



Opening Remarks

By Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary-General of ASEAN

Regional Workshop on Strengthening Information Management for Humanitarian Mine Action in ASEAN

Jakarta, Indonesia, 10 August 2026

Ms Rothna Buth, Executive Director of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC),

Mrs. Jolanda Pfister Herren, Deputy Head of the Political Section, Embassy of Switzerland to Jakarta,

Mr. Henrik Rydberg, Programme Manager for Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA), Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD),

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, and Friends, including those joining virtually.

Good Morning.

1. This year marks ARMAC's tenth anniversary – an ASEAN centre of excellence – a decade in which the Centre has built its reputation through steady, practical work, particularly in supporting victims of explosive remnants of war (ERW) and strengthening partnerships with ASEAN's external partners, such as Canada and Switzerland. These achievements reflect not only ARMAC's dedication, but also the resilience of mine-affected ASEAN Member States, which have transformed difficult experience into real expertise.
2. Today marks another important step: the development of an information management system for humanitarian mine action. This will help interested ASEAN Member States with research and knowledge-sharing on the effects of ERW. In essence, it is about ensuring the right information reaches the right people at the right time so that better decisions can be made, resources can be allocated and directed where they are needed most, and, ultimately, lives can be protected.
3. ASEAN has seen the value of information management before. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the ASEAN BioDiaspora Virtual Centre, now the ASEAN Biological Threat Surveillance Centre, played a vital role in monitoring the

regional situation. In the area of disaster management, the ASEAN Disaster Information Network (ADINET) has been the knowledge hub critical to our regional preparedness and response. ARMAC now operates on that same front line, where managing data translates directly into saving lives.

4. I understand the internationally recognised Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) has supported mine action programmes around the world since its launch back in 1998. I am pleased to see that GICHD, which has played such an important role in developing IMSMA, is with us today. I am confident that over the next three days, GICHD will share lessons learnt that can inform the development of ARMAC's own regional system.

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. Please allow me to offer three suggestions.
6. First, it is essential to clearly articulate the value-add of an ASEAN-tailored approach to information management. The ASEAN version should not merely replicate, or become a subset of, IMSMA. Instead, it should identify what information is not currently available through IMSMA and ensure that our own system is reliable and accessible. In doing so, it can become the primary reference point for humanitarian mine action practitioners and experts working in and on Southeast Asia.
7. The system could eventually capture information, such as the extent of remaining contaminated land, the number of victims, national mine action stakeholders, demining capacities, assistance available to survivors, and each country's mine clearance targets and timelines. Together, these would give us a far more complete regional picture.
8. Second, information management must be continuously updated, developed, and maintained. IMSMA itself has evolved over two decades, and ARMAC should adopt that same mindset of continuous innovation; one that reflects Southeast Asia's unique geographical and operational context as the system grows. I would also encourage ARMAC to explore collaboration with Geographic Information System (GIS) providers within ASEAN — the technology used to map and analyse location-based data. Such partnerships would open further opportunities for innovation and improvement in the years ahead.
9. Third, information must translate into actual relevant policy and tangible outcomes. Today, the challenge is not a lack of information, but how to turn information into actionable intelligence. That is the key. That requires, in my view, closer collaboration and coordination with ASEAN Member States, alongside regular consultations and testing, to ensure the system remains practical, relevant and impactful.
10. Globally, resources for humanitarian mine action are dwindling, as donor priorities shift towards other, more active crises. Resource allocation must therefore be prudent, and investing in information management is a wise

choice, precisely because it is cost-efficient now and stands to have a long-term impact.

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11. I look forward to the next chapter in the development of ASEAN's own information management system for humanitarian mine action, and I reiterate that the ASEAN Secretariat stands ready to assist the work in that process.

12. It is now my pleasure to officially open the Regional Workshop on Strengthening Information Management for Humanitarian Mine Action in ASEAN. I wish this regional workshop a resounding success.

Thank you.
