

Second Session of the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas, Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit, Mexico, March 15-17, 2011

Communiqué from Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit, Mexico on Lines of Action to Strengthen Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas

Revised version with comments from plenary session

March 23, 2011

1. The participants in the Second Session of the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, representatives of States and Territories, local governments, international, regional and subregional agencies, civil society, the academic, scientific and private sectors from North America, Central America, South America and the Caribbean.
2. Meeting in Nayarit, Mexico to contribute to and be part of the process of developing a regional development agenda that explicitly and effectively includes disaster risk reduction along with the considerations of adaptation to climate change, present this statement as a contribution to promote and reinforce the development of the countries and territories of the region, in which we express our concerns and proposals, so that they be taken into account at the next session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to be held from 8-13 May 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland, and for their consideration in the outcomes and management mechanisms resulting therefrom;
3. We express our solidarity with and condolences to the people of Japan for the earthquake and tsunami of 11 March 2011, the consequences of which make evident the need to prioritize DRR at the highest level of action;
4. We recognize the actions and efforts for disaster risk reduction (DRR) being undertaken by the countries of the region and by respective institutions;
5. We recognize that for numerous factors the region of the Americas is highly vulnerable to the potential hazard posed by natural, socio-natural and technological events to which all of the region's countries are to a greater or lesser extent exposed; recent experience has shown that these phenomena can lead to a high cost in human life as well as economic and environmental losses that set back national efforts to advance along the road to the development of countries and communities, especially the poorest and most disadvantaged. This has been demonstrated by the recent large-scale disasters affecting Haiti, Chile, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Brazil and Guatemala, as well as other disasters, which, although on a smaller scale and less visible, occur repeatedly at the local level;
6. We underscore the fact that this priority of developing a hemispheric development agenda that explicitly and effectively includes disaster risk reduction is taking place in a context of declining cooperation resources in many countries of the region, because they are considered to be middle income countries. However, these countries still have enormous inequalities in income generation and distribution and in local management capacity for the sustainable use of natural resources, which translates into the presence of significant pockets of extreme poverty;

7. Taking into consideration the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, held in agreement with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 58/214, which adopted the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters;
8. Remembering the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 64/200 of December 21, 2009 which refers to the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and that specifies guidelines for strengthening the work done; Resolution 65/1 of October 19, 2010 in which the member countries reaffirm their commitments to attaining the Millennium Development Goals; and taking into account Resolution 57/270B of June 23, 2003 on the integrated and coordinated implementation and monitoring of decisions adopted at large United Nations economic and social conferences and summit meetings;
9. Remembering, in addition, the Declaration of the Incheon Conference, "Building a Local Government Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction," held in August 2009, which lays the groundwork for the World Disaster Reduction Campaign, "Making Cities Resilient: My City is getting ready" which considers the progress of the initiative for safe schools and hospitals;
10. Taking note of the decisions adopted by the Climate Change Conference in Cancun, Mexico (COP 16/CMP 6) in December 2010, in particular the outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention, which makes reference to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) as an instrument to be considered within strategies for climate change variability and adaptation and disaster risk reduction associated with these types of events and within the Cancun Adaptation Framework;
11. Taking note of Resolution 65/264 of January 28, 2011 by the 65th plenary of the United Nations General Assembly, in which it calls on Member States and United Nations response agencies to promote a shift in emphasis from disaster relief to sustainable development assistance in global cooperation projects, and in which the Assembly likewise urges updating of early warning systems, improvement of disaster preparedness, and implementation of risk reduction measures;
12. Taking note of the decisions adopted by the Cancun Declaration of the XXI Summit of the Rio Group and the Latin America and Caribbean II Summit on Integration and Development (CALC for its Spanish acronym) in the Mayan Riviera, Mexico on 23 February 2010, in particular the decisions on cooperation among regional and subregional mechanisms for integration, social development, eradication of hunger and poverty, food security, climate change, disasters and South-South cooperation;
13. Reaffirming the role of the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas as a broad-based, ongoing and inclusive forum, whose purpose is to bring together existing subregional platforms, national platforms, government agencies, United Nations Agencies, intergovernmental organizations in the region, civil society organizations, regional and subregional organizations, non-governmental organizations, funding institutions, the academic and scientific communities, the private sector, civil society in general, members of the ISDR system, *inter alia*, to advocate for disaster risk reduction and to be the primary regional mechanism for

guiding the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA); recognizing in addition that the Regional Platform acts as a bridge for communication between national and global platforms;

