



ONE ASEAN
ONE RESPONSE

THE COLUMN

THE AHA CENTRE NEWS BULLETIN

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The EOC building of the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) of Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw that hosts the AHA Centres project office

HIGHLIGHT

AHA Centre Opens Project Office in Myanmar

MONTHLY DISASTER OUTLOOK

Monthly Disaster Review and Outlook for June 2020

THE OTHER SIDE

Rahmawati Husein



2

02 | HIGHLIGHT

Developing capacities at national level in an ongoing, face-to-face format ensures intensive and targeted capacity development of disaster management actors in ASEAN Member States – an outcome that forms the central reasoning of the new AHA Centre project office in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.



10

05 | MONTHLY DISASTER OUTLOOK

08 | INSIGHT

10 | PARTNERSHIP

12 | AHA CENTRE DIARY



12

14 | THE OTHER SIDE

AHA CENTRE

ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management



14

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Hi Readers,

We hope Volume 62 of the AHA Centre's Column finds you happy and healthy, and ready to read more about all things disaster management from across ASEAN. This Volume highlights the opening of an AHA Centre project office in Myanmar, and explores the importance and value of our presence working alongside our counterparts from the Government of Myanmar. We also get some further insight into the utilisation and value of alternative data, with lessons learned from its value to the pandemic, and how this can be applied within disaster management processes.

For our Other Side article, we learn more about Rahmawati Husein, the Deputy Chairperson of the Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Centre in Indonesia. Following this, we take a look at the AHA Centre Information Management Network, and its role in bringing together stakeholders for strong information management partnerships, before also learning more about the AHA Centre's recent engagement as part of the high-level panel discussing new technology and innovation with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

We hope you enjoy this Volume's content, and we are proud to keep you engaged and informed at times such as these.

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AHA CENTRE OPENS PROJECT OFFICE IN MYANMAR



Developing capacities at national level in an ongoing, face-to-face format ensures intensive and targeted capacity development of disaster management actors in ASEAN Member States – an outcome that forms the central reasoning of the new AHA Centre project office in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. Working alongside Myanmar’s Department of Disaster Management (its National Disaster Management Organisation – NDMO), the AHA Centre and the Government of Myanmar aim to strengthen the nation’s disaster management sector through this pilot project, that will also stand as evidence for replication in other nations in the years to come.



Identifying comprehensive and durable solutions that address the situation in Rakhine, Myanmar formed a key need highlighted by the ASEAN Leaders during the 33rd ASEAN Summit in Singapore, November 2018. Within this discussion arose the importance of creating a conducive environment for affected communities to rebuild their lives. During the Summit, all ASEAN Leaders also expressed continued support for Myanmar in its effort to bring peace, stability, the rule of law, to promote harmony and reconciliation among various communities, as well to ensure sustainable and equitable development in Rakhine State.

As part of this ongoing effort, ASEAN Leaders also affirmed their readiness to support Myanmar in the process of repatriating displaced communities, and welcomed the invitation from Myanmar to the AHA Centre to engage a needs assessment team to the region, in an effort to identify possible areas of cooperation to facilitate the repatriation process in Rakhine State. As a result, the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) was deployed to Myanmar to conduct a preliminary need assessment (PNA) for repatriation during March 2019. A key finding from the PNA was the opportunity to enhance the readiness of Myanmar Government’s local capacity to provide humanitarian assistance as part of the repatriation process. Based on this outcome, a project was approved for implementation in Myanmar, through the ongoing support of the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF).

Written by: Aye Theint Thu | Photo Credit: AHA Centre

This pioneer project, entitled “Enhancing the Readiness of Myanmar Government Local Capacity in Providing Humanitarian Assistance to Support the Repatriation Process”, aims to develop localised tools and methodologies that can then serve as a reference and model for future local capacity building programmes across other ASEAN Member States. More formally, the project has three key goals that are:

