

SUMMARY REPORT of the eighth
GLOBAL AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS
CONFERENCE (GAREC-2012),
Port Dickson, Malaysia , 12 -14 November 2012

The eighth Global Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Conference, GAREC-2012, took place in Port Dickson Malaysia hosted by the Malaysian Amateur Radio Transmitters Society and was attended by 17 delegates from nine countries. The theme of the conference was 'One world, One commitment'.

Presentations were received on;

- the Mobile Emergency Weather System – providing a means of empowering citizens to assist authorities using simple equipment and training. Principles which should be transferable to the Amateur Service.
- The status of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service provision in Finland, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Germany and Switzerland. These presentations highlighted the differences and similarities in approach to emergency planning by the respective countries, directed to meeting the needs of their peoples.
- Switzerland also presented their procedure for net control which provided more efficient message handling should the volume of messages increase beyond the needs of a simple net.
- The conference also considered the problems and common issues facing Amateur Radio Emergency Communicators, while solutions may not be easy to find, sharing the problems and allowing individual countries to recognise that they were not alone provides valuable support to the Global community.

Two further practical activities were also carried out.

- A directed exercise was held where the delegates were asked to work together as one team, providing emergency communications for a fictional country and event. This encouraged the delegates to consider what their ideal network and licence conditions would look like as well as enhance the inter-personal relationships between the delegates helping them to work together more efficiently in future.
- The IARU HF Emergency Operating Procedure was reviewed following experience of use in GlobalSET and national exercises. A number of opportunities were identified to improve the procedure and these will be developed by the delegates for presentation to the IARU Regional Emergency Co-Ordinators.

Certain themes began to emerge through the activities.

- The title of GAREC and the Global Centre of Emergency Frequencies can be misinterpreted as only meaning Global emergencies. This is not the case. The Conference and CoA frequencies are available for all Emergency communicators around the world to share their knowledge to assist their colleagues who are having problems themselves.
- There was a discussion on how GAREC and Emergency Communications should be branded to allow more exposure to the Served Agencies and the public we also serve. All Emergency Communications Groups are encouraged to share information on all emergencies they are asked to assist with so that our public profile is raised and understanding of our service improved.
- It was discovered that four countries were independently looking at the issue of monitoring the CoA frequencies to allow the alert to be raised for a disaster or emergency in an automatic manner. It would obviously be better for those countries to collaborate on establishing a standard solution. The continuation of GAREC as a forum to share ideas and

- plans may prevent wasted effort in future.
- There was increased understanding of the restrictions placed on Radio Amateurs in different countries in emergency response.
 - The conference suggested that future conferences seek to involve Partners in emergency response such as IFRC and ITU to ensure that the most value is gained from the memoranda of Understanding that exist between those organisations and the Amateur Radio Community.

The next GAREC will be held in Zurich, Switzerland on 25-27 June 2013 and all groups and organisations involved in amateur Radio Emergency Communications are invited to attend to share their knowledge and learn from others.

Further conference venues have been identified as Huntsville, USA in 2014 and Tampere, Finland in 2015.

The delegates wish to record their thanks and appreciation for the generous hospitality of MARTS and the Malaysian people in hosting this successful conference.