14. Reaffirming that the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters defines the priorities and lines of action for achieving objectives related to disaster risk reduction and building the resilience of nations and communities throughout the region, at all territorial levels, in the face of all types of natural, socio-natural and technological hazards;
15. Taking note of the work for promoting good practices on disaster risk reduction by the Organization of American States (OAS) and its specialized entities and encouraging the Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation (INDM) to continue promoting cooperation and collaboration among member States, multilateral agencies, and regional organizations;
16. Underscoring progress being achieved at the national level as well as the work of different regional bodies and mechanisms and those for subregional coordination to advance and consolidate achievements toward disaster risk reduction (DRR), including the considerations of climate change adaptation (CCA) in the region, which has enabled the preparation, adoption and implementation of strategies, policies, plans and programs that articulate regional and subregional efforts and strengthen national capacities, including: the Central American Policy for Integral Disaster Risk Management (SICA/CEPREDENAC-PCGIR); Andean Strategy for Disaster Prevention and Relief (CAN/CAPRADE-EAPAD); Comprehensive Disaster Management: Strategy and Program Framework (CARICOM/CDEMA-CDM) for the Caribbean region; and the Specialized Meeting on Social and Natural Disaster Risk Reduction, Civil Defense, Civil Protection, and Humanitarian Assistance (REHU-MERCOSUR), as well as the Association of Caribbean States' 2008 Saint Marc Plan of Action and the Plan of Action resulting from the Red Cross' Inter-American Conference;
17. Underscoring the dialogue and instruments developed by the Latin American and Caribbean States, with support from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the process of the Regional Meetings of International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance (Mexico 2008, Florianopolis, Brazil 2009, Buenos Aires, Argentina 2010), which allows for the exchange of experiences, consensus building and the development of specific tools for strengthening coordination of humanitarian assistance, including aspects of sustainability in the context of disaster risk reduction;
18. Recognizing the role of the national systems for disaster risk reduction as well as civil protection and defense, including the support and cooperation provided by the Red Cross societies;
19. Underscoring the work of coordination and regional consensus-building of the Forum for Subregional Coordination and Cooperation Mechanisms on Disaster Risk Management in the Americas;

20. Taking note of the progress reports on implementation of the HFA at the various levels, and the outcomes of the HFA Mid-Term Review;
21. Recognizing the relevance of the World Disasters Report 2010 - Focus on Urban Risk by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and of the Views from the Frontline report by the Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction on progress toward implementation of the HFA at the local level;
22. Taking note of the considerations on the economic impact of disasters and the recommendations along these lines set forth in the recent World Bank and United Nations publication Natural Hazards, UnNatural Disasters: The Economics of Effective Prevention¹ and the different seminars and meetings organized by the UNISDR, in conjunction with many national and international agencies, organizations and bodies with regard to the need to increase public investment in DRR;
23. Highlighting that the ultimate goal of actions aimed at reducing the risk of disaster, including food security as well as climate change variability and adaptation, is to contribute to the achievement of a sustainable and socially inclusive development in harmony with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and considering the cross-cutting themes of gender and cultural diversity;
24. Recognizing that in an increasingly interdependent world, the occurrence of disasters can have an impact that extends beyond national borders, in some cases forcing processes of displacement and migration of population groups, affecting the development processes of these groups and of the areas of refuge;
25. Reaffirming that securing the progress made with respect to DRR and resolving the challenges to sustainable development imposed by climate change and variability require strategies for strengthening capacities, in particular the capacity for resource management and civil society participation in the formulation of public policies, at all levels; and
26. Building on the contributions of the I Session of the Regional Platform held in Panama in March 2009, the Chair's summary of the II Session of the Global Platform held in Geneva in June 2009, the conclusion of the II Hemispheric Encounter held in Santa Marta, Colombia in April 2010, and taking into account the themes and objectives of the III Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to be held in May 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland, and having examined the outcomes of the multi-stakeholder survey for identifying the main lines of action and mechanisms to enable and accelerate DRR and CCA established in the region,² as well as the outcome of the different sessions held during this II Session of the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction;

¹ World Bank and the United Nations, 2010.

