

The ASEAN

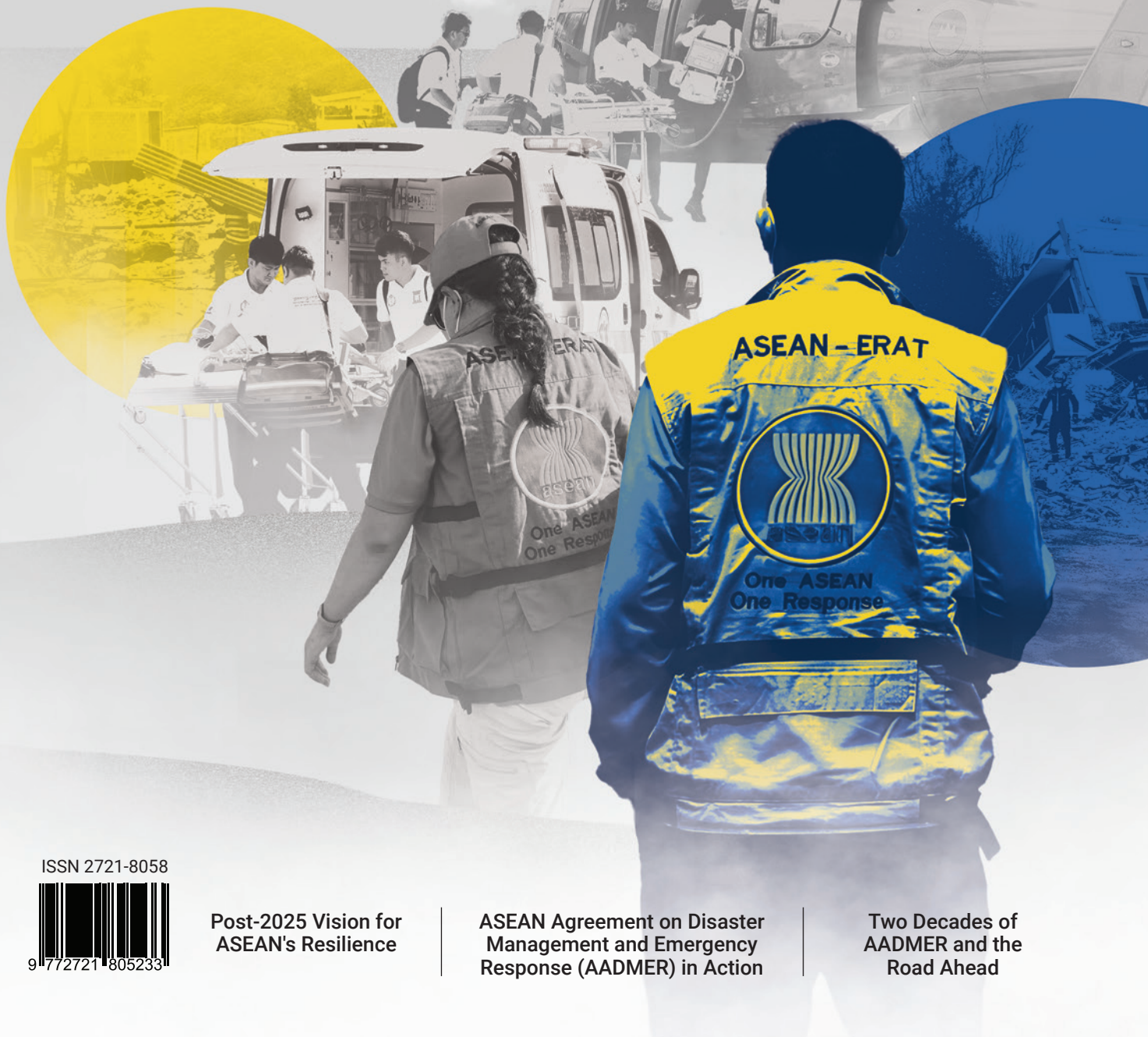


one vision
one identity
one community

SPECIAL ISSUE 46
October 2025

20 YEARS OF AADMER

ASEAN Vision for Global
Leadership in Disaster Resilience



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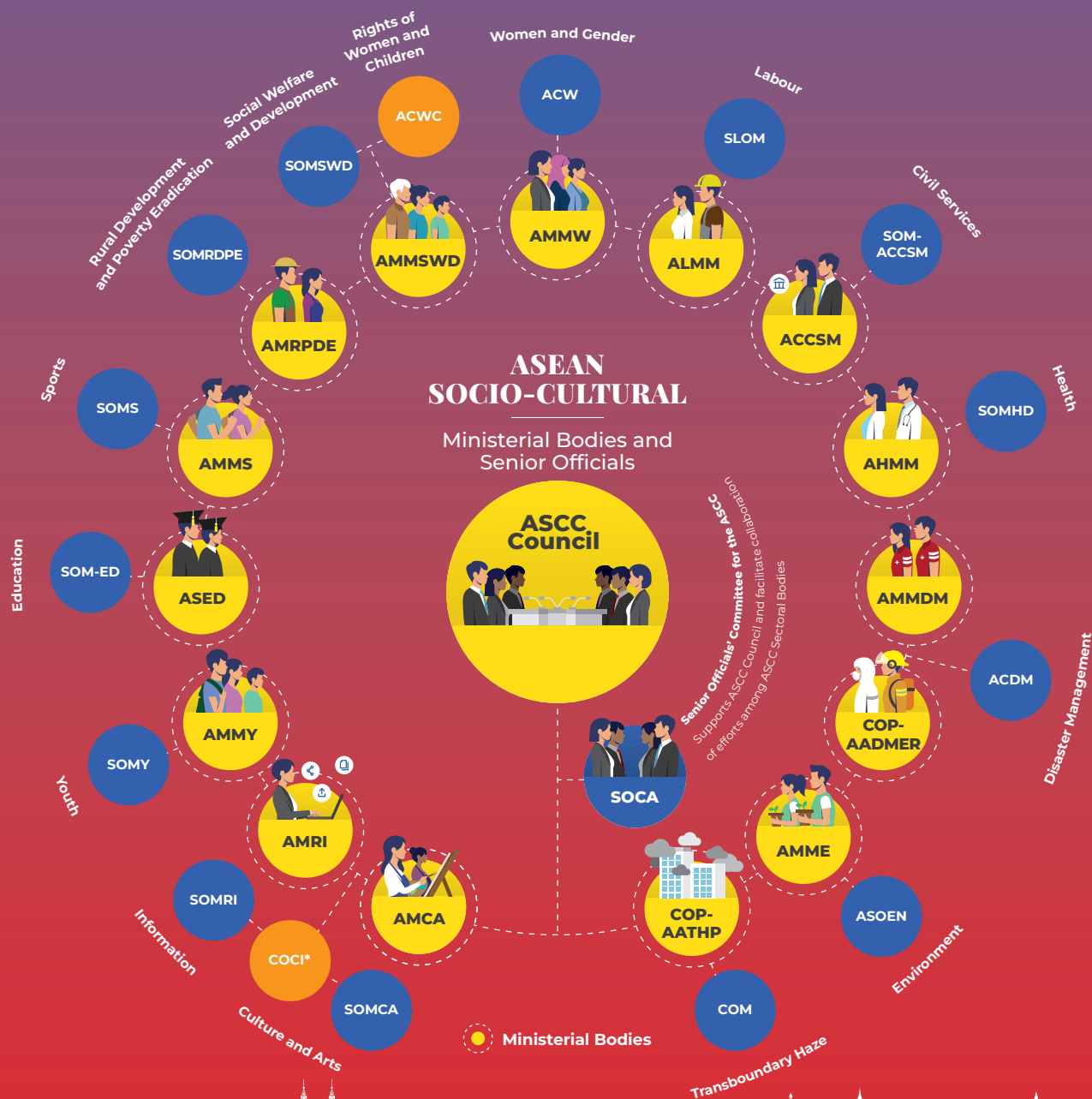


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Post-2025 Vision for
ASEAN's Resilience

ASEAN Agreement on Disaster
Management and Emergency
Response (AADMER) in Action

Two Decades of
AADMER and the
Road Ahead



AMRI: ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information

AMCA: ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts

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: ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters

AHMM: ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting

AMMDM: ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management

ACDM: ASEAN Committee 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

** takes guidance from and reports to both AMCA and AMRI*



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ABOUT AADMER

The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) is a binding agreement that promotes regional cooperation in disaster management among all ASEAN Member States.

The ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), established in 2003, oversees the AADMER Work Programme. The AADMER's priority programmes are Risk Assessment and Monitoring, Prevention and Mitigation, Preparedness and Response, Resilient Recovery, and Global Leadership.

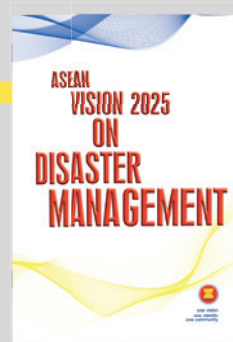


2005

26 July

Adoption of AADMER

AADMER was signed by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers in Vientiane, Lao PDR, at the 38th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting



2015

December

ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management

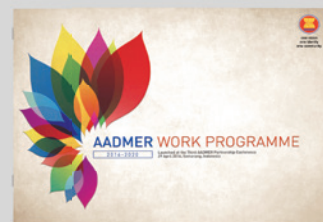
The vision was adopted by ASEAN Ministers in Phnom Penh, setting regional direction for the next decade of AADMER's implementation

2016

29 April

AADMER Work Programme 2016-2020

The AADMER Work Programme 2016-2020 was endorsed by ACDM in February 2016 and formally launched at the 28th ACDM Meeting and 3rd AADMER Partnership Conference in Semarang, Indonesia



2016

6 September

"One ASEAN, One Response" Declaration

ASEAN Leaders signed the declaration in Vientiane, signifying political commitment to unified regional response mechanisms

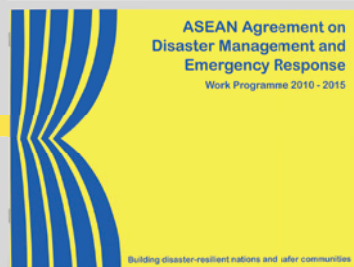


2009**24 December****Entry into force**

The Agreement entered into force upon the 60-day period after the 10th ratification instrument was deposited

2010**11 March****AADMER Work Programme 2010-2015**

The AADMER Work Programme 2010-2015 was adopted by the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) at its 15th Meeting in Singapore

**2012****15-16 March**

- 1st Conference of Parties (COP) Meeting**

Held in Jakarta, the first meeting of the COP to AADMER adopted procedural rules, financial mechanisms, ASEAN-ERAT and SASOP frameworks

- Establishment of the ASEAN Disaster Management and Emergency Relief (ADMER) Fund**

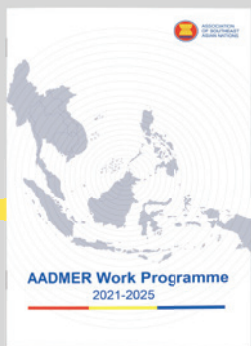
The ADMER Fund, composed of voluntary contributions from Member States, is intended to support the implementation of the AADMER

**2011****17 November****Establishment of AHA Centre**

ASEAN Foreign Ministers signed the Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) during the 19th ASEAN Summit in Bali

**2020****27 November****AADMER Work Programme 2021-2025**

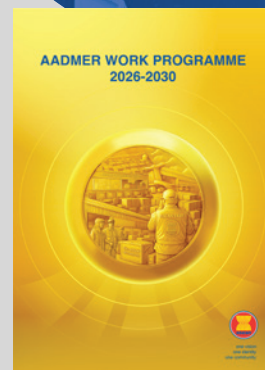
The AADMER Work Programme 2021-2025 was adopted by the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management at its 8th meeting

**2023****Declaration on Sustainable Resilience**

ASEAN Leaders adopted a declaration aligning disaster-climate resilience with Sendai, SDGs, Paris Agreement agenda

**2025****AADMER Work Programme 2026-2030**

Phnom Penh, 15 October 2025
At the 13th AMMDM/14th COP to AADMER





Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr. Kao Kim Hourn

The frequency, scale, and complexity of disasters are escalating across Southeast Asia—driven by climate change, rapid urbanisation, and emerging transboundary risks. These growing threats strike at the very foundations of our development, stability, and shared prosperity.

Over the past two decades, ASEAN has established strong foundations for regional disaster cooperation. A major milestone was the 2015 ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management, which launched the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management. This transformative document enabled ASEAN to develop a structured, cooperative, and increasingly effective regional system, positioning it as a global model for disaster management and humanitarian coordination.

As we now set our sights on a post-2025 horizon, we must carefully assess the lessons learned, consolidate our achievements, and identify the key enablers that will ensure continued progress while shaping a more ambitious, integrated, and future-ready disaster agenda for our region. In this spirit, the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, adopted by ASEAN Leaders in May 2025, presents a powerful opportunity to reimagine our regional resilience.

It challenges us to envision an ASEAN that is not only more capable of withstanding disasters but also more unified in anticipating, preparing for, and recovering from increasingly complex crises. Disaster resilience is not a standalone priority—it underpins our broader aspirations for inclusive and sustainable development, regional integration, and social protection.

At the 46th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, our Leaders adopted ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future—a landmark roadmap

that charts our regional trajectory for the next two decades. It embodies the shared ambition of Member States to adapt and lead amid an increasingly complex and uncertain global landscape. This comprehensive blueprint encompasses the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and four supporting Strategic Plans—covering Political-Security, Economic, Socio-Cultural, and Connectivity dimensions. Together, they present a unified vision: a resilient, innovative, dynamic, and people-centred ASEAN by 2045. This marks the first time in ASEAN's history that we have articulated a 20-year vision.

