



ONE ASEAN
ONE RESPONSE

THE COLUMN

THE AHA CENTRE NEWS BULLETIN

VOL.59 | MARCH 2020

To ensure the safety and well-being of staff, the AHA Centre conducted disinfectant cleaning of the whole office.

HIGHLIGHT

Impact of COVID-19
on the AHA Centre:
Challenges and Opportunities

MONTHLY DISASTER OUTLOOK

Monthly Disaster
Review and Outlook for
March 2020

THE OTHER SIDE

Jommel Merano

THE COLUMN

THIS ISSUE:
IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE AHA CENTRE:
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



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EDITOR'S NOTE



ONE ASEAN
ONE RESPONSE

Hi Readers,

It is a unique and challenging time that greets Volume 59 of the AHA Centre's Column. However, natural disaster is always a threat even in the midst of a pandemic such as what we currently face. Within the following pages we take a look at pandemic-specific information, with the Highlight article looking of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to the AHA Centre, while our Insight covers a historical view of the impact of pandemics in recent times.

Jommel Merano is the subject of this month's Other Side interview, as we learn more about his role and lessons from the DELSA satellite warehouse system. For Volume 59's Partnership article, we gather an overview of the Estonian Rescue Board (ERB) and its engagement supporting the AHA Centre through the LACER (Shortening the Learning Curve of AHA Centre through Support from EU Civil Protection Agencies) programme.

We hope you are healthy and safe wherever you may be. Please take extra care of those around you during such unforeseeable times.

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IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE AHA CENTRE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



AHA CENTRE'S

CHANGES AND ADJUSTMENTS IN VIEW OF PANDEMIC SITUATION

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is having an effect on everyone. By the end of March 2020, the number of global cases has reached more than 50,000 per day. In Southeast Asia, although the case numbers remain relatively low, many countries have taken precautionary measures, such as limiting travel from countries that are heavily affected by the outbreak.

The AHA Centre has also been heavily affected by the pandemic, although fortunately no staff has been infected by the virus so far. However, as a regional organisation, many of the AHA Centre's activities include travel and engagements across the region. Therefore, travel restrictions have caused the Centre to postpone or cancel some programmes and events that has been planned. Some activities being postponed for 2020 include batch 7 of the ACE Programme, ASEAN-ERAT trainings, and the ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise (ARDEX).

Alongside this, the Government of Indonesia (the host of the AHA Centre's office) implemented social distancing measures on March 15th, as part of the efforts to contain the spread of the virus. These included requests for all businesses and organisations to implement work-from-home conditions, to which the AHA Centre responded immediately by initiating work-from-home arrangements to ensure the health and well-being of staff and the wider community.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The AHA Centre faces a significant challenge in adapting to this 'new normal'. This includes significant re-alignment in working approaches as staff switch from office-based to home-based environments. As an organisation that is very reliant to collaboration among staff as well as with ASEAN Member States and partners, the challenge lies in finding the best online working method that accommodates the collaborative nature of the work.

There are, however, two sides to any disaster, even in situations such as the pandemic. The Centre has identified an opportunity to realise a long-standing vision of becoming a smart office that utilises various collaborative technological tools. Part of this vision is to apply near-to-zero waste and minimal utilisation no papers. However, the pandemic situation has forced the AHA Centre to make these necessary changes, as part of its overall adaptation to the new normal.

