

# ASEAN: The Literally Invisible Hand in Disaster Management<sup>1</sup>

*Parada Chainikom*

Faculty of Political Science, Ramkhamhaeng University, Thailand

E-mail: chainikom7@gmail.com

## Abstract

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established through the Bangkok Declaration on 8th August 1967. To date, ASEAN has comprised 10 member countries namely Cambodia, Thailand, Brunei, Myanmar, the Philippines, Malaysia, Laos, Vietnam, Singapore, and Indonesia. Originated in 2015, the ASEAN Community consists of three pillars namely ASEAN Security Community (ASC), ASEAN Economic Community-AEC, and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). The three pillars of the ASEAN community in particular are aiming towards the unification, conciliation and consolidation of the Southeast Asia region with a strong focus on the importance of shared responsibility among the member countries in tackling security issues in every aspect including non-traditional threat. Nonetheless, as for ASEAN, a truly crucial and obvious challenge to date has been its operation when it comes to Disaster Management. Despite the fact that almost all of these countries are situated in the areas of high vulnerability to natural hazards, and that many country members have encountered severe natural disasters throughout the past decade e.g. the 2004 Tsunami Attack, the Cyclone Nargis, the Typhoon Haiyan, there has hardly been any mutually recognizable or tangible mechanisms related to disaster management to date. This might be attributed to the fact that each country operates in accordance with their own national mechanism based on the principle of sovereignty, and that all of them are active members of certain international organizations working towards disaster management in cooperation with global mechanisms who mainly receive international assistance. In this respect, the existence of ASEAN in connection with regional mechanisms such as the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and the Emergency Response (AADMER) seems to literally be the invisible hand when it comes to regional disaster management.

**Keywords:** ASEAN, Natural Disaster, Non-Traditional Threat

## Introduction

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a geo-political and economic organization formed through the Bangkok Declaration on 8 August 1967. At present, ASEAN has 10 member states namely Cambodia, Thailand, Brunei, Myanmar, Philippines, Malaysia, Laos, Vietnam, Singapore, and Indonesia.

ASEAN was formed with the purpose to strengthen the region's intergovernmental cooperation in the focus areas of politics, security, economy, society, culture, science, agriculture, industry, transportation as well as the increase of income and living standard among its people so as to establish a solid foundation for the prosperity of ASEAN whose operating policies are constructed from conclusions of meetings attended by heads of governments, ministers, and ASEAN's senior officers. Apart from serving as a prominent regional conference where participants including leaders of the ASEAN member countries

<sup>1</sup> This article is a part of the dissertation "Cooperation of ASEAN in the Political - Security Community: Natural Disaster Management"

discuss the establishment of their overall policy framework, the ASEAN summit also provides a good opportunity for all country members to collectively declare ASEAN's long-term work plan presented in different documentary forms such as action plan, joint declaration, declaration, agreement and convention. At ministerial and high-level conferences, both overall and specific policies are discussed. (Satawedin, 2012: 286-287)

