional Ceremony, which has long been practised by Banyuwangi people in the Aliyan and Alasmalang villages of East Java. The ceremony is performed to plead for rain, good harvests, and protection against disasters during the dry season. The villagers believe that adhering to this tradition symbolises their gratitude for the grace of God and invokes the ancestral spirits to grant their wishes.

Buffaloes are seen as the key symbol for this traditional ceremony since they are closely associated with farmers' activities and rice fields. During the ceremony, individuals dress up and role-play as buffaloes (kebo), as no real animals are involved. The ceremony begins with prayers and eating of tumpeng, a dish of 12 cone-shaped mounds of

rice that represent the cycle of life. The event brings together elders, community leaders, officials, and villagers, who all join a procession along the irrigation dams to witness the water flowing into the rice fields.

Beliefs associated with negotiating for rain and cultural practices, which are related to upholding order and harmony within the community, have always been integral aspects of these ceremonies. While some of these customs and beliefs have been preserved over time and are still practised today, they face a number of challenges, such as climate change.

Climate change has disrupted the predictability of rainfall. Rain now falls at irregular intervals and not in accordance with the expected seasons. As a result, some areas experience excessive rainfall while other areas suffer from droughts. Hence, farmers have difficulty regulating water for crop production, causing shortages of agricultural products supplied to the markets.

Another consequence of climate change is the rising of sea levels. This phenomenon will also negatively impact agricultural production, lead to soil salinisation, and compromise food and water security. Crop productivity in coastal and small island communities will likely decrease and affect nutritional health, small farm incomes, ecosystem cycles, and food price stability. Additionally, rising sea levels increase the risk of storms and flooding during coastal storm events. Unpredictable weather poses challenges to the observance of rain-related traditions, as they can no longer be carried out during the typical wet seasons. These conditions raise the possibility of the disappearance of these cultural practices.

According to the Global Climate Risk Index, four out of 10 of the countries most affected by climate change due to global warming are ASEAN Member States. These include Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. In addition, a study by the Asian Development Bank found that the region is experiencing rising temperature and sea levels. The



average annual temperature is likely to increase by approximately 1°C (3.7 per cent) across the region, and sea levels have risen by 61 per cent, with a notable increase from an average of 2.6 mm/year during 1993-2008 to 4.2 mm/year during 2008-2022. These changes have particularly affected coastal nations, with the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and Viet Nam being significantly impacted.

Over the past five years, the region has experienced the severest droughts recorded in decades. At the peak of these droughts, over 70 per cent of the land area was affected, exposing nearly 60 per cent of the region's population to this dire situation (Southeast Asia Development Solutions, 2020). Meanwhile, the Weather and Climate Service for ASEAN predicted an increased likelihood of belownormal rainfall during the period of August-October 2023, especially for the southern ASEAN region. The dry season is yet to reach its peak intensity. In addition, the onset of El Niño, which contributes to below-normal rainfall in many parts of the region, raises concerns about the potential for hotspots and haze events in the southern ASEAN region, reaching intensity not seen since 2019 (The Weather and Climate Service for ASEAN, n.d.).

Climate change and extreme weather disruptions are not the only risks to vanishing rainrelated customs. Modernity also threatens the continuation of these traditions. Despite initiatives to pass down these customs to the next generation, ritual knowledge has been gradually fading among the elders.

ASEAN has made concerted efforts to raise awareness of the region's cultural heritage related to rain and the impact of climate change on it. The ASEAN Sub-Committee on Culture (SCI) of the ASEAN Committee of Culture and Information (ASEAN COCI), led by the Ministry of Culture of Thailand, collaborated with the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (SEAMEO SPAFA) to organise "Rain Motions: Connecting (with) the Skies of Southeast Asia."

This initiative received support from the ASEAN Cultural Fund (ACF). It brought together 21 traditional and contemporary performers and 11 scholars and researchers from the ASEAN Member States and Timor-Leste. It consisted of a series of online workshops from February to April 2023, wherein participants brainstormed concepts for joint performances and how best to convey messages about the region's rain-related customs. Subsequently, the on-site seminar and joint performance took place in Bangkok, Thailand in May 2023. The initiative provided new perspectives on widely-performed Southeast Asian masked and traditional ethnic dances, while serving as a bridge between the past and present.



It addressed urgent concerns posed by climate change, which threaten various aspects of human lives, including their culture and traditions.

Khemchat Thepchai, Center Director of SEAMEO SPAFA, said that the project aimed to promote contemporary dance while preserving cultural and natural heritage in Southeast Asia.

Darunee Thamapodol, advisor to the Ministry of Culture of Thailand, emphasised that the project would foster cross-cultural understanding and facilitate knowledge exchange on environmental conservation and climate change adaptation. She highlighted that these elements, distinct from rain itself, had become deeply ingrained in Southeast Asian cultures. She also underscored the project's relevance in light of the growing global concern over climate change. The collaborative art performance were selected as effective means to promote the essence of rain.

During the seminar, scholars from ASEAN Member States and Timor-Leste presented their knowledge about cultural heritage, beliefs and traditions associated with rain. The presentations included Adai-Adai Dance by Brunei Darussalam; Temples and Practices by Cambodia; Mapping Indonesia Cultural Assets for Rain Motions by Indonesia;

Bun Bang Fai or Rocket Festival by Lao PDR; The Concept of Water in the Kelantanese Shadow Play by Malaysia; Rain and Tug-of-War Traditional Connection with Moe Kaung Kyaw Swar Nat (Spirit) by Myanmar; Tug Of Wa(te)r by the Philippines; Water That Moves Us by Singapore; Rain Culture in Thailand by Thailand; Water-Related Culture in Viet Nam by Viet Nam; and Timorese Tradition and Culture by Timor-Leste.

The performances, presented in three acts (Voices, Negotiation, and Celebration), were witnessed by embassy officials from several ASEAN Member States and Timor-Leste, representatives from the media and the academe, and members of the public.

Chanlyka Leav, a performer from Cambodia, expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to connect with other performers: "It is such a great honour to join this program. What surprised me the most is the big similarity in ASEAN and Timor Leste cultures, how we value our family, our warmth, and our hospitality."

Meanwhile, Pham Thi Duong, a performer from Viet Nam, said that the programme was important for her to gain more experience and a deeper understanding of the relationship among ASEAN performers, especially those from

Timor Leste. "I have been abroad many times to perform, but with this workshop, my first time in Bangkok, I learned a lot about how all ASEAN cultures were connected. We all shared our wonderful rituals and beliefs. I have had a memorable experience on this joyful journey."

Dr. Kusuma Venzky-Stalling, the artistic director at Chiang Mai University, Thailand, explained the sensitivity of applying the concept of "weaving a tapestry" to bridge traditional and contemporary performing forms during the devising process. "Any adjustment should not destroy the core value of traditions, yet the water/rain-related culture narrative about the interconnection between people and nature must be tastefully told," she said.

She added: "The most challenging part was what to tell and how to express the idea so that the show could be meaningful, innovative and most importantly, how to create a fresh perspective of how academic knowledge and artistic expression co-existed." The way that artists chose their artistic expression to voice those beliefs and even questioned the human relationship with nature and the environment in today's urban life reminded me of the role of performing arts in communicating these concerns."

Teeradon Kaewklam, a third-year student from Srinakharinwirot University of Thailand and one of the audience members, found ASEAN's diverse cultures fascinating and was awed by their co-existence and similarities. He remarked, "Although we are different nations, we use different languages and believe in different religions, we live in the same region and have access to water to connect with everyone. After the show, I couldn't say anything because the show touched my heart."

References: https://bit.ly/Issue30_Ref



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