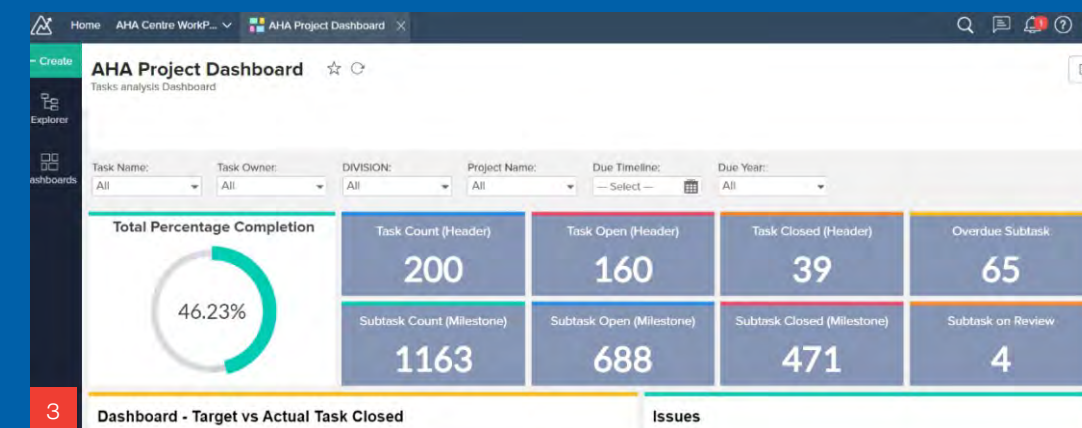
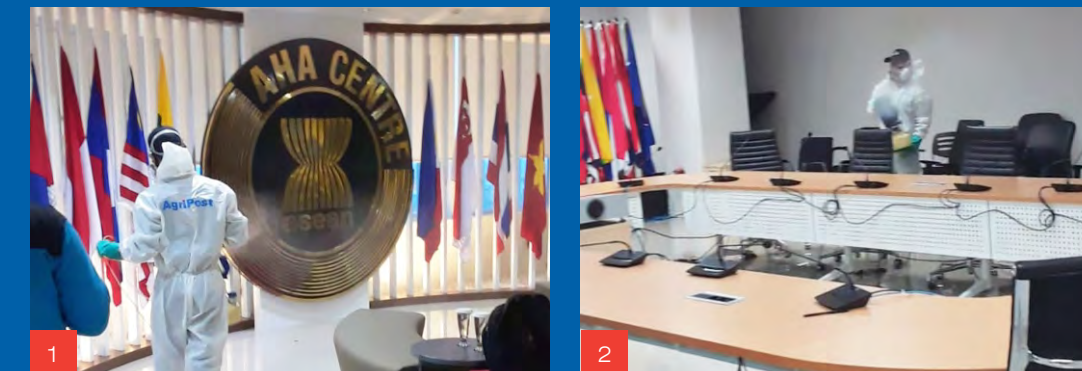
Adjustments have also included the utilisation of video conferencing tools for meetings, as well as other tools to facilitate sharing and collaboration. Additionally, the AHA Centre has also moved all of its administrative, financial and human resource processes fully online.

Some challenges still remain of course, including the reality that nothing can fully replace direct face-to-face interaction. However, the Centre aims to remain productive, while at the same time protecting staff's health and well-being. While we hope for the end of the pandemic situation, we also appreciate that some of these changes and adjustments will continue, and that will be for the benefit of our work in the future.



There are, however, two sides to any disaster, even in situations such as the pandemic.

The Centre has identified an opportunity to realise a long-standing vision of becoming a smart office that utilises various collaborative technological tools.



1-2 Disinfectant cleaning of the AHA Centre's office was conducted shortly before the AHA Centre implemented working from home arrangement

3-4 The AHA Centre was quick to adopt various online platforms to support its work after working from home arrangement was implemented, including online conferencing tool such as Zoom application, and Zoho project management tool.



REGIONAL TALLY		
	MARCH 2020	MARCH IN FIVE-YEAR AVERAGE
• Number of recorded significant disasters	17	19
• Number of affected people	209,162	208,754
• Number of internally displaced people	5,014	13,615
• Number of damaged houses	44,161	3,822
• Number of casualties	9	33
• Number of injured people	20	67
• Number of missing people	1	25

(covering the period of Weeks 10-14 in 2020 and 2015-2019 average)