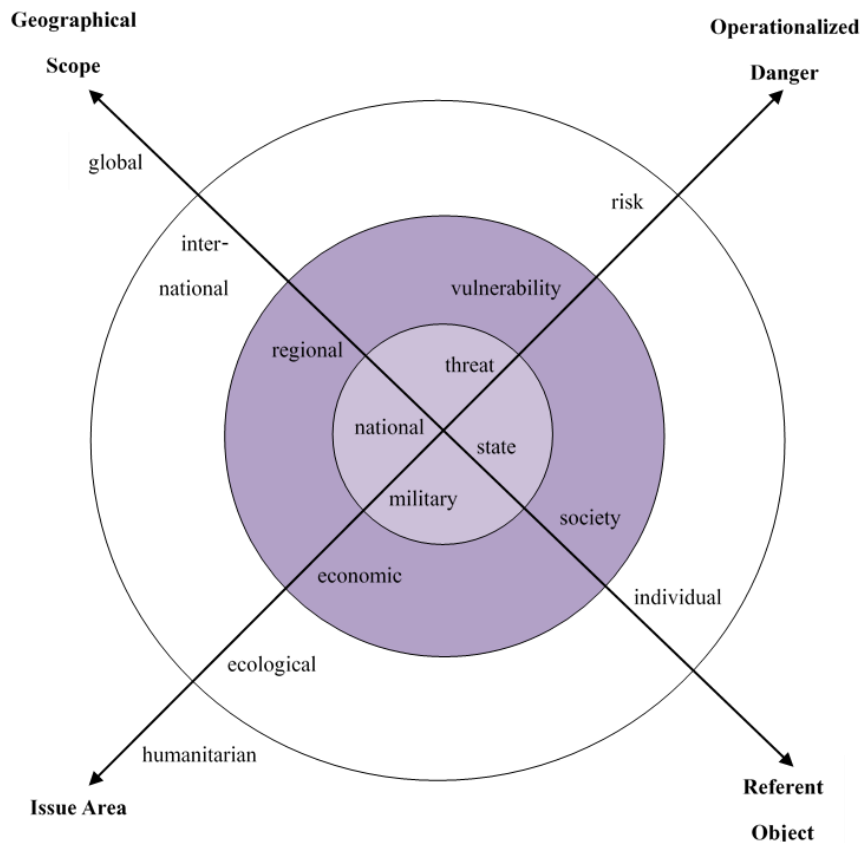
It was then at 9th ASEAN Summit on 7 October 2003 where all member states agreed upon reaching a more in-depth cooperation through developing joint operation in constructing the three pillars in the fields of political-security and socio-cultural cooperation. The Declaration of Bali Concord II was subsequently endorsed with an agreement to establish the ASEAN Community within 2020 (which would later shortened to 2015) along with the initiation of ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). (Thepchatree, 2011: 22)

The Declaration of Bali Concord II unmistakably reflects ASEAN's improved cooperation in a rather more diverse dimensions in consequence of global security's context that is becoming all the more non-traditional. The end of the Cold War in particular brought about a transformation of ASEAN from being a seemingly anti-communist association in the past to an organization that embraces the entire Southeast Asia region through welcoming new country members of different ideological and political backgrounds. Other supporting factors instigating this turning point in ASEAN's framework also include the 1997 financial crisis and the ever-increasing terrorism around the world. (Tomotaka, 2008: 22)

### **Transformed Security Threats**

One of the more apparent changes in global security circumstances can be clearly observed in the period after the Cold War as a result from the transformation in the concept of security. That is to say, after the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 which was followed by the end of the Warsaw Pact threat such as a nuclear war too was dissolved. Yet instead of experiencing a state of stability which had never existed, each state was confronted with infinite security threats such as terrorism, the rapid increase of weapons of mass destruction, civil war and ethnic conflict. The fact that the end of Cold War did not bring about the elimination but merely disarmament of nuclear weapons among the Superpower, up until the year 2003 USA and Russia had been holding a stockpile of remaining 7,000 to 8,000 nuclear warheads. In addition, the likelihood and intensity of terrorist attacks was increasing while weapons of mass destruction as well as small arms were more readily available. During the 1990s, several conflicts instigated in many parts of the world with 47 out of 49 incidents were mainly civil wars which involved the use of small arms and light weapons. The number of deaths due to these threats, however, could not be compared to those caused by HIV/AIDS. For example, from 1960 to 2001, the highest number of deaths caused by terrorist attacks were 4,548 while 2 million died from HIV/AIDS in 1999 after which the number shortly rose to 3 million in 2003. This has made infectious disease threat which is not geographically limited become a new widespread threat with increased probability. (Krahmann, 2005: 5-7)

Taking into account the world's transformed context mentioned above, Christopher Daase (2010: 23) proposed that the transformed security culture over the past 50 years has partially resulted from secularization. Yet the main issue is the consequence of de-nationalization both politically and socially including transnationalization - an unintended consequence of social liberation. Daase was thus led to conclude that the geographical scope of the concept of security expands in 4 dimensions as follows. (Daase, 2010: 26-34)



**Figure 1** The expansion of the security concept happened in 4 dimensions as follow  
Source: Daase (2010: 26-34)

From the Figure 1, it can be perceived that the scope of security issue area that was once only limited to military. In other words, any military-related issues back then were regarded as threat to national security with the state being the referent object. At present, nonetheless, the scope of such issue area has extended to cover economic, ecological as well as humanitarian aspects; from contemplating the issue by trying to identify threat to moving towards assessing vulnerability as well as risk involved. This method of assessing the issue area hence requires broadening and refining the geographical scope of the issue area and that of the referent object. As a result, the non-traditional security risk extends from national to regional scope, and ultimately, to international scope while the referent object's scope spreads downward to smaller units; from the state to society before eventually having a direct impact on the individual.