² The outcome of the survey can be seen at www.eird.org

WE HEREBY DECLARE our commitment to the guiding principles of DRR set forth in the HFA and those for CCA and we strongly encourage, by means of this Statement, the consideration of these priorities defined by the institutions and governments of the Americas, in the framework of the upcoming III Session of the Global Platform for DRR. Likewise, we strongly encourage action to be taken by all States and Territories, regional and subregional agencies, civil society, the academic, scientific and private sectors, international agencies, and, in general, all those stakeholders committed to the development of the peoples of the region to:

27. **With regards to the consolidation of the regulatory and institutional frameworks that prioritize DRR and CCA as explicit sustainable development objectives at the national, subnational and local levels:** Urgently advance the integration of DRR and CCA policies, regulatory frameworks and development plans. We also strongly encourage governments and cooperation entities to jointly promote permanent training and capacity building programs for national and local authorities and officials, communities, civil society and the private sector on the regulatory and institutional frameworks (national, local) that provide the underpinnings of the integration of DRR and CCA into the context of sustainable development. We encourage promotion of the design and implementation of results-based management instruments, for example the development of evaluation systems, which enable the continuing review and adjustment of the process of implementation of the regulatory and institutional frameworks, including roles and responsibilities and in particular accountability, with consideration for multi-stakeholder representation, with all actors of civil society and the participation of all sectors and levels of government.
28. **In terms of the process of knowledge generation about risk in a context of multiple hazards:** We invite government entities at the national, subnational and local levels to allocate resources and create management mechanisms for promoting the strengthening of ties among the academic sector, the private sector and civil society that support research and development that lead to concrete proposals for facing the challenges for articulating DRR and CCA in development processes with particular focus at the local level.

We also strongly encourage promotion of the development and use of methodologies for the production and evaluation of multi-hazard risk scenarios that have flexible data requirements and are adaptable to different geographical and time scales and we seek to have the process of knowledge generation on risk include community participation and consider traditional and ancestral community knowledge. With special interest, we encourage promotion of capacity building for evaluating and generating knowledge about the environmental, economic and financial implications of DRR and CCA, as well as promotion of the establishment of procedures for conducting an ongoing assessment of the levels of risk that public infrastructure might be exposed to, with special reference to schools, hospitals, and basic services (water, sustainable food production, energy, communications and roads); and additionally, the strengthening of systems for climate, oceans and territorial observation to ensure the availability of relevant information, adopted and channeled to the local context and indigenous languages, for the development of early warning

systems³, with an approach based on active community participation, recognizing the importance of reaching those population groups that should be warned, and encouraging and motivating the informative and educational role of the mass media.

29. **Regarding the use of knowledge, innovation and education for developing a culture of prevention and resilience at all levels:** We call upon the entities responsible for the definition of the educational policies at the national, subnational and local levels to promote the inclusion of DRR as a cross-cutting element within the education system in all its facets and at all levels, adapted to the specific conditions of the geographic areas where educational activities occur, and promoting the rights of children and students of all ages to an education. We strongly encourage national, subnational and local governments to promote the creation and dissemination of information services tailored to specific users (public sector, communities, individuals) that support DRR and CCA decision-making processes. We encourage the design and implementation of permanent communication strategies surrounding DRR and CCA targeting specific audiences, reaching urban and rural communities and adapted as necessary to local cultures and languages and including the analysis and dissemination of relevant DRR and CCA experiences. We highlight the need to involve the media to partake in formal educational processes surrounding DRR. We strongly encourage ministries of education, universities and other entities for higher education to take on a proactive role in DRR and to efficiently make use of the network of universities and other scientific and educational entities in order to contribute to the implementation of the HFA and provide substantive scientific inputs to related political decision-making processes.
30. **With regard to the reduction of underlying risk factors:** We encourage promotion of the design of management instruments to ensure measurable increases in the inclusion of DRR and CCA criteria in processes for land use planning and public investment at the local, national and regional levels, including a focus on gender as a cross-cutting issue. We support the development and strengthening of capacities for managing economic resources and human capital and of productive abilities, bearing in mind the achievement of DRR and CCA objectives as a necessary condition for attaining the Millennium Development Goals. We encourage the design and implementation of financial services appropriate to the specific needs of the different types of populations, so that these groups can implement DRR measures and include aspects relating to CCA, such as savings and credit plans, macro and micro insurance, reduced insurance premiums for families, tax breaks for businesses. We also encourage the design and implementation of participatory plans and policies including aspects of food security, rural development, environment, economy and production, so that relevant development sectors include DRR and CCA.
31. **In terms of preparedness for effective disaster response at all levels:** We strongly encourage national, subnational and local governments to develop and/or oversight instruments to ensure that disaster risk reduction mechanisms are integrated into post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation activities. It is important to improve instruments

