

# THE COLUMN

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Photo Courtesy of the ASEAN Secretariat

## NEWS HIGHLIGHT

**Signing Ceremony of the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response:  
ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region**

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of Humanitarian Action**



ONE ASEAN  
ONE RESPONSE

VOLUME 21  
**2016**

One ASEAN One Response

THE AHA CENTRE NEWS BULETIN 2016

The vision of "One ASEAN, One Response" shall be echoed blatantly in all Member States to always remember to move forward and unite as one in responding to disaster within and outside the region. The ASEAN invited Leaders of all Member States to gather and sign the "ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN One Response".

It was conducted based on the principle of harnessing the individual and collective strengths of different sectors and stakeholders in ASEAN to effectively respond to disaster within and outside the region. The signing ceremony would be the main highlight of this edition of The Column.

This month, The Column chatted with Ms. Adelina Kamal, Director, Sustainable Development of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Department for the Special Edition of The Other Side. Ms. Kamal shared her more than two decades of experience within the humanitarian field, through creating history in the ASEAN Secretariat, and left the AHA Centre as her legacy.

Further on the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the Column, readers are presented the role of technology in increasing the effectiveness of disaster management in the Insights section. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in their World Disaster Report 2013 described the effectiveness of humanitarian actions using technology through four stages of disaster management.

Finally, we provide you the review of the 9<sup>th</sup> DELSA PSC Meeting, ACDM Working Group on Preparedness and the Final Exercise Planning Team (EPT) for ASEAN Regional disaster Exercise (ARDEX) & 1<sup>st</sup> ARDEX Referee Training.

If you wish to share some stories / articles / blogs / comments with us to improve the bulletin, please drop us a message at comm@ahacentre.org, and we will do the rest.

Sincerely,  
The Column editor

**?** The Column is a monthly news bulletin from the AHA Centre – capturing the latest activities from the organisation.

**Signing Ceremony of the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region**



The signing ceremony of the declaration was held by the Leaders of ASEAN Member States

The ASEAN region is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world, and with the increasing amount of disaster occurrences and scale of immediate response shown in the natural calamity, ASEAN should always be ready prior to future disaster happenings.

Numbers of action were taken by the ASEAN, from the establishment of the ASEAN Agreement on disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), including the establishment of the AHA Centre as its operational engine, the ASEAN Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP), and the ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ERAT).

Moreover, as a vision for Member States to move forward and unite as one solidarity in responding to disaster within and outside the region, the AHA Centre jointly developed the "One ASEAN, One Response".

As the continuation of the establishment of the ASEAN's vision in disaster management, the ASEAN jointly conducted a commemoration of a remarkable journey of ASEAN together with the ten ASEAN Member States and the AHA Centre

in envisioning the One ASEAN, One Response through the declaration of the vision.

The Leaders of ASEAN Member States signed the "ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region" at the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits and Related Summits that were conducted in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 6-8 September 2016.

Besides the ASEAN Leaders, the summit also attended by the Heads of State/Government of the ASEAN Dialogue Partners, including Australia, China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea and the United States, also the East Asia Summit countries – in their attendance in the ASEAN Plus Three Summit. It was held back-to-back under the Chairmanship of Lao PDR.

"The declaration is a major step for the ASEAN Community as it reaffirms ASEAN's readiness to achieve faster and collective response to disasters," said H.E. Le Luong Minh, Secretary-General of ASEAN during the signing ceremony of the declaration.

At the summit, Leaders reviewed the progress of implementation of the ASEAN Community Blueprint 2025 and provided guidance and

directives in addressing the challenges in implementing the plans.

Leaders of the ASEAN Member States signed an agreement on a collective response to disasters. It is part of the realisation of the "One ASEAN, One Response" vision, where the agreement included affirmation of the ten-nation alliance's will in responding to disaster inside and outside the region in a collective matter.

The declaration of One ASEAN, One Response was conducted to strengthen cooperation in mitigating disaster that has been agreed earlier under the agreement on Management of Disaster and Response to Emergency (AADMER) concluded in December 2007.

The declaration was inspired by and united under the motto of ASEAN, "One Vision, One Identity, One caring and Sharing Community" and convinced by the role of the AHA Centre that emphasized in realising the unity of effort with the spirit of One ASEAN, One Response.