02
DISASTERS



MONTHLY DISASTER REVIEW AND OUTLOOK

DISASTER MONITORING & ANALYSIS
(DMA) UNIT , AHA CENTRE

MARCH 2020

GENERAL REVIEW OF MARCH 2020

The month of March ended the first quarter of 2020, with a small reduction (11%) of disaster occurrences when compared to the five-year average for the month, with a majority of the recorded disasters formed by flooding events. The number of people affected remained similar to the March average, with a substantial amount due to the storms that occurred in Viet Nam during the first and third weeks of the month, as well as from multiple localised flood events and landslides in Indonesia. While impact numbers remained steady, there was a significant decrease in numbers of displaced persons – which was measured at a 63% decrease compared to the five-year average. On the other hand, damaged house statistics rose to over 10 times the five-year average. This overwhelming increase can be attributed again to the storms and flooding in Indonesia and Viet Nam. Human casualties also measured only 27.27% of the five-year average, with a number of deaths caused by storms in the northeastern provinces of Thailand, where lightning strikes took the lives of three individuals. Additionally, week-long rains, thunderstorms and tornadoes in the northern provinces of Viet Nam also caused a number of fatalities. Substantial decreases to missing and injured persons were also recorded for the month. According to the Climate Forecast System (CFS) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), average precipitation values for the month of March 2020 showed a 50 to 100 millimetre increase across northeastern parts of Thailand, northern parts of Viet Nam, and the islands of Java, Sulawesi and Kalimantan in Indonesia. This increase potentially stands as a key cause of the significant increases to affected people and damaged houses. Such figures also highlight the perennial problem flooding in Indonesia, as well as the importance of the availability and accessibility of early warning information. The significant amounts of damaged houses also highlights the importance of climate change-adaptive and resilient structures.

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REPORTED
DISASTERS

throughout
the ASEAN region
in March 2020

Related to geophysical activity, 26 earthquakes of magnitudes greater than or equal to 5.0M were recorded for the month of March 2020. Contrary to the first two months of the year that saw no significant earthquake events reported, the month of March saw one earthquake that resulted in a minor disaster event in Indonesia. The earthquake registered a magnitude of 4.9M, but was enough to rock the western parts of Java causing 3 injuries and damage to 202 houses. No tsunami warning was issued by BMKG as the epicenter was located underneath land, with the earthquake recorded on a strike-slip fault where two tectonic plates moved in parallel but opposite directions to one another.

DISASTER COMPARISON IN NUMBERS

WHITE BAR | MARCH 2020 RED BAR | MARCH IN FIVE-YEAR AVERAGE

Earthquake	1	1	Cambodia	-	1
Flood	12	11	Indonesia	14	12
Landslide	1	2	Malaysia	-	1
Storm	3	3	Myanmar	-	1
Wind	-	2	The Philippines	-	1
Total	17	19	Thailand	1	2
(covering the period of Weeks 10-14 in 2020 and 2015-2019 average)			Viet Nam	2	1
			Total	17	19

SEASONAL OUTLOOK

According to the ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC), inter-monsoon conditions (that typically span from April until May) are expected over the region, which is described as the transition between the Northeast and Southwest Monsoons. This inter-monsoon condition is expected to gradually transition to the Southwest Monsoon around the end of May or early June. The inter-monsoon conditions are characterised by increased occurrence of scattered rain showers in the region, higher probabilities of thunderstorms, and intensification of lightning activity. Despite the expected inter-monsoon conditions for the period of April to June 2020, the ASMC expects below-normal rainfall in ASEAN regional areas north of the equator. This should bring about warmer-than-normal conditions for Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, and the northern Sumatra and Kalimantan islands of Indonesia. While the amount of forecasted rainfall may not be alarming, the region should still be cautious for thunderstorms, lightning activity, and increased occurrence of scattered rain showers that are characteristic of inter-monsoon conditions. Increased exposure to, and occurrence of, localised rainfall may still cause flooding and rain-induced landslides.

DISCLAIMER

Disclaimer: AHA Centre's estimation is based on data and information shared by National Disaster Management Organisations (NDMOs) and other relevant agencies from ASEAN Member States, international organisations, and news agencies. Further information on each recorded significant disaster, description, and detail of data and information are available at: <http://adinet.ahacentre.org/reports>.

