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**Agenda Item 4: Asia/Pacific and Inter-Regional SAR Planning, Coordination and Cooperation**

**MALAYSIA MARITIME SAR SOP REVIEW AND UPDATE ON SAR ACTIVITIES, OPERATION AND TRAINING DURING PANDEMIC**

(Presented by Malaysia)

**SUMMARY**

This paper provides a brief update on Malaysia's Maritime Search & Rescue SOP review and updates on SAR activities, operations and training during pandemic

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This paper provides information on the actions of the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) in reviewing the Maritime SAR SOP by adding in a new chapter, namely Guidance for Maritime SAR during a pandemic. Taking into consideration that the world is currently affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the safety of SAR personnel is vital. Thus, efforts were made in developing guidance for SAR personnel to ensure preventive measures and safety of all SAR personnel comply with recommendations by International Maritime Organization (IMO) and International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF).

1.2 This will ensure that all SAR activities, operations and training are carried out by implementing proper procedures, at the same time preventing the spread of infectious disease.

**2. DISCUSSION**

Guidance for Maritime SAR during a Pandemic

2.1 New sections introduced in MMEA SOP, Chapter 'Guidance for Maritime SAR during a pandemic' are as the following:

- a) Response plan for suspected infection – to develop a plan in case someone exhibits symptoms of infection such as isolating, quarantine, monitoring, disinfection and methods on how to transport the person to health care facility, or home.
- b) Preventive and protective measures–reminder and advice on not sharing personal equipment, maintaining social distancing, the usage of personal protective equipment and proper hygiene, disinfection and clean up.
- c) Safe disposal of potentially infected waste – correctly dispose clinical waste and minimising the risk associated with the incorrect disposal of potentially infected items that could impact the natural environmental and spreading of the infectious diseases.

- d) Handling and transporting of victims – avoiding direct contact or touching, maintaining distance and conducting pre-health screening prior to handing over victims to a third party.
- e) First aid response – Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) is not recommended for high-risk groups. Responders are encouraged to use Automated External Defibrillator (AED) for infected victims.
- f) SAR operation – Medical evacuation request should be processed and verified with other national authorities prior to deploying assets for assistance.
- g) Training activities – Non-essential training activities that require participants to be physically present would be suspended, cancelled or postponed, whereas essential training should be carried out by minimizing the number of trainers and participants present. It is recommended to utilize technology by various online platforms for training purpose.

2.2 To support the recommendation of the SOP, MMEA had organised two programmes during the Movement Control Order (MCO) and Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) period, focused to enhancing SAR personnel’s knowledge on the following:

- a) Essay writing competition – Maritime Enforcement/SAR during COVID-19 in June 2020, and
- b) Knowledge sharing day via online platform focusing on Maritime SAR/MRO during COVID-19, the challenges and technologies on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

MMEA as Malaysia's Maritime SAR Authority would like to ensure that existing directives, orders and procedures are reviewed and updated in line with the current situation by proposing recommendations and best practices in SAR from all over the world.

### **3. ACTION BY THE MEETING**

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper; and
- b) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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