Leaders were affirmed that actions will be in accordance with ASEAN's principles of respect for the independence and territorial integrity of AMS, and that all Member States must contribute assets and capacities on a flexible, voluntary and non-binding basis with contributions remaining under national command and control.

It is with great hope for the "One ASEAN, One Response" vision to be embodied not only in all ASEAN Member States and its operations basis, but also in the people of ASEAN to unite and uphold solidarity to act collectively in responding to disasters.

**ACDM Working Group on Preparedness and Response**



Malaysia and Singapore as the Co-chairs of the ACDM Working Group on Preparedness and Response during the 9<sup>th</sup> DELSA PSC Meeting

The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) is a proactive regional framework to achieve a cooperative, coordinated, and effective technical assistance and resource mobilisation in all aspects of disaster management within regional scope.

In AADMER, appropriate guidelines to attain effective mechanisms are discussed and planned to reduce disaster losses in lives, and in the social, economic, and environmental assets. The initial AADMER Work Programme 2010-2015 was a success that led to a new Work Programme 2016-2020.

The AADMER Work Programme 2016-2020 identified strategic policy issues as embodied in the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management. There are four (4) strategic components, namely: Risk Assessment, Early Warning, and Monitoring (renamed to be Risk Assessment and Awareness). In implementing the strategic components into action, the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) functions as the main driver to realising the vision and mission of AADMER. A subsidiary thematic Working Groups have been established under the ACDM to lead the technical implementations of the AADMER Work Programme. Each working group shall exercise oversight functions over projects and programmes developed under each priority programme. The working groups consist of:



The ACDM Working Group on Preparedness and Response is jointly chaired by Malaysia and Singapore with representation from Lao People's Democratic Republic, Philippines, and Thailand and Support from the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (DMHA) Division and the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre).

The ACDM working Group on Preparedness and Response recently co-chaired the 9<sup>th</sup> Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting for the "Establishment of a Disaster Emergency Logistics Systems for ASEAN" (DELSA) in SCDF Head Quarter, Singapore. Review of the meeting will be described in the following article.

## 9<sup>th</sup> Delsa Project Steering Committee Meeting



Group photo of the 9<sup>th</sup> DELSA PSC Meeting

On December 2012, the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) Project was established in Subang, Malaysia. The DELSA Project aims to establish a logistics system which can serve disaster-affected Member States in a timely manner, as well as to enhance the capacity of the AHA Centre and ASEAN Member States in handling disaster emergency logistics operation, through various trainings and technical supports, which made available from the support of the Government of Japan.

Since its establishment, DELSA has played a fundamental role in providing substantial support to the ASEAN Member States. The Project Steering Committee members which co-chaired by Malaysia and Singapore and the Chairs of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) Working Group on Preparedness and Response conducted the 9<sup>th</sup> DELSA Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting on 27 September 2016 at the SCDF Head Quarter, Singapore.

The meeting was attended by representative from Japan Mission to ASEAN, Japan ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) Management Team, Office of Civil Defence Region 8 of the Philippines, ASEAN Secretariat, and the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre)

The meeting adopted 12 agendas including updates of activities resulting from the previous 8<sup>th</sup> DELSA PSC, review and evaluation of the ACE Programme 3rd batch Completion Report and discussion of the next batch, updates on the communication activities, status of DELSA stockpiles and the procurement process of batch 3, development of the 5 Years Logistics Framework of the AHA Centre as well as discussion regarding several essential aspects.

One of the highlights of the meeting was the presentation of the very first DELSA Relief Items Catalogue, presented by Mr. Andri Suryo, the Communications Officer of the AHA Centre.

The meeting suggested the catalogue to be presented at the upcoming ACDM Meeting and ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in October, to be held in Manado, Indonesia.



Mr. Kamogawa Hisashi from Mission of Japan to ASEAN (right) and Mr. Zin Aung Swe (left) from JAIF Management Team

## Final Exercise Planning Team (EPT) for ASEAN Regional Disaster Exercise (ARDEX) and 1<sup>st</sup> ARDEX Referee Training



Group Photo of the 1<sup>st</sup> ARDEX Referee Training

The ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Exercise (ARDEX) is coordinated by the AHA Centre to practice, assess, and review disaster emergency response mechanisms under the ASEAN Standby Arrangements and Standard Operating (SASOP) in facilitating a close and effective collaboration amongst the host country, other ASEAN Member States and between ASEAN and the relevant United Nations and international organisations in handling a major disaster as stated in the SASOP.