³ Early warning systems (EWS) designed in accordance with the criteria established by the Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR).

that facilitate access to financial reserves and special financial mechanisms created to transfer risk and support effective response and processes for early recovery from disaster. Likewise, to promote ongoing review and development of the response capacity of all corresponding territorial entities and levels, with particular emphasis on urban and rural areas. To strengthen the development of protocols (national, international) and procedures for facilitating the compilation and sharing of information during emergencies and disasters; compatible damage assessment methods and identification of post-disaster needs; promote compilation, analysis, systematization and dissemination of lessons learned and good practices regarding experiences with early disaster assistance and recovery; promote strengthening of regulatory frameworks and guidelines that support the rapid, timely intervention of the international community in disasters, taking into consideration, among other things, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) International Disaster Response Laws, Rules and Principles (IDRL). To promote awareness-raising surrounding national legislature and frameworks relating to emergency management, in particular with relation to declarations of emergency and disasters; raise awareness surrounding the mechanisms and instruments for coordination of response and humanitarian assistance available throughout the hemisphere and at all levels, global (through the United Nations System), regional (through the Inter-American System) and subregional (through CAPRADE, CEPREDENAC, CDEMA and REHU).

Recommendations to the Global Platform

32. We invite national, subnational and local governments to establish and/or strengthen mechanisms that enable the joint, continuous review of DRR strategies, plans, programs, and actions, including considerations for CCA, ensuring participation of all relevant stakeholders and with the support of regional and subregional intergovernmental agencies;
33. We strongly encourage international cooperation agencies and mechanisms to support actions for DRR, including considerations for CCA, as well as any agencies involved in sectoral development issues and cross-cutting themes to strengthen coordination mechanisms and promote synergies in the implementation of support programs at all levels;
34. We urge the development and strengthening of horizontal cooperation mechanisms on issues regarding DRR, including considerations of CCA, within the framework of sustainable development, that includes technology transfer, knowledge sharing, and the dissemination of lessons learned and good practices such as the INDM;
35. We reiterate that DRR, including considerations of CCA, are fundamental to sustainable development and human security and therefore these issues should be explicitly linked to the realization of the MDGs;
36. We urge the international community to continue its contribution and support to this priority issue, and to consider the major inequalities and disparities that persist in middle income countries, and where the setting up of a regional development agenda that explicitly includes DRR and takes into account considerations of gender, the

particular needs of highly vulnerable sectors of society and cultural diversity, is hindered by significant gaps in management capacity at the local level;

37. We underscore the need to reinforce, from a sustainable development perspective, a comprehensive view towards land-use management, biodiversity, fragile ecosystems, environmental degradation processes, and water resources management as factors that can positively or negatively contribute to reducing vulnerability to different types of hazards and therefore to disaster risk management. Along these lines, we consider it fundamental for DRR to be included in meetings of Heads of State / Government and Ministers, such as for example the upcoming Rio +20 Earth Summit to be held in 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil;
38. We underscore the need to strengthen linkages among DRR-related actions being implemented at the national, subnational and local levels. In this context, we recognize the importance of advancing with implementation of the campaign “Making Cities Resilient: My city is getting ready”;
39. Lastly, we invite national, subnational and local governments to apply, monitor, and report on progress in the implementation of the decisions adopted at major United Nations conferences and summits on topics related to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, DRR and CCA.
40. The participants thank the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), all entities that facilitated the thematic and parallel sessions, the United Nations system agencies, the Organization of American States (OAS) and its specialized entities, the Government of Mexico, and in particular the Government of Nayarit for the organization and support provided to this II Session of the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas.