

**OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF
HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS
(OCHA)**



**International
Search and Rescue
Advisory Group**

**Report on the Meeting of the
INSARAG Regional Group Africa/Europe**

Revinge, Sweden, 23/24 April 2002

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**Meeting of the INSARAG Regional Group Africa/Europe
Revinge, Sweden
23/24 April 2002**

Summary Report

Annexes:

- Annex I: Agenda
- Annex II: List of participants

1. Opening

The meeting, in which 34 delegates from 18 countries and organizations participated, was opened by Mr. Ulf Bjurman, Head of Department, Swedish Rescue Services Agency (SRSA). He underlined the commitment of the Swedish Government to INSARAG and the importance to establish closer links between the European Union (EU) and the INSARAG network. Mr. Bjurmans' opening remarks were complemented by a warm welcome of participants by the host of the venue Mr. Per Widlundh, Principal, Emergency Services College in Revinge, SRSA, Sweden.

Mr. Arjun Katoch, Chief, Field Coordination Support Section (FCSS), Emergency Services Branch (ESB) in the United Nations office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Secretary of INSARAG, thanked the Swedish Government for hosting the meeting. Mr. Katoch reviewed the recent achievements of INSARAG. These were the strengthening of the Regional Groups Asia/Pacific and the Americas, the regional urban SAR exercise that was held in Singapore in March 2002, and the creation of a UN GA Resolution on Urban SAR assistance, to be expected in fall 2002. Mr. Katoch listed the challenges ahead for the Regional Group Africa/Europe, which were the inclusion of African countries, the establishment of INSARG Focal Points within its member countries, and to develop technical standards for USAR operations.

2. Election of new Chairman

The Chairman, Mr. Dietrich Laepke, Director, Federal Academy for Emergency Planning, Civil Protection and Crisis Management, Germany, informed about a decision taken at the last meeting of the regional group in Tunisia, to adopt the concept of rotating chairpersons, that was already applied in the other regional groups. He recommended Mr. Kjell Larsson, Head of International Department, Swedish Rescue Services Agency (SRSA), to take over the chairmanship for the next period. Participants endorsed the recommendation and Mr. Kjell Larsson accepted the new task. It was decided that, due to the absence of Mr. Moncef Belkhir, General Director, Office National de la Protection Civile, Tunisia and Vice-Chairman of the Regional Group, the election of a new Vice-Chairman be done in the next meeting.

Mr. Toni Frisch, Delegate for Humanitarian Aid and Head Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit, and Chairman of INSARAG, congratulated the new Chairman. He stressed the importance of the INSARAG Regional Group Africa/Europe to integrate more countries, particularly from Africa, and to focus more on capacity building in disaster prone countries. He thanked the parting Chairman, Mr. Dietrich Laepke, for his invaluable contributions to INSARAG since its establishment in 1991 and his outstanding job in leading the Regional Group Africa/Europe for more than a decade.

3. Presentation of results of recent INSARAG meetings

Presentations of the results of recent INSARG meetings can be summarized as follows:

Regional Group of the Americas, Miami, USA, May 2001

- Election of chairman (Mr. Paul Bell, Senior Regional Advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean, USAID) for the period of two years
- To identify member countries in the Americas region and nominate focal points
- To translate the INSARAG Guidelines into Spanish. This was accomplished in 2001
- To translate the INSARAG Website into Spanish. This was accomplished in 2001
- To develop classification criteria for light, medium, heavy SAR teams until the next meeting in May 2002
- Next meeting to be held in Fairfax, USA, in May 2002

Regional Group Asia/Pacific, Christchurch, New Zealand, Nov 2001

- Election of Chairman (China) Vice Chairman (New Zealand)
- To organize a regional urban search and rescue exercise in Singapore. This was accomplished from 5 to 9 March 2002
- To review the format of the INSARAG Guidelines and provide recommendations for improvement at the next meeting in November 2002
- To review the feasibility of the proposed "Peer Evaluation" concept and provide results at the next meeting in November 2002
- To organize a Pacific urban SAR course in Spring 2002. This was accomplished in April 2002 in Fiji.