Broadening the scope of security threat that has taken place helps determine certain security issues in the global context including mechanisms that will tackle these issues in the international level in various aspects. For example, the 1990s was designated by the United Nations as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Relief (INDNR). Then it was in 1994 when the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World was established after which it was developed into the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Other examples include the UNSC Resolution 1540 (2004) adopted on 24th April 2004 in regards to the non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) which established relevant measures to keep WMD, launcher, and related equipment out of the hands of terrorist groups, and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) which prevents and suppresses human trafficking in accordance with the UN framework.

Meanwhile in the regional level, many have also been aware of certain security threats in non-traditional form somewhat apparent within ASEAN's framework since it has been transformed to cover various aspects and made suitable to the changing context of international relations. In the past, the framework would mostly relate state security to the development of military strength, however, non-traditional security threats have taken center stage. A few examples of this new form of security threats include issues related to public health, migration, environment, natural resource conflict, transnational crime, maritime piracy, and terrorism. (Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, 2012: 11-24)

These issues were most clearly observed in the development of ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2015 which highlights the following 3 aspects: (Tangtrongpaioj, 2011: 346-347)

1) Sharing the same social rules and values including activities that will be conducted together so as to develop proper understanding in the different sociocultural systems as well as historical backgrounds among the members. Encouraging political development in growing towards the same direction through promoting the democratic principles, supporting and protecting human rights, encouraging civic participation against corruption, and supporting rule of law and good governance.

2) Promoting peace and awareness of shared responsibility in maintaining security in every aspect among the ASEAN citizens including cooperation to reinforce security in the traditional sense which is a necessary action to build trust and peaceful settlement of disputes in preventing war while also working towards peaceful coexistence far from mistrust among the ASEAN countries. Broadening regional cooperation against non-traditional security threats such as terrorism, transnational crime, drug and human trafficking as well as ensuring disaster preparedness so as to prevent and manage natural hazards.

3) Creating dynamics and enabling interactions with the outside community. Planning activities to support ASEAN's pivotal role in regional cooperation.

### **Natural Disaster as Non-Traditional Security Threat and ASEAN's Regional Mechanism**

From the shifted perception of security, one of the issues which have been regularly brought up during discussions on security is natural disaster.

Furthermore, the past decade has been considered as a period of numerous massive natural disasters with countless lives, properties, economies, societies, and environment being affected in immeasurable ways. 4 billion is the number of lives around the world affected by natural disasters, 2 million of which lost their lives while many others have become homeless immigrants. In 2011 alone, EM-DAT's assessment revealed the total damage cost across the world caused by natural disasters was \$366.1 billion with East Asia being the most affected making up 80% of the total damage. Southeast Asia's circumstances were regarded as rather severe since most ASEAN member countries are located in the geographical zone that is the most disaster-prone area in the world. (Sawada & Zen, 2014: 1)

According to the data from 1970-2009, 1,211 natural disaster events in this region were reported, causing 414,927 deaths in total, 32 % of which was caused by cyclones, 9% by earthquakes and tsunami attacks, 4% from volcanic eruptions, 3% from drought, and finally 1% from forest fires. (ASEAN Disaster Risk Management Initiative, 2010: 124)

The natural event that causes most deaths in the region is the cyclones followed by earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, epidemics, landslides, drought, volcanic eruptions and forest fires. As for the top 5 Asian Developing Countries whose citizens are prone to be impacted by natural hazards the most are Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Laos and Myanmar. (Asian Developing Countries at Relatively High Mortality Risk from Multiple Hazards) (ADB,

2013: 6)

Furthermore, every country in Southeast Asia has been impacted by climate change. According to the IPCC's reports from 1951-2000, the average temperature in this region rose from 0.1 to 0.3 degree Celsius per decade with the sea level predicted to increase 40 cm approximately in the year 2100 as compared to that of 1990. Moreover, regional rainfall amount has decreased causing more heat waves and cyclones respectively. Apart from the vulnerability caused by population density, it was quite apparent that natural disasters have affected the economy of Southeast Asia. According to the forecast on the impact of climate change, the issue will most likely affect ASEAN in the year 2100 and that most member countries may lose up to 6%-7% of GDP. (ASEAN Disaster Risk Management Initiative, 2010: 125) It should be noted that the 5 countries whose economies are most at risk of suffering from disaster events are Vietnam, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia and Cambodia. (ADB, 2013: 6)