Data Sources : ASEAN Disaster Information Network, ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre

**Black Death (Bubonic Plague)**

The bubonic plague is famous for its spread during a time that sea travel and ports were major links between countries and continents. Thought to have spread through rats and fleas, the plague (or Black Death as its more commonly known), moved across Europe, Africa and Asia killing anywhere between 75 to 200 million people over a number of years.

BLACK DEATH

WAS THE MOST FATAL
PANDEMIC RECORDED WITH

75-200
MILLION DIED

AND WIPED

30%-40%
EUROPE'S POPULATION

PANDEMICS

THROUGHOUT HISTORY

We have begun the new decade with a significant and complex challenge, as the entire world comes face-to-face with the Coronavirus pandemic. While this may form a new context for many nations and people, it is only the most recent of many pandemics that have challenged the human race throughout history. Each pandemic's impact on health, livelihoods and other areas may have varied, however the all hold one defining similarity. They require a global response that prioritises human life and looks out for the vulnerable, similar to many aspects of natural disaster. As the AHA Centre explores its role within this new challenge, we take a look back over some of the key pandemics faced throughout history – and particularly in recent times.

Smallpox

The smallpox pandemic had a significant impact on native populations across the American continent, brought and spread by conquerors, adventurers and settlers into new and foreign lands. In the 1500's the Aztecs experienced significant decimation, while it is also estimated that the disease killed 90% of native Americans in general. By the 1800's the disease was still prevalent, and was killing around 400,000 people per year in Europe. As a result, the first ever vaccine created was to deal with smallpox, with its eradication finally complete by 1980.

Spanish Flu

One of the more recent large pandemics was the Spanish Flu, that killed anywhere from 50 to 200 million people globally. It is estimated to have infected over 500 million people (one third of the globe's population at that time), and attacked populations with a death rate of 10-20%. Another scary aspect of the Spanish Flu was that it tended to kill healthy and strong people, as opposed to usual influenza strains that have a higher impact on children, the elderly and the sick. 200 million

Asian Flu

Another influenza outbreak caused the Asian Flu, a pandemic that killed around 2 million people during the late 1950's. Originating on the Chinese mainland, the flu then moved through Singapore, Hong Kong, and into the United States throughout a two-year period.

Ebola

Having gone through a number of outbreaks since it was first discovered in 1976, Ebola became a serious pandemic in West Africa during 2014-2016. Spreading through contact with body fluids from humans and animals, this extremely deadly disease kills anywhere between 25-90% of people it infects, with an average of 50% death rate since its discovery. A vaccine was approved in 2019, with the hope that such advances can completely eradicate the deadly disease that killed over 11,300 during the 2014-16 pandemic.

Swine Flu

The second pandemic from the H1N1 virus (the first being the Spanish Flu), Swine Flu resulted from a mix of flu strains during previous years. Killing a relatively smaller amount of people in comparison to other pandemics (200,000 deaths), there are studies that approximate the infection of between 700 million to 1.4 billion people across the world – which equates to up to 20% of the overall population at the time.

HIV AIDS

HIV AIDS first appeared in Africa during 1976, and has gone on to form one of humankind's greatest pandemic challenges for many decades. The disease has killed more than 36 million people since 1981, and has infected an estimated 5% of the total sub-Saharan African population. While awareness and treatments have grown and improved, and deaths and sickness have decreased with medicinal improvements, there is still no vaccine for the blood and sexually-transmitted disease, and it continues to be transmitted across the world.

Hong Kong Flu

Ten years after the Asian Flu came the Hong Kong Flu, with the initial outbreak in Hong Kong quickly moving into Singapore and Vietnam. Within a few months cases were detected across Asia, the Middle East, Europe, Australia and the United States, resulting in the deaths of over a million people worldwide. Even with a low death rate of around 0.5%, the pandemic did take the lives of around 500,000 people in Hong Kong itself, which was around 15% of the city's population during the late 1960's.