September 2016 marked two important events relevant to the effectiveness of ARDEX, those are the Final Exercise Planning Team (EPT) Meeting for ARDEX on 5-6 September 2016, that was conducted back to back with the 1<sup>st</sup> ARDEX Referee Training on 7-8 September 2016 in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

The Final EPT Meeting was attended by respective representatives from ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) Focal Points. Attendees discussed and reviewed the plan for ARDEX 2016 including the confirmation on the level of participation from ASEAN Member States and partners, finalisation of Master Scenario Event List, Finalisation of Exercise control structures and final review of logistics arrangements – through two sub-events, namely Table Top Exercise (TTX) and Coordination Exercise (CoorDEx) that are scheduled to be held in the late November 2016.

On the other hand, the ARDEX Referee training aimed to establish a pool of well-trained referees in the region who will help evaluate the ARDEX exercises as well as other regional or national exercises. Participants of the training had the opportunity to learn and engaged in a discussion regarding competences of Referees' allocation, behaviour in groups, command and control, observation on how to avoid biases and pitfalls, and skills, attitude, and behaviour of ARDEX Referees.

The next activity for Referees would be the Referee briefing which is planned to be conducted in November 2016.

Both events of ARDEX would not be realised without the support from the Global Initiative on Disaster Risk Management (GIDRM), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the AHA Centre.



Final Exercise Planning Team for ARDEX

## DISASTER OUTLOOK

SEPT 2016

The AHA Centre One ASEAN One Response

	Affected Houses	27,600 Units
	Affected Agriculture	26,900 Ha
	Affected Population	240,000 People
	Death	49 People
	Displaced People	13,000 People
	Injured People	65 People



### SEPTEMBER

#### DISASTER COMPARISON NUMBER

2015 - Black bar  
2016 - Red bar



### GENERAL OVERVIEW

Indonesia reported the highest number of natural disasters occurring in the region with 22 incidents, representing 55% of the total 40 incidents recorded for the month of September. This is followed by 6 incidents in Malaysia, 5 in Thailand, 4 in the Philippines, 2 in Viet Nam and, 1 in Myanmar. Flooding is the highest recorded disaster with 26 incidents, followed by 5 storm and wind incidents, 3 incidents of landslides, and 1 reported drought incident. A total of about 240,000 people were affected by these disasters, displacing approximately 13,000 and damaging 27,600 houses. Compared to the same month last year, there were lesser disasters reported at 9 incidents in the region in 2015.

### FORECAST FOR OCTOBER

Inter-monsoon conditions are expected to start around the beginning of the month. Light wind and shower activities with occasional short periods of dry weather characterise the inter-monsoon season.

Myanmar, north Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Vietnam, Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia's North and West Sumatra, West Timor and East Nusa Tenggara will have a normal rainfall outlook for the month of October. Central and south Thailand, Indonesia's Kalimantan Provinces, Sulawesi, Maluku Islands, West Nusa Tenggara, and Papua is forecasted to have a slightly above normal rainfall. The rest of Indonesia, South Sumatra and Java is expected to be wet with above normal rainfall. (source: <http://asmc.asean.org/asmc-seasonal-outlook/>).

Precautionary measures for hydrometeorological hazards (e.g. tropical cyclones/ typhoons, thunderstorms, coastal storm surges, floods including flash floods) and its accompanying effects (e.g. landslides, dispersion of volcanic eruption material) should be implemented. As the inter-monsoon season will have the occasional brief periods of dry weather, hotspot activities may occur and should be prepared for accordingly.

#### DISCLAIMER:

The use of boundaries, geographic names and related data shown are not warranted to be error free or implying official endorsement from ASEAN Member State.

#### SOURCE:

Basemap is from global administrative area. Information is generated from many sources including NDMO, International Organisation and news agencies.

Supported by:



## INSIGHTS

### Technology and the Effectiveness of Humanitarian Action

The use of technology offers concrete ways to make humanitarian assistance more effective, efficient, and accountable, and perhaps could reduce the vulnerability and strengthen resilience. Especially in disaster-prone countries, like ASEAN, technology can contribute to a critical difference and make a great impact in giving people early warning of events.

Referring to the four phases of disaster management, from mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in their World Disaster Report 2013 explained about the effectiveness of humanitarian action during each of the stages.