Disaster resilience is central to safeguarding the ASEAN Community Vision 2045. The Vision was crafted with full recognition of climate change's accelerating impacts and the intensifying frequency of natural disasters across our region. These risks pose grave threats to lives, livelihoods, infrastructure, and progress. Therefore, strengthening disaster resilience extends far beyond emergency response—it is a fundamental prerequisite for achieving long-term regional stability and securing a sustainable, inclusive future for all.

Over recent decades, ASEAN has steadily built stronger regional cooperation and enhanced disaster management capacity. Guided by the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management, our work rests on three strategic pillars: Institutionalisation and Communications, Finance and Resource Mobilisation, and Partnerships and Innovations. Together, these pillars have not only advanced the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) but also established ASEAN as a recognised global leader in this field.

In terms of Institutionalisation and Communications, we have translated commitments into tangible programmes through the AADMER Work Programmes, ensuring a comprehensive coverage of the entire disaster management cycle. Meanwhile, high-level guidance has emerged from Leaders' Declarations such as the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response and the Declaration on Sustainable Resilience.

Supporting these works are practical, operational tools—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; and the ASEAN Capacity Building Roadmap 2025-2030—each strengthening our ability to prevent, prepare, respond, and protect. Our institutional machinery has matured significantly during this period. The ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMDM) reviews, refines, and sets policy direction annually. Simultaneously, the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) and its Working Groups advance these policies through concrete actions, regional projects, and stakeholder coordination, including simulations like the ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise (ARDEX).

At the operational level is the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management—the AHA Centre—which has developed vital tools, such as the ASEAN Disaster Information Network, the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA), and the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN ERAT). These mechanisms have substantially enhanced our capacity for disaster monitoring, preparedness, and coordinated response.

We have also strengthened cross-sectoral linkages. Platforms such as the Technical

Working Groups on Civil-Military Coordination and on Protection and Gender, as well as the ASEAN Disaster Resilience Platform, now connect 13 ASEAN sectoral bodies across all three pillars of the ASEAN Community. This ensures a genuinely integrated approach, while our ASEAN Disaster Risk Communication Framework has become the regional standard for inclusive, evidence-based communication.

In Finance and Resource Mobilisation, we continued to leverage the ASEAN Disaster Management and Emergency Relief Fund while diversifying its sources—including contributions from the private sector. Support also flows from Dialogue and Development Partners, the United Nations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent, NGOs, and think tanks. Since adopting the ASEAN Roadmap for Disaster Risk Financing and Insurance in 2011, we have helped equip Member States with financial tools and risk-transfer mechanisms to manage the economic impact of disasters. Through the ASEAN Plus Three initiative and the World Bank, the Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Insurance Facility (SEADRIF) now serves as a key resource for financial resilience against disasters and climate-related shocks. This area has seen significant expansion, with financing playing an increasingly critical role in disaster management.

Under Partnerships and Innovations, our collaboration with governments, international organisations, civil society, and the private sector has deepened considerably. We convene through ACDM Open Sessions, ACDM Plus consultations, and the ASEAN Disaster Resilience Forum, among other platforms. Our partnerships with the United Nations, China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea are anchored in joint work plans, while the AADMER Partnership Group connects us with civil society.

Simultaneously, we are embracing science, technology, and innovation—guided by the ASEAN ICT Roadmap—to build a coherent digital infrastructure for disaster management, encompassing emergency communications, data analytics, and resource tracking. Together, these three pillars—well-institutionalised systems, sustainable resources, and strong partnerships—have reinforced ASEAN's role as a global leader. This is evident in our active participation in the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, platforms for sharing lessons, building networks, and advancing resilience far beyond our own region.

Despite our progress in building disaster management capacities, ASEAN continues to face an increasingly complex and rapidly evolving risk environment. Traditional hazards are now colliding with new and emerging threats, creating challenges that are more interconnected—and more unpredictable—than ever before. Climate change remains a defining force, driving rising temperatures, elevating sea levels, and fuelling more frequent and severe extreme weather patterns. These impacts reverberate across our region, from coastal flooding to prolonged droughts. Rapid and often unplanned urbanisation compounds these risks, concentrating populations and infrastructure in hazard-prone coastal and low-lying areas.

Other forces are also reshaping our landscape. Rural-urban divides continued to widen. The swift pace of digital and green transitions has been taking place, while there are opening new opportunities, risks deepening disparities in capacity and access. Environmental degradation continued to erode the natural defences that protect our communities and villages. Demographic changes—whether population growth or aging societies—introduce fresh complexities to risk management. Hydrometeorological and geophysical hazards, in particular, are becoming more erratic and destructive, with cascading effects that disrupt livelihoods, damage infrastructure, and strain national and regional systems. Between 2021 and 2025 alone, the ASEAN Disaster Information Network recorded more than 3,600 disaster events across the region. These hazards displaced over 7.5 million people and caused economic losses exceeding US\$3.1 billion. Behind these statistics lie human stories—of lives uprooted, futures interrupted, and development set back.

The consequences extended far beyond our borders. Large-scale disasters in ASEAN increasingly have global ramifications, given the region's central role in trade, manufacturing, and supply chains. Disruptions here can trigger ripple effects on economic stability, food security, and humanitarian access across the world. If we do not act decisively and collectively, these vulnerabilities could undermine not only our regional resilience but also our shared progress toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Looking beyond 2025, ASEAN must adapt to a rapidly changing disaster landscape shaped by influential megatrends. To realize the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, we must pursue innovative, coordinated, and practical approaches to strengthen our collective resilience.

First, strategically align Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA). These agendas are inseparable yet often pursued in isolation. ASEAN should lead in bridging them—both in policy and practice—by developing robust, interoperable data systems that capture past, present, and future risks, guiding both DRR and CCA planning. This alignment requires integrating DRR and CCA into development plans, climate policies, disaster management strategies, and investment decisions, not just for individual ASEAN Member States, but for ASEAN as a whole by working in partnership with our partners.

This strategic alignment demands multi-sector and multi-level coordination—engaging not only just disaster agencies, but also planning, environment, finance, health, and other ministries—shifting from reactive response to proactive, risk-informed development. We must also strengthen institutional and technical capacities by expanding training, fostering cross-sector collaboration, and creating platforms for knowledge exchange. ASEAN should set the pace by developing integrated plans, monitoring frameworks, and tools that reflect both regional and global commitments.

Second, build robust, real time, end-to-end multi-hazard early warning systems. These works must encompass four elements: risk knowledge, detection and monitoring, warning dissemination, and preparedness and response. Too often, these components remain disconnected across Member States; we need stronger, harmonised systems to ensure warnings translate into action. This includes: (i) enhancing policies for risk assessment, ensuring interoperability, and standardising actionable local messages; (ii) strengthening institutional processes for data sharing, and leveraging mobile technology to reach the "last mile"; and (iii) expanding capacity in all four thematic areas, adopting cloud technology for reliable alerts, and applying the international Common Alerting Protocol.

Third, strengthen community and infrastructure resilience. Resilient communities form the foundation of disaster preparedness. We must scale up community-based risk management, promote social innovation, local leadership, indigenous knowledge, and appropriate technologies—ensuring solutions are locally grounded and sustainable. Infrastructure must also be built to withstand future hazards. Looking ahead, we must be prepared for this reality. ASEAN should continue embedding DRR principles into the design and management of housing, transport, healthcare, education, and communications systems. Resilience should be mandated through building codes, zoning,

and land-use planning, while incentives can encourage investment in resilient construction.

Fourth, enhance disaster risk financing and insurance. Timely access to finance is critical before, during, and after disasters. ASEAN should explore innovative financing options, engage international partners, and develop pooled funding mechanisms that cover disaster risk, humanitarian needs, and climate-related losses. Strengthening SEADRIF is essential, alongside building Member States' capacity to design insurance products suited to local risks. We must also invest in financial literacy and institutional capacity, ensuring these tools are widely accessible and effective.

Fifth, improve preparedness and response for large-scale disasters, as demonstrated by recent events such as the earthquake in Myanmar. ASEAN should further develop its SASOP and Joint Disaster Response Plan, expanding standby resources from governments, non-state actors, and partners, while covering a broader range of scenarios. Our response tools—including ASEAN-ERAT, DELSA, and the Emergency Operations Centre—must integrate innovative approaches and ensure long-term sustainability. Regular exercises such as ARDEX remain vital for testing and refining readiness. All enhancements should aim to increase the speed, scale, and solidarity of ASEAN's response, ensure interoperability with global systems, and strengthen our capacity to respond beyond the region as "One ASEAN," in line with the Declaration on One ASEAN One Response.

Sixth, prepare for large-scale disaster recovery in advance. Recovery is often the longest and most resource-intensive phase of disaster management. Pre-arranged plans can make it faster, more efficient, and more transformative. This means mapping regional recovery assets, engaging diverse actors—including civil society, private sector, and partners—and establishing strong coordination mechanisms. Resource mobilisation strategies should enable swift action, and recovery should embrace a "build-back-better" vision that creates more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable systems.

Seventh, strengthen ASEAN's global leadership. As the Sendai Framework concludes in 2030, ASEAN should help shape the next global disaster risk reduction agenda, drawing on over 20 years of experiences under AADMER. We must also share our knowledge more proactively by exchanging best practices, fostering inter-regional dialogue, building joint capacity, and deepening partnerships. In doing so, ASEAN can

contribute not only to regional resilience but also to strengthening global disaster preparedness.

Strengthening these recommendations requires an enabling environment that empowers ASEAN to decide and act at scale, with speed, and in a sustainable manner.

We must harness innovation and advanced technologies across the disaster management cycle—from prevention and mitigation to preparedness, response, and recovery. Artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics, big data analytics, satellite imagery, drone technology, digital platforms, and emerging tools like the metaverse should be scaled up and integrated into ASEAN's operations. Human resource capacity must be strengthened through continuous investment in capacity-building programmes, equipping disaster management personnel with the necessary skills, leadership, and competencies needed to meet ASEAN's competency standards and certification frameworks. A professional, well-prepared workforce forms the backbone of regional resilience.

Partnerships and inclusivity must underpin all disaster management efforts. ASEAN should advance whole-of-ASEAN and whole-of-society approaches, enhancing collaboration among ASEAN bodies, centres, and entities, while deepening engagement with External Partners, UN agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, NGOs, community organisations, research institutions, academia, and the private sector. Engaging all stakeholders is essential. Private sector engagement should extend beyond disaster response into prevention, mitigation, and preparedness. Above all, communities must remain at the heart of our efforts. Gender-responsive and inclusive strategies should ensure women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups are not only protected but also empowered as active contributors to disaster risk reduction and resilience building.

ASEAN's future in disaster resilience will be defined not by the disasters we face, but by the strength we build together. Two decades of progress under AADMER have proven that unity, solidarity, preparedness, and innovation save lives.

We need to reconsider how we define and respond to disasters. Should we include human-induced disasters in our response strategies? This represents a major policy decision that will impact our priorities and our peoples. We must go beyond what we have accomplished in the past 20 years

and make our work even more relevant to people on the ground in ASEAN communities and villages, wherever they may be. Failure to respond in time costs lives. Even as we revisit our concept of disaster, we must ensure that our response to humanitarian assistance remains prioritised. We also must depoliticise our engagement and ensure that we protect and assist people affected by these disasters at all costs.

We must review and reinvest in the best training, tools, and technologies that our responders need to perform their duties effectively. However, the best policies and tools can be meaningless without effective coordination and timely response on the ground. Key to this is ASEAN's open and active engagement among our stakeholders, across Member States, across sectoral bodies, within the ASEAN Community, and with our partners. The ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM) must work more closely with our external partners, whether Dialogue Partners, Sectoral Dialogue Partners, Development Partners, or UN agencies. We do not have a monopoly of wisdom and best practices, so it is crucial to expand, build, and invest in more stronger and more effective partnerships.

Moving forward, the success of AADMER hinges on its evolution from a reactive framework to a proactive, people-centred model. The focus must be on empowering communities and ensuring the most vulnerable populations, including women and children, are at the forefront of policy and action. This includes leveraging innovation through a people-centred approach to technology, utilising advancements, such as AI for early warning systems and data analytics to inform policies and respond more effectively. A commitment to partnerships underpins these efforts, as AADMER continues to strengthen collaboration not only just with traditional partners but also with new actors in the public, private, and civil society sectors.

By prioritising these key areas of works and cooperation, ASEAN is poised to not only build on its considerable progress but also to become a global leader in disaster management and resilience, creating a safer and more sustainable future for the entire region.

Note:

This article is an edited version of Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn's Keynote Address on the Post-2025 Vision for ASEAN's Resilience: A Perspective on the ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management (SPDDM) on 20 August 2025 in Singapore.



No Country Faces Disasters Alone



**National Committee for
Disaster Management (NCDM)
Cambodia**

The 46th Meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) and related meetings were convened in Siem Reap, Cambodia, from 20 to 23 May 2025, bringing together representatives from National Disaster Management Organisations of ASEAN Member States, Timor Leste, ASEAN Secretariat, the ASEAN Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), and partners to strengthen cooperation in disaster management and humanitarian assistance. The meeting was chaired by Kim Virak, Chair of the ACDM and Secretary-General of the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM), Kingdom of Cambodia.

Cambodia currently serves as the Chair of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM). ACDM Chair and Secretary General of the National Committee for Disaster Management of Cambodia Kim Virak discusses ASEAN's progress under the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), its growing role in shaping global disaster management, and how Cambodia's 2025 Chairmanship is steering the region's disaster management agenda forward.



