

Disaster Management and Humanitarian Action in Southeast Asia: Opportunities for an ASEAN-Japan Coordinated Approach

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JAPAN IS ONE OF the oldest dialogue partners of ASEAN. Initial dialogue started between the foreign ministers of Japan and the countries of ASEAN in 1973, and this was later formalized in 1977. In fact, 2013 marks 40 years of dialogue between ASEAN and Japan, dating from the first informal meeting in 1973.

ASEAN-Japan cooperation takes on a new significance when reviewed in its historical entirety. A number of developments have served to enhance ties between ASEAN and Japan. First, several of Japan's milestone doctrines set the direction for cooperation in—and with—the region, which had an impact on ASEAN's own efforts at region building. Second, Japan has participated in regional mechanisms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN+3, and the more recent East Asia Summit (EAS). Third, the establishment of the ASEAN-Japan Centre in 1981 was a pioneering moment. And finally, Japan has appointed an ambassador to ASEAN who is resident in Jakarta.¹

ASEAN procedures and the "ASEAN way" dominate at ASEAN forums. For example, the ARF provides a venue for security discussions, ASEAN+3 discusses community building in economic and functional areas, and the EAS adds a broader strategic dimension to the process. But these different forums also contribute to new approaches for addressing issues and challenges that confront countries in East Asia. They have provided the

framework for strategic partnerships to emerge from ASEAN's existing bilateral relations with its dialogue partners.

ASEAN-Japan cooperation provides a good example of these new approaches. Japan's role in ASEAN regional processes—based on the “heart-to-heart” principles of the 1977 Fukuda Doctrine—has been that of a bridge, initially between the original six non-communist ASEAN states and the communist and socialist Southeast Asian states that joined ASEAN in the 1990s. This later evolved into a more constructive role of supporting ASEAN's growth and progress when the grouping's membership expanded. Japan has also been the most active country in carrying out activities under the ASEAN+3 framework, assisting ASEAN countries in addressing emerging issues for human security and development. In addition, Japan is ASEAN's second largest trading partner and the second largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI).²

Although ASEAN-Japan cooperation started from rather humble beginnings, with the establishment of a forum on synthetic rubber in 1973, the breadth of ASEAN-Japan cooperation has spread extensively since then, covering sectors ranging from maritime security to trade and cultural exchange and, more recently, addressing and promoting cooperation in disaster management.³ This last area was accorded a separate strategy area in the 2011 Joint Declaration for Enhancing ASEAN-Japan Strategic Partnership for Prospering Together (Bali Declaration) issued in Bali, Indonesia, on the occasion of the 14th ASEAN-Japan Summit.

Several initiatives have been set in motion under the various ASEAN-Japan collaborative frameworks to implement the 2011 Bali Declaration. One of these initiatives is the ASEAN-Japan Strategic Partnership and Regional Community Building Project, the comprehensive research project that forms the basis for this volume. This project assesses ASEAN-Japan cooperation with the aim of suggesting pathways for enhancing the existing partnership in a pragmatic and positive manner with the participation of the policy, business, and academic communities, as well as the general public in Japan and in the ASEAN member countries. The project, the brainchild of the late Tadashi Yamamoto (founder and president of the Japan Center for International Exchange), also contributes to further enriching cross-sectoral dialogue among the different community pillars of ASEAN.

This chapter assesses the potential for more in-depth collaboration between ASEAN and Japan in responding to disaster relief needs and the role of multilateral diplomacy afforded to strategic partnerships under regional arrangements, such as ASEAN, in addressing such concerns. ASEAN-Japan dialogue on disaster management cooperation merits further examination, as it was only in the wake of the March 2011 Great

East Japan Earthquake that Japan turned its interest to furthering collaboration with ASEAN in the area of disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. Developing better mitigation and preparedness measures against the impact of mega-disasters that require massive humanitarian operations is also a priority for ASEAN, highlighted by its experience following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the 2008 Cyclone Nargis humanitarian crises.

