

21st Annual Southeast Asia Red Cross Red Crescent Leaders Meeting

“Stronger Together for Climate Resilience and Recovery”

IFRC - National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies engagement with ASEAN

Session A Overview


Session Title Strengthening collaboration in disaster management in the ASEAN region	
Chair	IFRC Support
Benjamin William, Secretary General/CEO - Singapore Red Cross	Elkhan Rahimov, IFRC Representative to ASEAN/Head of Country Cluster Delegation

Key Objectives of the Session
The session will serve as a place for a discussion of approaches for growing collaboration between the National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies of Southeast Asia region, IFRC and ASEAN within the area of disaster management. Consider relevant recommendations, including activities and collaborative opportunities emerging from the discussions to strengthen the partnership in the future

Background and Current Issues - Key Insights & Contextual Factors

Signed in May 2022, the MOU between IFRC and ASEAN emphasizes disaster management, disaster risk reduction, health in emergencies, gender, youth, and climate change. This agreement aligns with the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) and its work programmes, aiming to bolster regional, national, and local disaster resilience (IFRC, 2022).

The Phnom Penh Statement adopted during RCRC SEA Leadership meeting in 2023 underscored the importance of the implementation of this MoU, with National Societies in Southeast Asia prioritizing three thematic areas of youth, gender and climate change. In addition to these three



areas, within Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies and within ASEAN, disaster management remains a cornerstone thematic area of programmatic focus for all involved parties.

Across the ASEAN region, challenges in relation to disaster management, preparedness, and response continue to mount, given growing trends in the disaster profiles of the region. Over the past 50 years, Asia has accounted for half of the world's economic losses from natural disasters, totaling more than US\$ 1.3 trillion. Climate-related hazards such as floods, typhoons, droughts, heatwaves, cold waves, and storm surges have impacted over 57 million people in the Asia Pacific region, including Southeast Asia. These hazards not only endanger the lives of the most vulnerable populations but also have far-reaching effects on community livelihoods, often leading to a loss of income and food security.

The National Societies in SEA region are looking proactively into support mechanisms within region, benefiting from existing deployment systems through IFRC (surge), ASEAN/AHA Centre (ERAT), bilateral deployments during emergencies between NSs, cooperation with respective government institutions. There are several capacity-building initiatives linked to ASEAN engagement, the ones of IFRC, hosted bilaterally by NSs and governments. The NSs of SEA region are also consolidating efforts in building capacities in First Aid, referring to 2nd First Aid network meeting of SEA region in Bali on 4-5th of September.

Bearing in mind that climate change is driving the increased frequency and severity of these extreme hazards, ASEAN has recognized the important role of anticipatory action as an increasingly vital component of comprehensive disaster risk management. The need to work collaboratively to address the changing dimensions of disaster preparedness, risk reduction, and response were also highlighted at the ASEAN launch of the Framework on Anticipatory Action in Disaster Management.

National Society Perspectives

The session responds to the commitment to organize yearly consultations with ASEAN Secretariat, AHA Centre and ASEAN member States on the implementation of the MoU. Since signing the MoU in 2022, the National Societies and IFRC engaged in following initiatives with ASEAN (reference to IFRC Presentation).

At this mid-term point of the MoU, National Societies and ASEAN counterparts may consider how to best leverage the remaining 3 years of the MoU to maximize impact and engage in meaningful action in relation to advocacy, training, program development, and resource allocation.

Possible guiding questions:

- What could be the format of a joint strategic level meeting in 2025? How to utilize existing meetings in ASEAN- NSs –IFRC calendars for 2025 so as to have focused topics for joint discussions (ASEAN SPDDM? SEA Leadership meeting? Stand-alone Strategic Dialogue meeting engaging also with all members of ACDM?)
- ERAT, IFRC Surge, SEA network of responders, newly established SEA RCRC First Aid network, different trainings and capacity building initiatives- how to coordinate those better?
- Can we have one or two joint initiatives support/co-funded by ASEAN/NSs/IFRC in line with priority areas defined in MoU?

Annex 1: Common Threads of Activity - Disaster Law

Annex 2: Common Threads of Activity - Disaster Risk Reduction

Annex 3: Common Threads of Activity - Disaster Relief and Emergency Response

Annex 4: Common Threads of Activity - Disaster Management

Annex 5: Common Threads of Activity - Health in Emergencies