From the aforementioned circumstances, this type of security threat is considered rather crucial for ASEAN leading the organization to integrating plans concerning preparedness, prevention, and natural disaster management into the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint (Department of ASEAN Affairs, n.d.: 9) So as to encourage the community in becoming more responsive with efficacy and efficiency to urgent issues or critical situation impacting ASEAN until 2004, when the ASEAN region was attacked by the tsunami waves causing severe damages and losses, the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management or ACDM then initiated an operational framework based on the cooperation among ASEAN members which was neither an action plan nor a declaration but an agreement with certain obligations and duties for all member countries to accept and follow under international laws. This would later give birth to the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) which was signed on 26 July 2005 by ministers of foreign affairs from every member country and became effective on 24 December 2009. (Vachirakul, 2014: 94)

As for the objectives of AADMER, the agreement focuses on building an effective mechanism to help reduce current disaster-related damage affecting lives, properties, economies, and environment within the member countries' societies as well as jointly responding to urgent disaster events so as to establish cooperation in the national level and extend such cooperation toward regional and international levels. This operation, furthermore, shall be conducted within the structure of sustainable development and under the principles of AADMER (Boonhok, 2013: 28) Consequently, AADMER which comprises 11 parts and 36 articles is characterized as an agreement with obligations that member countries must follow through along with developing cooperative frameworks and comprehensive operational mechanisms within ASEAN in preparing for effective disaster response. This should cover the non-disaster phase, the pre-disaster phase (e.g. identification of disaster risks, monitoring, early warning, prevention, preparedness), the impact phase (e.g. emergency response, mitigation), post-disaster phase (e.g. habilitation, recovery), as well as establishing academic cooperation, conducting scientific researches, and strengthening capacity and competency. The agreement also encourages each country member to first seek domestic assistance and utilize their own resources. If the circumstance is, in any case, beyond their capacity, then it is advisable for them to adopt established mechanisms suggested in AADMER for further assistance.

Risk assessment which is the first step of disaster management in this agreement involves conducting risk analysis and assessment to identify probability or likelihood of a disaster event, its damage and impact on people, their properties, economy, and environment. Each country member was asked to contribute appropriate measures in order to determine disaster risk in their own territory as well as conducting an assessment of risk and exposure levels

which shall include their disaster management capacity. All data from each assessment shall be sent to The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Center) for data analysis.

As for the preparedness as stated in AADMER, the agreement specifies that all member countries develop certain strategies and contingency plans to reduce disaster-related loss which can be worked out collectively or independently. Furthermore, this agreement also highlights a preparation mechanism composed of 2 parts: establishment of the Standard Operating Procedures for Regional Standby Arrangement and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP), with the following regulations and standards (Boonhok, 2013: 28-51)

- 1) Guides and templates to initiate the establishment of the ASEAN Standby Arrangement for Disaster Relief and Emergency Response
- 2) Procedures for joint disaster relief and emergency response operations
- 3) Procedures for the facilitation and utilization of military and civilian assets and capacities
- 4) Methodology for the periodic conduct of the ASEAN regional disaster emergency response simulation exercises with the purpose to test the effectiveness of SASOP

As for the emergency monitoring and alert, this will take place right after the assessment of disaster risk with transboundary effects covering disasters that have already occurred as well as those with probability. The National Focal Point of each member country will present an initial report to the AHA Center for further analysis and information delivery among the member countries so as to establish early warnings and follow-ups. In this respect, the National Focal Point of each member country presenting the report is requested to closely follow up on related situation and report any distinct changes. The frequency of the report shall depend on the intensity of the current disaster event or they are suggested to provide a daily report at 9:00, Jakarta time, so that the AHA Center will be able to analyze each report on the situation and inform each member country of any changes which will then be treated either as a situation update or daily report to be released at 10:00, Jakarta time.