Kittie Sangahak Bandith Kun Kim, Chair of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM), Senior Minister in Charge of Special Missions, and First Vice President of the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM), Kingdom of Cambodia

Why is the AADMER crucial to the regional cooperation in disaster management with the increasing threats of disasters, including climate-related incidents?

ACDM Chair Kim Virak:

As Chair of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), Cambodia stands at a pivotal moment in the region's journey toward resilience. At the centre of this effort is the AADMER, the region's legally binding framework for disaster cooperation and response. Its importance cannot be overstated: in a region where floods, typhoons, earthquakes, and droughts frequently strike across borders, AADMER ensures that no country faces disaster alone. It transforms the principle of solidarity into concrete actions through the mechanisms for preparedness, emergency response, and long-term recovery.

As climate-related disasters intensify, AADMER remains crucial to strengthening regional cooperation by enabling shared leadership, capacity building, and rapid response, while also integrating climate adaptation and promoting innovative, inclusive approaches to build a more resilient ASEAN.

What are the most significant achievements in the past 20 years?

ACDM Chair Kim Virak:

Since it entered into force in 2009, AADMER has played a vital role in strengthening collective disaster management across the region. One of its landmark achievements is the establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre), which facilitates regional coordination and information sharing to support humanitarian response. In addition, various mechanisms have also been developed to enhance regional disaster management, including the Standard Operating Procedures for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP), which guide collective action during emergencies.

ASEAN has also developed practical tools and mechanisms, such as the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA), which pre-positions relief items in warehouses in Subang (Malaysia), Chainat (Thailand), and Pampanga (Philippines) for rapid

deployment. Policy frameworks like the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response further strengthened collective action by committing all Member States to keep a united front in responding swiftly to disasters.

These mechanisms were tested most recently during the ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise (ARDEX-25), hosted by Cambodia in Phnom Penh in July 2025. The exercise simulated large-scale flooding caused by super typhoons, mobilising ASEAN's standby assets, testing DELSA logistics, and applying SASOP procedures. For Cambodia, leading ARDEX-25 was clear evidence of both capacity and responsibility, proving that **AADMER is more than theory—it is a practical living framework that saves lives.**

How do the ASEAN Leaders' Declarations serve as a guide in enhancing disaster management and building disaster resilience in the region?

ACDM Chair Kim Virak:

ASEAN Leaders' Declarations are critical in enhancing disaster management and building resilience across the region. These Declarations reaffirm a political commitment to integrating disaster risk reduction into broader development and resilient agendas, ensuring that disaster management is not treated as a standalone issue, but as a core component of ASEAN's sustainable growth.

These Declarations also help ensure a comprehensive approach to the disaster management cycle, from prevention and preparedness to response and recovery, by setting priorities that are institutionalised through mechanisms like the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management and operationalised by the AHA Centre. They also promote cross-sectoral collaboration, inclusive approaches, and regional solidarity by encouraging coordination among various ASEAN sectoral bodies.

Furthermore, the Declarations have paved the way for the development of regional tools. By aligning policy direction, operational mechanisms, and partnerships, these Declarations reinforce ASEAN's commitment to building a disaster-resilient and responsive region.

How has ASEAN become a global leader in disaster management?

ACDM Chair Kim Virak:

ASEAN has emerged as a global leader in disaster management through a comprehensive, institutionalised approach built over more than two decades under the AADMER. High-level political guidance, reflected in Leaders' Declarations such as One ASEAN, One Response and Sustainable Resilience, has been translated into concrete actions through the AADMER Work Programmes, covering the full disaster management cycle.

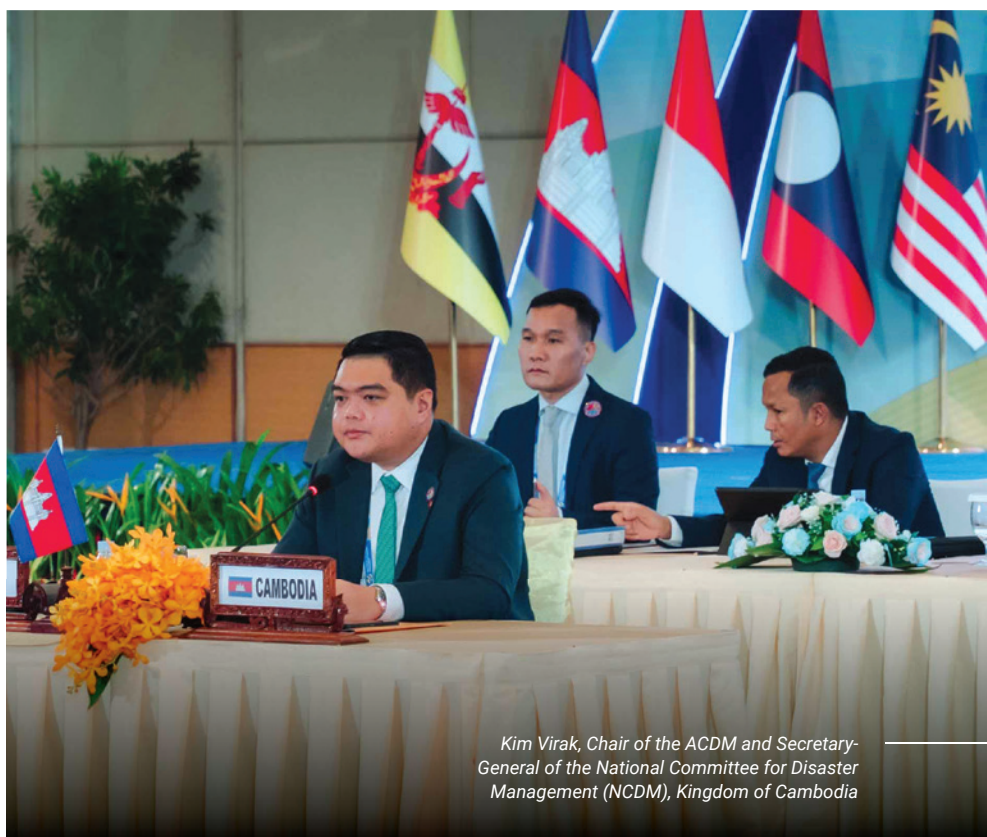
ASEAN's operational tools, including SASOP, the ASEAN Joint Disaster Response Plan, ASEAN Disaster Information Network, ASEAN Disaster Monitoring and Response System, and the ASEAN Capacity Building Roadmap, among others, have enhanced regional preparedness and response. Institutions like the AHA Centre and mechanisms such as DELSA and ASEAN ERAT have significantly improved coordination and logistics in emergencies.

ASEAN has also strengthened cross-sectoral links and standardised disaster risk communication. Financial resilience is bolstered through the ASEAN Disaster Management Fund and Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Insurance Facility (SEADRIF). Partnerships with the UN, civil society, and Dialogue Partners, along with a focus on innovation and digital infrastructure, further solidify ASEAN's leadership in shaping regional and global disaster resilience agendas.

How is Cambodia's 2025 Chairmanship advancing ASEAN's strategic vision for disaster management under the AADMER Work Plan 2026–2030 and the ASEAN Community Vision 2045?

ACDM Chair Kim Virak:

Looking ahead, Cambodia is placing a strong emphasis on the forthcoming AADMER Work Plan 2026–2030, which prioritises innovation, inclusivity, and climate adaptation for disaster management across the region. These priorities aim to shape a more anticipated people-centred ASEAN. In the long term, the ASEAN Community Vision (ACV) 2045 sets the goal of a disaster-resilient, climate-adaptive ASEAN that safeguards livelihoods and sustains development.



Kim Virak, Chair of the ACDM and Secretary-General of the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM), Kingdom of Cambodia

As Chair of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) and the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM) in 2025, Cambodia leads under the theme: "20 Years of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER): ASEAN's Vision for Global Leadership in Disaster Resilience." This theme marks two decades of regional cooperation and highlights ASEAN's forward-looking ambition to be a global leader in disaster resilience.

Under Cambodia's leadership, ASEAN achieved key milestones that are set to shape the region's disaster management landscape. A central achievement is the development of the AADMER Work Programme 2026–2030, which will guide ASEAN's strategic direction in disaster management over the next five years. Another major initiative is the successful conduct of the ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise 2025 (ARDEX-25), held on 21-25 July 2025. This full-scale simulation tested and strengthened ASEAN's emergency response mechanisms,

enhancing regional coordination and operational readiness.

In addition, two crucial regional statements were adopted through a referendum by the ASEAN Ministers-in-charge of Disaster Management: the Joint Statement of ASEAN for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) 2025, adopted on 19 May 2025; and the ASEAN Ministerial Statement on the 20th Anniversary of AADMER: ASEAN's Vision for Global Leadership in Disaster Resilience, adopted on 1 August 2025.

To support these efforts, Cambodia, in close coordination with the ASEAN Secretariat, convened the 46th ACDM Meeting and related events from 20 to 23 May 2025, and the 47th ACDM Meeting, the 13th AMMDM, and associated meetings from 13 to 16 October 2025. These high-level gatherings ensure strategic planning, policy coordination, and regional alignment toward a safer, more resilient ASEAN.

PREVENTION AND MITIGATION

To support AADMER's goals, ASEAN has taken steps to promote resilient urban planning, infrastructure, and economies, and to safeguard vulnerable groups through social protection and community-based disaster risk management.



ASEAN DISASTER RISK COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

The development of a disaster risk communication master plan is part of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme 2021-2025. The ASEAN Disaster Risk Communication Framework (ADRCF) is designed to support the improvement and harmonisation of disaster risk communication efforts across ASEAN Member States before, during, and after disasters.

VISION

“Disaster risk impact in ASEAN is reduced through the communication of timely and reliable, understandable and actionable, and trusted disaster risk information

OBJECTIVES



Objective 1
Timeliness and
reliability



Objective 2
Understandable
and actionable

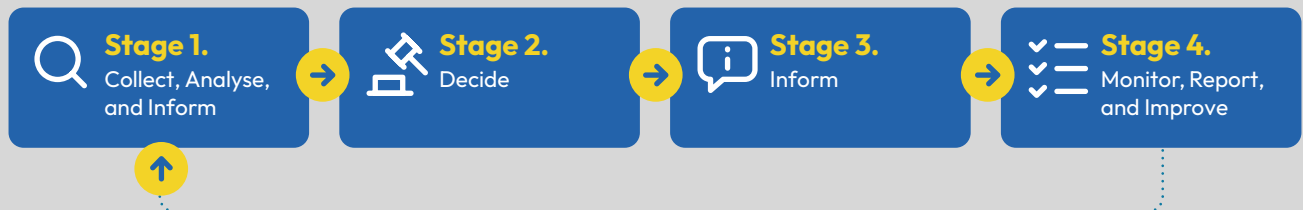


Objective 3
Raise trust



Objective 4
Strengthen ASEAN's
leadership

PROCESS



PLAN OF ACTION



Action 1.
Strengthen
hazard
monitoring
coordination



Action 2.
Enhance
existing regional
guidelines for
disaster risk
communications



Action 3.
Capacity
building for
effectively
delivering
disaster risk
communications



Action 4.
Enhance data
sharing between
regional and
national level



Action 5.
Develop, refine,
and apply
indicators based
on feedback and
collected data



Action 6.
Share best
practices and
lessons learned
from ASEAN
countries

Read the ADCRF at <https://asean.org/book/asean-disaster-risk-communication-framework/>

PHILIPPINES

Building Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

THE PHILIPPINE EXPERIENCE



Office of Civil Defense–National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council
Philippines

Drawing lessons learned from previous experiences in responding to major disasters, the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) system has shifted its policy focus from a relief-centric approach to a more proactive, holistic, and integrated disaster system. Informed by the global trends in addressing the adverse impacts of climate change and threats of hazards, the entry of the new millennium paved the way for various internationally

accepted principles that served as a backbone for a sound national policy.

Perhaps the most notable of these is the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER). Ratified in July 2005 and taking effect on 24 December 2009 in the Philippines and the whole of ASEAN, the AADMER has since become the backbone that guides the further development of Philippine DRRM initiatives across the ASEAN region.

A shift in disaster management approach

The Philippines has long grappled with the challenge of disaster resilience. For decades, disaster response was viewed as the exclusive domain of government agencies and humanitarian organisations—reactive, centralised, and often slow to reach the grassroots. In recent years, a quiet yet powerful shift has been unfolding across the archipelago: the transition from top-

down disaster response to community-centred preparedness. At the heart of this paradigm shift is a new guiding principle—Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (CBDRRM).

The shift of the country's DRRM focus to include CBDRRM initiatives ensures that disaster responses are not limited to the Philippine government's purview. Thanks to the AADMER's emphasis on CBDRRM, various Philippine civil society organisations (CSOs) were empowered to spearhead advocacies that drive the significance of sectoral representation and participation in disaster management. Some of these CSOs have formed networks in pursuit of CBDRRM as a unifying response to the increasing occurrences of severe and climate-change-related disasters in the Philippines.

With the enactment of Republic Act (RA) 10121, also known as the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, the Philippines established a national mandate that aligns with the AADMER's objective of promoting a comprehensive framework for CBDRRM.

RA 10121 institutionalises this commitment through the establishment of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC)—the country's highest policymaking and coordinating body for disaster risk reduction and management in the country. The Council is composed of representatives from government agencies, CSOs, and the private sector, underscoring the Act's emphasis on a whole-of-society and inclusive approach. In particular, RA 10121 mandates the participation of four (4) CSO representatives and one (1) private sector representative in the NDRRMC, alongside the inclusion of the League of Barangays, League of Municipalities, League of Cities, and League of Provinces. Through this framework, all DRRM Councils across levels recognise the critical role of non-government stakeholders in building resilience and ensuring that disaster risk reduction and management strategies remain participatory, community-driven, and responsive to local needs.