USAR Team Leaders Meeting, Sydney, Australia, Dec 2001

- INSARAG working groups need better guidance (TOR, timeframe, expected result)
- To revise the format of the INSARAG Guidelines within the Regional Groups. This recommendation was endorsed by the Steering Committee in Feb 2002
- SAR team leaders meeting to focus on technical issues only
- To revise the activities of the working group on training. This recommendation was endorsed by the Steering Committee in Feb 2002
- The respective host country also to chair the team leaders meetings
- South Africa considers to host next team leaders meeting in 2002

INSARAG Steering Committee, Geneva, February 2002

- Regional Chairmen provided an update on activities and work plans of their Regional Groups

- To revise the format of INSARAG Guidelines in a joint effort of Regional Groups
- To jointly develop specifications for light, medium, heavy SAR teams based on the recommendation developed in the Americas Group
- To establish working groups on training within the Regional Groups
- To review the possibility of an INSARAG outpost in Africa (Tunisia) to act as interface to African countries and translate INSARAG documents into French and Arabic
- INSARAG Secretariat provided an update on the status of the GA Resolution on Urban SAR Assistance
- Revision of the strategic direction for INSARAG, which include:
 - a) Closer integration of regional INSARAG groups activities with each other, in particular for training and exercises
 - b) To promote regional urban SAR capacity building within disaster-prone countries
 - c) To encourage member countries to incorporate actions as stated in the INSARAG Guidelines, into national disaster management plans
 - d) To utilize international fora to create higher visibility for INSARAG methodology, guidelines and standards
 - e) To deepen the institutionalisation of the functioning of INSARAG, to include identification of INSARAG focal points in member countries, ensure regularity of annual regional meetings, to establish rotating chairmanship in all regional groups, to define terms of reference and timeframe for INSARAG working groups.
- Other issues included:
 - a) the INSARAG Secretariat to develop a summary of the INSARAG Guidelines as annex to the GA Resolution on USAR assistance
 - b) to strengthen the link between INSARAG and IFRC
 - c) To hold the annual meeting of the INSARAG Steering Committee in conjunction with one of the annual regional meetings

4. Lessons learned in the SAR Exercise in Singapore, March 2002

Presentation by Mr. Thomas Peter, OCHA: The first regional urban search and rescue exercise was held in Singapore from 5 to 9 March 2002. The objectives of the exercise was to:

- Promote professional collaboration between Asia/Pacific USAR teams
- Train SAR team managers on UN/ INSARAG Disaster Response Concept
- Practice the UNDAC team in the revised OSOCC methodology
- Validate a standard urban SAR exercise package to be used as template in other Regional Groups

Participants were managers from USAR teams from 13 countries of the Asia/Pacific region as well as UNDAC members and USAR experts from additional 10 countries from Europe, USA and the Pacific.

The exercise was carried out in three phases:

- 1) Arrival of USAR teams and processing through immigration and customs in cooperation with UN Reception Centre
- 2) Base of Operations, area and site assessments by USAR teams and development of a joint operations plan in cooperation with OSOCC and LEMA
- 3) Processing out of USAR teams and hand-over of coordination structures to local authorities

The following lessons were learned

- It is necessary to dedicate more time in training and briefing of participants and facilitators prior to the exercise
- The pre-defined injects proved useful in facilitating constant evaluation in order to measure the status of methodology, training, as well as the exercise itself
- It is necessary to define the profile of SAR liaison persons to work in the OSOCC, as these are responsible for the development of the operations plan within the OSOCC. This requires profound knowledge about SAR operations, as well as skills in negotiation, team-work, working language used in the respective emergency and cultural awareness
- To include the OSOCC operational concept into INSARAG Guidelines
- Avoid the exercise to run only at night in order to achieve a better learning result
- Prepare to share the exercise package within the INSARAG network
- To organize the same type of exercise in other INSARAG regions

5. Concept of including foreign assistance in national disaster management plan

Presentation by Mr. Arjun Katoch, OCHA. Following the experience of recent disaster, in particular the 11 September events in the USA, it is recommended that all countries (also those with high national response capacity) include the concept of receiving international assistance into their national disaster management plans. This should include the management of international USAR with support of the UNDAC team and On-Site Operations Coordination Centres (OSOCC) in cooperation with the Local Emergency Management Authority (LEMA). This model will be first adopted by New Zealand who plan to invite international SAR teams as well as UNDAC to their national disaster management exercise Phoenix, to be held in July 2002. Estonia expressed its intention to also pursue this approach in their upcoming national disaster management exercise in September 2002.

6. Formation of a Regional Working Group on Training

The Chairman facilitated a discussion on the establishment of a Regional Working Group on training, as recommended by the INSARAG Steering Committee. It was agreed that the working group should not be too large in order to be manageable and that Terms of Reference (TOR) as well as a timeframe for the working groups should be developed.