Regarding disaster prevention and relief as stated in AADMER, all member countries are requested to jointly or individually develop strategies in establishing prevention, reducing disaster-related loss as well as developing appropriate measures to decrease disaster risk as follows: (Boonhok, 2013: 28-51)

- 1) Conducting legislation endorsement and establishment of rules and regulations, policies, work plans, projects and strategies.
- 2) Building capacity in disaster management and coordination both in local and national scope.
- 3) Building public awareness and public education while enhancing community participation.
- 4) Encouraging the use of knowledge and implementation of such in local communities.

The operational measures during disasters will take place once the member country declares its incapacity to deal with the situation. The measures to cope with such situation are divided into 2 levels.

- 1) In responding to national emergency situation, member countries are required to establish their necessary measures for the transportation of equipment, facilities, materials, and personnel as well as the funding arrangements required for such emergency response. All of these must be clearly stated in domestic laws of each member country and informed to all the others including the AHA Center.
- 2) As for joint emergency response under assistance framework, the National Focal Point of the affected member country shall, when assistance after an event of disaster emergency within its territory is needed, request such assistance from any other member country, directly or through AHA Center, or, where appropriate, from other entities. The requesting member country shall inform to the assisting party of the type of assistance needed as well as any

significant information for further consideration. If the requesting party is incapable of indicating the scope and type of assistance, both the requesting and assisting parties shall work on such topics together.

Once the request is acknowledged by other member countries, the National Focal Point of that country is expected to go through the request and respond immediately regarding the type and possible assistance framework. In case the assisting party is incapable of providing such assistance as requested, it needs to notify the AHA Center so that it can provide other possible assistance. Since disaster management is considered an internal affair, provision of any external assistance must be first approved by that state. In addition, in accordance with the national laws and regulatory requirements of both the requesting and assisting state, the requesting party must allow the assisting party (Boonhok, 2013: 28-51)

1) Exemption from taxation, duties and other charges of a similar nature on the importation and use of equipment including vehicles and telecommunications, facilities and materials brought into the territory of the requesting or receiving party for the purpose of assistance.

2) Facilitation of entry into, stay in and departure from its territory of personnel and equipment, facilities and materials involved or used in the assistance.

3) Cooperation, where appropriate, with the AHA Centre to take place in order to facilitate the processing of exemptions and facilities in respect of the provision of assistance.

Furthermore, the assisting party shall designate a person who shall consult or coordinate with the receiving party, or, nevertheless, the assisting party itself shall be in charge of and shall retain immediate operational supervision over the personnel and the equipment provided by it. The designated person, referred to as Head of the assistance operation, shall exercise such supervision in co-operation with the appropriate authorities of both the requesting and receiving parties. The requesting party is also required to ensure the protection of such personnel, equipment and materials brought into its territory by the assisting party. Such military personnel and related civilian officials are, however, not allowed to carry arms.

Regarding post-disaster measures, ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response or AADMER establishes that all member countries, jointly or individually, develop post-disaster strategies and conduct a recovery project; that all member countries shall encourage bilateral, regional, and international cooperation with regard to disaster-related recovery.

### **Just How Committed Is Considered Committed?**

In dealing with devastating disaster events which have over the years occurred rather frequently in the Southeast Asia region, ASEAN has been making the effort to reaffirm their commitment through the signing of AADMER which aims to establish a regional cooperation framework while providing technical assistance as well as mobilizing resources in each and every aspect deemed necessary in handling disastrous events with assistance from the AHA Centre or the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Management representing ASEAN's main mechanism in supporting coordination of humanitarian assistance.

To date, the AHA Centre has made a presentation on the operational outcomes of disaster management of the ASEAN region in the year 2013 covering 7 ASEAN disastrous events to which they provided assistance, namely (1) in January, the massive flooding in Jakarta, (2) in May, the typhoon Mahasen in Myanmar, (3) in July, the Aceh earthquake in Indonesia, (4) in August, Manila's heavy floods caused by tropical cyclone 'Maring', (5) in August, flooding in central and northern region of Laos, (6) also in August the devastating earthquake in Bohol, Philippines, and (7) in November, the disastrous Typhoon Haiyan in Philippines. In the case of Typhoon Haiyan, a team of experts organized by the AHA Centre in collaboration with the ASEAN Emergency Rapid Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) was sent to Manila