Source : <https://jmvh.org> and The Conversation

Written by : William Shea

ESTONIAN RESCUE BOARD (ERB)

2020 will see a new project implemented by the AHA Centre known as **LACER – or Shortening the Learning Curve of AHA Centre through Support from EU Civil Protection Agencies**.

LACER's specific objectives are to (1) strengthen the capacity and sustainability of the AHA Centre towards achieving operational excellence in disaster monitoring, preparedness and emergency response, and; (2) to enhance mechanisms for ASEAN leadership to respond as one, through excellence and innovation in disaster management.

As seen in the Column Volume 58, the *LACER – or Shortening the Learning Curve of AHA Centre through Support from EU Civil Protection Agencies* project will be implemented through a consortium led by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), alongside the Estonian Rescue Board (ERB). In Volume 58's Partnership article we learnt about the MSB, therefore for this issue we will take a further look into the ERB.



ESTONIAN RESCUE BOARD (ERB)

The Estonian Rescue Board is a public authority under the Estonian Ministry of the Interior. ERB employs over 2,100 people making it the third-largest public sector institution in Estonia. The ERB operates within five key areas, being prevention, safety surveillance, rescue work, explosive ordnance disposal, and emergency management.

As an emergency management authority the ERB has been involved as a partner in developing the emergency services of several disaster-prone nations in the European region, such as working supporting Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and the Ukraine. ERB offers expert knowledge in national and international disaster management and logistics, and delivers training, exercises, advisory services and mentoring to its partners. Depending on the context, ERB can also mobilise external experts from different fields of specialisation for international deployment to disaster, usually within areas such as ICT, health, education and civil engineering.




Written by: Ina Rachmawati | Photo: AHA Centre

The ERB has departments that develop, plan and manage activities, as well as Regional Rescue Centres and the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Centre that implements the activities in the field. North, South, East and West Regional Rescue Centres undertake tasks such as day-to-day rescue work, fire safety surveillance, emergency prevention, and crisis management.

ERB is actively involved in European Union cooperation, and is an active member in Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), and has experts in the Union Civil Protection Team (UCPT) and Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), as well as in the European Civil Protection Pool (ECP). The ERB is an active partner of the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP), of which it currently sits as chairman until the end of 2020.

The LACER Project is the first consortium project across region involving the AHA Centre, MSB and ERB on Disaster Management Capacity building.



 Bonfire patrol: Bonfire that was declared dangerous or left unsupervised, was extinguished.

HOW THE AHA CENTRE - ICT TEAM

MANAGING TRANSITION

FROM OFFICE JOB TO WORK-AT-HOME

Working from home, or WFH, during this time can influence us to make changes to anticipate various pitfalls: difficulty communicating efficiently, lack of access to information, lack of supervision (causing anxiety for both managers and employees), and social isolation. As any other organisation, the AHA Centre team relies much on the ICT team to help the transition from work in office to work from home. The team provides and creates a breakthrough to make work easier from home.

Written by : Ina Rachmawati | Source : ICT Team



UTILISE VARIOUS COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND ESTABLISH GROUND RULES

Before WFH arrangement, there were only two user accounts available for video conference. Since the demand has multiplied exponentially the team has provided five accounts for video call using Zoom, a backup service using WebEx, and for urgent meetings using Google Meet.

All staff has access to this communication tool for their need in collaborating and coordinating with colleagues and partners. ICT team will monitor the access request and make sure everyone can utilise the service.



TEAM COLLABORATION

Before WFH set up, it is easier to have daily catch-up with team members to ensure smooth collaboration. Furthermore, it is a normal routine to have frequent team meeting to have a quick catch-up where everyone has the opportunity to have a quick question and answer, which during WFH is no longer possible. So how is working from home going to impact team work dynamic in the AHA Centre?

In the beginning, we all have to struggle to keep up with our work and adjust to work from home. Hard copy notes and documents were daily routines, but since the WFH set up, ICT team had to speed up the usage of Zoho, where the hard copy documents and administrative process are processed to a digital record and approval is done via digital documentation.