The composition of the Regional Working Group on Training was decided as follows: Claus Höllein (Chairman, Germany) and representatives from Austria, Denmark,

Estonia, Poland, Sweden, Italy, Finland, Switzerland, South Africa, 1 additional African country, to be determined.

The following Terms of Reference were decided:

Short term (within the next 60 days)

- To identify existing and planned exercises and training events to be conducted in the Europe/Africa region in 2002-2003. This should include location, objectives, dates, participation and eventual costs.
- To identify topics of training needs for SAR teams within the regional group

Long Term (by the next regional meeting)

- To identify recipient countries in the region which need training in disaster management for USAR and suggest an order of priority
- To identify available training facilities for USAR in the region

7. Experience in recent disasters in the region and national disaster management capacity of new INSARAG member countries

Ms. Immacolata Postiglione, Department of Civil Protection, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Italy, made a presentation about Italy's response to the eruption of the volcano Etna in 17 July 2001. The Government of Italy activated an Operations Centre for interventions management on 21 July. The state of emergency was declared by the President of Council of Ministers on 23 July. The main activities of the Operations Centre was to monitor the volcano, to construct earth barriers in order to slow down and divert the lava flows, to manage the emergency response and to develop an evacuation plan. Modern computer based technology was used to calculate and display the predicted flow of lava. The main challenges in the management of the emergency operation was to provide fire fighting assistance, to protect life-lines and cultural heritage, to clear the streets from ash, to control the traffic, to provide information updates to the local population accurately and rapidly through media, to control "disaster-tourism", and to continuously monitor the situation and assess the damage.

The delegates from Iceland and Norway jointly presented their country's partnership in the preparation for a joint USAR capacity. This partnership will include the development of mutual agreements and a letter of intent. The draft letter of intent was presented to the meeting, which states that Norway will prepare to provide dogs and a logistics element as well as air-transport capacity (C-130). Iceland will contribute search, rescue and medical components. It is planned to train in joint USAR exercises.

The delegate of Finland, Mr. Harry Frelander, Ministerial Adviser, Rescue Department, announced that FINRESCUE had finalized the establishment of its UNDAC Support Module and that it was ready for deployment.

The delegate from Estonia, Mr. Mati Raidma, Director General, Estonian Rescue Board, announced that his country was prepared to deploy a small SAR team with a search, rescue and medical component.

Mr. Dietrich Laepke announced a meeting related to USAR, which is scheduled in Germany in 2002:

- Conference entitled “First International Convention following the terror attacks of September 11th 2001”, to be held in Hamburg, Germany, on 27 and 28 September 2002. More information about the conference can be obtained at the Internet Website www.feuerwehr-hamburg.org/kongress.

8. Interface between INSARAG and the European Union Disaster Response Mechanism

Presentation by Mr. Ulf Bjurman, SRSA. The objective of the EU Community Mechanism is to facilitate reinforced cooperation in major disasters and emergencies. The Mechanism is primarily for the European Union with the ability to assist also in other parts of the world. International activities of the EU Disaster Response Mechanism should be interlinked with the UN system. The activities of the EU Disaster Mechanism include the development of expert databases, a training programme, communications systems, monitoring and information centres, medical resources databases and intervention capacity inside and outside the EU.

The presentation was followed by a discussion about the potential threat of duplication of the work of INSARAG by the EU Mechanism. It was agreed that the EU Mechanism is not a threat for duplication of INSARAG’s work but rather an opportunity for cooperation in developing methodology and information exchange during emergencies. It is necessary to define counterparts within the EU Mechanism in order to establish a dialogue as a basis for information exchange and cooperation. It was further felt that the INSARAG Regional Group Africa/Europe should seek the dialogue also with other regional networks such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) as well as to systematically include African countries into its network.

9. Status of the USAR Legal Framework

Presentation by Mr. Arjun Katoch, OCHA. The idea for the creation of a legal framework for USAR was born in the follow-up meeting of SAR teams in Germany in December 1999 after the series of earthquakes in Turkey, Greece and Taiwan. It was decided that interested countries create a Core Group to discuss the way ahead. After four meetings of the Core Group of some 28 countries in Geneva in the period from 2000 to 2002, it was decided not to pursue the original idea of creating an USAR convention for the time being. It was recommended to pursue a “soft law” solution and to create a United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Urban Search and Rescue Assistance. The Turkish Government agreed to take the lead in the process of the GA Resolution. The USA agreed to support the initiative. More meetings in this connection will be held in New York. The next will be an information meeting on 4 June in New York to raise the awareness of New York UN Permanent Representatives. The meetings will be convened by the Turkish Government. The GA Resolution is expected to materialize in autumn 2002.