SETTING THE CONTEXT

Southeast Asia has historically been at the core of frequent natural disasters that beset the countries in the region. In recent years, these disasters have increased in frequency and intensity, causing immeasurable damage to life and property. At times, the natural disasters are exacerbated by human interference or inaction. The manmade element of natural disasters cannot be discounted. Some experts have even stated that the damage caused by these disasters is comparable to that caused by war, as disasters—whether natural or manmade—can have a serious impact on economic and social development in the affected countries. The magnitude of the disasters and the immediacy of the needs of disaster victims have shortened the reaction time afforded to governments in handling crises.

In the age of instantaneous information, images of suffering and destruction caused by disasters are disseminated rapidly through various information platforms. An increasingly aware and vocal civil society creates commentaries on social media and other online discussion spaces. Indeed, commentaries and analyses of the concerned government's response, or lack thereof, and the issues and challenges faced in responding to disasters, mushroom in the wake of these disasters, acting as a prod to many governments to respond efficiently and effectively.

The intensity and the frequency of such disasters have prompted ASEAN to develop and strengthen regional response mechanisms, as well as to seek collaborative partnerships with countries in the wider Asia Pacific region and with other regional and international organizations. This is premised on the recognition that the scale of the disasters that have occurred in recent years requires a coordinated multisectoral, multi-agency response that national governments alone cannot handle. To meet the challenge, the international community needs to come to the affected country's aid through various mechanisms and arrangements available under the United Nations framework and those under other intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences defines natural disasters as “destructive consequences of extreme natural hazards.” Natural hazards are defined as “an extreme natural phenomenon that threatens human lives, activities or property or the environment of life.”⁴ Floods, earthquakes, and cyclones are the most destructive. For the purpose of this chapter, the term “cyclone” is used to refer to the extreme weather events that occur in the South Pacific and Indian Oceans, although countries in or around the Northwest Pacific Ocean (such as the Philippines and Japan) usually use the term “typhoon” in referring to these violent tropical storms.

Citizens of Southeast Asia—especially those in the disaster-prone (coastal) areas—can certainly attest to the destruction caused by extreme weather. In assessing disaster management in Southeast Asia, Uday Bhanu Singh estimated a toll of 140,000 lives on average each year lost to natural disasters. More than 280,000 lives were lost in the 2004 tsunami, while more than 5,000 lives were lost during the earthquake in Indonesia in May 2006.⁵ Those dead or missing after Cyclone Nargis in May 2008 numbered some 138,000, while more than 2 million lives were affected. The official death toll for Thailand’s overwhelming floods in 2011 stood at over 800, with more than 13 million people affected. At the time of writing, the death toll of Cyclone Bopha that struck the Philippines in early December 2012 (the strongest ever cyclone to hit the Philippines) had exceeded 1,000 and, some fear, could reach 2,000.

The Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004 that ravaged coastal areas in Thailand and Indonesia, Cyclone Nargis in 2008 that devastated Myanmar’s lower Ayeyarwady Delta, the more recent floods in Bangkok, and most recently Cyclone Bopha in the Philippines have demonstrated the importance of constant preparedness and prompt action at both the national and regional levels. Although individual governments shoulder the responsibility of coordinating disaster relief and management efforts in their countries, the 2004 tsunami and 2008 cyclone have highlighted that working alone is not an option.

The humanitarian fallout of natural disasters—climate driven, manmade, or otherwise—highlights the importance of treating disaster risk reduction and risk management as a first line of defense. The more frequent, more intense, less predictable, and longer-lasting nature of natural disasters in recent years magnifies the risk of these disasters, particularly in areas that are already vulnerable.

ASEAN COOPERATION ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSE

ASEAN's first regional commitment to disaster response was in 1976, with the adoption of the ASEAN Declaration of Mutual Assistance on Natural Disasters. An expert group that was elevated in 2003 to a committee of senior-level officials has been meeting annually to discuss collaborative activities and share information. However it was only in 2004, three weeks prior to the Indian Ocean tsunami, that the ASEAN ministers responsible for disaster management agreed to proceed with the formulation of a regional agreement on disaster management and emergency response. The rest is history, as the saying goes.