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To strengthen local capacity to provide humanitarian assistance to support the repatriation process.
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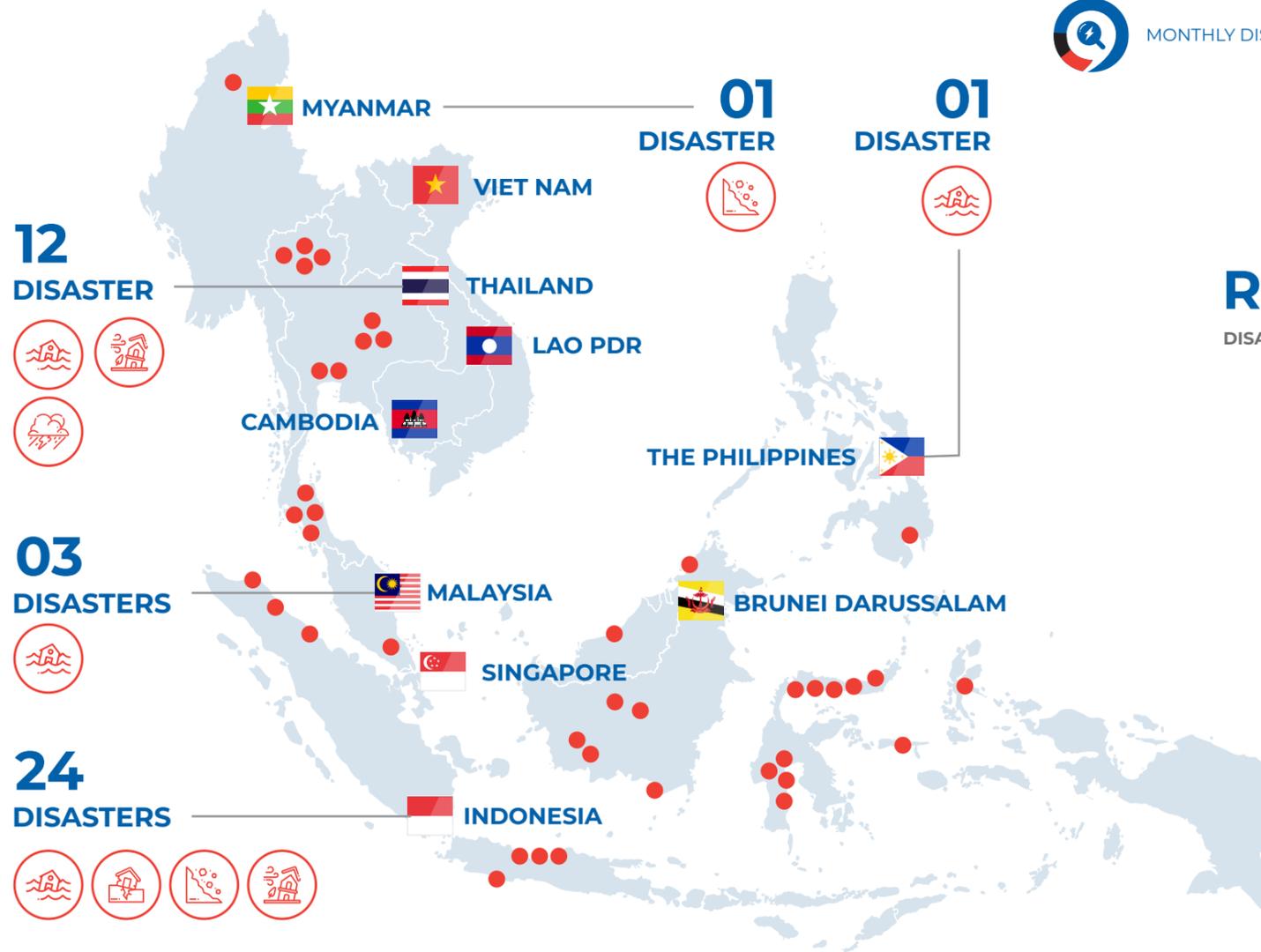
To strengthen State Disaster Preparedness Planning.
- 

To raise awareness and understanding among decision-makers in Myanmar regarding ASEAN initiatives.

Therefore, a project management team has been recruited in Myanmar, and have begun their work alongside the Department of Disaster Management in Nay Pyi Taw. The team is currently made-up of a National Project Manager, a National Training Officer, and a Finance & Administration Officer, who will implement the project’s activities and strategy with support from the AHA Centre team based in Jakarta, as well as guidance from the Government of Myanmar and the other 9 ASEAN Member States.