and Tacloban right before the typhoon hit the two cities so as to work in coordination with a group of officers from the Philippines' National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) in ensuring proper preparedness, installation of the Broadband Global Area Network (BGAN) as a post-disaster communication channel, and provision of disaster relief to those being affected. After the typhoon's arrival, the team periodically conducted assessments of needs in Philippines. They managed to import into the affected area emergency stockpiles of relief items from the city of Subang, Malaysia consisting of clean drinking water, food, relief packs, tents, electric generator as well as mobile office space. In addition, the collaborative team also played the key role of a coordinator between the ASEAN member countries by helping facilitate assistance and relief items traveling to the Philippines from other countries. (Department of ASEAN Affairs, 2013, pp.1-2) However, according to Mr. Larry Maramis, Director of Cross Sectoral Cooperation, ASEAN Secretariat, the role of ASEAN in providing assistance to the Philippines was not as outstanding as it should have been, possibly due to lack of proper public relations. (Department of ASEAN Affairs, 2013: 2)

Satisfactory practice of public relations, nevertheless, may not be the only key answer to AHA's monotonous role since, in reality, the AHA Center, despite its key role as ASEAN's central agency in ensuring the implementation of AADMER, only consisted of 17 officers with an operating budget of \$5.8 million. (Donations from all ASEAN member countries was scarcely \$300,000) (Hughes, 2015: 7)

Whereas one may attribute this inadequate donations to the fact that all of these countries are essentially developing countries, it should be noted that in the case of Myanmar, during the attack of Cyclone Nargis, the country received a donation amount of \$323,900 in total from Thailand, both from its public and private sectors, along with a contribution made by the Singaporean government of \$200,000, and the total amount of 9,212,300,000 Rp (approximately \$1 million) in cash from Indonesia. (Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, 2010) In comparison to AHA's aforementioned budget donated from all ASEAN member countries to support its operation, this indicates, in one respect, the little importance all ASEAN member countries have given to the operation of AHA. It should be observed that, in actual practice, each country may not have maximized their own resources in their operations in accordance with the agreement's principles. (Hughes, 2015, 7)

In addition, the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response is considered the world's first and only legally-binding agreement as well as an operational tool for the Hyogo Framework for Action. This suggests that the AADMER was principally established in accordance with the framework of a global mechanism and therefore largely adopts disaster mitigation measures pertaining to such mechanism, and not the one developed out of its own conditions. The next interesting question to ask would be regarding the locality of this agreement in the context of international affairs which consists of an intersection of the these principles for each ASEAN state to keep in mind i.e. their existence as an autonomous state, a regional community, and a member of the global community. It is worth noting that in many cases when disastrous events take place within the territory of ASEAN countries, each of them is already equipped with clear strategies and work plans largely connected to global operational frameworks whereas ASEAN in 2008 took more than 2 weeks after the Cyclone Nargis had struck Myanmar before calling for an immediate meeting in Singapore in order to exert their pressure on the impacted Myanmar to accept assistance from the fellow members. After the meeting and Myanmar's consent to receive this assistance, the member countries were able to send their teams over to assess the circumstances as well as their respective medical personnel to rescue the citizens affected by the event. The major organizations that provided humanitarian assistance as well as conducting constant assessments and follow-ups after a disaster strikes the region turn out to



be those entities outside ASEAN. This reflects ASEAN's own lack of readiness in knowledge, personnel, and funds when it comes to the operation in accordance with AADMER.

### **One Vision, One Identity, One Community?**

According to an evaluation of the Department of ASEAN Affairs, the most crucial issues and challenges for the political-security pillar of ASEAN is developing shared values among the member countries as each state comes from different political cultures. Furthermore, the role of the ASEAN Secretariat which acts as a central agency for ASEAN is considered rather weak. More importantly, given the conflict issues throughout history in the region, one cannot help but notice that mutual trust is still very much lacking among the member countries. Other issues of concern among ASEAN members also include resource-induced conflicts such as maritime security and the South China Sea dispute whereas the political situations in each country are highly vulnerable despite the possibility that these political issues would likely affect other countries in the region as well. Partially resulted from internal political conflicts, these issues have also impacted the global economy; such issues include the political development in Myanmar, smog pollution or even the 2011 Great Flood in Thailand. (The Guardian, 2014)