Community action on the ground

In practice, CBDRRM in the Philippines takes many forms. In hazard-prone coastal barangays, fisherfolk now participate in evacuation planning and risk mapping exercises. In upland communities, indigenous knowledge is integrated into early warning systems. Women's groups are organising local preparedness workshops. Youth volunteers are trained in basic life support and emergency response.

A compelling example worth highlighting is the proactive involvement of the Disaster Risk Reduction Network Philippines (DRRNetPhils), a community-based network. It is composed of various CSOs, members of the academia, and DRRM practitioners advocating for the formulation of a national law that integrates the importance, implementation, and government support of a comprehensive CBDRRM framework in the country. The advocacy campaign of the DRRNetPhils gained relevant traction with the onslaught of Typhoon Ketsana (local name "Ondoy"). On 26 September 2009, Ketsana poured down a month's worth of rainfall (approximately 450mm) on Metro Manila and its surrounding provinces. It triggered the worst flooding in the area in almost 40 years. At its wake, Typhoon Ketsana caused a total of 137.8 billion Philippine pesos (approx. 2.4 billion US dollars) in damages to essential infrastructure and agriculture, affecting 9.3 million Filipinos with 710 deaths, 42 missing, and about 373,000 displaced.

In 2014, among the first responders in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan (local name "Yolanda") were organised citizens' groups on the ground that were not seriously affected by the typhoon. These groups and other non-governmental organisations from nearby locales were in the most affected areas of Leyte province a day after the typhoon hit. The immediate response illustrates civil society's capacity to mobilise its resources after a disaster strikes. These community-driven initiatives may seem a stark contrast to the more structured and well-funded machinery

of the government, but they can play a crucial role in disaster management. This decentralised approach has been proven effective during the recent calamities that struck the Philippines. During the onslaught of Typhoon Rai (local name "Super Typhoon Odette") in late 2021 and the Taal Volcano Eruption of early 2020, *barangay* or village-level response mechanisms, including trained volunteers and pre-established evacuation centres, were critical in reducing civilian casualties and easing inter-agency emergency coordination.

Beyond the local context, the technical expertise of the NDRRMC (through the OCD) also took a more prominent role at the ASEAN level, especially during the tenure of the Philippines as Chair of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) in 2020. Reeling from heightened climate-related risks as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, the chairmanship of the Philippines steered the strategic direction of ASEAN's DRRM framework to emphasise the importance of localising disaster resilience, advancing early warning systems, and strengthening CBDRRM initiatives across all ASEAN Member States. This culminated in the development of the AADMER Work Programme 2021-2025.

Nevertheless, implementation gaps remain, especially in geographically isolated areas in the Philippines. The Office of Civil Defense continues to address these gaps by improving localised access to DRRM funds, investing in digitalisation and digital infrastructure, and lobbying for legislation for long-term structural reforms. Notable is Senate Bill No. 205 and its proposed establishment of the Department of Disaster Resilience in the country. With these in view, and under the helm of the NDRRMC, CBDRRM in the country continues to evolve. From the AADMER to RA 10121, CBDRRM initiatives have since been structured into law, proactively enabled by institutions, and vitally sustained by local communities that remain at the forefront of Filipino resiliency.

PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

In line with AADMER's mandate, ASEAN has strengthened its disaster readiness by improving planning and coordination for large-scale disasters, while investing in capacity building through stronger supply chains, a more capable ASEAN-ERAT, and better emergency communications. Complementing these efforts, new mechanisms have been established to support post-disaster recovery when regional intervention is required.

Photo Credit: © AHA Centre





TWO DECADES OF AADMER AND THE ROAD AHEAD



Lee Yam Ming
Executive Director, AHA Centre

The AHA Centre, led by Executive Director Lee Yam Ming, facilitated the coordination on the ground during the M7.7 Mandalay Earthquake in Myanmar

When the ASEAN Leaders signed the **ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER)** in 2005, few could have foreseen how central it would become to our regional identity. Two decades on, the agreement remains relevant and is a key driving factor in the formulation of strategies and policies in ASEAN. It has given us a shared framework and, perhaps most importantly, a sense of solidarity amongst the ASEAN Member States in the face of adversity.

Since the establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) in 2011 as the “operational engine” of AADMER, ASEAN has transformed the way it manages disasters. What started as a coordinating body focused on emergency responses has evolved into a hub of knowledge in disaster management, capacity-building, and rapid response. In an era when disasters are growing in scale and complexity, this transformation has also been both necessary and timely.

The AHA Centre’s core mandate is to facilitate and coordinate ASEAN’s collective response to disasters through the implementation and guidance of AADMER. It was translated into the four core functions, namely coordination, disaster information management,

resource management, as well as knowledge and outreach. These laid the foundation for ASEAN’s regional capacity as it exists today.

Yet the AHA Centre’s role continues to expand. Today, the AHA Centre is as much about anticipation as it is about preparedness. The Centre integrates climate projections, harnesses artificial intelligence (AI) to mitigate the effects of disasters and provide early warning, and works with partners to bolster ASEAN’s resilience long before disasters strike. These advancements reflect lessons learned from each major response. From the 2013 Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines to regional coordination during the COVID-19 pandemic at its height in 2020-2021, we have seen the AHA Centre’s regional posture advancing from operational coordination to thought leadership in disaster management.

The AADMER framework and ASEAN’s model of cooperation in disaster management remain unique to the region. Each Member State contributes distinct strengths that collectively enhance the region’s capacity to respond to disasters. To cite a few examples, the Philippines’ tremendous experience in persevering through countless natural disasters brings expertise and knowledge in managing crises, Singapore’s advances in information and communications technology propel ASEAN’s innovation in disaster management, and Malaysia hosts one of the global humanitarian support hubs, facilitating logistical and supply chain solutions in one of the most vulnerable regions to disasters. The true strength of AADMER and the AHA Centre lies in harnessing this diversity and transforming it into a comprehensive and cohesive regional response.



ASEAN-ERAT members from the ASEAN Member States conducted direct observation and rapid assessment in the affected areas during M7.7 Mandalay Earthquake



The One ASEAN, One Response Declaration, adopted in 2016, captured this spirit of solidarity. The most recent display of this principle was evident in the aftermath of the M7.7 Mandalay Earthquake in Myanmar, back in March 2025. For the first time in ASEAN history, ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) Members from all 10 Member States were deployed together, and Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams as well as Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) from the ASEAN Member States, pooled their expertise to support the affected communities. Similarly, ASEAN relief items from the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) stockpiles, strategically located in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand, and contributed by ASEAN's partners including Dialogue Partners, National Red Cross Societies, the private sector and ASEAN-based civil society organisations (CSOs), allow ASEAN to deliver needs-based aid rapidly and effectively, turning pooled resources into real-world impact. This is what "collective response" looks like: national strengths amplified at the regional level, ensuring that no Member State needlessly faces disasters alone.

ASEAN's journey in implementing AADMER offers several lessons to the global disaster management community.

First, a legally-binding regional agreement matters. The AADMER commits all Member States to shared standards and obligations, ensuring a

collective response whenever disaster strikes. Serving as the regional policy backbone, the AADMER binds all Member States to contribute to ASEAN's collective coping capacity and resilience-building agenda. Unique among disaster management frameworks worldwide, the AADMER is the only legally binding agreement supported by a five-year Work Programme (2010-2015, 2016-2020, 2021-2025, and the upcoming work programme 2026-2030) which operationalises its provisions through measurable priorities, targets, and activities. This mechanism not only keeps implementation on track but also provides a structured basis for monitoring, evaluation, and accountability. Through this spirit of solidarity, ASEAN arrives first in the affected country to provide timely apolitical assistance based on needs, making certain that no Member State is left behind in times of crisis, whilst upholding and respecting the ASEAN Charter's principles of non-interference, national sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

Second, ASEAN's ability and agility to repurpose disaster management mechanisms outside of disasters caused by natural hazards, notably during the COVID-19 pandemic by mobilising medical supplies through DELSA, illustrates the flexibility required in today's multi-faceted and compounding risks landscape. This adaptability was also demonstrated in the comprehensive needs assessment

conducted in Rakhine State to support displaced persons in the area. Likewise, under the mandate of the ASEAN Leaders' Five-Point Consensus, the AHA Centre undertook a humanitarian needs assessment and provision of humanitarian assistance in Myanmar. Both activities reflect ASEAN's ability to adapt and adjust to the dynamic situation.

The experiences of recent cyclones highlight how anticipatory action must be at the heart of ASEAN's disaster management. When Tropical Cyclone Mocha struck Myanmar in 2023, early forecasts generated by the affected Member States as well as by the AHA Centre through the Disaster Monitoring and Response System (DMRS) and information harvested from partners enabled authorities to take timely preventive measures, including the evacuation and relocation of coastal communities—actions that significantly reduced casualties. Just a year later, Tropical Cyclone Yagi swept across the Philippines, Viet Nam, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Myanmar, underscoring that disasters today are not only more frequent and severe but also transboundary in nature. These back-to-back crises demonstrate the urgency for ASEAN to move further upstream—beyond response alone—towards robust prevention, mitigation, and anticipatory action under AADMER, ensuring the region is prepared to confront risks before they escalate into full-scale crises.



ASEAN-ERAT members worked alongside the National Disaster Management Office of Lao PDR and its partners to receive ASEAN relief items during Tropical Cyclone Yagi in 2024



The ASEAN Standards and Certification for Experts in Disaster Management (ASCEND) programme is one of the signature capacity-building programmes implemented by the AHA Centre

These are lived experiences, forged in the aftermath of untold numbers of tropical cyclones, earthquakes, and crises that tested our unity and resolve. As we look ahead, we must be honest: the challenges are intensifying. Climate change is amplifying the frequency and severity of disasters. The AHA Centre has been recording disaster incidents since its establishment through our ASEAN Disaster Information Network (ADINet), which demonstrates an increasing trend over the years, with an average of more than 1,200 disasters annually and suggests no respite in the foreseeable future. Moreover, humanitarian crises are becoming more complex, with natural hazards becoming more transboundary in nature and often compounded by and intersecting with health and other sectors.

The AHA Centre's strategic vision beyond 2025 reflects this reality. Nowadays, the Centre commits to mainstreaming climate resilience into disaster management, so the region is better prepared for more complex disasters. Some initiatives have been implemented by the AHA Centre to address this challenge, focusing increasingly on upstream resilience whilst maintaining capacities in downstream relief. One of the examples is through the implementation of the ASEAN Protection, Resilience, and Inclusion for Multi-Hazard Emergencies (ASEAN-PRIME) project, which aims to enhance capacities in providing gender-responsive humanitarian assistance and

respond to new complex transboundary disasters with the support of the Government of Canada.

Additionally, expanding partnerships with governments, the UN agencies, Red Cross Societies, ASEAN-based CSOs, and the private sector to strengthen coordination and collaboration across sectors and borders is also crucial to address emerging risks and challenges.

The AHA Centre also envisions the importance of investing in human capital through initiatives such as the ASEAN Standards and Certification for Experts in Disaster Management (ASCEND) initiative, which certifies ASEAN's disaster management professionals to global standards. ASEAN's disaster management approach has also evolved. While the earlier focus was primarily on strengthening NDMOs, the emphasis today is increasingly people-centred, ensuring that communities and individuals remain at the heart of resilience-building efforts. This shift is further reflected in embedding mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in responses, recognising that disaster resilience entails not only physical considerations but also the emotional and psychosocial aspects as well.

The 20th anniversary of the AADMER this year is not just a milestone that is uttered; it is a tangible reminder of what regional cooperation can achieve—what has been demonstrated by ASEAN. From its modest beginnings, the AHA Centre

has grown into a trusted institution with global reputation that embodies the principle of One ASEAN, One Response.

But it is not only about the institution—lest we forget, it is about the ASEAN people and the ASEAN Community. At the heart of all that is said and done, it is about the communities that rebuild stronger after each calamity. And it is also about partners who continue to invest in and support ASEAN's collective vision of resilience.

Looking forward to 2045, ASEAN envisions a disaster management system that is more anticipatory, people-centred, and globally engaged. The future of AADMER, particularly with the newly developed AADMER Work Programme 2026-2030, will build on its unique role as the world's only legally binding regional disaster management framework with five-year work plans, while expanding its scope to address complex and transboundary risks. Guided by the vision of One ASEAN, One Response Beyond the Region, ASEAN also aims not only to strengthen collective resilience at "home" but also to contribute to humanitarian action globally, showcasing ASEAN solidarity and leadership on the world stage.

The road ahead will not be easy. Yet, the past 20 years of AADMER have taught us that ASEAN's resilience lies not only in its mechanisms, but in its unity. Together, we can face the uncertainties of tomorrow with confidence, solidarity, and hope for a better future.