- Two AHA centre staff stationed in Nay Pyi Taw office in Department of Disaster Management, Ms Aye Theint and Mr Thu Zin Aung Swe.
- Socialisation meeting with ASEAN-ERAT members from Myanmar for the local ERAT training curriculum development



MONTHLY DISASTER REVIEW AND OUTLOOK

DISASTER MONITORING & ANALYSIS (DMA) UNIT, AHA CENTRE
JUNE 2020

GENERAL REVIEW OF JUNE 2020

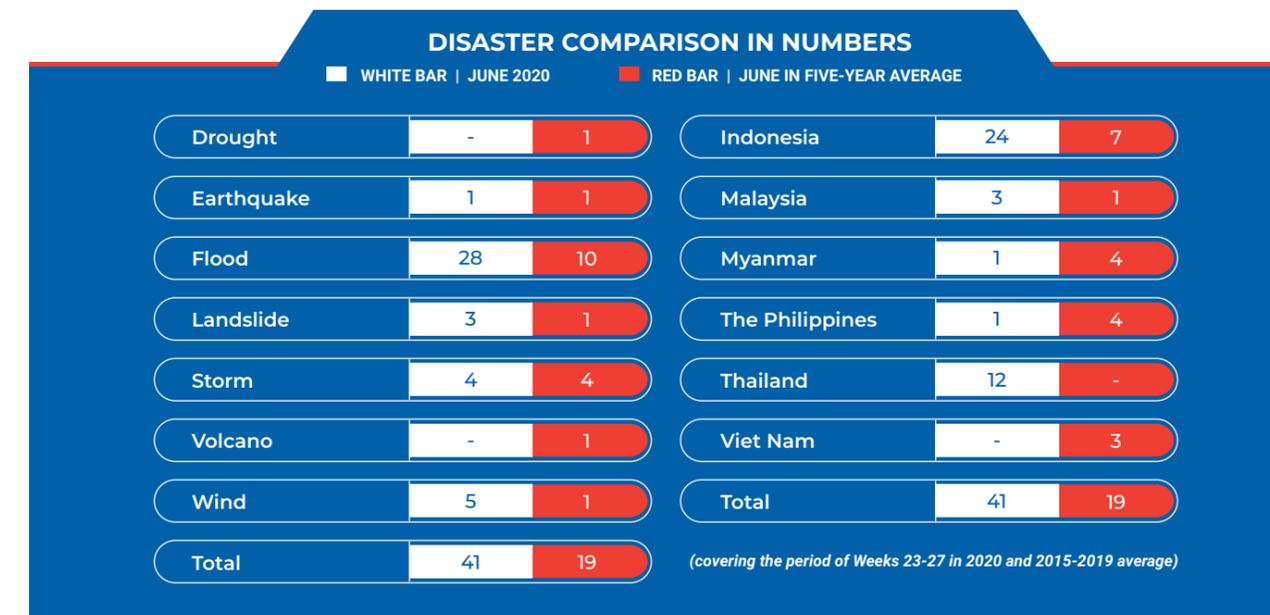
A total of 41 disaster events were recorded for the month of June 2020, which was a little lower when compared to May 2020, however, more than double the June average for the previous five years. Despite this increase, there was a significant overall decrease in the number of affected people (around 9 times less), internally displaced, injuries and missing persons recorded. However, increases to the number of damaged houses and casualties (more than threefold) were also reported. A majority of disasters recorded were flooding events (28, or almost 70%); with 20 out of those 28 occurring in Indonesia. This could be attributed to the prevalence of southwest monsoon conditions in the ASEAN region since late May, as noted by the ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC). Other disasters for June 2020 included an earthquake, three landslides, four storms, and five other wind-related hazards. The recorded casualties were mainly attributed to a landslide event in the Hpakant Township of Myanmar. This landslide was reportedly triggered by heavy rain that caused the bank of the Laku creek to collapse, setting off a fatal wave of mud and torrents of water into the area used by locals to mine for jade.