ASEAN today has several mechanisms for monitoring and responding to natural and manmade disasters in the region. At the ASEAN level, the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management monitors the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Programme on Disaster Management (ARPDm). The ARPDm provides a programmatic approach for ASEAN members to coordinate information, preparedness, awareness, and action for disaster response. The ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management coordinates work among the ASEAN members in implementing the ARPDm and also liaises with ASEAN's dialogue partners and other international partners. Involving the wider Asia Pacific and beyond, ARF ministers also monitor search-and-rescue activities in the wake of disasters under the ARF inter-sessional exercises.

ASEAN has demonstrated a collective impact in responding to disasters in recent years. The good offices of the ASEAN secretary-general have been recognized and, to a certain extent, facilitated by the ASEAN Charter's provision for an expanded role for the secretary-general. The ASEAN secretary-general has been given the additional responsibility of serving as ASEAN humanitarian assistance coordinator, building on the success of former ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Surin Pitsuwan's role in facilitating regional and international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the wake of the cyclone disaster in Myanmar in 2008.

However, ASEAN still emphasizes the need for consultation and consensus before regional assistance can be provided to countries in need of assistance. The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) has a clause that highlights that assistance may only be provided to an ASEAN member "upon request." This provision ensures that assistance is not given where—or in a manner in which—it is not welcome.

While the different ASEAN mechanisms provide for regional coordination and policy coherence, it would also be worthwhile to consider

supporting national or subregional mechanisms that can impact or influence regional interventions. The tripartite coordination mechanism that successfully brought together different interest groups during the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar and the subregional institutional framework for addressing transboundary haze pollution in ASEAN stand as good examples.

The different levels of development, readiness, and capacity to implement regional agreements in member countries tend to hamper national commitments to follow up on the agreements. How ASEAN rallies for better preparedness in responding to disasters and disaster-related crises will be the ultimate test of regionalism, as the often diverse interests of nations strive to find some common ground to safeguard the region's economic and social wellbeing.

ASEAN's key instrument for regional cooperation in responding to natural disasters is the AADMER, adopted in 2005. The agreement provides a framework for the development of operational procedures to respond collectively and expeditiously to disasters. These include provisions for setting up an ASEAN disaster relief fund, mobilizing relief assistance, expediting customs and immigration clearance, utilizing military and civilian personnel in disaster relief, and establishing a center to coordinate the regional disaster response. The agreement also provides for simulation exercises to test emergency responses on a regular basis. The agreement's implementation was first put to the test in the wake of Cyclone Nargis, which wreaked death and devastation in Myanmar. Interestingly, Myanmar ratified the agreement on November 17, 2006, making it one of the earlier countries to ratify the agreement after its adoption in July 2005. At the time when Cyclone Nargis devastated Myanmar's lower delta area in May 2008, only six countries had ratified the agreement. The AADMER came into effect only in December 2009.⁶

The unique circumstances surrounding the response in Myanmar provided a window for ASEAN to assume the "honest broker" role in coordinating humanitarian assistance for natural disasters and emergencies, coming to the aid of ASEAN member states. One positive result is the recent establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), which works with relevant agencies in ASEAN member states, the United Nations, and other international organizations.⁷

ASEAN first discussed Myanmar's humanitarian situation in the wake of Cyclone Nargis not in the context of disaster management but at the ARF Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) held in Singapore on May 9, 2008.⁸ This was followed by the Special Meeting of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers, also in Singapore, on May 19, 2008. It is noteworthy that the United States,

a member of the ARF, had stated its readiness to “help Myanmar” at the ARF SOM,⁹ even though the offer was not taken up then.

Disaster relief, including search and rescue, is also a topic on the ARF’s cooperation agenda. The ARF started its inter-sessional meetings on search and rescue coordination and cooperation in 1996, following the agreement by ARF ministers at their second meeting in August 1995. Since then, ARF inter-sessional meetings on disaster relief have continued annually (with a hiatus between 2000 and 2005). After several preliminary discussions and consultations, the ARF Disaster Relief Exercise (DiREx) was launched in 2011. The ARF has also convened expert group meetings, training seminars, and workshops on disaster relief, humanitarian assistance response, joint civil-military operations, stabilization and reconstruction issues, as well as laws and regulations on disaster relief cooperation.¹⁰

A ROLE FOR ASEAN-JAPAN PARTNERSHIP?