#### 01 Technology for disaster mitigation

The very first and most important phase in communicating disaster is during the early warning distribution. A proper early warning system could prevent the vulnerabilities of possible impacts.

However, there are several factors to increase the effectiveness of the effort, including:

 Good scientific knowledge of the risks

 Highly automated monitoring and warning services

 People-centred dissemination of meaningful warning

 Community driven public awareness building

#### 02 Technology for disaster preparedness

After a good early warning system, other stage that is similar essential during the disaster is the efforts to strengthen resiliency in actively preparing for possible risks.

It includes creating plans to save lives and infrastructures, as well as response and rescue services for operations.

In increasing the effectiveness of preparedness efforts, technology plays in several focus areas, including:

Setting up **resource databases** and resource mobilisation systems that map the available response resources in the country



Creating **knowledge networks** that focus on sharing best practices in humanitarian response at both sectoral and geographical levels



**Training humanitarian responders** and communities at risk through effective use of technology

#### 03 Technology for disaster response and recovery

The last phase probably holds the most difficult situation, which is to respond during the immediate aftermath. In this phase, humanitarian action needs to be prompt and targeted – it is about taking the right decisions that can make the differences between life and death.

Technologies can play an essential role to enable better information and communication management of the limited resources for the decision-makers, through:

 Situational awareness – improved understanding of the situation

 Needs analysis – understanding of the needs of the affected community

 Coordination and resource allocation of the overall humanitarian response efforts and available resources

 Awareness-raising not only for the affected community, but also for the relief-distribution workers and volunteers

 Community-driven response by involving affected communities more in the humanitarian response

## THE OTHER SIDE

### Ms. Adelina Kamal

Director for Sustainable Development Directorate, ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Department, ASEAN Secretariat



#### You started very early in the ASEAN Secretariat. What was the story behind you becoming part of the ASEAN Secretariat?

I found out that there was a vacant position in the ASEAN Secretariat from a friend of mine when I was still working as an English teacher for high-school students in one of the local English course institutions in Jakarta. I also applied for three to four other positions with the private sector. Some of them already offered me with positions but somehow I was more inclined to work for the ASEAN Secretariat, perhaps because it was different from the others and perhaps it was because Indonesia is one of the members of ASEAN, so I felt like being 'summoned' to join ASEAN and become part of the ASEAN family.

I joined the ASEAN Secretariat in December 1994. From the twenty-two years of my service there, I have served five Secretaries-General of ASEAN. Back then, the Secretary-General of ASEAN was accorded ministerial status. Before that, the predecessors only served as Secretaries-General for the ASEAN Secretariat. It was also a new era for the ASEAN Secretariat as we witnessed professionals coming in.

My career started in a new division with only two to three people in our team. My focus was on project development, evaluation and management, not on disaster management yet.

#### How did you start working in the area of disaster management?

I was working in that new division as an Assistant Programme Officer for about 3 years before I got promoted as a Programme Officer in 1997. I was informed by one of my colleagues in the Environment Division that the ASEAN Secretariat was setting up a project management unit with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to handle the transboundary haze issues. At that time, ASEAN experienced probably the worst environmental disaster in the history. So I joined the ASEAN-ADB project in 1998 as the Assistant Programme Manager, then I got recruited by the ASEAN Secretariat in 2001 as a Senior Officer for the Environment Division with transboundary haze as my main portfolio.

In late 2003, ASEAN Member States started to give more attention to the disaster management portfolio and decided to strengthen the regional cooperation by elevating the expert-level working group into a full-fledged ASEAN body, later known as the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management or ACDM. Given this development, in early 2004, the Secretary-General of ASEAN at that time assigned me with the disaster management portfolio. Back then, disaster management was not considered as an exciting portfolio at the ASEAN Secretariat and it was never handled full time by an officer.

So the portfolio was given to me, not by choice. I think the Secretary-General considered that transboundary haze was somewhat similar to disasters, and he was confident that the Environment Division could develop the portfolio based on our experience with the haze issues. So I took up the challenge, and we developed the portfolio into one of the most exciting portfolios in ASEAN today. Now, I consider that the assignment was a nice gift from the Secretary-General. I am fortunate that I was able to develop the portfolio from scratch and grow with it.