From a Geophysical perspective, there was a total of 25 significant earthquakes (\geq M5.0) reported for June 2020 across the region. Volcanic activity was observed for Dukono and Semeru Volcanoes in Indonesia throughout June, however the Alert Level remained at 2. Volcanic activity was also reported for Indonesia's Sangeang Api and Bulusan and Taal in the Philippines. The 21st of June also saw an eruption of Indonesia's Mount Merapi, located on the border of Central Java and Yogyakarta. The eruption recorded an amplitude of 75mm and a duration of 100 seconds, and saw ash clouds reaching 8,968m above sea level, exposing 184,273 people within a 10km radius to the ash. However, no casualties were reported as a result of this eruption.

41 | REPORTED DISASTERS | throughout the ASEAN region in June 2020

REGIONAL TALLY	JUNE 2020	JUNE IN FIVE-YEAR AVERAGE
• Number of recorded significant disasters	41	19
• Number of affected people	74,974	604,304
• Number of internally displaced people	8,695	43,295
• Number of damaged houses	12,986	10,664
• Number of casualties	171	50
• Number of injured people	57	84
• Number of missing people	4	9

(covering the period of Weeks 23-27 in 2020 and 2015-2019 average)



SEASONAL OUTLOOK

During July 2020, wetter conditions (above-average rainfall) for most of the equatorial region are forecast. The largest positive anomalies (wetter conditions) are expected over the coastal equatorial regions. For Mainland Southeast Asia, below-average rainfall is forecast over northern Viet Nam, northern Philippines, and coastal Myanmar. This pattern of below-average rainfall broadly follows the coastal regions between 15°N to 20°N latitudes.

The prevailing Southwest Monsoon conditions (rainy conditions in the northern ASEAN region and dry in the southern region) that have been in effect since late May are expected to continue until September 2020. These conditions are likely to bring more rains to the northern ASEAN region that could result in flooding and rain-induced landslides. However, it is expected to gradually weaken by October 2020 signalling the onset of the inter-monsoon period, that is characterised by warm weather and increased rain shower activities. By August 2020, the prevailing winds in the ASEAN region are forecast to blow from southeast to southwest. There is also an increased chance of above-average rainfall over much of the maritime continent and southern coastal regions of the Mekong sub-region.

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>.

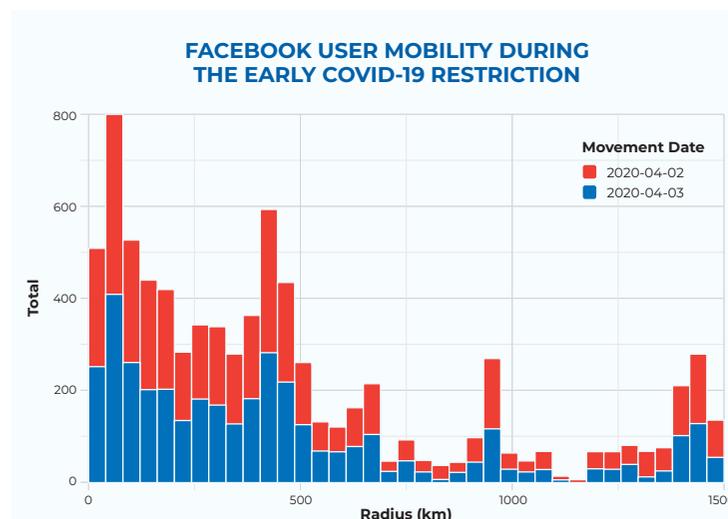
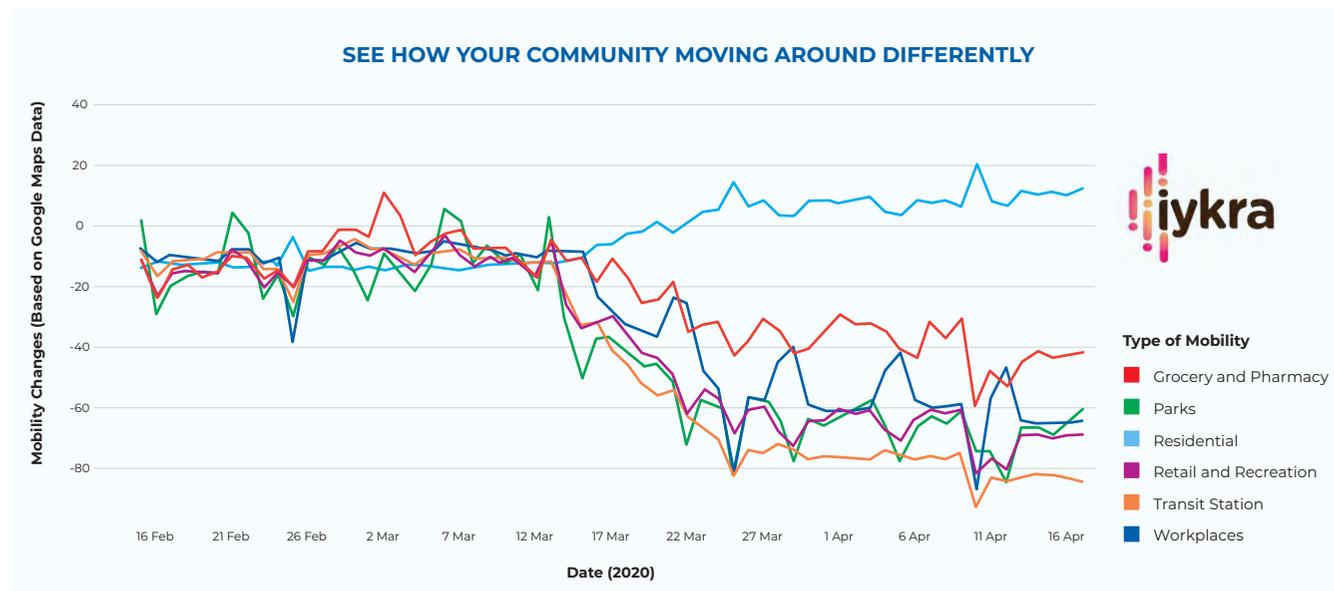
Data Sources : ASEAN Disaster Information Network, ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre

ALTERNATIVE DATA FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND LESSONS FROM COVID-19 RESPONSE

During June 2020 an online discussion with over 60 participants from government to the private sector, academia, media and other development partners, was convened to explore alternative data for disaster management, with a focus on Indonesia's COVID-19 response. The discussion was implemented by Saraswati – a private Indonesian firm focused on innovations in the development sector – in collaboration with SIAP SIAGA, a disaster risk management programme funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Some interesting and innovative examples of alternative data were raised as examples during the discussion – examples which could potentially be replicated and/or expanded for current or future disaster management contexts. Indonesian firm Iykra – for example – established a data network using data from Google and Flight Radar to provide analysis on mobility and early potential rates of infection. Google mobility data allowed them to develop data visualisations as an alternative source on community movement before and after large-scale social movement restrictions were implemented by the Indonesian government.

In another example, Pulse Lab Jakarta (PLJ) explored mobility patterns using data based on agreements negotiated with telecommunications providers. Such mapping was undertaken during and after natural disasters – for example following the 2018 Central Sulawesi earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia – to support insights on disaster response for multiple parties. PLJ has undertaken such work again to support the Indonesian government during this pandemic, particularly by visualising COVID-19 data from each Indonesian province for easier analysis and response.



Written by: William Shea | Source: Saraswati Development Innovation

Examples and innovations such as these form a large part of the AHA Centre's ICT Roadmap, as well as the organisation's overall push for increasing information and communication technology advances at the front and centre of ASEAN disaster management. While there is still much to be determined, even the small portion of ICT currently being utilised by disaster managers is having a significant impact. Alternative data not only provides new and unique insights, but also supports governments and other disaster management stakeholders to overcome data management challenges – particularly in relation to speed and infrastructure access required to gather traditional data within emergency situations. With proper understanding and utilisation, alternative data could form an integral part of disaster management processes, and support the development of policies, processes and activities through all parts of the disaster management cycle.