A special ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Meeting was held on April 9, 2011, in Jakarta, Indonesia, which discussed strengthening ASEAN-Japan cooperation on disaster management. This was just a month after the disastrous earthquake and tsunami that severely affected northeastern Japan and also caused the nuclear power plant accident in Fukushima Prefecture.

Then Japanese Foreign Minister Takeaki Matsumoto proposed to ASEAN foreign ministers that “further strengthening of cooperation in the area of disaster management between Japan and ASEAN in light of the current major earthquake, [would be a part of] Japan’s foreign policy for ASEAN going forward.”¹¹ To this end, several initiatives to strengthen cooperation in this area were proposed by Japan, including convening of seminars, dispatch of personnel from the AHA Centre, training and capacity building for rescue teams, and provision of support by Japan to improve the AHA Centre’s communication facilities and stockpile systems.

In addition to individual expressions and offers of support, ASEAN countries also collectively expressed support to Japan over the Fukushima incident in the context of regional cooperation on nuclear safety.¹² In a way, the Fukushima tragedy also prompted ASEAN countries to highlight the importance of strengthening “existing disaster management cooperation under the various regional mechanisms, including ASEAN+3, EAS, ARF, and ADMM Plus [ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting+8], as well as periodic holding of Disaster Relief Exercises.”¹³

Additionally, ASEAN mounted an ASEAN Youth Caravan goodwill visit to Japan in June 2011 in support of relief and rehabilitation efforts for the

survivors of the Fukushima disaster and to “further strengthen the human bond with Japan.”¹⁴ This is an area worth further exploring, as it also resonates with a long-standing strategy of ASEAN-Japan partnerships to deepen people-to-people contacts. The Youth-Exchange Project with Asia-Oceania and North America (Kizuna Project) initiated by Japan and launched in June 2012 has already taken steps to encourage youth volunteerism in disaster-affected areas.¹⁵ Such initiatives should be continued.

Since the pronouncement of high-level statements calling for closer cooperation in disaster management and risk reduction, ASEAN and Japan have held several collaborative activities. The Japan-ASEAN Disaster Management Seminar was held in December 2011 in conjunction with a wider conference hosted by Japan on strengthening disaster management, which involved participants from the international community. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) supported and organized both events, serving as co-organizer with the AHA Centre for the seminar specifically on ASEAN-Japan cooperation.¹⁶ Under the ASEAN University Network’s (AUN) partnership with Japan through the Southeast Asia Engineering Education Network (SEED-Net), JICA also supported an ASEAN-Japan seminar and workshop on satellite data applications on floods in July 2012.¹⁷ Earlier, in May 2012, Japan and the United States partnered with the AHA Centre in organizing an AHA Centre ICT [information and communications technology] Workshop.¹⁸

ASEAN and Japan continue to cooperate and take initiatives to strengthen cooperation on disaster management, which is now a key priority on the ASEAN-Japan dialogue agenda. ASEAN and Japan are exploring effective use of science and technology in disaster preparedness, such as using satellite systems to identify and share information on potential disaster threats. Japan jointly developed the regional network for disaster preparedness and disaster relief with the AHA Centre. This regional network is named the Disaster Management Network for the ASEAN Region, with the AHA Centre as the hub.

Japan has also contributed significantly to the AHA Centre’s operationalization. The center’s information and technology systems—and those of the national disaster management offices of Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar—were provided by Japan to ensure smooth and consistent communication among the respective national disaster management offices of the ASEAN members. Japan also contributed more than US\$11 million to the ASEAN regional emergency stockpile and logistics system located in Subang, Malaysia, where the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) is also located.¹⁹ And the funds for the Disaster Emergency Logistic System come from the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund. The system is aimed at

providing “rapid delivery of relief items in times of disaster emergencies” and was first operationalized to deploy relief items to areas in the Philippines affected by Cyclone Bopha.²⁰

There is, thus, a role for closer ASEAN-Japan partnership in the area of disaster management and humanitarian response. While the initial collaborative activities carried out under the ASEAN-Japan dialogue rubric show ASEAN in more of a receiving role, ASEAN brings to this partnership the considerable experience it has gained in recent years in coordinating multi-agency responses across countries.