Participants in the meeting were encouraged to inform their Governments and, in particular, their permanent UN representatives in New York about the process in order to create the necessary awareness and support to the initiative.

10. Status of the development of International Disaster Response Law by IFRC

Presentation by Mr. Christof Johnen, IFRC. IFRC is currently in the process of compiling an overview of existing international law and legal obligations. This initiative was considered important, as many related legal instruments are scattered across various legal domains and therefore significant agreements (e.g. customs regulations) are barely known to actors involved in disaster response (e.g. customs offices). IFRC is cooperating closely with the Core Group of the USAR Legal Framework, as the upcoming GA resolution is considered an important building block in the array of related legal elements. The overview of the Disaster response Law is expected to be finalized by end of April 2002. The result will be presented in handbook format. The result will be complemented by field studies in order to identify the usefulness of existing regulations as well as possible gaps and overlaps. Mr. Johnen encouraged INSARAG member countries to support the initiative.

11. Workplan of the INSARAG Regional Group Africa/Europe

The meeting continued with three workshops in order to identify areas for improvement as well as to recommend a way ahead. The workshops were:

- INSARAG Strategy and development of a workplan for the Regional Group Africa/Europe
- Information exchange within the Regional Group Africa/Europe
- Regional INSARAG Working Group on Fire and NBC (INSARAG-Fire)

The results of the workshops were discussed in plenary and are summarized in the workplan for the Regional Group Africa/Europe below.

Workplan of the Regional Group Africa/Europe

- 1) Establishment of a regional Working group on training with the following composition: Claus Höllein (Chairman, Germany), Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Poland, Sweden, Italy, Finland, Switzerland, South Africa, 1 additional African country, to be determined (**action: Chairman of the Working Group**).

The following Terms of Reference were decided:

Short term (within the next 60 days)

- To identify existing and planned exercises and training events to be conducted in the Europe/Africa region in 2002-2003. This should include location, objectives, dates, participation and eventual costs.
- To identify topics of training needs for SAR teams within the regional group

Long Term (by the next regional meeting)

- To identify recipient countries in the region which need training in disaster management for USAR and suggest an order of priority
 - To identify available training facilities for USAR in the region
- 2) To organize a regional SAR exercise in Armenia in spring 2003 (**action: INSARAG Secretariat and Sweden**)
 - 3) Next meeting of the Regional Group Africa/Europe in April 2003, to be held in the Netherlands. The Government of the Netherlands to provide the final date and information about the venue of the meeting by 31 May 2002 to the INSARAG Secretariat and the Chairman of the Regional Group (**action: Netherlands and INSARAG Secretariat**)
 - 4) Appointment of focal points for the INSARAG Regional Group Africa/Europe for the comments on incoming documents from other Regional Groups of INSARAG:
 - Light/medium/heavy SAR team Mr. Steffen Schmidt, DEMA, classification (from the Regional Group Denmark of the Americas):
 - INSARAG Guidelines (from the Mr. Per-Anders Berthlin, Regional Group Asia/Pacific): SRSA, Sweden
 - 5) The INSARAG Secretariat to prepare a standard INSARAG Presentation and distribute it to INSARAG member countries. This presentation should be presented in the annual ECOSOC meetings in 2002 (by Turkey) and in 2003 (by Sweden) (**action: INSARAG Secretariat, Turkey, Sweden**)
 - 6) INSARAG member countries in the Africa/Europe region should sponsor other developing countries within the region, in particular in East Europe and Africa to ensure a broader participation in the INSARAG regional network. The sponsorship should include the identification of suitable countries that are either disaster prone or have a stake in urban SAR and to determine focal points within these countries. It should be further ensured that the sponsored countries are supported to participate in meetings of the INSARAG Regional Group as well as other related events such as regional SAR exercises and meetings of international SAR team leaders. Interested countries should inform the INSARAG Secretariat and the Chairman of the Regional Group about possible sponsored countries and their focal points by the end of May 2002. It is suggested that donor countries each sponsor two countries from Africa and one from East Europe (**action: member countries of the INSARAG Regional Group**).
 - 7) Further to the idea of sponsorship, in order to determine additional interested countries from East Europe and Africa, INSARAG member countries are requested to use their established diplomatic contacts in these countries to identify focal points