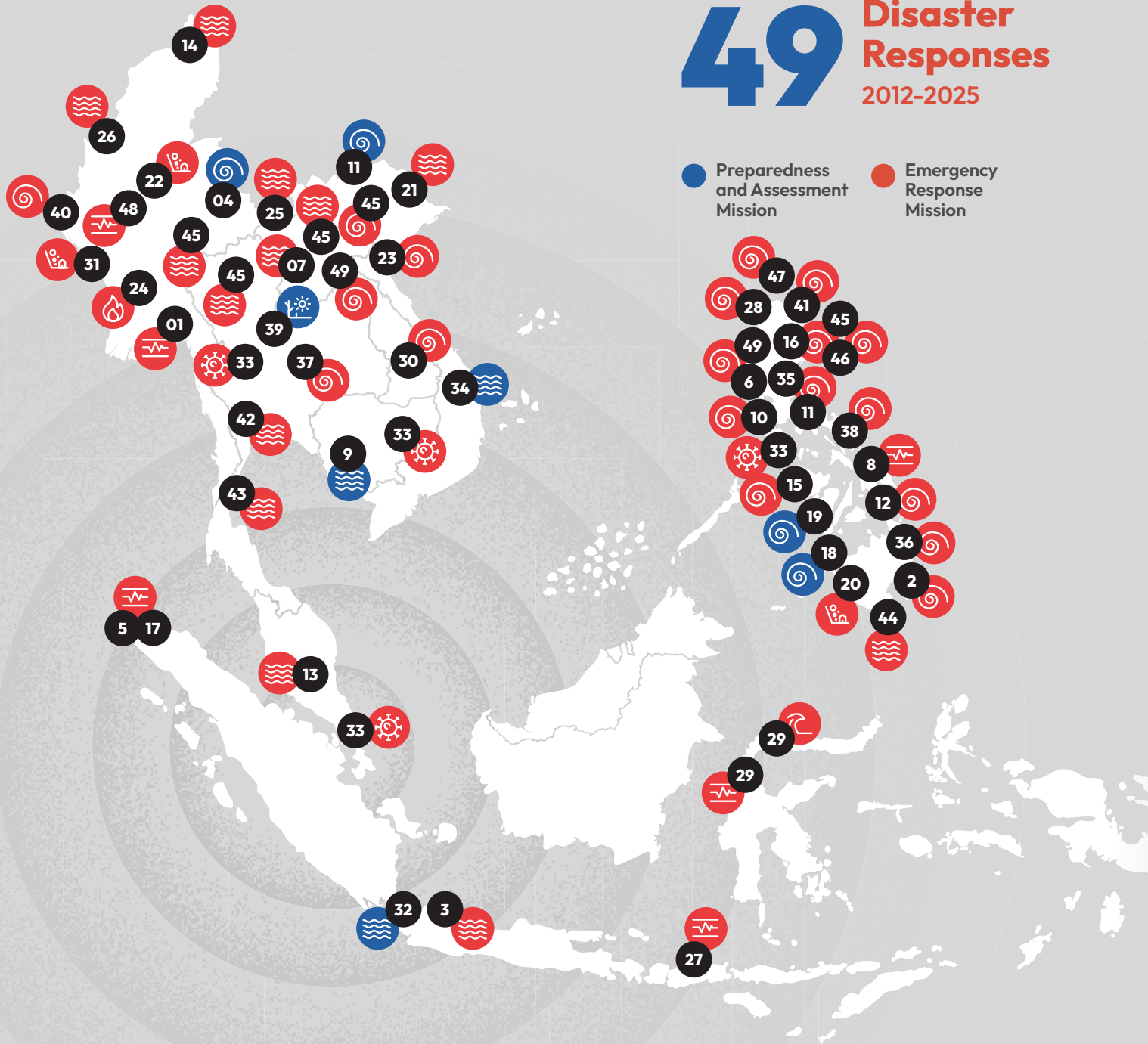
ONE **ASEAN**
ONE **RESPONSE**

AHA CENTRE DISASTER RESPONSES

Recorded from 2012 to 11 August 2025

49 Disaster Responses 2012-2025

● Preparedness and Assessment Mission
● Emergency Response Mission



- 1 **Thabaitikkyin Earthquake**
Myanmar, Nov 2012
- 2 **Tropical Storm Bopha**
Philippines, Dec 2012
- 3 **Jakarta Flood**
Indonesia, Jan 2013
- 4 **Tropical Cyclone Mahasen**
Myanmar, May 2013
- 5 **Aceh Earthquake**
Indonesia, Jul 2013
- 6 **Tropical Storm Trami**
Philippines, Aug 2013
- 7 **Flood**
Lao PDR, Aug 2013
- 8 **Bohol Earthquake**
Philippines, Oct 2013
- 9 **Flood**
Cambodia, Oct 2013
- 10 **Typhoon Haiyan**
Philippines, Nov-Dec 2013
- 11 **Typhoon Rammasun**
Philippines, Viet Nam, Jul 2014
- 12 **Typhoon Hagupit**
Philippines, Dec 2014
- 13 **Flood**
Malaysia, Jan 2015
- 14 **Flood**
Myanmar, Aug 2015
- 15 **Typhoon Koppu**
Philippines, Jul 2015
- 16 **Typhoon Haima**
Philippines, Oct 2016
- 17 **Aceh Earthquake**
Indonesia, Dec 2016
- 18 **Typhoon Melor**
Philippines, Dec 2016
- 19 **Typhoon Nock-ten**
Philippines, Dec 2016
- 20 **Internally-displaced People in Marawi**
Philippines, Jul 2017
- 21 **Flash Flood and Landslide**
Viet Nam, Aug 2017
- 22 **Internally-displaced People in Rakhine State**
Myanmar, Oct 2017
- 23 **Typhoon Damrey**
Viet Nam, Nov 2017
- 24 **Landfill Fire, Yangon**
Myanmar, Apr 2018
- 25 **Flood**
Lao PDR, Jul 2018
- 26 **Flood**
Myanmar, Aug 2018
- 27 **Lombok Earthquake**
Indonesia, Aug 2018
- 28 **Typhoon Mangkhut**
Philippines, Sep 2018
- 29 **Central Sulawesi Earthquake and Tsunami**
Indonesia, Oct 2018
- 30 **Tropical Storm Podul and Tropical Depression Kajiki**
Lao PDR, Sep 2019
- 31 **Internally-displaced People in Rakhine State**
Myanmar, Dec 2019
- 32 **Jakarta Flood**
Indonesia Jan 2020
- 33 **Covid-19**
Cambodia, Malaysia, The Philippines, Thailand, Jan 2020-2021
- 34 **Central Viet Nam Flooding**
Viet Nam, Oct 2020
- 35 **Typhoon Goni**
Philippines Nov 2020
- 36 **Typhoon Rai**
Philippines, Dec 2021
- 37 **Typhoon Noru**
Thailand, Sept 2022
- 38 **Tropical Cyclone Nalgae**
Philippines, Nov 2022
- 39 **Drought**
Thailand, Jan 2023
- 40 **Tropical Cyclone Mocha**
Myanmar, May 2023
- 41 **Combined Effects of the Southwest Monsoon, TC Doksuri and TC Khanun**
Philippines, Aug 2023
- 42 **Flooding in 37 Provinces**
Thailand, Oct 2023
- 43 **Flooding in Southern Thailand**
Thailand, Jan 2024
- 44 **Combined Effects of the Southwest Monsoon, TC Gaemi, and TC Prapiroon**
Philippines, Jul 2024
- 45 **Tropical Cyclone Yagi and Southwest Monsoon**
Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam, Sep-Oct 2024
- 46 **Tropical Cyclone Trami and Kong-rey**
Philippines, Oct 2024
- 47 **Tropical Cyclone Yinling**
Philippines, Nov 2024
- 48 **Mandalay Earthquake**
Myanmar, Mar-Apr 2025
- 49 **Combined Effects of Tropical Cyclone Wipha, Francisco, Co-May, and Enhanced Southwest Monsoon**
Lao PDR, Philippines, Jul-Aug 2025

MYANMAR

Myanmar's Collaborative Disaster Response Efforts with ASEAN Member States



Ministry of Social
Welfare, Relief and
Resettlement
Myanmar

The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) was signed in 2005 and entered into force in 2009. Conceived to systematically and collectively reduce the adverse impacts of disasters in the region, AADMER provides a framework for risk identification, prevention, preparedness, emergency response, and recovery. The establishment of the AHA Centre in 2011 was influenced significantly by ASEAN's coordinated response to Cyclone Nargis in 2008, which caused more than 130,000 fatalities in Myanmar and prompted unprecedented regional and international collaboration. This article illustrates the evolution of disaster governance in ASEAN, shaped by shared experiences, and emphasises the role of AADMER as a foundation for regional resilience and humanitarian cooperation.

Throughout its 20-year journey, the AADMER has been implemented through successive 5-year Work Programme. Covering key pillars—Risk Identification and Monitoring, Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, Disaster Preparedness, Emergency Response, and Rehabilitation, AADMER reflects a strong spirit of regional cooperation.

Myanmar's engagement in the AADMER's implementation includes:

- **Leadership and collaboration:** Myanmar actively assumes leadership responsibilities within assigned pillars of the AADMER Work Programme while proactively collaborating in pillars led by other ASEAN members. The 2016 publication of the *ASEAN Recovery Reference Guide* stands as a notable collaborative achievement of the Recovery Working Group co-chaired by Myanmar, designed to assist ASEAN Member States in enhancing recovery preparedness and implementing timely, efficient, and effective recovery programmes.
- **Financial support:** Myanmar contributes through voluntary financial commitments to both the AADMER Fund and the AHA Centre Fund, which are fundamental to the success of regional responses to disasters.
- **Operational cooperation:** Myanmar engages robustly in joint disaster response efforts within the ASEAN framework.

Lessons from Cyclone Nargis and institutional evolution

Cyclone Nargis was a watershed moment for Myanmar and ASEAN. At the time, Myanmar lacked comprehensive legislation for disaster management, and AADMER had not yet come into force. The emergency response was coordinated through a tripartite mechanism involving Myanmar, ASEAN, and the United Nations, paving the way for more structured regional disaster governance. The success of this cooperation not only accelerated the operationalisation of AADMER but also contributed to the establishment of the AHA Centre, strengthening regional capacity for coordinated humanitarian assistance.

The shared experiences from Nargis and other regional disasters led to the creation of the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) in 2012. DELSA ensures the timely provision of humanitarian supplies during regional disasters. Initially based solely in Malaysia, DELSA now operates from three strategically located warehouses.

Post-Nargis experiences directly informed Myanmar's enactment of the Natural Disaster Management Law (2013), reflecting AADMER principles. This law enabled more systematic domestic disaster management and enhanced effectiveness in implementing AADMER initiatives with ASEAN partners. Further refining international cooperation, the Natural Disaster Management Rules (2015), specifically Rule 42, designates a Competent Authority for International Communication. This Authority coordinates international assistance efforts—including search and rescue teams, emergency medical teams, and humanitarian aid—through a "One Corridor Channel," ensuring swift and efficient processes, particularly under AADMER Part V (Emergency Response).

Recent disaster responses and regional solidarity

Cyclone Mocha (2023). In the aftermath of Cyclone Mocha, Myanmar worked closely with the AHA Centre's in-country liaison teams and ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Teams (ASEAN-ERAT). Activities included situation reporting, needs assessments, and the facilitation of DELSA relief distribution, demonstrating the operational maturity of ASEAN's support mechanisms.

Mandalay Earthquake (28 March 2025). This case study could be discussed in two significant parts: national response and recovery initiatives, and regional collaborative efforts.

i. National response and recovery initiatives

Field assessments quantified extensive damage across critical public and private sector infrastructure, and the estimated losses surpassed 7,979 billion Myanmar kyat (approximately 3.8 billion US dollars). The State responded decisively through the National Natural Disaster Management Fund. By 11 August 2025, the NDMC provided over 1652.573 billion Myanmar kyat (approximately 786.93 million US dollars) to different response activities (Figure 1).

An additional 340 billion Myanmar kyat (approximately 161.90 million US dollars) has been utilised for early recovery initiatives. Furthermore, food and essential commodities donated domestically and internationally were distributed promptly to affected areas.

Significant damage to offices, basic education schools, and staff residences necessitated the rapid deployment of temporary solutions. Authorities

distributed 442 container offices, 9,048 container shelters, and 20 prefabricated school buildings to relevant ministries and affected regions. Construction included 2,972 completed temporary housing units in Nay Pyi Taw (127 ongoing) and 57 completed temporary classrooms (7 ongoing).

Recovery operations, guided by national leadership, are progressing rapidly across all sectors (Figure 2).

Recovery efforts continue at an accelerated pace across all sectors and implementing agencies to ensure comprehensive rehabilitation.

ii. Regional collaborative efforts

Following the 7.7 magnitude earthquake, Myanmar promptly activated national emergency response measures under AADMER Article 10, mobilising domestic human, financial, and logistical resources. Concurrently, under Article 11, Myanmar requested and welcomed regional and international assistance. The Emergency Operations Centre maintained real-time communication with the AHA Centre, facilitating the deployment of DELSA relief items, ASEAN-ERAT, and in-country liaison teams.

Significantly, this was the first ASEAN-ERAT deployment comprising representatives from all Member States, conducting needs assessments across Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, and Sagaing Regions.

In addition to immediate relief, early recovery projects were initiated, including the construction of 20 prefabricated schools facilitated by the AHA Centre and a 250,000-US dollar reconstruction project funded by the Government and people of the Philippines.

Figure 1

Education and Health

 All basic education schools have resumed operations. All hospitals and clinics are fully functional.

Transportation

		
Roads	Bridges	Railway Lines
94.43%	38.83%	96.39%
restored	restored	restored

Utilities

	
Telecommunications	Electricity Distribution
97.19%	98.61%
reinstated	reinstated

Figure 2

 **Emergency Food Aid** **> 42.094 Billion MMK**

 **Bereavement Support** **> 4.733 Billion MMK**

 **Medical Assistance to the Injured** **0.175 Billion MMK**

 **Housing Reconstruction** **> 1605.571 Billion MMK**

TOTAL **> 1652.573 Billion MMK**

Reflections and strategic value of AADMER

The case studies underscore the "spirit of ASEAN" in translating regional commitments into practical, coordinated action. AADMER has proven to be more than a policy instrument; it is a platform for collective resilience-building and a catalyst for global leadership in disaster risk governance.