THE AHA CENTRE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NETWORK

Data and information form the base of key decision making that enables effective and efficient disaster management, and facilitates appropriate and timely emergency response. In order to ensure a well-informed and prompt decision-making process, such data and information have to be available, of high quality, and accessible across the entire emergency management cycle. The AHA Centre Information Management Network (AIM-Net) aims to recommend potential solution to address issues of data and information availability, quality, and accessibility to aid in disaster management and emergency response, and ensure the interoperability of information systems between the National Disaster Management Organisations (NDMOs) of the ASEAN Member States and the AHA Centre.



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AIM-Net is a regional forum that facilitates ASEAN Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) practitioners to coordinate and cooperate in strengthening EOC capacities, capabilities and practices. AIM-Net's formation was a result of recommendations from the ASEAN-ERAT Advisory Group and the ICT Task Force, after being presented to both the ACDM Working Groups on Risk Assessment (WG-RAA) and on Knowledge and Innovation Management (WG-KIM).

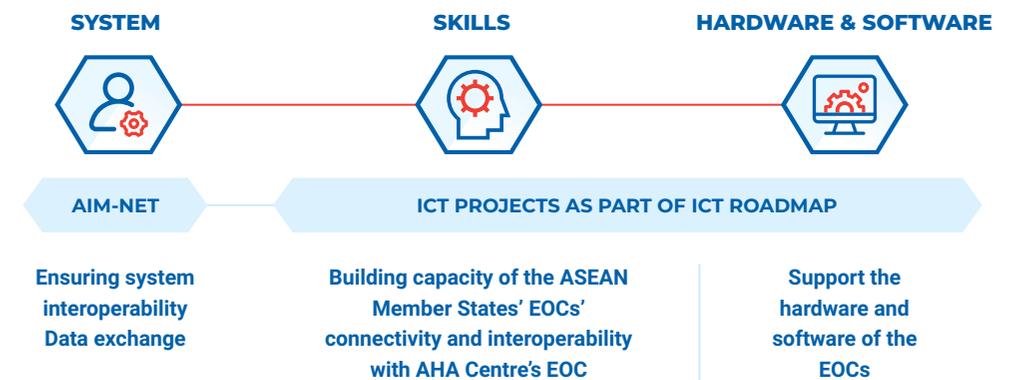
AIM-Net was established based on the requests from NDMOs, who wanted to develop a regional framework to support EOCs integrating big data and artificial intelligence into their work. It was also required to promote the development of regional data sharing and data management agreements, and to establish a technical platform to collectively address regional disaster information issues and concerns. This initiative was supported and approved during the 11th Meeting of the Governing Board of the AHA Centre in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, in October 2019.

Written by : Ina Rachmawati | Photo : AHA Centre



1st AIM-Net webinar involving AIM-Net members from ASEAN Member States

AIM-Net stands as the key first step towards strengthening ASEAN Member States' Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs), and will consist of the following components:



AIM-Net functions as a platform to develop and implement regional disaster Information management strategy, access information management information system interoperability needs, and develop and reach consensus on information management and information system interoperability taxonomy, specification, standards, and protocols. Its membership and structure includes a focal person from each NDMO, and also ASEAN-ERAT Information Management Specialists. The Chairperson role will rotate among NDMOs (first co-chairs will be nominated during the 1st AIM-Net Meeting), and the AHA Centre Disaster Monitoring and Analysis unit shall work as its secretariat.

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL MEETING (ECOSOC)

On June 10, 2020, the AHA Centre's Executive Director Ms. Adelina Kamal was engaged as a key panellist on the United Nations Economic and Social Council Meeting (ECOSOC) discussion on Improving humanitarian effectiveness through new technology and innovation: opportunities and challenges. The discussion was on the third day of the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment 2020, within which the panel discussed concrete examples of the humanitarian sector improving humanitarian effectiveness in a changing landscape through use of new technology and innovation.

The online panel was chaired by H.E. Mr. Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco and Vice-President of ECOSOC, and moderated by Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham, Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator. Alongside Ms. Kamal from the AHA Centre, other panellists included: Mr. Fabrizio Hochschild, Under-Secretary-General for Digital Cooperation; Ms. Valerie Guarnieri, Assistant Executive Director, United Nations World Food Programme; Mr. Balthasar Staehelin, Director of Digital Transformation and Data, International Committee of the Red Cross; Dr. Patrick Meier, CEO, WeRobotics, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy; Mr. Raj Kumar, Founding President & Editor-in-Chief of Devex, and; Mr. Christopher Fabian, Senior Advisor on Innovation, UNICEF. Throughout the session all panellists showcased examples of new technology and innovation being used in humanitarian preparedness and response to improve the impact of humanitarian operations, as well as share best practices and lessons learned.