Many of the coordination mechanisms and facilitative measures implemented by the AHA Centre, and provided for under the AADMER framework, owe their existence to the lessons learned from the tragedies of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the 2008 Cyclone Nargis. While it can be said that an ASEAN-coordinated response did not play a prominent role in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami disaster that affected ASEAN members Indonesia and Thailand, the ASEAN role—and the value of regionally coordinated response efforts—came to the fore in the humanitarian disaster following Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar. The AADMER’s preparation was accelerated in the wake of the 2004 tsunami. However, its ratification did not receive any impetus until the 2008 Nargis tragedy. The importance of having a dedicated regional center monitoring and supporting the humanitarian needs of disasters was also highlighted by these two major disasters in ASEAN, leading to the much-needed support for the speedy establishment of the AHA Centre.

Today the impact of Cyclone Nargis is remembered more for the confusion over Myanmar’s stance on accepting aid and ASEAN’s role in brokering the coordination of humanitarian assistance. Less remembered is the role of the Tripartite Core Group (TCG) through which the government of Myanmar, the UN, and ASEAN coordinated relief and recovery assistance. The TCG’s consultative mechanism has been used as a model for Japan’s provision of capacity support to ASEAN’s newer members, such as Laos, to facilitate their integration into the ASEAN processes of community building and connectivity. The pilot program currently underway in Laos is expected to expand to the other CLMV [Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam] countries. Japan’s assistance to Laos is part of Japan’s overall contribution to the Initiative for ASEAN Integration, which ASEAN launched in 2000 to help the newer members of ASEAN fully participate in regional integration processes.

The main gain from the experience of these two major disasters in the region has been that ASEAN efforts to address problems that require special engagement with its members, such as human rights and emergency

response to disasters, have been brought sharply into focus. With the entry into force of the ASEAN Charter in December 2009, the administrative role of ASEAN as a coordinator and facilitator has been better defined. The Nargis experience has also served as a benchmark of sorts for circumventing the institutional hurdles of the non-interference principle and the requirement for political consensus. During the Nargis response, the media—both local and international—failed to share more human interest stories to give people a sense of the tremendous constraints that private citizens and civil servants faced and surmounted to help villages recover their livelihoods and build a sustainable future after the cyclone. One useful lesson from this experience is that more stories on the human element in responding to humanitarian needs should be highlighted. The ASEAN Youth Caravan of Goodwill to Japan in 2011 and the Kizuna Project are good examples of how this can be put into practice.

THE FUTURE OF ASEAN-JAPAN PARTNERSHIP IN DISASTER RESPONSE

Conceptual paradigms for disaster management also take into consideration the importance of disaster preparedness. This is premised on the recognition that disaster management strategies cannot take a reactive, “firefighting” approach post-disaster but should in fact focus more on disaster risk reduction by strengthening preparedness (including awareness) and prevention measures.

High-level commitment exists for strategic partnerships between ASEAN and Japan in strengthening disaster resilience. The 2011 Bali Declaration highlights five strategies to “further enhance peace, stability and prosperity in the region.”²¹ Creating a disaster-resilient society is listed as the fourth strategy, after the priorities dealing with political-security cooperation, Japan’s support for ASEAN Community building, and enhancing ASEAN-Japan connectivity. The fifth strategy is to address common regional and global challenges together.

