



CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT & HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

REGIONAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE COORDINATION CENTER (RHCC) EXERCISE COORDINATED RESPONSE (COORES) 2017 FOCUS GROUP PAPER

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Overview

Exercise COORES 2017 was a table top exercise (TTX) based on a fictional Category 5 Typhoon Malakas making landfall in the Bicol region of the Philippines. The exercise was the culmination of a two-year effort by Singapore Armed Forces' RHCC, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and CFE-DM. Exercise COORES 2017 used a TTX and focus groups to accomplish the following objectives:

- Enhance military-to-military coordination and interoperability during Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HADR) operations
- Highlight best practices and guidelines for HADR response
- Gain a better understanding of the transition of HADR operations to local authorities

Exercise COORES 2017 scenario was divided into two phases. The first phase (D+1) consisted of Typhoon Malakas making landfall. The exercises participants focused on assessments, information sharing, and initial coordination of military assets. Phase 2 (D+5) concentrated on disaster response, the coordination of military assets and transition planning.

CFE-DM experts served as facilitators for four focus groups supporting the scenario. The focus groups were:

Participant Countries

- Australia
- Bangladesh
- Brunei
- Burma
- Cambodia
- Canada
- China
- France
- Laos
- Malaysia
- Philippines
- Republic of Korea
- Russia
- Singapore
- Thailand
- Vietnam
- United Kingdom
- United States

International Organizations/NGO's

- Corporate Citizen Foundation
- Earth Observatory Singapore
- International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- Mediciens Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders)
- Rajaratnam School of International Studies
- Singapore Civil Defense
- Singapore Red Cross
- Thailand Ministry of Defense
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
- United States Agency for International Development
- World Food Program

Focus Group 1 Summary - Communication and Information Sharing.

This group considered prevailing information sharing issues in HADR operations. The group first discussed recurring themes surrounding information sharing and their significance. This included a focus on supporting decision-makers with information, the collaborative effects of efficient information sharing, information sharing challenges, and achieving stronger unity of effort through effective information sharing in disaster response operations. The group also discussed information sources and the requirement to ensure information received is from a valid source, such as the AHA Center and ASEAN, UNOCHA and UN cluster system leads.

Focus Group 2 Summary - HADR Pre-Coordination Mechanisms.

This group discussed pre-disaster coordination mechanisms to be implemented by states to facilitate rapid deployment of assisting state militaries. Key issues assessed included legal considerations, logistical arrangements, and customs, immigration, and quarantine (CIQ) requirements. The group then determined how Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) and Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA) could be developed to eliminate much of the usual friction that occurs during the early stages of a disaster response.

Focus Group 3 Summary - Monitoring of Disaster Relief Efforts.

The third group considered the essential components of disaster monitoring systems and key enablers. Discussions focused on the challenges associated with developing an HADR focused system. There are various software products and tools available; however, it is critical to tailor a system to specific needs of the HADR community. Group participants proposed a system that is simple, low-cost, portable, established with input and buy-in from key stakeholders, and capable of supporting real-time operational updates during a disaster. The system is built around a standard web-based common operating picture (COP) with blue force tracking, information sharing and analytics, computer information systems, enhanced graphics, language translation, and essential references.

Focus Group 4 Summary - Transition Planning to Civilian Actors.

This group focused on military task and resource transitioning from the military to relevant civilian organizations. The participants discussed disaster management transition phases. They agreed that when relief transitions to recovery and there is a return to normalcy in the affected country, the military should transition their response tasks and responsibilities to the civilian sector. Group participants also defined specific transition criteria. Examples included: military mission achievement; the absence of a need for unique military capabilities; the capacity for local, national and humanitarian actors to take over the operations; a request for assisting state military to leave; and the assisting state military is called to other duties.