Alongside this, the panel also approached how the humanitarian sector is positioning itself to work with partners – including regional, national, and local actors, as well as the private sector – to identify and roll-out further opportunities. Speakers also identified numerous risks and challenges associated with new and emerging technologies, and discussed how these can be mitigated in the future. Challenges included data protection and protection against privacy breaches, the potential curtailment of personal liberties through the misuse of data, the spread of misinformation and disinformation, and the use of technology to stigmatize or incite tensions.



H.E. Mr. Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco and Vice-President of ECOSOC, opening the discussion

Written by : William Shea | Photo : AHA Centre

This engagement gave the AHA Centre yet another opportunity to lead the region on disaster management coordination with an array of international bodies, while also be actively involved in the continuing expansion of information and communication technology activities taking place within the global disaster management sector. The change, the innovation, and the importance of this subject was highlighted by H.E. Mr. Omar Hilale when he stated during his opening speech that:



“When I began my career in humanitarian affairs, it was mostly a process of contingency planning involving a small group of disaster managers and aid workers meeting and gathering around a flipchart with a handful of coloured marker pens. Today, humanitarians use Artificial Intelligence, machine learning, and predictive analytics to more quickly and efficiently analyse and make decisions about how to respond to crisis.”



Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham, Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, moderating the session.



Ms Adelina Kamal delivering her session on how technology and innovation improving humanitarian effectiveness. in the region.



RAHMAWATI HUSEIN

Rahmawati Husein is the Deputy Chairperson of the Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Centre (MDMC) in Indonesia, which is a disaster management and humanitarian-focused organisation that stems from one of Indonesia's largest Muslim organisations – Muhammadiyah. The AHA Centre spoke to Ms Husein about the organisation's beginnings, and her own views on the state of disaster management in the ASEAN region.



Ms Husein has been with the MDMC since its initial foundation, which came about after she was sent to Aceh by Muhammadiyah to support the distribution and monitoring of relief items after the earthquake and tsunami in 2004. Ms Husein remained involved with the recovery efforts in Aceh, and then as other natural disasters continued to occur – such as the earthquakes in Yogyakarta and Sumatera – members of Muhammadiyah were increasingly engaged in response and relief efforts. Finally, in 2010, the MDMC was formally established, allowing the members to increase capability and opportunity to support disaster efforts across Indonesia. Rahmawati Husein was designated as the Deputy Chairperson at that time, and has maintained the role for the best part of a decade.

Over the years the MDMC has expanded its presence and engagement, and has even taken on roles responding to disasters across the ASEAN region. “The MDMC deployed a team to the Philippines in response to the Typhoon Haiyan in 2013” Ms Husein explains. “Also, we were engaged in the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Myanmar during 2016-2017, together with other organisations from Indonesia.” She highlights the appreciation and welcoming approach by local governments towards the MDMC in these situations, and believes that this allowed her team to evidence their role within regional disaster and humanitarian action.



Ms Rahmawati as Deputy Chairperson of MDMC recognises the role and value of the AHA Centre as coordinating organisation.



Attending international and regional exhibition to introduce MDMC to international audience

Written by : Moch Syifa and William Shea | Photo : AHA Centre

Moving on to what she has experienced from a regional disaster management perspective, Ms Husein highlights the strong and improved coordination amongst ASEAN Member States. “At times of disaster we always work together” she states. She also recognises the role and value of the AHA Centre, and highlights the organisation's critical position coordinating relief items and activities in responding to disaster. According to Ms Husein, this value was increasingly visible during the Central Sulawesi earthquake and tsunami response in 2018.

It is a lifelong passion for humanitarian activity that drives Ms Husein, and even led her to complete her PhD in Disaster Management. She continues to remain engaged with the MDMC and the region in disaster management activities.



“Due to the region being prone to natural disaster, engaging in humanitarian action remains significantly important”.

-Rahmawati Husein



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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.