



MERCY MALAYSIA CALLS FOR STRONGER ASEAN DISASTER COORDINATION, EMPOWERED AHA CENTRE, AND DEDICATED REGIONAL RESPONSE FUND

Kuala Lumpur, 17 September – As disaster management ministers and senior officials from across ASEAN convene in Manila this week to address the region's mounting disaster risks, MERCY Malaysia reaffirms its strong support for enhanced regional cooperation and coordination on disaster management across Southeast Asia.

Southeast Asia remains one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world, facing recurring floods, typhoons, earthquakes, and climate-driven hazards that cross national borders and increasingly test the capacity of any single country to respond alone. MERCY Malaysia believes the scale and frequency of these events demand a stronger, more coordinated regional architecture — one built on genuine trans-boundary cooperation, shared early-warning systems, and pre-positioned response capacity that can move quickly across borders when disaster strikes. This architecture must also be inclusive, drawing civil society organisations, local responders, and community networks into planning and decision-making alongside governments, not only into implementation after the fact.

Central to this architecture is the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre). MERCY Malaysia has maintained a longstanding partnership with the AHA Centre, and has seen firsthand the value of its role in coordinating preparedness, monitoring, and emergency response among ASEAN Member States. We call on ASEAN governments to give the AHA Centre more meaningful empowerment — including clearer operational mandates, faster deployment authority, and sustained institutional backing — so it can act decisively at the speed disasters demand, rather than being constrained by process.

MERCY Malaysia also reiterates the urgent need for a dedicated ASEAN Disaster Response and Preparedness Fund. A standing, adequately resourced regional fund would allow Member States and humanitarian partners to act ahead of and immediately following a disaster, rather than relying solely on ad hoc, post-event fundraising. This would strengthen both the region's readiness and the speed and adequacy of its response when disasters occur.

As a longstanding partner of the AHA Centre, MERCY Malaysia stands ready to continue contributing humanitarian expertise, technical capacity, and field-based support that complements ASEAN's governmental coordination mechanisms — and we welcome the opportunity to work alongside ASEAN Member States, the AHA Centre, and fellow humanitarian actors to translate this week's discussions in Manila into concrete, lasting improvements in regional disaster resilience.

– END –

For the latest updates and further information, please follow MERCY Malaysia social media channels at @mercymalaysia or reach out to us directly at info@mercy.org.my

For further information, please contact:

- Nor Safura Jaafar, Head Communication & Fundraising, MERCY

Malaysia

E: safura.jaafar@mercy.org.my | M: +60 12 2078272

MERCY Malaysia, recipient of MERDEKA AWARD 2026 for Outstanding Contribution to Education & Community.