

Cha-am Hua Hin Statement on East Asia Summit (EAS) Disaster Management

Cha-am Hua Hin, Thailand, 25 October 2009

We, the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Australia, People's Republic of China, Republic of India, Japan, Republic of Korea, and New Zealand, on the occasion of the 4th East Asia Summit (EAS) in Cha-am Hua Hin, Thailand, on 25 October 2009;

Expressing grief at the recent loss of life, properties and livelihoods from the impact of disasters that have been experienced by countries in the East Asia Summit (EAS) and in the Asia-Pacific region; and also expressing deep concern at the long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for nations which hamper the achievement of their sustainable development, particularly in achieving the internationally agreed development strategies, including the Millennium Development Goals and regional integration processes;

Reaffirming the commitment of countries in the EAS to pursue effective disaster risk reduction in the spirit of partnership and cooperation in order to reduce the vulnerabilities and enhance the capacities of peoples to be more resilient and self-reliant in mitigating the impact of disasters; and recalling that disaster risk reduction is one of the priority areas of cooperation identified in the 2nd EAS in January 2007;

Recalling the principles and recommendations of key international and regional framework documents on disaster risk reduction and disaster management, inter alia, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) 2005, the Beijing Action for Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia of 2005, the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the East Asia Summit of 2005, the ARF Statement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response of 2006, the Delhi Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia of 2007, and the relevant UNGA Resolutions¹;

Reaffirming support for sustaining and developing effective regional approaches, mechanisms and capacities with regard to disaster risk reduction and disaster management, including early warning to disasters; and recognizing the efforts of ASEAN, particularly the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), the ASEAN Regional Forum, and other regional initiatives to enhance cooperation on disaster risk reduction and disaster management;

Recognizing the active cooperation and various regional initiatives of ASEAN, and welcoming ASEAN's leadership through the ASEAN-led coordinating mechanism for the victims of Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar;

Recognizing the primary role of states for their own sustainable development and disaster risk management, and the importance of international cooperation and partnerships to support states in pursuing efforts to this end;

Recognizing the significant efforts already underway by regional organisations, national governments, civil society and other organisations, to strengthen disaster management, the need to continue strengthening existing arrangements, and the importance of avoiding duplication and ensuring greater coherence of efforts;

Welcoming the establishment of the Australian-Indonesia Facility for Disaster Reduction, a facility to complement and enhance existing disaster risk reduction efforts and to build national and regional capacity to manage disasters;

Emphasizing the importance of adopting an integrated and a multi-hazard approach to disaster risk reduction and disaster management and of mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into national sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels in key areas such as poverty, housing, water, sanitation, energy, health, agriculture, education, infrastructure and environment;

Recognizing that communities are in the frontlines of facing and responding to disasters, and therefore stressing the importance of placing communities at the centre of all aspects of disaster risk management through communitybased preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery where attention should be paid in assisting people whose lives, livelihoods, and dignity are endangered;

HEREBY ENDEAVOUR TO:

1. Support efforts to strengthen capacity of countries in the region in terms of policies, plans, procedures, systems in place, training of people and inter-operability of mechanisms. Such capacity must be integrated locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally for an efficient and effective response in the region;
2. Cooperate to develop integrated preparedness and disaster risk reduction capacities for transboundary, multi-hazard disasters, among others, end-to-end early warning systems and response capacities in the region, and enhance the linkages and networks among the local, national, regional disaster management agencies, in cooperation with international organisations and the UN Specialised Agencies, to foster an effective network to provide timely, reliable and understandable warning information as well as rapid response to communities at risk that will help mitigate the impact of disasters on peoples in the region, including their vulnerabilities to climate change;
3. Cooperate to provide continued support to the regional multi-donor voluntary trust fund for early warning system arrangements in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach for enhancing regional cooperation for natural disaster preparedness and building tsunami early warning capacities in a multi-hazard approach;
4. Support the effort of ASEAN at enhancing humanitarian coordination and strengthening leadership to respond to major disasters, in particular, by developing linkages to, and/or voluntarily earmarking assets and capacities as appropriate for regional standby arrangements, in particular, the ASEAN Standby Arrangements for Disaster Relief and Emergency Response, and/or developing optimal common procedures and mechanisms, including those for needs assessment, to mobilize assets and capacities as appropriate in an effective and timely manner;
5. Cooperate to enhance post-disaster management and recovery efforts, and encourage greater integration of early recovery activities in the immediate post-disaster phase to ensure a smooth transition from relief to recovery, including supporting an ASEAN-led mechanism and other organisations in the region;
6. Cooperate to assist governments in formulating and mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into strategic development, policy regulation and planning, and to foster better understanding and knowledge of the causes of disasters, as well as to build and strengthen coping capacities through, inter alia, the transfer and exchange of experiences and technical knowledge, educational and training programmes for disaster risk reduction, access to relevant data and information, and the strengthening of institutional arrangements including community based organisations;
7. Help each other develop more effective community-based tools and approaches in promoting greater understanding on disaster risk reduction and disaster management by instilling a culture of safety and prevention and enhancing public awareness with regard to reducing hazards and risks and other relevant issues, including in schools, communities and government agencies, and among the public at large, with a view to increasing the resilience of local communities;
8. Cooperate to assist governments in the formulation of relevant laws and the enhancement of capacity for law enforcement in the area of the exploitation and management of natural resources, particularly forest and water resources, in a sustainable manner, with a view to mitigating the negative impact caused by human activities on the environment and vice versa;
9. Work together to promote the networking and sharing of best practices, experiences and operational manuals among specialists, responders and practitioners, inter alia, through ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise (ARDEX) and other relevant simulation exercises, with a view to enhancing national capacity and improving regional coordination in disaster management, including with the UN systems;
10. Support the operationalization and enhancement of standard operating procedures, such as ASEAN Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangement and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP), and the continued development of ARF strategic guidance for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and work towards increasing their compatibility, in order to enhance closer interaction among early warning and humanitarian assistance centres in the region, and with those outside the region;

11. Work together to reinforce the technical capabilities of local, national, regional and international early warning arrangements to improve scientific and technical method for risk assessment, monitoring and early warning information;
12. Support the operationalisation of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), and strengthen its capacity to provide operational coordination support during major disasters in the ASEAN region as well as technical leadership in the implementation of regional activities;
13. Also support efforts of other relevant organisations in the region, amongst others, the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), the Australian-Indonesian Facility for Disaster Reduction (AIFDR) and other regional centres, in providing technical support and capacity building, as well as encourage more comprehensive research in the region on disaster risk reduction and disaster management, including through such organisation as the UN ESCAP, and support China's proposal to establish a regional research centre on catastrophic disasters in Asia;
14. Encourage local, national, regional and international capacity building programmes to enhance the capacity of EAS participating countries in disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management, and establish linkages among training and research centres to leverage their resources in the implementation of capacity building programmes.

The necessary follow-up actions to ensure the implementation of the above measures will be undertaken through existing regional frameworks and mechanisms in ASEAN, in close consultations among the EAS participating countries.

Adopted in Cha-am Hua Hin, Thailand, on the Twenty Fifth Day of October in the year Two Thousand and Nine.

¹ United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 46/182, 57/150 and 62/192