Through shared leadership, mutual assistance, and the institutional mechanisms it has fostered, AADMER has positioned ASEAN to respond decisively to disasters while strengthening long-term resilience.

As AADMER celebrates its 20th anniversary, Myanmar's experience demonstrates the value of regional solidarity in disaster management. From the formative lessons of Cyclone Nargis to the coordinated responses to Cyclone Mocha and the 2025 Mandalay earthquake, ASEAN's disaster governance architecture—anchored in AADMER—has evolved into an effective and reliable mechanism.

Looking ahead, sustaining this momentum requires continued investment in joint preparedness, capacity building, and early recovery strategies, ensuring ASEAN remains a region of resilience in the face of future hazards.

MALAYSIA

MALAYSIA'S SMART HEROES IN ACTION **MAS01 MyTeam Relief Operation to the Myanmar Earthquake 2025**



*National Disaster Management
Agency, Prime Minister's
Department, Malaysia*

28 March 2025, Myanmar was shaken by a devastating 7.7 magnitude earthquake. The tremor struck at 12:50 pm local time (2:20 pm Malaysian time), with its epicentre in Sagaing Region, northwest Myanmar. As people were still reeling from the impact, a powerful 6.4 aftershock followed soon after, leaving widespread destruction in its wake.

The scale of the disaster demanded urgent international support. On the same day, Malaysia stepped forward. The Deputy Prime Minister, as Chairman of the National Disaster Management Committee, swiftly approved the deployment of Malaysia's elite rescue team, the Special Malaysia Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team (SMART), to Myanmar on an Urban Search and Rescue mission.

The mobilisation was also aligned with the regional mechanism of the ASEAN Joint Disaster Response Plan (AJDRP) and the Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP), under which SMART serves as one of Malaysia's earmarked response tools for regional emergencies.

The deployment, callsign MAS01 MyTeam Relief Operations, was not just another mission. It was the activation of an INSARAG-Classified Heavy Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team, mobilised within hours. Behind the scenes, the International Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Working Committee, led by National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA) and comprising the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Royal Malaysian Air Force, Fire and Rescue Department, Customs Department, Immigration Department and others, worked tirelessly to ensure everything moved like clockwork. Adding to the momentum, the Embassy of Myanmar in Kuala Lumpur graciously fast-tracked visas and flight permits. It was teamwork in its truest form.

At 8 am on 30 March, two Royal Malaysian Air Force A400M aircraft carried MAS01 into Nay Pyi Taw after a three-hour flight. MAS01 deployed with 50 personnel and 33 tons of cargo, including two 5-ton trucks and a 4x4 vehicle. The team brought together a perfect blend of expertise: 44 SMART officers, 2 HAZMAT specialists from the Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia (JBPM), and 4 Malaysian Armed Forces medical professionals (two doctors and two paramedics). Together, they formed a self-sufficient force covering the five core USAR components: management, logistics, search, rescue, and medical.

But the real challenge awaited in Sagaing City, 250 km away. Damaged roads and tight security stretched the journey into an 11-hour ordeal, with

the convoy escorted by police through 10 security checkpoints. Yet, in a heartwarming twist, local communities greeted the team with smiles and had even built makeshift shelters to welcome the Malaysian rescuers. By 1:30 am on 31 March, MAS01 had set up its Base of Operations (BoO) at Sagaing Football Field, just in time to celebrate Eid al-Fitr together far from home, turning a foreign field into a place of solidarity and faith.

For nine intense days, Sagaing became MAS01's battlefield against time and rubble. At 11 worksites assigned by the Local Emergency Management Authority (LEMA), the team combed through collapsed buildings and unstable ruins under blistering heat, with temperatures ranging from 37°C to 41°C and amid ongoing aftershocks, recorded up to 102 tremors by 7 April. Their determination paid off: 11 victims were recovered, including one survivor brought out alive. That moment, when silence turned to cheers, was a powerful reminder of why this mission mattered.

The impact went far beyond numbers. MAS01 became a source of hope for locals, their professionalism and compassion earning praise not only from families of victims but also from Myanmar's authorities and international partners. Compliments poured in, but the greatest reward was the trust and gratitude of the people they served.

Of course, no mission succeeds by chance. Internally, MAS01's strength came from its training, discipline, and self-sufficiency, backed by strong

home-based coordination from NADMA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Malaysian Embassy in Myanmar, RMAF, and, of course, continuous support from the AHA Centre, Myanmar's National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC), and UNOCHA. Externally, the Government of Myanmar ensured safety, translators, and logistical support, while local communities embraced the team with warmth.

Just as important were the lessons beyond logistics and protocols. Cultural sensitivity, respect, and genuine listening became powerful tools for effective communication. The Malaysians did not just bring equipment; they brought humility, cooperation, and friendship. That spirit turned an international mission into a shared human journey.

On 4 April, the Myanmar Government officially declared the end of the search and rescue phase and the start of recovery phase. MAS01 wrapped up its mission on 5 April and flew home on 7 April 2025. They returned not only as rescuers but also as living proof of Malaysia's unwavering commitment to humanity.

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LAO PDR

RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF DISASTER

How Lao PDR Responded to the 2024 Floods



**Social Welfare Department,
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare**
Lao PDR

Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone of the Lao PDR distributed relief items to the affected population

In September 2024, two powerful storms, namely Tropical Cyclone Yagi and Tropical Storm Soulik, tore through northern Laos, leaving behind widespread destruction. Homes were destroyed, roads were washed out, and communities were left struggling to recover. It was one of the most devastating natural disasters the country has faced in recent years, highlighting Laos's vulnerability to extreme weather events intensified by climate change.

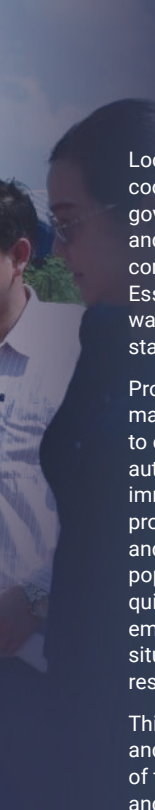
The storms brought heavy rains that triggered severe flooding, flash floods, and landslides across northern and central Laos. Entire villages were

submerged, roads were cut off, and critical infrastructure such as schools and health centres were damaged and destroyed. The Mekong River and its tributaries overflowed, making the situation even worse.

The disaster hit 10 provinces, including Luangnamtha, Houaphan, and Vientiane Capital, affecting 31 districts and over 500 villages. More than 128,000 people were affected, nine people lost their lives. Thousands of families lost their homes, crops were ruined just before harvest, and many communities were left with difficult access to clean water, food, or electricity.

The government's rapid mobilisation

As the floodwaters rose, the rescue teams led by the Lao People's Army were quickly deployed to carry out evacuations and search and rescue operations. At the same time, the Lao government responded swiftly. Just one day after damage reports came in, the Central Disaster Management Committee (CDMC) held an emergency meeting led by the Deputy Prime Minister to assess the severity of the situation. The committee immediately dispatched teams to the hardest-hit areas to coordinate relief efforts on the ground.



Local officials were instructed to coordinate closely with the national government to assess the damage and ensure that aid reached affected communities as quickly as possible. Essential supplies including food, clean water, medicine, and temporary shelters started reaching affected communities.

Provincial and district disaster management committees were instructed to closely coordinate with national authorities to assess damage and deliver immediate aid. Relief assistance, such as providing food, water, temporary shelters, and medicine, began reaching affected populations immediately. The government's quick mobilisation of its national emergency mechanism helped stabilise the situation, prevent further loss of life, and restore critical services.

This quick response helped save lives and restore basic services. But the scale of the disaster was so large that local and provincial resources alone were not enough.

A region comes together: ASEAN and international response

On 24 September 2024, the Department of Social Welfare, acting as the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), worked closely with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) and activated the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to organise a Needs Assessment and Early Recovery Meeting. This led to the formation of a Joint Needs Assessment Team, comprising government representatives, UN agencies, the local committee, and ASEAN. The assessment team conducted the joint needs assessment in Luangnamtha Province, Xayabouly, Luangprabang, Xiengkhuang, and Houaphan provinces. These efforts were instrumental in shaping a targeted response plan.

Regional solidarity was soon in motion. The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) deployed its In-Country Liaison Team (ICLT) to Laos, the team comprising specialists in information management, rapid assessment, and humanitarian logistics. The ICLT worked alongside national authorities to bolster operational capacity and contributed to the joint needs assessment efforts.

Through its Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA), AHA Centre facilitated the delivery of relief items valued at 167,817.80 US dollars, consisting

of 1,000 shelter repair kits, 5,000 hygiene kits, 2,000 kitchen kits, 510 family kits, and 5,000 mosquito nets, with the transportation support of the Singapore Air Force. Additionally, the Social Welfare Department communicated with the related agencies to utilise 589 tons of rice from the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve, and it was delivered to the most food-insecure communities.

This outpouring of regional aid was complemented by the IASC and international humanitarian organisations. The World Food Programme (WFP) distributed rice to 14,000 severely affected people, while World Vision provided 390 hygiene kits through interfaith groups in Vientiane. CARE International focused on Luangnamtha, delivering water, food, sanitation items, and health supplies, with a strong emphasis on meeting the specific needs of women and girls and other agencies/organisations that were not mentioned.

Rebuilding lives: The early recovery phase

As the floodwaters receded, the difficult task of rebuilding began. Joint assessments identified 469 recovery projects. Of these projects, 308 were classified as urgent and 161 were longer-term, aimed at building resilience against future disasters. The emergency project and recovery project requires a budget of 1,000 billion Lao Kip (approximately 50 million US dollars) to repair damaged infrastructure, support agriculture, and provide housing and livelihood assistance, education and healthcare facilities, and others.

Recognising the limitations of its budget, the government committed 257 billion Lao Kip (approx. 11.8 million US dollars) to kickstart emergency activities. Funding came from multiple sources, mainly government emergency reserves, the Central Disaster Management Fund, US dollar payout from the Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Insurance Facility (SEADRIF), and a 500,000-US dollar donation from the Republic of Korea, through the AHA Centre, used to procure zinc sheets, nails, and other housing materials.

This financial support was critical in initiating the reconstruction of homes and schools. Simultaneously, UN agencies and NGOs rolled out cash-for-work and cash transfer programmes, injecting money directly into affected communities and empowering people to take part in rebuilding their own lives, such as housing repair and river cleaning programmes.

Lessons learned: Turning crisis into opportunity

The 2024 floods showed just how vulnerable Laos is to natural disasters, but they also revealed the country's resilience and capacity to recover. While the response was not perfect, it offered essential lessons that can help the government better prepare for future emergencies and build a stronger, more resilient future.

On the other hand, these disaster events have given Laos a valuable lesson in improving disaster management systems. The rapid coordination between national and local authorities helps deliver emergency aid rapidly, save lives and reduce the suffering of those affected. Local committees proved essential in the early response efforts. Strengthening their capacity through training, equipment, and funding must remain a national priority. At the same time, the collaborative response from ASEAN, UN agencies, and donor countries reinforced the importance of international partnerships in tackling large-scale crises.

Recovery efforts also emphasised the importance of protecting the most vulnerable groups, especially women, children, and older people, through inclusive, gender-sensitive programs. Additionally, as the Lao PDR buys premiums with the Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Insurance Facility (SEADRIF), the rapid insurance payout from SEADRIF proved how financial preparedness can speed up response efforts during emergencies.

Looking ahead: Building a more resilient Laos

The damage from Tropical Cyclone Yagi and Tropical Storm Soulik remain visible, but the people of Laos are determined to rebuild. With continued government leadership, support from partners, and the strength of local communities, the country is moving toward a safer and stronger future, building back better infrastructure, improving warning systems, and helping people to learn how to stay safe from disasters.

The 2024 floods were a big challenge but also an opportunity. And though the road to recovery will take time, every repaired home, reopened school, and recovering village tells a story of hope, resilience, and renewal. In the face of adversity, the people of Laos are showing the world what it means to come back stronger.



ASEAN REGIONAL DISASTER EMERGENCY RESPONSE SIMULATION EXERCISE (ARDEX)

WHAT IS ARDEX?

THE ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise, or ARDEX, is a full-scale simulation exercise that seeks to test, practise, review, and evaluate ASEAN's emergency response and disaster management mechanisms. It is conducted on a regular basis, generally every two years.

The AHA Centre co-organises and co-chairs the conduct of ARDEX with a Host Country. The Host Country and the type of disaster scenario are decided based on regional priorities and the need to test specific emergency procedures.

WHY ARE SIMULATION EXERCISES IMPORTANT?

At the strategic level, ARDEX helps to test:



Guides and templates for ASEAN's standby arrangements



Information sharing



Cross-border mobilisation of resources and response teams



Processing requests and offers of assistance



Joint assessments by ASEAN-ERAT

At the tactical level, ARDEX helps to test:



ASEAN's command and control structure



Interoperability of response teams from member states



Communications



Casualty management

WHO PARTICIPATES IN ARDEX?

The exercises are participated in by disaster response agencies from the Host Country and other ASEAN Member States as well as invited teams and observers from the United Nations and international organisations.

HOW HAS ARDEX BEEN IMPLEMENTED OVER THE YEARS?

