



Strengthening disaster preparedness and response in the Asia Pacific

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The 2017-2018 Taiwan Disaster Preparedness Initiative

Objectives: The proposed Taiwan Disaster Preparedness Initiative will: (1) strengthen Taiwan domestic disaster preparedness, response, and “whole of society” coordination; (2) facilitate Taiwan’s effective participation in providing cross-border humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR); (3) help Taiwan stakeholders build sustainable relationships with counterparts from the international community and other countries, such as the U.S., Japan, Philippines, and others; and, (4) save lives and reduce suffering caused by natural disasters in Taiwan and the Asia Pacific region.

Whole of Society Methodology: Peace Winds America (PWA) initiatives utilize a unique “whole of society” methodology that brings together stakeholders from governments (national and local), militaries, NGOs, private sector, United Nations, ASEAN, and others for a series of trainings, forums, and networking events. Through the PWA approach participants build sustainable relationships that allow stakeholders in the region to mutually understand each other’s roles, capabilities, structures, and processes. As a result, domestic and international partners are better able to collaborate in preparedness and in providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) domestically and across borders.

PWA’s wide network of partners and trainers ensures that host nations and participants interact with HADR experts from organizations such as US Agency for International Development, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, U.S. Pacific Command, Japan Self-Defense Forces, and many others.

Previous Preparedness Initiatives: PWA has been facilitating these programs in Japan for nearly ten years, reinforcing the U.S.-Japan Strategic Alliance and building patterns of cooperation and coordination. The 3/11 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami demonstrated the efficacy of these trainings. In after-action reviews officials from U.S. and Japanese civilian and military agencies highlighted the benefits of PWA programs. PWA implemented a similar trilateral initiative with the Philippines in 2013-2015, providing one of the first inter-agency after-action reviews of the domestic and international response to Typhoon Haiyan.

The Taiwan Disaster Preparedness Initiative: Building upon past successes, this Initiative will focus on Taiwan. Taiwan is a natural partner due to its vulnerability to various disasters, geographic location, and its interest in providing cross-border assistance along with the U.S., Japan, Philippines, and international responders.

Domestic Preparedness and Response: The Initiative will first solidify Taiwan’s disaster preparedness, response, and “whole of society” coordination at all levels. Taiwan, regularly affected by natural disasters, most notably typhoons, earthquakes, and landslides, aims to further strengthen domestic disaster response and coordination. Its geographic isolation and political environment make a strong, cohesive domestic response important to maintaining political, economic, and social stability and domestic security.

Peace Winds America will bring together representatives from the “whole of society” in Taiwan—government, NGOs, military, private sector—along with international experts and counterparts to review disasters and responses in Taiwan, lessons learned, and ways to enhance capabilities, connectivity, and collaboration. Participants will examine case studies, sharing best practices and lessons learned in Taiwan and in other countries.

Cross-Border Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HADR): Taiwan is increasingly capable of assisting disaster prone nations and communities through its effective HADR. Taiwan’s New Southbound Policy will strengthen its HADR to others in Asia and the Pacific. Already Taiwan has made notable contributions to overseas disasters such as the 2010 Haiti earthquake, 2011 Tsunami in Japan, 2013 Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, among others.

Through this Initiative, PWA will unite representatives from Taiwan with international experts and counterparts from other countries, such as the U.S., Japan, Philippines, and others for HADR training, dialogue, and exercises, which will enhance Taiwan’s ability to provide, as well as receive, cross-border assistance in the future. Through this Initiative:

- Taiwan and international counterparts will identify and nurture Taiwan’s unique capabilities in providing HADR across borders (e.g., urban search and rescue, health/medical assistance, logistics and heavy lift, technology, infrastructure building). Similarly, Taiwan will understand the capabilities and forms of assistance available from others.
- Taiwan will be better equipped to provide effective and appropriate forms of HADR across borders and to deploy its resources expeditiously.
- Participants will better understand the roles and comparative advantages of the government entities, private sector, and NGOs at different phases in the disaster continuum from immediate relief to long-term recovery.
- Taiwan and other participants will understand the appropriate processes and mechanisms for proffering and receiving assistance from each other.
- Political and logistical barriers (e.g., visa processes) to cross-border HADR will be identified and reduced. Taiwan will be capable of navigating international HADR and coordination frameworks and understand international standards, such as ADMM-Plus and the international cluster system.
- Participants will develop sustainable relationships that will continue beyond the initiative which facilitate collaboration in disaster mitigation, resilience, and preparedness.

Budget and Timeline: PWA with appropriate funding will implement the Initiative over 12 months. PWA will conduct three events in Taipei and potentially Tokyo. The events include hands-on workshops, roundtable discussions, forums, networking events, and a final symposium. Participants will include representatives of government ministries, NGOs, military, and the private sector from Taiwan, Japan, the U.S., the Philippines, and as well as the United Nations, ASEAN, and others.

The Initiative will be prefaced by a research and curriculum design phase intended to tailor the program to the specific needs and interests of the Taiwan participants. PWA will meet with Taiwan representatives to discuss needs, desired outcomes, and potential partners. Following the events, PWA will publish and disseminate findings, results, lessons learned, and recommendations.