HIGHLIGHT
Asean Responds to Floods In Lao PDR

MONTHLY DISASTER OUTLOOK
Monthly Disaster Review and Outlook for September 2019

THE OTHER SIDE
Chris Webb
HI READERS,

Volume 55 of the AHA Centre's Column comes to you with plenty of disaster management news and events taking place across the ASEAN region.

Our Highlight article takes a look at the AHA Centre's response to the flooding emergency in Lao PDR, that saw the AHA Centre and the Government of Lao PDR come together to provide relief to affected populations under the vision of One ASEAN, One Response.

In Volume 55's Other Side we learn more from New Zealand's Chris Webb, who gives us an array of insights and experiences from his time within the AHA Centre programmes, as well as within the New Zealand and global disaster management context. Partnerships also take another look at New Zealand's support for the implementation of the AHA Centre Executive (ACE) Programme, while the AHA Centre Diary takes us through the journey of the ACE Programme Batch 6 – including their visit to New Zealand and other interesting activities experienced during September 2019.

Thanks once more for continuing your interest and engagement in the ASEAN disaster management field, as we work together towards a stronger, united and resilient ASEAN region.

The Editor

The formation of Tropical Storm ‘Podul’ was first identified on August 27, 2019, with the AHA Centre intensifying its monitoring efforts based on the potential size and impact of the storm. As September arrived, so too did a large Low Pressure Area (LPA) and a ‘Tropical Depression’ known as ‘Kajiki’.
The formation of Tropical Storm ‘Podul’ was first identified on August 27, 2019, with the AHA Centre intensifying its monitoring efforts based on the potential size and impact of the storm. As September arrived, so too did a large Low Pressure Area (LPA) and a Tropical Depression – known as Tropical Depression ‘Kajiki’. The combination of the LPA, tropical storm and tropical depression resulted in significant rainfall and flooding across six provinces in Lao PDR – Champasak, Saravan, Sekong, Savannakhet, Attapeu, and Khammouan. The AHA Centre quickly stepped up to the call of support from the Government of Lao PDR, and responded through various means to support the affected communities of the ASEAN Member State.

Ready to operationalise the spirit of “One ASEAN, One Response”, the AHA Centre worked quickly to support the Lao PDR Government’s response through coordination, information management, rapid needs assessment, and deployment of ASEAN relief items from the region’s Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) warehouse network. The AHA Centre’s In-Country Liaison Team (ICL T) was mobilised to coordinate the region’s response support, and also facilitated the handover ceremony of DELSA relief items in Vientiane on 12 September 2019. The relief items comprised of family kits (330), personal hygiene kits (2,596), kitchen sets (1,144), mosquito nets (1,400) and jerry cans (1,400), which were airlifted into the affected region by the A400M of the Royal Malaysian Air Force, from the DELSA regional stockpile in Subang, Malaysia.

The AHA Centre’s Information Management specialist and ICL T, together with representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Education, and the Lao PDR Red Cross, also engaged in a National Joint Needs Assessment Planning Meeting implemented by the Director-General of Lao PDR’s Social Welfare Department in Vientiane. The AHA Centre worked collaboratively with six country members of the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) to develop supporting tools and methods for the assessment efforts, to be translated into local language and provided to local staff for implementing the assessment in affected areas.

Flood waters began to subside on September 10, with conditions improving slowly through all affected provinces during the days that followed. The damage that remained was significant, with figures showing up to 89 bridges, 613 schools, 46 health centres and hospitals, 286 km of roads, 274,719 hectares of farmland, 574,742 livestock, and 56 reservoirs affected by the floods. Total damage is so far estimated at more than USD 10 million. Flooding and related hazards affected over 661,000 people, left 40,000 displaced, and resulted in the deaths of 18 souls. The AHA Centre's Executive Director, Ms. Adelina Kamal, summed up the region’s feelings when she spoke at the handover ceremony of DELSA relief items. “Our hearts and prayers are with the communities affected by the floods. The AHA Centre as a centre established by the ten ASEAN Member States, including Lao PDR, stands ready to enhance country-led response to alleviate the suffering of the flood-affected communities.”

The AHA Centre provided support in planning process, including introduction & designing of the assessment tool – KoBo, and training of assessment teams. We also provided technical assistance in data processing and analysis.

Handover of ASEAN relief items, to support flood-affected communities in six provinces in Lao PDR in September 2019.

Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia Dr. Wan Azizah inspected the ASEAN relief items being uploaded into the Royal Malaysian Air Force before it took off to Lao PDR.

One of the three assessment teams visited a school in Attapeu where the height of the flood was about 2.5m, leaving visible marks on the classroom’s wall. Classroom sessions just resumed a few weeks after the floods receded.

The Social Welfare Department, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of Lao PDR led the first ever multi-sectoral Joint Disaster Needs Assessment in the country. The AHA Centre supported in the planning and conduct of this country-led needs assessment.
SEPTEMBER 2019

According to the ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC), the inter-monsoon period will be expected to start in early October 2019 over the ASEAN region. This seasonal period is mainly characterised by light and variable winds, together with rainy conditions in the equatorial area, which can improve hotspot activities and the haze situation. This state may persist for several weeks before giving way to the Northeast Monsoon season in late November or early December.

Furthermore, the El-Niño phase will remain "neutral" at least until the end of the year. Separately, above-normal temperatures over most parts of the ASEAN region are also expected, with the northern ASEAN region to enter its traditional dry season. Meanwhile, below-normal temperatures are expected in the eastern part of the Indian Ocean, due to the positive phase of the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), which could also reduce the rainfall intensities in the southern ASEAN region.

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HYDROMET DISASTERS

DROUGHT

Drought – formed by a significant, extended period of dry weather and limited rainfall – is particularly common across some of the ASEAN region’s drier areas. However, history has shown that drought is not confined to just those locations, with it known to impact communities and livelihoods from traditionally rainy climate, and can even be felt significantly outside of the directly-affected region.

ABOUT DROUGHT

Defining drought can be relatively complex, due to the fact that it is based not on a set precipitation figure – but compared to the average amount of precipitation experienced in a specific location. Therefore, a recognised drought situation in a tropical region (known for high rates of rainfall) may still be seen as very wet when compared to an arid location. However, we can simply determine that a drought is recognised when an area receives significantly less precipitation than it is used to, and does so over an extended period of time.

A key difference with drought, when compared to other disaster types, is its slow-onset nature. While earthquakes, floods and volcanoes strike quickly and often unexpectedly, drought slowly manifests over weeks and months of little-to-no rainfall. Sometimes bursts of rainfall may provide short-term relief, however the beginning and end of drought periods are usually only determined once the disaster has truly finished. Drought beginning and end of drought periods are usually only determined once the disaster has truly finished. Drought – formed by a significant, extended period of dry weather and limited rainfall – is particularly common across some of the ASEAN region’s drier areas. However, history has shown that drought is not confined to just those locations, with it known to impact communities and livelihoods from traditionally rainy climate, and can even be felt significantly outside of the directly-affected region.

IMPARTS OF DROUGHT IN ASEAN

It was recently reported by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) that droughts have impacted over 60 million ASEAN citizens throughout the past 30 years, with such estimations considered conservative due to traditional underreporting of drought based on its slow-onset context. Through a study produced to support ASEAN disaster risk reduction under the ASEAN-UN Joint Strategic Plan of Action on Disaster Management, significant increases in the future impact of drought in the region were highlighted, particularly with increased detrimental impact of climate change on ASEAN communities.

Key challenges faced by ASEAN when facing drought include the tendency of high impact on farming communities and regions, increasing vulnerability for those who rely on agriculture as their primary source of income – including in (% of citizens):

- 65% Malaysia
- 41% Indonesia
- 31% Thailand
- 27% Philippines
- 26% Vietnam

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RISK OF SECONDARY DISASTERS

Drought impact and conditions also increase significant risk of a range of secondary disasters – or disasters that occur due to conditions impacted by drought. Flooding can increase in risk in drought-affected areas, particularly when flash rains arrive, with loose and dry topsoil adding to water runoff, alongside lack of flooding preparation by communities (due to ongoing dry weather). Landslides also become a significant risk, as land degradation and decreased plant life results in unstable and landslide-prone land areas. Fires clearly also increase in risk during drought conditions, as trees and plants become dry and more prone to ignition, while dry winds and lack of rain only add to fan the flames of any hotspots or flare-ups. As previously mentioned, human conflict (or human-influenced disaster) is also an increased risk due to drought, as inequality, hunger and forced displacement all become more prevalent the longer a drought continues.

HOW TO SUPPORT DROUGHT MITIGATION

Even in non-rural areas, efforts for water conservation and protection of green areas can support the overall context of drought mitigation. Working with farmers through new technology and drought-resistant crops, as well as policies to prepare for the forecasted increase in future droughts. While perhaps more challenging to prepare for than quick-onset disasters, ASEAN communities and governments must adopt new practices and new technology and drought-resistant crops, as well as policies to prepare for the forecasted increase in future droughts. While perhaps more challenging to prepare for than quick-onset disasters, ASEAN communities and governments must adopt new practices and more responsible water-use methods are all significant opportunities to help deal with the onset of drought. All parties clearly have a role in the preparation for and overcoming of future drought conditions in the region.

- EFFORTS FOR WATER CONSERVATION
- PROTECTION OF GREEN AREAS
- NEW TECHNOLOGY AND DROUGHT-RESISTANT CROPS
- SUSTAINABLE LAND-USE PRACTICES
- RESPONSIBLE WATER-USE METHODS
NEW ZEALAND PARTNERSHIP WITH AHA CENTRE

The New Zealand Government is one of the AHA Centre's original partners – dating back before the official establishment of the Centre in 2011 – and has continued its strong support for disaster management with the AHA Centre through its engagement in the ACE Programme. The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade (MFAT) through the New Zealand Aid Programme has provided ACE Programme support since 2014, and has engaged a number of other New Zealand institutions within the effort to build a generation of future ASEAN leaders in disaster management.

During the 2019 ACE Programme implementation, MFAT – supported by the University of Canterbury – delivered a number of activities with the programme participants, including key courses on Introduction to Hazards and Critical Incident Leadership (CIL). They also worked with participants in Jakarta to prepare for their visit to New Zealand to engage in the courses. These courses were co-developed by MFAT and the AHA Centre, and stand as MFAT’s key contribution within the ACE Programme. The CIL course is a 150-hour component of the ACE curriculum that concentrates on the development of critical incident leadership skills, communication, and exercise management for the future disaster management leaders in ASEAN. Undertaken in New Zealand, CIL specifically targets areas of strategic thinking, proactive planning, decision-making, and situational awareness based on engagement with stakeholders in disaster management.

MFAT support the in-country course delivery as part of an overall 2-week study trip that took participants to institutions and disaster sites throughout the four New Zealand cities of Christchurch, Kaikoura, Wellington and Auckland. The participants engaged in lectures from researchers and practitioners, including cultural experience and community insights from Maori tribe representatives (Ngai Tahu – Maru Kaitatea) about response and resilience after the 2016 earthquake in Kaikoura. Participants learnt about the Maori’s values on resilience to natural disaster, where people of Maori descent aim to protect their resources (taonga) to prevent disaster and to preserve their livelihood and sustainability.

Alongside the preparation for courses in Jakarta, and the study trip itself, MFAT also provides support to the ACE Programme through professional engagements delivered by prominent individuals such as Her Excellency Pam Dunn, Ambassador of New Zealand to ASEAN for the ACE Programme in 2018, and Her Excellency Jo Tyndall, New Zealand High Commissioner to Singapore for the ACE Programme in 2019. They engaged as speakers in the ACE Programme Leaders Talks, which allow participants to learn about leadership through their expertise and experience being the world’s key leaders themselves. Through inputs such as these, MFAT and the Government of New Zealand have opened the minds and worlds of 97 ACE Programme participants so far, and continue to provide their valuable support and experience to the ACE Programme and the AHA Centre as a whole.

Written by: Putri Mumpuni

WITH THE AHA CENTRE EXECUTIVE (ACE) PROGRAMME TAKING PLACE DURING THE SECOND HALF OF 2019, WE WILL BRING TO YOU INSIGHTS OF AHA CENTRE PARTNERS AT WORK – SHOWCASING THEIR INPUT AND VALUE THROUGH THEIR ENGAGEMENT IN THE ACE PROGRAMME.
Early September saw ACE participants journey to Palu, Central Sulawesi, to undertake Red Cross and Red Crescent Induction and Operations training course. During the first three days of training, facilitators covered several topics, such as the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement; an introduction to the Framework and Roadmap for Community Resilience; Building Safer and Resilient Communities; the Strategy on Disaster Preparedness and Response; ICRC Response tools; Protection Programme; Gender, and Inclusion Training; an Introduction to Disaster Law, and; Coordinating and Communication Mechanisms. Following this, ACE participants visited Garuda Camp of the Indonesian Red Cross in Palu to see the camp organisation, as well as undertake training on Management of the Dead with the ICRC. Participants also visited a liquefaction area, schools that have been rebuilt, as well as temporary camps, to learn more about the impact of the 2018 disaster. Participants were also invited to witness the location and process of the AHA Centre in building the ASEAN Village.