Eight simulation exercises have been conducted since 2005 as follows:

ARDEX-05

19 September 2005

 **Host Country** Malaysia

 **Location** Selangor

 **Scenario** Earthquake

ARDEX-06

27 September 2006

 **Host Country** Cambodia

 **Location** Kandal Province

 **Scenario** Flood

ARDEX-07

22-26 October 2007

 **Host Country** Singapore

 **Location** Singapore

 **Scenario** Multi-agency regional response

ARDEX-18

5-9 November 2018

 **Host Country** Indonesia

 **Location** Banten

 **Scenario** ASEAN SOP testing (multi-disaster)

ARDEX-13

21-24 October 2013

 **Host Country** Viet Nam

 **Location** Hanoi

 **Scenario** Multiple disasters (earthquake, flood, etc.)

ARDEX-08

August 2008

 **Host Country** Thailand

 **Location** Rayong Province

 **Scenario** Typhoon, storm

ARDEX-23

1-4 August 2023

 **Host Country** Indonesia

 **Location** Yogyakarta

 **Scenario** Earthquake, tsunami

ARDEX-25

22-24 July 2025

 **Host Country** Cambodia

 **Location** Phnom Penh

 **Scenario** Flood, typhoon

Sources:

AHA Centre. (2015). ARDEX handbook. <https://ahacentre.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/ARDEX-Handbook-2015-09-16-final.pdf>

AHA Centre. (2016). ASEAN Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP). <https://ahacentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/SASOP-Book.pdf>

AHA Centre. (n.d.). The Column – AHA Centre. Retrieved on 18 September 2025 from <https://thecolumn.ahacentre.org/>

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

The ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management seeks to position ASEAN as a global leader in disaster management. Towards this, ASEAN continues to build the professional capacities of its disaster management sector, showcase ASEAN's expertise and achievements worldwide, and form strategic partnerships with global institutions for disaster management cooperation.



Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR) 2024

From 14 to 18 October 2024, the Philippines hosted the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR) at the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City, in partnership with UNDRR. Ministers, officials, civil society leaders, youth groups, and private sector partners from across the region gathered under the theme “Surge to 2030: Enhancing Ambition in Asia-Pacific to Accelerate Disaster Risk Reduction.” The event built on the Sendai Framework Midterm Review and set the course for action in the final stretch to 2030.

Over five days, the conference examined how countries can mobilise financing for risk reduction, make disaster governance more inclusive and gender-responsive, and strengthen resilience at the local level. Delegates also brought attention to disaster displacement as a pressing challenge and underlined the role of science, technology, and innovation in reducing risks. The meeting concluded with the Co-Chairs’ Statement, urging governments and partners to step up ambition, investment, and cooperation so that resilience can reach communities most at risk across Asia-Pacific.

ASEAN issued a joint statement affirming its support for enhancing disaster risk reduction financing; leaving no one behind in disaster management through inclusive and gender-responsive disaster risk governance; leveraging science, technology and innovation in disaster management; and building local resilience.

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United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. (2024). APMCDRR 2024 Co-Chairs’ Statement. <https://www.undrr.org/publication/apmcdrr-2024-co-chairs-statement>

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7th Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

Held in Bali from 23 to 28 May 2022, the 7th Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GP2022) was hosted by Indonesia and co-chaired with UNDRR. The gathering brought together representatives from around 185 countries to reflect on the theme “From Risk to Resilience: Towards Sustainable Development for All in a COVID-19 Transformed World.” It was the first Global Platform since the pandemic and served as a crucial midpoint review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

The discussions centred on disaster risk governance, financing resilience, and linking disaster risk reduction with climate action and the SDGs. Particular emphasis was placed on inclusive participation, engaging women, youth, persons with disabilities, and Indigenous Peoples. Delegates underscored the importance of building effective multi-hazard early

warning systems and ensuring that communities can act on warnings. The meeting culminated in the Bali Agenda for Resilience, which urged governments and stakeholders to integrate resilience into all development planning and investments, noting that proactive action is far less costly than responding to disasters after they strike.

Reference:

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. (2022, May 28). 23-28 May 2022: Summary report GP2022. <https://globalplatform.undrr.org/news/23-28-may-2022-summary-report-gp2022>



SINGAPORE



SMALL STATE, BIG IMPACT Singapore's Role in Strengthening ASEAN's Disaster Management



Singapore Civil Defence Force

Located in the Pacific Ring of Fire, ASEAN is the most disaster-prone region in the world. In just mid-2025, ASEAN has faced close to 2,000 disasters, which have affected 45.6 million persons and displaced 2.1 million persons. Some 6,000 lives were lost, and damages amounted to 5.2 billion US dollars. Singapore, despite its size, contributes actively to advancing ASEAN's disaster management

capabilities and capacity. Through its strategic leadership, substantial contributions and strong operational readiness, the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) stands ready to serve as a valued member of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) and strives to enhance regional cooperation in all aspects of disaster management.

Contributions to regional ASEAN mechanisms: AADMER, establishment of the AHA Centre, and the ASEAN-ERAT

Since the early days when the idea of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) was mooted, Singapore has played a key role in

the establishment of regional disaster management mechanisms. The SCDF, as Singapore's national focal point for disaster management, holds the reputation as a leading disaster management and emergency response organisation within ASEAN. Mr. Kadir Maideen, an SCDF officer who has since retired, was seconded to the ASEAN Secretariat to work on the development of the AADMER.

To support the implementation of AADMER, there was a need to identify concrete actions and activities to be done, including the development of a regional mechanism for response to disasters. Mr. Kadir was part of the founding members of the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) concept. With no precedence, the team studied the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC)'s framework and developed the ASEAN-ERAT framework to suit the needs of the unique ASEAN landscape. Formed in 2008, the ASEAN-ERAT has since established itself as a critical regional disaster response mechanism and 17 years on, there are now 457 trained responders across all Member States, ready to be deployed to disasters within 48 hours.

In 2009, Singapore was invited to participate in the Task Force to establish the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance and disaster management (AHA Centre), alongside Indonesia, the Philippines, and the ASEAN Secretariat. The formation of the AHA Centre in 2011 has proven to be a great success, evident from its notable achievements, such as the strengthening of the ASEAN-ERAT framework, the development of the Standard Operating Procedures for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP), and the strong reputation that the AHA Centre has built as a leading regional disaster management organisation in the international fora.

Through the years, it was clear that the AHA Centre has been instrumental in helping ASEAN enhance its disaster management capabilities. The region has witnessed significant advancement through robust international partnerships, expanded financial support from key stakeholders, and refined response mechanisms—collectively elevating ASEAN's disaster management readiness.

Policy and practice: SPDDM, SEPDM and the AADMER Work Programme

In the arena of global thought leadership, Singapore inaugurated the ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management (SPDDM) in 2015. The platform was established to share achievements of the AADMER Work Programme 2011-2025, and to chart new strategic directions for the next AADMER Work Programme.

Over the years, the annual Dialogue has evolved to include discussions on key regional and global disaster management topics, opening new avenues for knowledge sharing and exchange with attendance from disaster management practitioners from international and regional organisations.

Singapore further enhances ASEAN's global leadership in disaster management through the Senior Executive Programme on Disaster Management (SEPDM), which equips senior leaders in disaster management with the necessary skills and knowledge. The SEPDM opens channels for networking and the exchange of best practices and experiences among senior practitioners with deep expertise, facilitating strategic discourse and innovation.

Beyond establishing platforms to advance ASEAN's efforts in disaster management, Singapore also holds key leadership roles within the ACDM. Singapore co-chairs two of the three Working Groups of the ACDM, namely the Working Group on Preparedness, Response and Recovery and the Working Group on Global Leadership. Together with the co-chairs from ASEAN Member States, Singapore ensures that the activities and programmes of the ACDM remain aligned with the AADMER and supports the implementation of the AADMER Work Programme, propelling the ACDM forward through innovation and international partnerships.

Singapore's contributions in disaster response

Since 1990, prior to the establishment of ASEAN institutions and mechanisms on disaster management, Singapore stood ready to respond and assist

neighbouring countries in urban search and rescue through Operation Lionheart. The 80-member International Search and Rescue Advisory (INSARAG)-certified Heavy contingent is on round-the-clock standby to provide disaster relief and humanitarian assistance.

Since 1990, Singapore has deployed the Operation Lionheart contingent to 21 overseas missions to assist with humanitarian relief. In March 2025, the SCDF Operation Lionheart contingent was among the first international teams to arrive and conduct search and rescue in response to the M7.7 earthquake that struck Mandalay, Myanmar. In addition, three of Singapore's ASEAN-ERAT responders were also deployed in less than 24 hours after the Government of Myanmar requested the assistance of ASEAN-ERAT.

Together with the other ASEAN Member States, Singapore continues to contribute to the ACDM's endeavour of developing the next AADMER Work Programme for 2026-2030, which aims to catapult ASEAN's global leadership in disaster management to greater heights, and potentially, outside the region.

Looking ahead and building on success

The Indian Ocean Tsunami was a moment of awakening for ASEAN on the need to be prepared for disasters, which will continue to occur. The increasing threat of compound hazards due to climate change further complicates the disaster risk landscape for ASEAN. Singapore remains resolute in its commitment to the "One ASEAN, One Response" vision and steadfast in contributing to regional resilience and recovery. Through the integration of cutting-edge technologies and continual refinement of operational mechanisms, Singapore continues to play its role in strengthening and deepening ASEAN's disaster management capabilities and resilience. This unwavering dedication to excellence and innovation strengthens ASEAN's position as a leader in disaster management, ready to meet the evolving challenges of tomorrow.

Written by Zohra Abdul Rahim, Staff Officer, ASEAN Development, Singapore Civil Defence Force



Strengthening ASEAN-UN Partnership in Disaster Management



Thandie Mwape

Head of Office, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Indonesia and ASEAN Liaison Office

UN and ASEAN colleagues at the 2018 INSARAG Asia-Pacific (A-P) Regional Earthquake Response Exercise in the Philippines

The increasing frequency, scale, and complexity of disasters in Southeast Asia underscore the need for strengthened regional cooperation in humanitarian action. The ASEAN region—one of the most disaster-prone in the world—faces a convergence of risks that demand coordinated and forward-looking responses to natural hazards, which have significant socio-economic impacts. Climate change is worsening vulnerabilities across the region, while the conflict in Myanmar, population displacement, and public health emergencies know no borders. Therefore, they all call for integrated preparedness and response plans. These challenges are compounded by an increased concentration of the population in urban centres, increasing the exposure of city populations to disasters, particularly in informal settlements in hazard-prone areas.

Disasters are constantly knocking back development gains and compounding risks from climate change, conflict, and unplanned urbanisation, undermining resilience. By way of a concrete example, on 28 March 2025, a 7.7 magnitude earthquake ripped through Myanmar, killing some 3,700 people and affecting thousands of others, including in some regions that face active hostilities. When the earthquake struck, Myanmar was already battling to meet the humanitarian needs of some 20 million people facing devastating impacts of the ongoing war and intermittent climate-induced disasters.

To respond to these complex challenges, the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), a legally binding framework adopted by ASEAN Member States in 2005, has become increasingly critical to building disaster-resilient nations.

The forthcoming ASEAN-UN Joint Strategic Plan of Action on Disaster Management (JSPADM) 2026–2030 presents a pivotal opportunity to strengthen and future-proof the ASEAN-UN partnership in disaster management. Building on more than a decade of collaboration and operationalised through successive AADMER Work Programmes, the next JSPADM must respond to an evolving humanitarian landscape defined by climate change, protracted conflict, rapid urbanisation, population displacement, and health emergencies, as well as a growing young demographic that should be seen as an incentive to risk management. The JSPADM must be responsive to a changing climate and mainstream cross-cutting themes on gender (with a strong focus on women and girls), anticipatory action, innovative financing, climate change adaptation, and the role of water as an enabler to adaptation and not just a risk, given the dominance of hydrometeorological hazards in the ASEAN region.

The UN's strategic thinking aligns with the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and the UN's Humanitarian Reset, reinforcing joint priorities on localisation, people-centred approaches, anticipatory action, resilience building, and principled humanitarian engagement. Against this backdrop, five key questions frame the way forward for ASEAN–UNOCHA collaboration.

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The forthcoming ASEAN-UN Joint Strategic Plan of Action on Disaster Management (JSPADM) 2026–2030 presents a pivotal opportunity to strengthen and future-proof the ASEAN-UN partnership in disaster management.

Cooperation during large-scale disasters

ASEAN and UN can share and deploy resources during large-scale disasters through the following:

- Operationalise JSPADM commitments on joint disaster response by deepening interoperability between ASEAN-UN disaster mechanisms, including the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Teams (ERAT) and the UN Disaster Assessment Coordination Teams (UNDAC), as well as the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG).
- Expand ASEAN-UN joint simulations and contingency planning exercises, ensuring national, regional, and international surge capacities are aligned, including through ARDEX.
- Institutionalise post-crisis after-action reviews within the AADMER Work Programme to systematically capture lessons and feed them into joint preparedness planning.

Financing approaches

The following collaborative financial approaches can ensure predictable and timely funding for disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation efforts:

- Under the JSPADM, leverage humanitarian financing frameworks that blend:
 - National resources and social financing (e.g., Zakat and Infaq in Indonesia, Malaysia and private sector financing through Connecting Businesses Initiative networks).

- The AADMER Fund for ASEAN-led contingency support, which the UN can support through applying lessons from multiple financing tools that the UN has been managing for decades.
- Global UN mechanisms (Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), country and region-based pooled funds for rapid disbursement.
- Strengthen AADMER Work Programme activities on resource mobilisation and private sector engagement, ensuring that local and national actors have direct access to financing channels.
- Prioritise multi-year investment in resilience and preparedness under JSPADM 2026-2030 to reduce reliance on ad hoc emergency appeals by leveraging innovative financing models, such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) bonds.

Use of early warning and information systems

ASEAN and the UN can jointly develop and use early warning and information systems for more effective disaster and climate action as follows:

- Align ASEAN's disaster monitoring platforms with UN risk and climate data systems through JSPADM objectives on risk assessment and early warning.
- Expand JSPADM activities on anticipatory action, embedding predictive analytics into ASEAN's operational planning.
- Promote shared methodologies for data collection, risk modelling, and impact analysis to strengthen joint situational awareness across ASEAN and UN actors.