CREATE A WORK FROM HOME POLICY ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE

Since the work from home policy, ICT Team has created an internal website that provides the latest office policy during the WFH set up. Everyone can access it at all times and everyone knows where to find it. People will be able to find answers to a lot of questions they might have about working from home, whether with regard to remote access, scheduling and working hours, or communication channels.

This will become an important document on the journey to remote working to refer to, not only in times of emergency but also in the future.



CREATE A COLLABORATIVE REMOTE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The AHA Centre staff relies on frequent contact with colleagues and team members in day-to-day work. It is crucial to create a working environment enabling open collaboration. There is a couple of things the ICT team has explored to help staff members connect and collaborate such as:

- Provide by request link for team huddles via video conferencing tools such as Zoom or Hangouts Meet
- Provide suggestion for team collaboration using various software and platform for better team collaboration, such as using Google Whiteboard, Wooclap for Team, and Miro

Everyone has to figure out how to strengthen virtual collaboration and meetings to communicate but also to celebrate daily victories. This will help the team members stay engaged, focused and productive, as well as fight the feelings of isolation and uncertainty one might have in an unusual, stressful situation.

Having to transition a workforce to working from home in a limited time isn't easy. However, in the digital age, it is also not impossible. The AHA Centre will continue to provide the staff with the right equipment, tools, and resources to stay productive.



JOMMEL MERANO

Jommel Merano is the National Logistics Officer for the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA), based in one of the two new DELSA satellite warehouses – located in the Philippines. He joined the AHA Centre team in late 2018 with two decades of experience in the disaster management sector, including working with the Philippines Office of Civil Defense (1999-2012) and the Philippine Red Cross (2012-2015). Drawn to the humanitarian field by the opportunity to further support communities around him, Jommel says the work brings him pride and joy. He feels that continuing such work with the AHA Centre allows him to play his noble part supporting his country and the region in the face of disaster.



Jommel first engaged with the AHA Centre in its early years when he was part of the second ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) training, and has since been deployed to six disaster missions – five within the Philippines and one in Indonesia. He has felt lucky to continue contributing to developing future ASEAN-ERAT members as a facilitator and mentor during the 6th, 7th, 9th and 10th ASEAN-ERAT Induction Courses. Jommel has also participated in a range of regional activities, and has recently completed the ASEAN-ERAT Level 2 Advance Course on Humanitarian Logistics.



“Such deployments and trainings continue to provide me an in depth understanding of ASEAN regional disaster mechanisms”
- Jommel Merano



Mr. Merano is an active member of the ASEAN-ERAT. He regularly participated in the induction courses of new ASEAN-ERAT members, like the one conducted in Bogor, Indonesia, in November 2019

Written by : William Shea | Photo : AHA Centre

Joining the AHA Centre through his role in the Philippines DELSA satellite warehouse, Jommel recognised the great opportunity to take part in the historic establishment and expansion of the DELSA system. Not only did it give him the opportunity to be part of something new and exciting, but also a chance to further engage and support not only the Philippines but also the other ASEAN Member States who are so well supported by the DELSA mechanism. More specifically, the role sees Jommel responsible for managing activities related to mobilisation, monitoring and maintenance of AHA Centre's relief stock items that are stored at the satellite warehouse facility.

Jommel's experience both recently with the DELSA programme and more broadly within the disaster management system as a whole has given him some clear and relevant insights on the future of disaster management for ASEAN and its people. He applies this to his current role when he states that “humanitarian logistics has always been an important factor in disaster relief operations”. “Now that the AHA Centre has established DELSA satellite warehouses in the ASEAN region, deployment of ASEAN relief items will become easier, and it will increase the speed and scale of ASEAN response” he continues.



Mr. Merano's long experience in emergency response operations makes him a valuable addition to the AHA Centre's team



“The commitment and engagement of ASEAN Member State National Disaster Management Organisations towards humanitarian logistics will surely result in increased capacity throughout ASEAN disaster management practices, which is strongly in line with the vision of One ASEAN One Response.”



ONE ASEAN ONE RESPONSE



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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 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.

ABOUT AADMER

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.

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