The declaration lists broad commitments to implement the priority for strengthening disaster resilience, including Japan’s support for the AHA Centre and a disaster management resource network for the ASEAN region. The declaration also recognizes the significant—albeit intangible—contributions of people-to-people interactions or connectivity in humanitarian responses to disasters. In addition, the declaration calls for joint action in addressing global challenges such as climate change, the impact of which can be found in increasingly frequent natural disasters such as flash floods,

cyclones and tsunamis, longer and more frequent droughts, less distinct seasons, disrupted agriculture patterns, and increasing pressure on already overcrowded cities as mounting numbers of migrants flee these phenomena.²²

The ASEAN-Japan Plan of Action 2011–2015 further lists specific activities to give effect to the broad priorities of the declaration. The section on “Creating a Disaster Resilient Society” lists 11 priority activities to carry out the vision of the declaration and the commitments made at the April 2011 Special ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Meeting. The priority activities include the usual range of information sharing, capacity building, joint monitoring and response, and preparedness exercises. However, Activity 3.11.7, which calls for “an integrated approach to disaster management cooperation including conducting studies and exploring the risk areas, promoting public awareness and education on environmental protection and conservation, and strengthening community participation,” resonates most with the need to create a disaster-resilient society that places people at the core of the process.²³

Involving people, especially at the community level, is important in strengthening disaster resilience in ASEAN countries and in Japan. This is where Japan’s expertise and rich experience can be shared meaningfully with ASEAN countries. This is also where people-centered disaster response mechanisms can be developed together with ASEAN countries. As ASEAN moves closer toward the integration date of December 31, 2015, for a single ASEAN Community, the focus of regional integration is also being directed more toward the people who are the builders and beneficiaries of regional integration. Brunei, the ASEAN chair for 2013, has reflected this increasing focus in ASEAN’s theme for 2013: “Our People, Our Future Together.” Myanmar, which will take up ASEAN chair responsibilities in 2014, is seriously considering a theme for ASEAN that continues the focus on people and their shared future. Malaysia, which will chair ASEAN in 2015, aims to take the people-oriented theme a step further toward making ASEAN truly people centered. It is thus fitting for ASEAN-Japan partnerships that aim to create a more disaster-resilient society in East and Southeast Asia to focus on people in strengthening the existing disaster management and response strategies.

The Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2012 prepared by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction highlights people’s exposure and vulnerability to disaster, experienced individually and collectively, as continuing twin challenges for the region. The report also emphasizes the importance of constant re-evaluation of disasters and their risks, which are rightly described as dynamic. The first step toward

achieving this is through systematic recording and analysis of disaster impacts and losses by strong national disaster inventory systems. This systematic inventory will provide governments with the information they need on the investments necessary to reduce their citizens' vulnerability to disasters. It will also inform and assist the regular disaster response exercises and monitoring that take place in the region.

Japan's support and assistance for disaster risk reduction (DRR) in ASEAN countries can take the form of sharing its experience in formulating disaster preparedness procedures and promoting disaster management awareness. Lessons from the ASEAN and international community's response, including Japan's, to the humanitarian needs in Aceh after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and in Myanmar after Cyclone Nargis in 2008 also highlight the value of encouraging volunteerism and building capacities long before disasters strike. Many disaster relief agencies operating in East and Southeast Asia need to strengthen their capacity to accurately assess the humanitarian assistance needs and deliver appropriate relief assistance effectively. It is also important for relief agencies to be aware of cultural and religious factors that may inhibit the provision of aid.²⁴

Drawing from the respective learned experiences shaped by their diverse historical, cultural, and political contexts, it is timely for ASEAN and Japan to bolster the emerging importance of perspectives from the Global South in modern humanitarian action.

To this end, the following measures are suggested for future ASEAN-Japan partnership in addressing disaster resilience. The measures build on the immediate-term priorities of the ASEAN-Japan Plan of Action 2011–2015 and look forward to the medium-term (2015–2020).

The rationale for the suggested measures is based on the premise that disaster management, especially disaster risk reduction and awareness, is an area where Japan's partnership with ASEAN can be brought to bear with good effect. Japan has comprehensive bilateral programs with each of the ASEAN countries, in addition to the activities carried out under cooperation with ASEAN. It should be taken into account that almost all of the ASEAN countries have extensive, heavily populated coastlines, large agricultural sectors, and sections of the population living below the poverty line.²⁵

1. Support Relevant Priorities of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration

- Continue supporting rural infrastructure development, particularly in the CLMV countries, focusing on disaster-resilient structures in rural coastal communities exposed to natural disasters and hazards.