Cooperation in the field of disaster management which seems to be one of the most tangible joint operations among the ASEAN states reflects the level of their commitment particularly in the aspect of non-traditional security threat. Looking back to all of their virtually insignificant joint operations in the past in solving disaster-related issues within the territory of each member country, it is rather comprehensible as to why ASEAN has not yet achieved the much needed realization that this issue of non-traditional security threat can no longer be dealt with by just one ASEAN state, that even those smaller units of the society are likely to be at risk of becoming troubled by these issues. Issues such as economic inequality, gender inequality, political conflict, religious conflict or political corruption are ultimately capable of exposing every member of the society and eventually the state itself to the type of vulnerability induced by natural hazards. Situation assessments from previous disaster events reveal that mortality rates among the poor were higher than that of the rich, religious and/or political differences impacted citizens' ability to access government's assistance and welfare, mortality rates of females were higher than that of males, population density was connected to disaster-induced violence, unqualified construction of buildings affected collapse resistance, corruption among government officers decreased people's welfare in preparing for disasters, etc.

Therefore, disaster management is not merely about establishing AADMER, hosting a ministerial-level conference, running a workshop to introduce basic knowledge of natural disaster, or starting a contingency training. It is to realize and be aware, first and foremost, of the fact that natural disaster is a non-traditional threat that is actually capable of jeopardizing security despite the many perceptions of the subject e.g. the cultural view concerning the intrinsicity of nature itself, or a religious belief regarding the cycle of karma, and that this too ultimately can be dealt with through preparedness and vulnerability risk mitigation.

Revisiting the concept of disaster management in accordance with global mechanisms, one should find that risk mitigation strategies and risk identifications are categorized as the two most important processes while also being treated as the first priorities in a state's operation. Decision-making process happening in the public and private sectors together with the global disaster management mechanism are intrinsically what gives the invisible hand metaphor, yet with such mobilizing force that produces tangible effects; whereas ASEAN's own mechanism seems to be the literally invisible hand, powerless at its core - a quality that is very much identical to the community itself.

## References

- ADB. 2013. **The rise of natural disasters in Asia and the Pacific: learning from ADBs experience.** Manila: Independent Evaluation ADB.
- ASEAN Disaster Risk Management Initiative. 2010. **Synthesis report on Ten ASEAN countries disaster risks assessment.** Jakarta: Association of Southeast Asian Nations.
- Daase, C. 2010. ““National, Societal”, and “Human Security”: On the Transformation of Political Language.” **Historical Social Research** 35(4): 22-37.
- Department of ASEAN Affairs. 2013. **Meeting Minute Report the 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management and the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response Partnership Conference.** Bangkok: Department of ASEAN Affairs.
- Department of ASEAN Affairs. n.d. **ASEAN MINI BOOK.** Bangkok: Department of ASEAN Affairs.
- Satawedini, D. 2012. **Southeast Asia: Development of Politics and International Affairs.** Unpublished manuscript, Ramkhamhaeng University.
- Krahmann, E. (ed.). 2005. **New Threats and New Actors in International Security.** New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Boonhok, N. 2013. **Thailand's implementation of ASEAN agreement on disaster management and emergency response.** Unpublished master's thesis, Thammasat University.
- Thepchatree, P. 2011. **ASEAN Community.** Bangkok: Sematham Press.
- Sawada, Y., & Zen, F. 2014. **Disaster management in ASEAN.** Retrieved from [www.eria.org/ERIA-DP-2014-03.pdf](http://www.eria.org/ERIA-DP-2014-03.pdf)
- Hughes, S. 2015. **ASEAN's Role in Regional Natural Disaster Response.** Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University
- Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University. 2012. **International Relations.** Nonthaburi: Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University Press.
- Tangtrongpaioj, S. 2011. “ASEAN.” In S. Tangtrongpaioj (ed.). **Asia Yearbook.** Bangkok: Institute of Asian Studies Chulalongkorn University Press, pp. 343-357.
- The Guardian. 2014. **Where did the Indian Ocean tsunami aid money go?.** Retrieved from [www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/dec/25/where-did-indian-ocean-tsunami-aid-money-go](http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/dec/25/where-did-indian-ocean-tsunami-aid-money-go).
- Tomotaka, S. 2008. “ASEAN Security Community: An initiative for peace and stability.” **NIDS Security Reports** 3 (4): 17-34.
- Vachirakul, W. 2014. **Disaster Management Strategy of the Thai Armed Forces to Support the ASEAN Political and Security Community.** Unpublished manuscript, Thailand National Defence College.