ACE participants were taught on the importance of Incident Command System by the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS). This course constitutes different components found in a disaster response team – from the different types of people to the common tools used. It was a very insightful programme as participants gained an in-depth understanding about the roles of the different staff and resource management methods in relation to responding to a disaster. Other than the roles, they were also able to identify different planning methods used by staff that may be of great value in the future. The ICS programme exposed a unique paradox about complexity, by understanding its literal definition and how and why it is complex.

This course also highlighted six types of ICS facilities and their facility map symbols. One of the course’s highlights was the Resource Management Principles, that enabled participants to be more organised and strategic in their group activities. Another valuable activity was the Planning Cycle lesson, that introduced ICS forms that are helpful for planning and recording data during an incident. The facilitation methods for technical and comprehensive information using interactive and enjoyable approaches successfully united ACE participants and attracted participants to engage fully during group activities.

During week 4 of September, ACE participants continued their journey to New Zealand’s north island, visiting sites in the cities of Wellington and Auckland. In Wellington, the ACE participants were hosted at a warm reception by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFA) – who support the Critical Incident Leadership course for ACE programme – before visiting the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa to learn about the hazardscape and history of the country. Here they also witnessed the base isolator system adopted by New Zealand, developed to make buildings safer from earthquakes. They visited the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office and Auckland. In Wellington, the ACE participants were hosted at a warm reception by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFA) – who support the Critical Incident Leadership course for ACE programme – before visiting the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa to learn about the hazardscape and history of the country. Here they also witnessed the base isolator system adopted by New Zealand, developed to make buildings safer from earthquakes. They visited the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office and Auckland. In Wellington, the ACE participants were hosted at a warm reception by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFA) – who support the Critical Incident Leadership course for ACE programme – before visiting the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa to learn about the hazardscape and history of the country.
Before taking on a role as a facilitator, Mr Webb worked in the New Zealand National Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management (MCDEM) as Professional Development Manager, and for the 12 years before that he was the head of the Emergency and Disaster Management Department at the Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. Mr Webb’s postgraduate qualifications in Emergency and Disaster Management also come from the same university, and add to his vast knowledge and experience in the disaster management sector.

Engaging as a facilitator in the ACE Programme for the past five years, including during 2019 in Jakarta and the New Zealand study trip, Mr Webb states that he has enjoyed every minute of the experience, and is always impressed with the enthusiasm that ACE participants show towards learning. He is confident that ACE graduates will strongly contribute to the future of disaster management in their own nations, as well as in the wider circles of the region and the world. Mr Webb feels that the relationships established and maintained by ACE participants definitely have great value for the One ASEAN, One Response vision. He likes to use the term “Leadership is a journey – a personal journey”, and at the end of the programme often sees that participants have embraced this form of personal development within their own context.

Outside of the ACE Programme itself, Mr Webb also believes that the greatest need for the ASEAN region is that Member States and supporting bodies continue to extend their focus outside of just disaster response, and further into the areas of disaster risk reduction and public education. He reminds us that disaster is very complex, and that the world of disaster management is part of the environment that is Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA). Establishing and maintaining relationships, as well as communicating and leading across a wide range of groups, cultures and thinking preferences is critical as ASEAN continues to move forward in disaster management. He says that as future leaders in ASEAN, ACE participants must acknowledge that leaders need to work with others, and must learn to lead themselves. Being a self-reflective leader is critical in disaster management, and it forms an area that Mr Webb is passionate about.

Mr Webb finishes his chat with us by highlighting what he sees as one of the greatest opportunities for the AHA Centre to have a valuable influence in global disaster management – which according to him is the Centre’s own experience, and the reality of such experiences. The AHA Centre understands the complexity of managing disaster within populous areas and with a variety of different cultures and peoples. He reminds us that there is a wealth of experience within ASEAN, and if this can be harnessed further, it could contribute greatly to the current body of global disaster management knowledge.
One ASEAN One Response

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.

The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) is a legally-binding regional 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.

The AHA Centre is an inter-govermental organisation established on 17 November 2011, through the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre by ASEAN Foreign Ministers, witnessed by the ASEAN Heads of State / Government 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.

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