

SUMMARY REPORT of the Tenth
GLOBAL AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS
CONFERENCE (GAREC-2014),
Huntsville, Alabama, USA. 14 -15 June 2014

The Tenth Global Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Conference, GAREC-2014, took place in Huntsville, Alabama. It was hosted by ARRL Alabama Section and the Huntsville Hamfest Association and was attended by delegates from all three ITU regions.

Aside from standing items such as regional reports and a desktop exercise, presentations were also received on;

- Emergency Communications as an element of promoting Amateur Radio amongst young people.
- The Salvation Army's SATERN programme and its use of digital modes and remote control operation.
- How the US Department of Defense utilises the Military Affiliate Radio Service (MARS) capabilities in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief activities..
- The construction of a combined Emergency Services Dispatch Centre providing interoperable communications facilities.

During the conference and in open sessions a number of themes began to emerge:

- The importance of having meaningful conversations with our Served Agencies to ensure that we best meet their communications needs.
- Attention should be focused on amateur radio as a trusted partner in emergency response at all phases of the communications life cycle.
- Effective ways need to be found to use social media to circulate near real-time information on an event which do not compromise our relationships with served agencies.
- More use should be made of social media to circulate information on GAREC itself, including video of the 2015 conference if possible to broaden the opportunity of outreach.
- We reaffirmed that every country has different disaster response needs which reflect their unique situations and operational standards. The IARU HF Emergency Message Procedures, which includes elements such as net operation procedures, standard messaging protocols and activation protocols should continue to be developed to establish baseline standards between countries and regions. These recommended best practices are not intended to replace existing Standard Operating Procedures but to enhance them.
- The role of amateur radio in emergency communications is constantly changing. Amateur radio must continue to adapt to the needs of our partners including embracing emerging technologies and new challenges.
- The conference recognised that more needed to be done to reach out to our Served Agencies to promote our service. All GAREC participants past and present are invited to submit their ideas or examples of local best practice to the next conference in 2015.
- GAREC participants recognise that in order to recruit the next generation of emergency communicators strong emphasis needs to be paid to recruiting new licensees to the hobby with attractive programmes training and support. Special attention is encouraged to develop youth and mentoring programmes.
- Steps should be taken to develop procedures for the gathering and disseminating of near real-time information on the Amateur Radio response to incidents to aid situational awareness and analysis on a global scale.

The next GAREC will be held in Tampere, Finland in June 2015 and all groups and organisations involved in amateur Radio Emergency Communications are invited to attend to share their knowledge and learn from others.

Possible venues for GAREC 2016 were identified as Indonesia or Thailand.

The delegates wish to record their thanks and appreciation for the generous hospitality of ARRL Alabama Section and the Huntsville Hamfest Association for this successful conference.