#### And then, what happened after the Indian Ocean Tsunami in December 2004?

The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami was the first-ever mega disaster that affected the ASEAN countries. It surely changed the way ASEAN pursued regional cooperation in the area of disaster management. However, as the frequency of

disasters was on the rise, ASEAN already initiated the idea of creating a regional instrument to facilitate cross-border movement of resources in times of disasters, even before the Indian Ocean Tsunami. While the idea was already conceived before the tsunami, it was that mega disaster that expedited the development of the regional instrument, known now as the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response or AADMER.

#### What was the condition back then when AADMER was still being developed and all? Was there any challenge?

Things were falling into place somehow at the right time. Before the tsunami, the ACDM already had the intention to come up with a regional instrument to allow resource sharing and helping one another in times of disasters. ASEAN Secretariat was tasked to conduct studies, gather reference materials and come up with the first draft of the instrument. The draft was then presented to the ASEAN Ministers in charge of Disaster Management, who met in Phnom Penh in early December. At that time, Philippines just suffered from a landslide. The Ministers made a decision that the regional instrument should be further developed and tasked the ACDM to start negotiating the instrument. No one however ever expected that three weeks later, the tsunami hit our region, affected four of the ASEAN countries and the other neighbouring countries.

After the tsunami, the ACDM was tasked by the ASEAN Leaders to finalise the Agreement as soon as possible. So my colleagues and I from the Secretariat worked with the ACDM and we facilitated the negotiation of the Agreement among the Member States. We often had to stay up late during the negotiation process, which lasted for four months. As our memories from the tsunami were still fresh at that time and the affected ASEAN countries were still in the midst of the recovery process, we were able to use the experience and realities on the ground into the drafting board.

The Agreement was signed by the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN in Vientiane in July 2005. AADMER is one of the fastest-negotiated agreements in ASEAN. As the negotiation and finalisation process was done right after the tsunami, AADMER captured the enormous experience of the individual ASEAN Member States and ASEAN as a region in responding to the mega disaster. The idea of AHA Centre also came out during the negotiation process. It was exciting to recall how the AADMER and AHA Centre came about, and I am so fortunate to be part of the making of both AADMER and AHA Centre.

#### Could you tell us more on how the AHA Centre was conceptualised? How did it happen?

The ASEAN Secretariat did not put the idea of AHA Centre on the very first draft of the AADMER. We put the ACDM as the one in charge of facilitating the cooperation as the ACDM had already been established at that time. But then, Indonesia as the chief of the negotiating committee initiated the idea of AHA Centre, considering that the ACDM would only meet at least once a year. Other Member States then agreed to the importance of having a regional coordinating centre that would continuously monitor disasters and facilitate ASEAN's response to disasters in a timely manner.

#### How did the name of AHA Centre come up?

It came from Indonesia... Indonesia came up with the idea of having the AHA Centre as part of the AADMER. At first, AHA Centre would stand for the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Centre, as provided for in the ASEAN Security Community Plan of Action. However, during the discussion among the Member States on the role of the Centre, they considered that affected countries should have the primary role in coordinating disaster response within their respective territories and what was needed was a regional centre to facilitate and serve as the coordinating body and operational engine of AADMER. Then, they came up with the name of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance to emphasize the coordinating and facilitating role of the AHA Centre, and also stressed that the scope would be on disaster management.

#### What was it then in 2011 when the AHA Centre was established?

After the AADMER was signed in July 2005, the AHA Centre could not be established right away as AADMER had to be ratified first by all Member States. However, while waiting for the process to complete, we decided to maintain the momentum by coming up with tools needed to operationalise the AADMER. We thought that we should start developing the tools so they could be handed over to the AHA Centre when it is ready to operate. So we came up with the concept of operations for the AHA Centre, developed the SASOP, kick-started the ARDEX, and established the ERAT. The development of these operational tools, which are now fully managed by the AHA Centre, was already initiated before the AHA Centre was established in 2011. Disasters could happen anytime so it is always better to be prepared and put in place necessary mechanisms, while waiting for the formalities.

#### Yes, and then Cyclone Nargis happened in 2008 and you were deployed as part of the ERAT? How was it?

I was the first team leader of ERAT, deployed after Cyclone Nargis made landfall in Myanmar in May 2008. The concept of ERAT and SASOP was already approved by the ACDM so following the ASEAN Secretariat's recommendation, the ACDM decided to activate the SASOP and deploy the ERAT.