UNDAC and ERAT members participate at the 11th ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) Induction Course in Brunei Darussalam in 2019



USAR teams from across ASEAN, ERAT members and UN attend 11th ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) Induction Course in Brunei Darussalam in 2019

Multi-stakeholder partnerships

Beyond technology, UNOCHA can help foster stronger human cooperation among all actors in ASEAN to integrate disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation through the following:

- Through JSPADM, scale up capacity-building initiatives led by the AHA Centre, with UNOCHA contributing technical expertise and lessons learned, and contributing to setting standards through globally tested tools.
- Deepen localisation in line with the Humanitarian Reset: supporting the shift in decision-making power and financing toward frontline responders, local NGOs, and national governments in support of nationally-led efforts.
- Expand linkages between ASEAN mechanisms and UN Resident Coordinators/UN Country Teams, embedding disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction into national development frameworks and Country Cooperation Frameworks.
- Advance JSPADM 2026-2030 priorities on cross-border disaster management protocols, including preparedness for displacement and migration.
- Jointly address food security, livelihoods, and health systems, recognising them as key resilience pillars, particularly by leveraging investments through UN Cooperation frameworks and implementing resilience and long-term cross-sectoral programmes on food security, nutrition, water, and sanitation, as captured in the ASEAN-UN Comprehensive Plan of Action, on which JSPADM is anchored.
- Uphold humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, where climate-induced disasters compound humanitarian needs.

funding mechanisms embedded in the JSPADM.

- iv. Invest in local leadership and capacity-building, making localisation a measurable outcome of ASEAN-UN cooperation.
- v. Prioritise displacement and food insecurity as cross-cutting themes in JSPADM 2026-2030, linking humanitarian action with resilience-building.
- vi. Strengthen South-to-South cooperation in disaster management for knowledge and skills transfer among ASEAN Member States and beyond the region.

Conclusion

The ASEAN-UNOCHA partnership, anchored in the JSPADM and its AADMER Work Programmes, has evolved into a model of regional-global humanitarian cooperation. The 2026-2030 JSPADM is not only an opportunity to consolidate this progress, but also to set a forward-looking agenda that responds to the realities of climate change, conflict, and complex emergencies.

By combining ASEAN's regional legitimacy, access, and proximity with OCHA's global humanitarian architecture, financing tools, and principled advocacy, this partnership can safeguard lives, protect development gains, and drive a people-centred humanitarian system fit for the future.

Cooperation to address humanitarian impacts

The following are the proposed cooperative efforts to address the humanitarian impacts of climate change in ASEAN:

Key recommendations for JSPADM 2026-2030

- i. Strengthen the application of the ASEAN-UNOCHA interoperability roadmap under JSPADM for joint surge response, ensuring the complementarity of skills and resources.
- ii. Support a blended financing framework that combines national, regional, and global mechanisms, with direct access for local actors.
- iii. Scale anticipatory action pilots into regional practice, with predictable



ONE YEAR OF IMPACT Strengthening ASEAN-EU Disaster Cooperation for a Safer Future



Maciej Popowski
*Director General of
EU Civil Protection
and Humanitarian
Aid Operations*



Lee Yam Ming
*Executive Director of
the AHA Centre*

The Former European Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez Lenarcic, and the AHA Centre Executive Director, Lee Yam Ming, at the signing ceremony of the Administrative Arrangement on disaster management between the EU's Department for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) and ASEAN's Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre), witnessed by the Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for Community and Corporate Affairs, Nararya Soeprapto, held at the ASEAN Secretariat on 17 October 2024

In September 2024, Typhoon Yagi tore through Southeast Asia, leaving devastation in its wake—claiming lives, displacing communities, and destroying livelihoods. At the same time, over 10,000 kilometres away, in the south of Europe, Portugal was battling raging wildfires that scorched vast areas and triggered evacuations.

These seemingly distant events are united by a common thread: From typhoons and floods to earthquakes and wildfires, both the EU and ASEAN regions are facing a growing array of hazards. Intensified by climate change, disasters are becoming more frequent, more severe, and more unpredictable. No country or region is immune—highlighting the urgent need for partnerships to strengthen collective resilience.

It is in this spirit of coordinated, forward-looking disaster risk management that we mark a significant milestone on 24 October 2025: the first anniversary of the Administrative Arrangement between the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) and the European Commission Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO).

"This partnership goes far beyond a formal agreement," said Maciej Popowski, Director General of EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. "It represents a shared vision of building resilient communities, enhancing disaster preparedness, and promoting coordination in the response to disasters in the spirit of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction."

A year of progress amid growing risks

Over the past year, the Administrative Arrangement has translated commitments into tangible actions. One of the most notable examples was the response to the devastating 7.7 magnitude earthquake in Myanmar on 28 March 2025. The European Union made available 13 million Euros in humanitarian aid to provide emergency shelter, medical care, clean water, and sanitation to people affected by the quake. It also transported over 1,000 metric tons (MT) of relief items through Humanitarian Air Bridge flights. The response was closely coordinated with the AHA Centre, exchanging information on the identified needs in the earthquake area and the delivery of relief items. Simultaneously, the EU activated the Copernicus Emergency

Management Service, delivering and sharing satellite-generated geo-spatial information to inform the response.

The finalisation of the Administrative Arrangement Action Plan paved the way for impactful initiatives, including expert exchanges, joint trainings, technical workshops, and strengthened policy dialogues between ASEAN and EU experts. These efforts not only enhance institutional capacities but also foster trust and a deeper understanding between the two regions. ASEAN disaster management professionals are gaining access to international standards, recognised certifications, and transferable skills—strengthening the region's operational readiness and capacity to respond effectively to crises.

In 2025, for example, DG ECHO and the AHA Centre are cooperating to organise workshops on humanitarian logistics for ASEAN Member States, covering key topics such as customs clearance and the import of humanitarian aid. The first session took place in Bangkok in January, followed by a second in Kuala Lumpur in September. While primarily addressing logistical challenges related to the AHA Centre's operations, these workshops will also facilitate the import of humanitarian aid for the wider humanitarian community.



A longstanding partnership

Since becoming Dialogue Partners in 1977 and elevating to Strategic Partners in December 2020, the EU and ASEAN have steadily deepened their political, security, and economic collaboration grounded in a shared commitment to multilateralism and a rules-based global order.

The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami was one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history. The scale of devastation prompted an unparalleled international response. The European Union was the very first institutional donor to respond, and with a total contribution of 1.5 billion Euros, also the largest. This tragic event marked a major turning point in humanitarian response efforts, reshaping how the international community addresses emergencies and highlighting the critical importance of disaster preparedness. In its aftermath, the EU began exploring more structured cooperation with ASEAN in disaster risk reduction and response.

Responding to the urgent need for coordinated action, the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) was signed in 2005 and entered into force in 2009. AADMER laid the foundation for the establishment of the AHA Centre in November 2011. Over time, the cooperation with the EU's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) expanded, from early technical exchanges to the launch of the European Union's Integrated Programme in Enhancing the Capacity of AHA Centre and ASEAN Emergency Response Mechanisms (EU-SAHA) in 2020.

"As a longstanding and committed partners, the EU has contributed to the Centre's governance, strategic planning, and capacity building," said Sujiro Seam, EU Ambassador to ASEAN. "This support has helped reinforce the AHA Centre's role as ASEAN's regional hub for disaster management knowledge and coordination. Notably, EU contributions have enhanced key preparedness tools, such as scenario-based decision-making frameworks and emergency response."

The signing of the Administrative Agreement in 2024 marked a new and pivotal step, deepening ASEAN–EU emergency response coordination and mutual learning in disaster risk management coordination.

Preparedness at the core of EU-ASEAN engagement

The European Union has long prioritised disaster preparedness and risk reduction, both within its borders and globally. As disasters intensify and climate change exacerbates the risks, the need for resilient systems has never been greater. The EU currently dedicates approximately 80 million Euros annually to disaster preparedness worldwide, including in the ASEAN region.

In 2025, the EU adopted a comprehensive Preparedness Strategy, outlining a whole-of-society approach to crisis management that spans all sectors and levels of governance. This strategy is in line with the ongoing work with ASEAN.

In Southeast Asia, the EU's engagement in this field spans three decades. Since 1995, the EU has collaborated with the United Nations, international NGOs, and local partners to strengthen disaster preparedness. These efforts have yielded tangible results, such as the piloting of innovative approaches, such as Anticipatory Action and Shock Responsive Social Protection. EU-backed projects have played a critical role in the development of frameworks to address imminent disasters.

In Cambodia, EU support enabled the provision of nationwide flood alerts to vulnerable communities. In the Philippines, the MOVE UP initiative enhanced disaster preparedness in urban areas, focusing on improved temporary shelter and resilient livelihood strategies.

At the same time, the EU Copernicus Programme in the Philippines (CopPhil) and the EU-ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity Package (SCOPE) Digital

programme aim to integrate Copernicus data to tackle pressing regional challenges like disaster response, climate change adaptation, and environmental protection, offering practical solutions that benefit the entire ASEAN Community.

This cooperation aligns with the EU Global Gateway strategy, which promotes smart, clean, and secure connections, with disaster risk management as a key sector to tackle global climate and sustainability challenges.

The 2024 Administrative Arrangement has helped consolidate EU-funded initiatives under a more coordinated framework—expanding reach, boosting efficiency, and increasing impact.

Looking ahead: Building resilience together

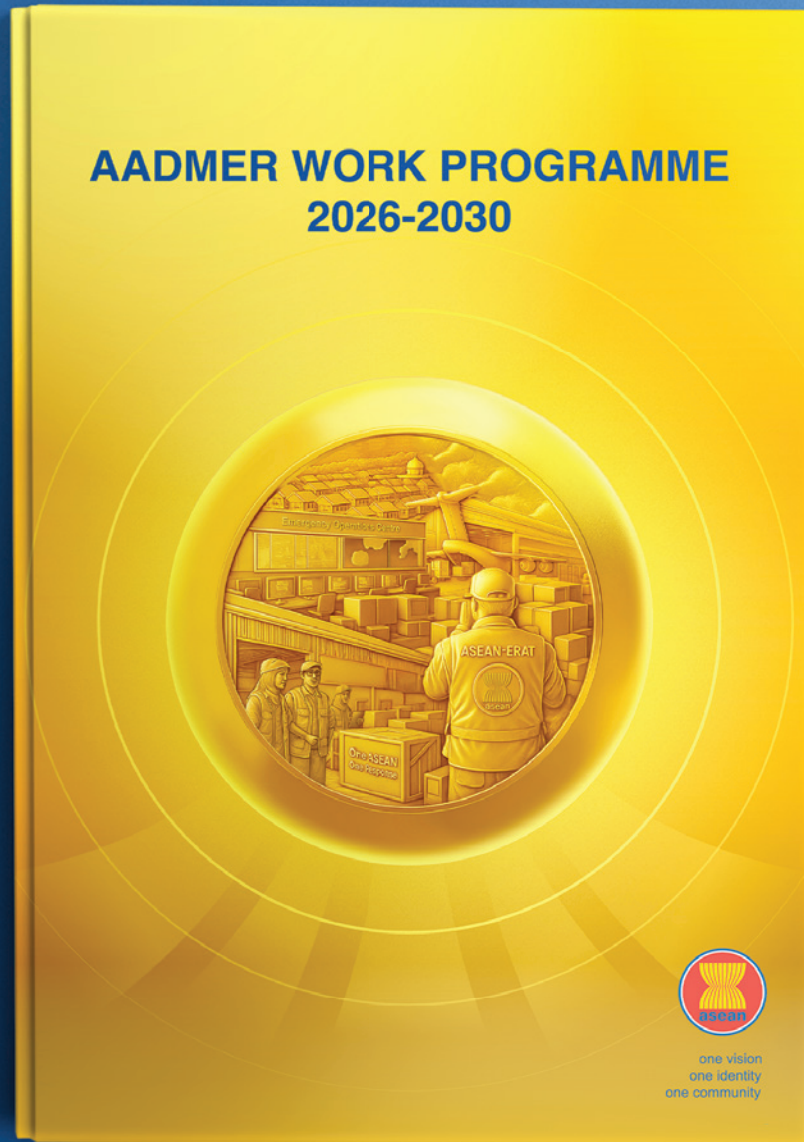
Looking to the future, the EU remains committed to supporting ASEAN's disaster management priorities, including the development of the AADMER Work Programme 2026–2030, which will shape the region's disaster management in the years to come. The EU's continued engagement will be key in addressing critical challenges such as building uniform capacities across ASEAN countries, embedding preparedness tools into national agencies, and transitioning from response to prevention, resilience planning, and climate mitigation.

Through the collaboration between DG ECHO and the AHA Centre, supported by the EU-SAHA Programme, ASEAN and the EU have forged an alliance based on shared values and mutual learning. As climate-induced risks continue to rise, it is vital to build on this strong foundation by enhancing data sharing, scaling up capacity-building, engaging communities, and exploring financial innovations. "Our partnership with the European Union demonstrates how shared commitment and collective action can significantly strengthen ASEAN's capacity to respond to disasters. Not only enhancing preparedness and coordination but also ensuring that no community in our region is left behind when crises strike," said Executive Director of the AHA Centre, Mr Lee Yam Ming.

With continued European partnership and ASEAN's leadership in regional coordination, we will work towards a shared goal: a safer, more resilient future for both regions.

Together, we are turning challenges into opportunities and transforming lessons into action. We look forward to many more years of impactful cooperation.

Learn more about the AADMER
Work Programme 2026-2030



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