- and report the results to the INSARAG Secretariat (**action: INSARAG member countries**)
- 8) INSARAG member countries to ensure that the INSARAG Guidelines are implemented in training and preparedness within their countries. This should include technical USAR issues as well as provision of plans for acceptance of international assistance by creation of or supporting an OSOCC in case of a major disaster. A status report of implementation of the INSARAG Guidelines should be prepared until the next meeting of the Regional Group in April 2003. (**action: INSARAG member countries**)
 - 9) Translation of INSARAG core documents into French (**action: INSARAG Secretariat**)
 - 10) Send invitations to Africa/Europe regional meetings in English and French and provide simultaneous translation into French at future meetings of the INSARAG Regional Group Africa/Europe in order to encourage francophone countries to participate (**action: host country and INSARAG Secretariat**)
 - 11) The regional Working Group INSARAG-Fire was requested to review the following at their next meeting, tentatively scheduled in Vienna, Austria, in June 2002:
 - The regional network of fire and NBC could better be accommodated in a separate network (not within INSARAG) with OCHA's Environmental Emergencies Section (not FCSS) as counterpart. The INSARAG Secretariat to review this possibility with the Environmental Emergencies Section in OCHA-Geneva.
 - With regard to interaction with INSARAG Regional Group Africa/Europe, the WG on Fire to develop Terms of Reference and a timeframe for activities to address issues related to fire and HAZMAT in USAR operations.
 - The Working Group on Fire to provide the results to the INSARAG Secretariat and the Chairman of the Regional Group by 15 September 2002 (**action: Working Group on Fire**)

**INSARAG Regional Group Africa/Europe
Revinge, Sweden, 23/24 April 2002**

Agenda

Monday, 22 April

Arrival and registration

19:00 Welcome reception at the Quality Hotel in Malmo

Tuesday, 23 April

- 07:00-08:00 Breakfast
- 08:00-08:45 Transport to the venue
- 08:45-09:00 Group photo
- 09:00-09:30 Opening (host Government, OCHA)
- 09:30-10:00 Introduction of INSARAG participants
- 10:00-10:30 Coffee
- 10:30-11:00 Election of new Chairman of the Regional Group Africa/Europe (facilitated by OCHA)
- 11:00-12:00 Results of recent INSARAG meetings (OCHA)
- Americas meeting in Miami, USA, May 2001
 - Asia/Pacific meeting, Christchurch, New Zealand, November 2001
 - USAR team leaders meeting, Sydney, Australia, December 2001
 - INSARAG Steering Committee, Geneva, February 2002
- 12:00-13:00 Training and exercises
- Lessons learned in the Singapore regional SAR exercise, 5-10 March 2002 (OCHA)
 - Concept of international component in national SAR exercises (OCHA)
 - Establishment of a regional working group on training (Chairman)
- 13:00-14:00 Lunch
- 14:00-15:00 Presentation of urban SAR capacity in INSARAG member countries of the region Africa/Europe and review of lessons learned in recent emergencies in the region (Chairman)
- 15:00-15:30 Coffee
- 15:30-16:00 The EU Disaster Response Mechanism (EU representative)
- 16:00-17:00 Discussion of possible synergy and interface between INSARAG and regional networks and initiatives in Africa/Europe (Chairman)

Agenda - ANNEX I

18:30 Social event (Revinge)

Wednesday, 24 April

07:00-08:00 Breakfast

08:00-09:00 Transport to the venue

09:00-09:30 Status of the USAR Legal Framework (OCHA)

09:30-10:00 Status of INSARAG Guidelines (OCHA)

10:00-10:30 Coffee

10:30-12:30 Workshops (including coffee break)

- 1) Discussion of the INSARAG Strategic direction as decided in the INSARAG Steering Committee and activities/workplan for the Africa/Europe Regional Group (facilitator: K. Larsson)
- 2) Information exchange between INSARAG member countries within the Africa/Europe Regional Group, to focus on (facilitator: S. Schmidt)
 - Identification of national focal points
 - Definition of stakeholders in governments and SAR teams/organizations
 - Determination of other target groups interested to participate in the INSARAG information exchange network in the region
 - Methods and ways to promote the use of the INSARAG Guidelines as well as the UN-OCHA disaster response system within the region, including the possibility to organize seminars or to participate in regional/national events
- 3) Discussion on Regional Working Group on Fire Fighting and NBC (facilitator: C. Hollein)

12:30-13:30 Lunch

13:30-15:30 Presentation of results and discussion (Chairman)

15:30-16:45 Decision on future activities of the INSARAG Regional Group Africa/Europe

16:45-17:00 Any other business and closing

List of Participants Participants - ANNEX II

Meeting of the INSARAG Regional Group Africa/Europe

Revinge, Sweden 22-24 April 2002

List of Participants

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