2. Increase Capacities for Evaluating Disaster Risks and Vulnerabilities

- Support or undertake national and regional studies that assess national disaster inventory system capacities and needs. Further assist those that need to be developed and strengthened.
- Strengthen disaster awareness education in the communities most exposed and vulnerable to natural hazards.
- Promote greater public dialogue and discussion on disaster preparedness, including government-NGO consultations.
- Develop and conduct sector-specific capacity-building programs for government officials and civil society organizations to effectively manage disaster relief and emergency responses.
- Strengthen institutions and human capacities, including local civil society organizations, to respond to disasters and emergencies.

3. Continue Enhancing People-to-People Linkages in Post-Disaster Relief and Reconstruction Efforts

- Encourage volunteerism, especially among the youth, to assist in rehabilitation and recovery efforts in the disaster-affected areas. Consider restarting the Kizuna Project.

4. Support or Complement National Commitments to Common Objectives under the MDGs and Rio+20 goals

- Through existing bilateral, subregional, and regional frameworks, identify priorities where capacity building or other technical and financial support can complement and assist ASEAN members' national commitments to common global undertakings for sustainable development.
- Support greater disaster resilience by assisting the development of integrated approaches in environmental, economic, and social policies in ASEAN members that are most vulnerable or exposed to disasters.

There is much potential for ASEAN-Japan collaboration in disaster response and management. ASEAN and Japan have both weathered crises arising from natural and manmade disasters, and the Plan of Action places the right emphasis on building disaster-resilient societies. Disasters of large magnitude usually attract attention from the international community and evoke support for emergency assistance from governments and communities around the world. However, ASEAN member countries and Japan have learned from their respective experiences in disaster management that whether it is a recurring natural hazard or an unforeseen complication of responses to multiple disaster events, disaster management and response

must be integral parts of national agendas, and that resilience needs to be built at every level of society. ASEAN and Japan have already taken positive steps toward strengthening partnerships in this area. Implementation of the ASEAN-Japan Plan of Action's commitments for disaster-resilient societies will build stronger local capacities for disaster management and response in ASEAN countries. The example of Myanmar has shown that regional and bilateral cooperation can help leverage humanitarian and development assistance for successful and sustained recovery. Ultimately, ASEAN-Japan collaboration on disaster management and humanitarian action should build this region's strength as a contributing force to reducing the social and economic impact of humanitarian emergencies wherever and whenever they occur.

NOTES

1. Japan is one of only four ASEAN dialogue partners to have done so. The others are the United States, China, and the Republic of Korea. Ambassadors to ASEAN from Australia and India are not resident in Jakarta. The other countries have concurrently appointed their ambassadors to Indonesia as their ASEAN envoys.
2. ASEAN Secretariat, "ASEAN-Japan Dialogue Relations," <http://www.asean.org/asean/external-relations/japan/item/external-relations-japan-overview-of-asean-japan-relations>.
3. ASEAN Secretariat, "Thoughts Connected, Future Connected: Celebrating 40 Years of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation," <http://www.asean.org/news/asean-secretariat-news/item/thoughts-connected-future-connected-celebrating-40-years-of-asean-japan-friendship-cooperation>.
4. *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 2nd edition (New York: Thomas Gale, 2007).
5. Udai Bhanu Singh, "Disaster Management in South-east Asia," *Journal of Defence Studies* (Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses) 6, no. 1 (2012).
6. Table of ASEAN Treaties/Agreements and Ratifications, as of May 2011, compiled by the ASEAN Secretariat. The AADMER required all 10 ASEAN members to ratify it for entry into effect. Between its adoption at the 38th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Vientiane, Laos, in July 2005, and the occurrence of Cyclone Nargis in May 2008, only 6 ASEAN members had ratified it, including Myanmar. (The others were Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.)
7. The AHA Centre was launched at the 19th ASEAN Summit on November 17, 2011.
8. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA), "Statement from the Singapore Chair of the ASEAN Regional Forum Senior Officials Meeting on the Cyclone Nargis Disaster in Myanmar," May 9, 2008, <http://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/statement-singapore-chair-asean-regional-forum-senior-officials-meeting-cyclone>.