The first ERAT team that I led came up with an assessment report that suggested for the establishment of an ASEAN-led coordinating mechanism to facilitate international humanitarian assistance in the cyclone-affected areas. The Secretary-General then established a coordinating office in Myanmar, and I was assigned to set up the office and lead the day-to-day operation for the first six months. I worked directly with the Secretary-General in articulating details and practicalities of the ASEAN-led coordinating mechanism. AHA Centre was not yet established, so the ASEAN Secretariat basically performed the role of the AHA Centre. Lessons from ASEAN's response to Cyclone Nargis were instrumental for the establishment of the AHA Centre.

Taking lessons from Cyclone Nargis and considering the importance of the disaster management portfolio, ASEAN Secretariat with the approval of the Member States created the Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (DMHA) Division, separate from the Environment Division. I was assigned as the

Head of the Division until December 2015 when I started to assume my current position as Director for Sustainable Development Directorate. Disaster management is one of the areas covered under my Directorate, apart from Environment, Haze, Culture and Information.

#### How were lessons from ASEAN's response to Cyclone Nargis used to establish the AHA Centre?

Towards the completion of ASEAN's humanitarian operation in Myanmar, more ASEAN countries completed the ratification processes for AADMER. By December 2009, all ten Member States had completed their ratification processes and the Agreement subsequently came into force on the Christmas Eve. As ASEAN was concluding the operation in Myanmar, we realised the need to institutionalise the enormous experience gained throughout the two-year operation into something more sustainable. Since AADMER already came into force, the experience was then utilised when the ACDM was ready to set up the AHA Centre.

AHA Centre was established on 17 November 2011 and the birth was marked through the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre at the 19<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in Bali. The establishment of the AHA Centre happened during a busy period when we were closing the ASEAN humanitarian operation in Myanmar and drafting a new five-year work programme for the AADMER.

Unlike the establishment of any other centres in ASEAN, the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of AHA Centre in Bali also marked the operationalisation of the AHA Centre. The ACDM did not only manage to have the Agreement finalised and signed, we also equipped the AHA Centre with the needed facilities and technologies so it could be up and running immediately after the signing ceremony. I am so fortunate to be able to contribute to the establishment of the AHA Centre, along with my colleagues at the Secretariat, the current Executive Director, and members of the ACDM.

#### Looking back at your 22-year service with the ASEAN Secretariat, it is two decades worth of work. If you could share with us, the most memorable moment, what would it be?

I think it would be those moments (and there are many of them!) when I know that I have contributed to and helped in realising ideas into realities and when those ideas brought good impact to other people.

My involvement in ASEAN's response to Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar was the most memorable moment. I consider it as one of my greatest achievements. It pushed my limit, tested my perseverance, and challenged my leadership skills. As cited by many, ASEAN played a historic role in facilitating and coordinating the humanitarian response in Myanmar, and showed a new model of humanitarian partnership. I am proud to be part of that historic journey.

#### AHA Centre is one of your legacies, you helped conceptualized it, delivered it in 2011, and now we are approaching five years. What would be your wishes for the AHA Centre to come?

The AHA Centre will soon need to reach its organisational independence. I would be so proud if the AHA Centre could stand on its own and become a sustainable centre for many years to come.

I also hope that the AHA Centre could become the centre for excellence and the reference for other regions to learn about disaster management. AHA Centre should continue to make a difference, add values to ASEAN Member States, and help realise the vision of One ASEAN One Response.

# One **ASEAN** One **Response**

## About ASEAN

*The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967. The Member States of the Association are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The ASEAN Secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia. As set out in the ASEAN Declaration, the aims and purposes of ASEAN among others are to accelerate the economic growth, social progress, cultural development, to promote regional peace and stability as well as to improve active collaboration and cooperation.*

## About The AHA Centre

*The AHA Centre is an inter-governmental organisation established on 17 November 2011, through the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) by ASEAN Foreign Ministers, witnessed by the ASEAN Heads of States, from 10 ASEAN Member States: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The Centre was set-up to facilitate the cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member States and with the United Nations and international organisations for disaster management and emergency response in the ASEAN region.*

## About AADMER

*The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) is a legally-binding regional multi-hazard and policy framework for cooperation, coordination, technical assistance and resource mobilisation in all aspects of disaster management in the 10 ASEAN Member States. The objective of AADMER is to provide an effective mechanism to achieve substantial reduction of disaster losses in lives and in social, economic and environmental assets, and to jointly respond to emergencies through concerted national efforts.*

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