9. "ARF Plans Statement on Providing Aid to Myanmar," *Kyodo News*, May 12, 2008, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/ARF+plans+statement+on+providing+aid+to+Myanmar.-a0179074812>.
10. For more details on the ASEAN Regional Forum's (ARF) disaster-relief activities, please see the list of ARF Track 1 activities on the ARF website: <http://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/library/arf-activities/list-of-arf-track-1-activities-by-subject.html>.
11. MOFA, "Special ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Meeting: Building Solidarity and Strengthening Cooperation on Disaster Management in Japan-ASEAN Relations," April 9, 2011, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/asean/sajmm/sajmm1104.html>.
12. Chair's Statement of the 18th ASEAN Summit, May 7–8, 2011, Jakarta. Paragraph 23 attests to ASEAN's "solidarity with Japan" and commits to engaging in "information-sharing and promote transparency on relevant nuclear-related issues in the region," http://www.asean.org/archive/Statement_18th_ASEAN_Summit.pdf.
13. Ibid. Paragraph 60 of the 18th ASEAN Summit Chair's Statement elaborates the actions to be undertaken in strengthening disaster management cooperation.
14. Mission of Japan to ASEAN, "Press Conference on ASEAN Youth Caravan's Goodwill Visit to Japan," <http://www.asean.emb-japan.go.jp/news20110526.html>.
15. Under the Kizuna Project, more than 10,000 youth, approximately 3,500 of whom are from ASEAN member states, had an opportunity to participate in several programs, visit disaster-affected areas, and engage in volunteer activities. The project ended at the end of March 2013.
16. Japan International Cooperation Agency, "Asia Pacific Countries Share Disaster Management Lessons," http://www.jica.go.jp/english/news/field/2011/2011226_01.html.
17. The seminar program is available at <http://www.seed-net.org/download/floodseminar.pdf>.
18. Mission of Japan to ASEAN, "AHA Centre ICT Workshop," http://www.asean.emb-japan.go.jp/news12_09.html.
19. A. K. P. Mochtan, "Towards a Disaster Resilient ASEAN," *Nation*, online December 18, 2012. <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/opinion/Towards-a-disaster-resilient-Asean-30196273.html>.
20. "ASEAN Supports the Typhoon Affected Communities in the Philippines," *ASEAN Secretariat News*, December 14, 2012, <http://www.asean.org/news/asean-secretariat-news/item/asean-supports-the-typhoon-affected-communities-in-the-philippines>.
21. "Joint Declaration for Enhancing ASEAN-Japan Strategic Partnership for Prospering Together (Bali Declaration)," November 18, 2011, http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/asean/conference/pdfs/bali_declaration_en_1111.pdf.
22. Rachel Roach, "Dried Up, Drowned Out. Voices from the Developing World on a Changing Climate" (London: Tearfund, 2005), 7–18.
23. ASEAN-Japan Plan of Action 2011–2015, November 18, 2011, <http://www.asean.org/archive/documents/19th%20summit/JP-PoA.pdf>.
24. Anecdotal reports cite instances in which aid supplies delivered to Aceh in the immediate aftermath of the tsunami could not be consumed or used by many of the survivors who were Muslim. A similar situation arose in Myanmar, where the cyclone survivors did not perceive energy biscuits as proper sustenance. The insular nature of decision makers also led to the rejection of a team of aid workers from Qatar because the flight on which the team arrived was "authorized" only to deliver aid and not aid workers. (There were also members of the media on the flight.) In the aftermath of the March 2011 triple disaster

in Japan, donations of bottled water, blankets, and medical assistance from abroad did not suit local needs.

25. The “2011 ASEAN Statistical Report on the Millennium Development Goals” (ASEAN Secretariat, 2012) reports that by 2010, the proportion of the population living on less than US\$1.25 PPP per day had gone down to 15 percent.